

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Water Resources Division Water Rights Bureau
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT</b> <b>For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact</b>

**Part I. Proposed Action Description**

Applicant/Contact name and address: IFG-KAMP, LLC  
 687 Canfield Ave. Suite 100  
 Coeur D Alene, ID 83815  
 Attn: Tom Schultz

1. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit No. 76M 30122112
2. Water source name: Groundwater
3. Location affected by project: NENENE Section 19, T18N, R27W Mineral County
4. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:

The applicant requests a point of diversion (groundwater well), flow rate of 901.9 GPM and a volume of 499.2 acre-feet (AF) per year for industrial use at the Idaho Forest Group's (IFG) St. Regis Mill, Mineral County. The proposed well will divert water to a pond for log spraying during the proposed period of diversion of May 1 to October 31.

The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

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

Montana Natural Heritage Program	Species of Concern
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks	2006 Montana dewatered streams

**Part II. Environmental Review**

1. **Environmental Impact Checklist:**

<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>
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**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.

The applicant proposes to utilize groundwater. The Clark Fork River is interpreted to be potentially affected but the Lower Clark Fork River, from the town of St. Regis to the confluence of the Flathead River, is not considered chronically or periodically dewatered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and is not included in controlled groundwater or basin closure areas.

*Determination:* No significant impact

**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:* The source is groundwater, see below

**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.

Within a radius of 600 feet from the proposed groundwater wells the Department calculated groundwater flux, or the amount of groundwater flowing through the area, to be 794.6 AF per year. The applicant is requesting a diverted volume of 499.2 AF of which 68.2 AF is consumed or lost to the system. This amount of groundwater consumption will not cause a negative impact to groundwater quantity. There were no identified sources of groundwater pollution from the proposed diversion of water that would affect groundwater quality.

The groundwater appropriated by the Applicant is hydraulically connected to the Clark Fork River. Depletion is expected to occur concurrently with consumption. Total depletion is 68.2 AF annually. The Clark Fork River has a USGS gaging site at this location that shows a low of 168,141.7 AF flowing through the depleted reach during the month of September to a high of 1,178,478.6 AF flowing through the depleted reach in June. The loss of 68.2 AF through this reach of river will not impact adjacent surface water flows. In addition, the Applicant proposes to mitigate (replace) the 68.2 AF net depletion to the Clark Fork River by using mitigation water through pending Application to Change a Water Right number 76M- 30148159 negating the depletion to surface water.

*Determination:* No significant 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.

The Applicant plans to divert water from a groundwater well powered by a 900 GPM 75 HP Franklin electric 9” STS Sub-Turbine pump. The proposed use of groundwater will not impact any channels, cause adverse effect due to flow modifications, create any barriers or impact riparian areas, dams or other existing or future wells.

*Determination:* No impact

## **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 (MNH) database was queried to determine if any threatened or endangered species, or species of special concern, are located in the project vicinity. According to MNH, the following sensitive species were identified as occurring in the same township and range as the proposed project site; Townsend's Big-eared Bat, Wolverine, Hoary Bat, Fringed Myotis, Fisher, Peregrine Falcon, Flammulated Owl, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Bull Trout

Sensitive species found occurring in streams in the Missoula Valley, such as Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Bull Trout should not be impacted by the applicant's proposed use of groundwater. The log spraying operation will not affect surface water flows in the Clark Fork River, and there will be no outlets from the pond that will allow water to leave the pond, or that could allow fish to migrate to and from the pond.

The place of use is an existing log yard and partially landscaped. Any impact to sensitive mammal species or plant species most likely has already occurred. No impact is foreseen

*Determination:* No 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.

The proposed project does not create or impact any wetlands.

*Determination:* No impact

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

A pumping pond having a capacity of 5.1 AF will be constructed on site. The site is an existing log yard so wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources will not be impacted.

*Determination:* No significant impact

***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 use of groundwater for log spraying will not result in application of water to soils that may cause a degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability or moisture content. Soils at the site are not heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.

*Determination:* No significant 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.*

Deterioration of vegetation cover is not expected. The site is an existing log yard where water will be sprayed on the stored logs. It is ultimately the landowner's responsibility to control the spread or establishment of noxious weeds.

*Determination:* No significant impact

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

Deterioration of air quality and/or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants is not expected. The water will be diverted using electric motors, therefore, there will be no emissions and/or increased noise levels associated with the proposed appropriation of groundwater.

*Determination:* No significant impact

**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.*

N/A – project not located on State or Federal Lands

*Determination:*

**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 impact

<b>HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b>
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**LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS** - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

*Determination:* No impact

**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.*

The proposed project will not inhibit, alter or impair access to present recreational opportunities in the area. The project is taking place on privately owned land.

*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? None identified
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? None identified
- (c) Existing land uses? None identified
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? None identified
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? None identified
- (f) Demands for government services? None identified
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? None identified
- (h) Utilities? None identified
- (i) Transportation? None identified
- (j) Safety? None identified
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None identified

**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:*** None identified
  
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 identified

***PART III. Conclusion***

1. ***Preferred Alternative*** N/A
  
2. ***Comments and Responses*** N/A
  
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 EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action because no significant impacts have been identified as a result of the proposed action.

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

*Name:* Kathy Schubert  
*Title:* Water Resource Specialist  
*Date:* 5/4/2020