

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:* Christopher and Barbara Erler, 1621 25th Avenue N, Lethbridge AB T1H4N8 CANADA
2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 76LJ 30070794
3. *Water source name:* Whitefish Lake
4. *Location affected by project:* NE¹/₄NE¹/₄NW¹/₄ and NE¹/₄NE¹/₄NW¹/₄ of Section 10, Township 31N, 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.

The applicant proposes to divert water from Whitefish Lake, by means of a pump, from January 1 through December 31 at 15 GPM (0.03 CFS) up to 1.63 AF, from a point in the NE¹/₄NE¹/₄NW¹/₄ of Section 10, Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County for domestic use from January 1 through December 31 and domestic lawn and garden use on 0.25 acres from April 15 through October 15. The place of use is generally located on Tract 1 COS 17123 in the NE¹/₄NE¹/₄NW¹/₄ and NE¹/₄NE¹/₄NW¹/₄ of Section 10, Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County and approximately 4 miles northwest of Whitefish.

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: Whitefish Lake is not identified by DFWP as being a chronically or periodically dewatered stream.

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: Whitefish Lake, in the reporting cycle 2014, was conditioned as minor-moderate impairment. Aquatic life impairment is associated with management decisions, primarily the introduction of mysis shrimp. Sedimentation increase appears to be associated in part with logging and road building. Fish consumption advisory exists for mercury and PCBs. Drinking water quality from this source should be checked. No impacts.

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 impacts

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: Water will be pumped from Whitefish Lake via a submersible pump off shore of a 35 foot shared easement through Lot 50 in the Rest Haven subdivision. The system will consist of a pressure tank, pressure switch controller and a Franklin Series FPS 4400 4" Tri-Seal 15 GPM, 1 hp pump. The 1 1/4" PVC water line will run a horizontal distance of approximately 500 feet. Outdoor sprinklers will deliver water for domestic lawn and garden irrigation. Total dynamic head was calculated at 150 feet. Pump curve and specifications were included in the application.

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, Canada Lynx, Fisher, Grizzly Bear, Pileated Woodpecker, Common Loon, Northern Alligator Lizard, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Pygmy Whitefish, Bull Trout, Sheathed Slug, Crested Shieldfern, Creeping Sedge, Giant Helleborine, Slender Cottongrass and A. Lichen. 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: This area in the Flathead National Forest is primarily made-up of rock outcrop, structural breaklands.

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: Some natural vegetation will be replaced with footprints of building and drive.

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.

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

Determination: Uses appear to be in compliance except for the DEQ requirement of a well drilled to a depth of 25 feet for domestic use.

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___ NoXXX 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? To be assessed
- (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? To be brought to property
- (i) Transportation? No impact
- (j) Safety? No impact

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None

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

Secondary Impacts No impacts

Cumulative Impacts No impacts

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: Domestic use is reasonable

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative

2. Comments and Responses

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: Personal real property

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

Name: Kathy Olsen

Title: Water Resource Specialist

Date: March 30, 2015