

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Water Resources Division
Water Rights Bureau

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact

Part I. Proposed Action Description

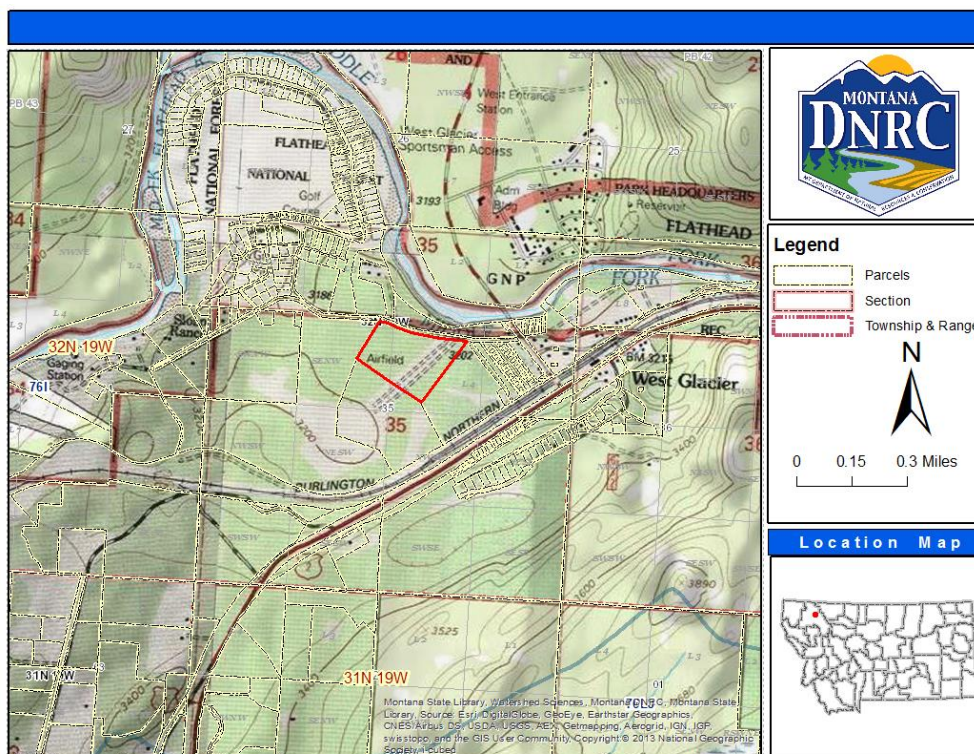
1. Applicant/Contact name and address:

Glacier Park Inc.
PO Box 2025
Columbia Falls, MT 59912

2. Type of action: Permit to Appropriate Water 76I 30115573

3. Water source name: Groundwater

4. Location affected by project: SWNE and E2SENE, Section 35, Township 32N, Range 19W, Flathead County, MT.



5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:

This application is to obtain a water use permit for one of two wells associated with a public water supply system located in the Glacier National Park Compact Area in the above-described location. The Applicant proposes to divert water at a rate of 35 GPM up to 9.6 acre-feet (AF) per year. Permit 76I 30115574 is associated with this permit; between the two rights the volume will not exceed 9.6 AF. The proposed use is for commercial purposes (102 RV park units, 25 cabins, office, laundry and maintenance building) from May 15th to September 20th each year.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

The National Park Service is being notified per compact requirement.
Montana Historical Society
Montana Natural Heritage Program

Part II. Environmental Review

1. Environmental Impact Checklist:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION

Water quantity - Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.

Determination: Not applicable, the source is groundwater.

Water quality - Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.

Determination: Not applicable, the source is groundwater.

Groundwater - Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply.
If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.

The applicant will derive water from a well at a rate of 35 GPM. Due to the proximity of the well to the river, the geologic materials reported on the well log, and the lack of evidence of a confining or other geologic barrier, it is likely that the aquifer in which the well is completed is hydrologically connected to the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. Streamflow depletion due to pumping will occur. The total time the well can be pumped before the rate of stream depletion by pumping reaches 10% of the water produced by the well is approximately 31 days of continuous pumping at a rate of 9.63 AF/year.

Determination: Impact

DIVERSION WORKS - Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.

This application is to obtain a water use permit for one of two wells associated with a public water supply system. The Applicant proposes to divert water at a rate of 35 GPM up to 9.6 acre-feet (AF) per year. The two wells are manifold and will provide water for commercial purposes (RV park with 102 units, 25 cabins, 1 office, and 1 maintenance building). The project will not impact any stream channels, barriers, riparian areas, or dams. The wells were drilled by licensed well drillers and approved by the MT DEQ. Streamflow depletion due to pumping will occur.

Determination: No significant impacts

UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Endangered and threatened species - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern," or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or "species of special concern."*

The Montana Natural Heritage Program and DFWP website were reviewed to determine if there are any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern", that could be impacted by the proposed project.

According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program and DFWP in Township 32N, Range 19W there are five plant species of concern: Moonworts (*Botrychium* sp), Treelike Clubmoss (*Lycopodium dendroideum*), Whitebark Pine (*Pinus albicaulis*), Pale Corydalis (*Corydalis sempervirens*), and Velvetleaf Huckleberry (*Vaccinium myrtilloides*).

The Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), and Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*) are listed as threatened and the Fisher (*Pekania pennanti*), Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), Common Loon (*Gavia immer*), Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*), Black-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) and Westslope Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkia lewisi*) are listed as sensitive by the USFS and USFWS. The Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*), Cassin's Finch (*Haemorhous cassinii*), Pygmy Whitefish (*Prosopium coulteri*), Hooked Snowfly (*Isocapnia crinita*), and Alberta Snowfly (*Isocapnia inegra*) are species of concern. Development has occurred near this commercial site for over 30 years; impacts to wildlife should be minimal. The proposed use is for groundwater; depletions to surface water will not adversely affect aquatic species. The land will be disturbed; existing vegetation will be affected.

Determination: Potential impact

Wetlands - *Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.*

Determination: There are no wetlands in the area of this project.

Ponds - *For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.*

Determination: Not applicable, the project does not involve a pond.

GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE - Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.

The geology/soil within the area of the project are a result of glaciation. Soils consist of silt loam and gravelly loam and are not susceptible to saline seep.

Determination: No impact.

VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS - Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.

Development has existed near this area for over 30 years. However, this piece of land has not been developed. The proposed commercial use will disturb the soil and could cause noxious weeds to be established or spread.

Determination: Potential Impact

AIR QUALITY - Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.

Determination: Potential impact.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.

This is an undeveloped commercially zoned piece of land near West Glacier. Development has existed in this area for over 30 years.

Determination: Potential Impact

DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.

Determination: None

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS - Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

Determination: The project is consistent with planned land use.

ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES - Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.

Determination: No impact.

HUMAN HEALTH - Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.

Determination: No impact.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights. Yes___ No X___ If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination: No impact.

OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES - For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.

Impacts on:

- (a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity? No
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? Yes
- (c) Existing land uses? No
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? No
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? Yes
- (f) Demands for government services? Yes
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? Yes
- (h) Utilities? Yes
- (i) Transportation? Yes
- (j) Safety? Yes
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? No

2. Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:

Secondary Impacts: None

Cumulative Impacts: None

3. Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures: None that I am aware of

4. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider: None

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative: As proposed

2. Comments and Responses: None

3. Finding:

Yes___ No **X** Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action: No significant impacts specifically related to water use have been identified; therefore, no EIS is necessary.

Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:

Name: Melissa Brickl

Title: Hydrologist/Water Resources Specialist

Date: February 20, 2018