

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: James M and Dawn M Gaitis, 1055 Trail Creek Rd, Polebridge MT 59928
2. Type of action: Permit Registration for Groundwater Use within the National Park Service Compact Area 76LJ 30072528
3. Water source name: Groundwater well
4. Location affected by project: NE¼NE¼ Section 29, Township 37N, Range 22W, Flathead County
5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits: The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

This application is to obtain a water use permit for a well located in the Glacier National Park Compact Area in the above-described location. The applicant proposes to divert water at a rate of 8 GPM up to 3.78 acre feet per year. The proposed use is for domestic use from January 1 through December 31 and domestic lawn and garden use on 1.11 acres inclusive of 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 Natural Heritage Program
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Natural Resource Conservation Service

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. Park Service to assess surface water hydrologic connection.

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. Park Service to assess surface water hydrologic connection.

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: The applicant will derive groundwater from the aquifer at a rate up to 8 GPM. The well was completed to a depth of 361 feet below ground surface (bgs) and has a static water level of 204.2 feet. The well was completed in October 2010 by Glazier Drilling license number WWC-655. Park Service to assess surface water hydrologic connection. No immediate impacts were noted.

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 well was constructed with a 6-inch steel casing down to 198 feet bgs and a 4-inch PVC casing from 181 feet bgs to 361 feet bgs. Ten 3/8" x 6" saw slots were completed from 342 feet to 360 feet bgs. The well was completed in October 2010 by Glazier Drilling license number WWC-655. No significant impacts have been noted.

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 Wolverine, Canada Lynx, Fisher 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, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Loon, Harlequin Duck, Varied Thrush, Black-backed Woodpecker, Pacific Wren, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Bull Trout, and Blunt-leaved Pondweed.

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: This part of the Flathead National Forest Area is typically Andeptic Cryoboralfs, sandy till substratum with a moderately high to high capacity to transmit water. 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.*

Determination: No impact.

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: 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: 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 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 **XX** 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
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? None
- (c) Existing land uses? None
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? None
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? None
- (f) Demands for government services? None
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? None
- (h) Utilities? None
- (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 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:***

PART III. Conclusion

1. ***Preferred Alternative*** As approved

2. ***Comments and Responses*** None

3. ***Finding:***
*Yes*___ *No* **XX** *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: Water Resource Specialist

Date: February 26, 2015