

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:

Luke Osborne, HydroSolutions Inc  
303 Clarke Street  
Helena, MT 59601

2. Type of action: Application to Change City of Helena Water Reservation Water Right No. 41I by adding additional well points of diversion.

3. Water source name: Groundwater

4. Location affected by project: City of Helena within City limits.

Capital High/Northwest Park in the NE Section 24, Township 10 North, Range 4 West, Lewis and Clark County.

Carroll College in the NWNW Section 30 and SWSW Section 19, Township 10 North, Range 3 West, Lewis and Clark County.

Lockey Park in the SWNENW and SWNWNE Section 32, Township 10 North, Range 3 West, Lewis and Clark County.

5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits: The DNRC shall issue a change authorization if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-402 MCA are met.

Applicant proposes to add six existing groundwater well points of diversion to the City of Helena Water Reservation (41I 72581) for municipal and irrigation uses. Four of these wells will be used to irrigate Carroll College grounds, one will irrigate Lockey Park, and one will irrigate the Capital High School grounds and Northwest Park. The additional flow rate proposed for use under the Water Reservation is 645 GPM, and the proposed additional volume is 88.63 AF.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment: None

**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 Impact

The source is groundwater from the Helena Valley Aquifer, and a flow rate and volume in excess of the project has already been approved and determined to not have a significant impact on surface water in the assessment done for the City of Helena Water Reservation.

**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 impact.

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.

*Determination:* No impact.

The project accesses the City of Helena Water Reservation. The determination regarding the Water Reservation indicated that a flow rate and volume greatly in excess of the proposed change would not have a significant impact on groundwater availability from this aquifer and no significant impact to connected surface water would occur.

**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 impact.

The project utilizes existing wells.

**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 Impact.*

The majority of the project involves existing turf irrigation within city limits from existing wells. The additional irrigated area will occur on ground that has already been developed on the Carroll College campus. No change in land use and no new diversion development will result in no impacts to any wildlife or native plant life. No significant impact to surface water is expected.

**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: No impact.*

The project does not involve wetlands.

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

*Determination: No impact.*

The project does not involve ponds.

**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 impact.*

The majority of the project involves existing turf irrigation within city limits from existing wells. The additional irrigated area will occur on ground that has already been developed on the Carroll College campus.

**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 impact.*

The project involves turf grass irrigation in areas where noxious weeds are actively controlled.

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

*Determination: No impact.*

The project involves existing turf grass in developed areas and a small amount of additional turf grass on a developed college campus.

**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- The project is 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 further impact 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:* No impact.

The project is consistent with increased usability of city parks and the college campus.

**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.

The project will increase the usability of recreational facilities.

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

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

Secondary Impacts None identified.

Cumulative Impacts None identified.

**3. *Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:*** No mitigation or stipulations are necessary.

**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:*** No human or environmental impacts exist as a result of the proposed action, and the no action alternative is reduced usability of city parks and the college campus.

**PART III. Conclusion**

**1. *Preferred Alternative*** No preferred alternatives identified.

**2. *Comments and Responses*** None at this time.

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:*

An Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis because no significant adverse impacts were identified for the proposed project.

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

Russ Gates  
Hydrologist/Water Resource Specialist  
August 9, 2019