

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:

Ellen Blankenship
5350 Blankenship Road
Columbia Falls, MT 59912

2. Type of action: Permit Registration for Groundwater Use Within the National Park Service Compact Area No. 76LJ 30120328

3. Water source name: Groundwater

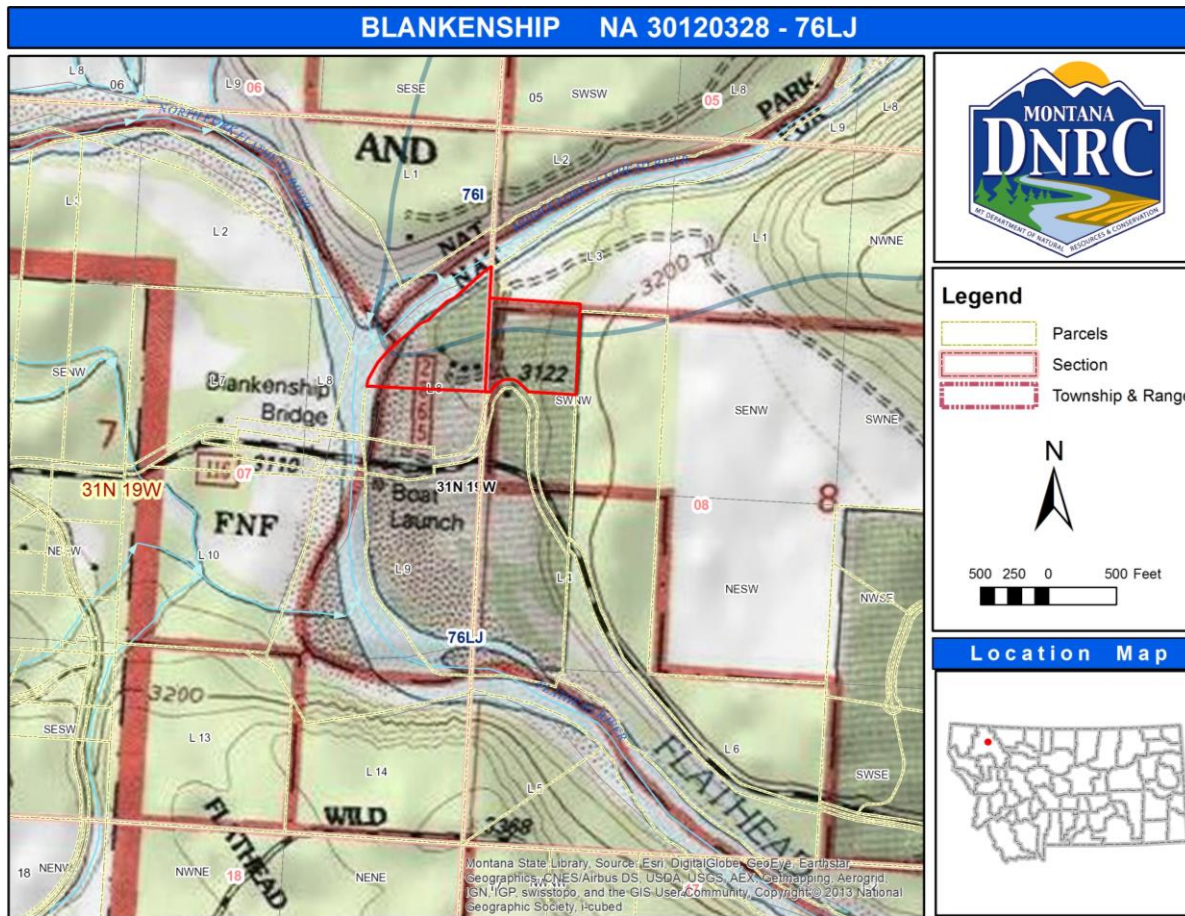
4. Location affected by project: NESENE of Section 7, Township 31N, Range 19W, Flathead County

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

The proposed appropriation is from a groundwater well located within the Glacier National Park Closure area in the NESENE of Section 7, Township 31N, Range 19W. The well is approximately 46 feet deep and 260 feet from the North Fork of the Flathead River. The requested flow rate is 7 gallons per minute (GPM) up to 1.75 acre-feet (AF) for multiple domestic and lawn and garden.

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

Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:
Montana Natural Resource Information System (NRIS)
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (DFWP)
Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Montana Natural Heritage Program
National Wetlands Inventory
USDA NRCS Web Soil Survey



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: No significant impact.

The North Fork of the Flathead River has not been identified as chronically or periodically dewatered by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks.

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: No significant impact.

The reach of the North Fork of the Flathead River which may be depleted by groundwater pumping is listed as fully supporting all beneficial uses for which it has been assessed. It is not anticipated that pumping of the Applicant's groundwater well will have any negative impacts on the water quality of the North Fork of the Flathead River.

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.*

Determination: No significant impact.

The Applicant is proposing to divert flows of 7 GPM up to 1.75 AF annually from the groundwater aquifer. National Park Service has not objected and flow rate will not be included in the calculation of total consumptive use for the North Fork Flathead River per the Glacier National Park Compact.

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.*

Determination: No significant impact.

The means of diversion (well) has already been constructed. Since this is a groundwater appropriation, there will be no channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, dams, or riparian impacts to the North Fork of the Flathead River.

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."*

Determination: No significant impact.

The Townsend's Big-eared Bat, Wolverine, Canada Lynx, Little Brown Myotis, Fisher, Pygmy Shrew and Grizzly Bear frequent this area of Flathead County. The well is drilled and should not impact area wildlife. Other species of concern include the Northern Goshawk, Brown Creeper, Evening Grosbeak, Bobolink, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Loon, Harlequin Duck, Pacific Wren, Western Toad, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Bull Trout, Brush-tipped Emerald, Hooked Snowfly, Alberta Snowfly, Deer Indian Paintbrush, English Sundew, Latah Tule Pea, Alkali-marsh Regwort, Spalding's Catchfly, Velvetleaf Huckleberry, Sparrow's-egg Lady's-slipper and Short-beaked Aloe Moss.

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.

Determination: No significant impact.

This part of the Flathead National Forest Area is typically stream bottoms Aquepts, stream bottoms with a moderately high to high capacity to transmit water. Not identified as soil with saline.

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.

Determination: No significant impact.

It is not anticipated that issuance of a water use permit will contribute to the spread of noxious weeds in the project area.

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

Determination: No significant impact.

There will be no impact to air quality associated with issuance of a water use permit.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project if it is on State or Federal Lands. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.

Determination: NA – Project not located on State or Federal Lands.

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: No other potential impacts have been identified.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Determination: County governed.

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 access or recreational activities will be significantly impacted by this project.

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

Determination: No impact to human health.

PRIVATE PROPERTY - Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.

Yes___ NoXXX If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.

Determination:

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? None
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? Increased tax revenue
- (c) Existing land uses? Planned development
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? No impact.
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? None
- (f) Demands for government services? None
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? None
- (h) Utilities? Already in place
- (i) Transportation? None
- (j) Safety? None
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None

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
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:***

PART III. Conclusion

1. ***Preferred Alternative*** As Approved
2. ***Comments and Responses*** None
3. ***Finding:***
Yes___ NoXX 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: Private property

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

Name: Kathy Olsen

Title: Kalispell Regional Manager

Date: November 28, 2018