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*: William and Michele Furry, 28 Seed Orchard Lane, Plains MT 59859

2. *Type of action*: Application to Change a Water Right 76N 30052529

3. *Water source name*: Groundwater Well

4. *Location affected by project*: NW¼ of Section 28, Township 20N, Range 26W, Sanders 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

   Place of use was historically part of an irrigated 120 acre plot. Champion International Corporation bought the property and in 1979 drilled a second well located approximately 170 meters north of the original 1964 well. Champion split the property and sold the east portion which included the 1979 well and severed the use of the 1964 well for that portion. Neither Champion nor subsequent owners had ever filed for a right on the 1979 well after it had been put to use on the east portion; even though it has been continually used. The 1964 well has been continually used on the west portion. Applicant now proposes to add the 1979 well as a point of diversion and continue to irrigate 39 acres up to 96.57 AF at 200 GPM from this added POD.

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

   Montana Natural Heritage Program
   Natural Resources and Conservation Service soil maps
   Montana Department of Environmental Quality
   United States Fish and Wildlife Wetland Mapper
   Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

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: Groundwater change. Depletions to adjacent Clark Fork River should not change.

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: Groundwater change. Depletions to adjacent Clark Fork River should not change.

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: Less water will be taken from the aquifer via the added well than what has been historically diverted with this change.

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: The proposed new well was completed in 1979 by Camp Well Drilling, License No. WWC-7. Well has an 8-inch casing and was completed to a depth of 60 feet with perforations from 31 to 41 feet. Static water level is 12 feet. A 4-inch mainline will deliver water to 3-inch laterals spaced 40 feet apart and contain 6 sprinkler heads 20 feet apart and capable of delivering approximately 4 GPM per head. A 15 HP pump is submerged to 30 feet. A pump curve submitted by Phil Cook Pump Service representing flow rate tests done to determine capability and safe operating limits of the pump. At a total head of 124 feet, production was 220 GPM which is approximately the total flow of this proposed application (200 GPM) and existing right 76N 30048061 (35 GPM).

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: The Montana Natural Heritage Program was contacted 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. They identified the following animal and plant species that are threatened, or have special status, that are located regionally: Wolverine, Hoary Bat, Fisher, Golden Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Lewis's Woodpecker, Western Toad, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, and Bull Trout. These species are found throughout this region and not necessarily at this particular spot. No immediate 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: No wetland identified. No impact.

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

Determination: No pond. No 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.*

Determination: The majority of soils in this area are well drained, Grantsdale silt loam with a moderately high to high capacity to transmit water. This soil has a non-saline designation.

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: Irrigation practices should limit spread of noxious weeds.

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.

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.*

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 impacts.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Determination: Land has been irrigation with new well since 1979. No impacts.

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**XXX** 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?* Nothing new since 1979

(c) *Existing land uses?* No new 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 new impact

(h) *Utilities?* No new impact

(i) *Transportation?* No impact

(j) *Safety?* No impact

(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

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:*** Project should be completed as proposed

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative

2 Comments and Responses

3. ***Finding:***
*Yes___ No**XXX** 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: Proposed well has been in existence and used since 1979

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

Name: Kathy Olsen
Title: Water Resource Specialist
Date: April 2, 2015