

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:* Sky Ranch Water Association, PO Box 1633, Kalispell MT 59901
2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Use Permit 76LJ 30064209
3. *Water source name:* Groundwater Wells
4. *Location affected by project:* Sky Ranch Subdivision; SE4SW, NW4SE4, SW4SE4, and the W2SE4SE4 Section 7 all in Township 27N, Range 20W, 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 the Flathead Valley’s deep alluvial aquifer at, by means of two groundwater wells with depths of 448 feet and 420 feet, from January 1 through December 31 at 202 GPM up to 68.25 AF, from points in the SE4NW4NE4 and NE4SW4NE4 in Section 7, Township 27N, Range 20W, for multiple Domestic use from January 1 through December 31 and Lawn and Garden irrigation on 10.5 acres from April 15 through October 15. The place of use is in the Sky Ranch Subdivision (42 lots) and is generally located NW4NE4, SW4NE4, NW4SE4, SW4SE4, NE4NE4 and the SE4NE4 of Section 7, Township 27N, Range 20W, and is approximately 7 miles southeast of Kalispell.

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

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

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: N/A – groundwater wells

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: N/A

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.

The proposed means of diversion are two wells constructed by Western Water Works (MT License #WWC-521 – No Longer Active) in the deep alluvial aquifer to depths of 448 feet (Well #1 located between lot 7 and 8) and 420 feet (Well #2 located on lot 10) with static water at 10.0 feet btoc on Well #1 and 0.5 feet btoc on Well #2. Wells were completed in 1996.

Pumping of this well will likely reduce water in the surface sources of the Flathead River and Flathead Lake sometime in the future.

Determination: Aquifer properties shows adequate water supply in the Flathead deep alluvial aquifer. Through the Provisional Permit process, it has been determined that adjacent surface source senior appropriators of these surface sources will not be adversely affected.

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 means of diversion are two wells constructed by Western Water Works (MT License #WWC-521 – No Longer Active) in the deep alluvial aquifer to depths of 448 feet (Well #1 located between lot 7 and 8) and 420 feet (Well #2 located on lot 10) with static water at 6.0 feet below top of casing on Well #1 and 0.5 feet below top of casing on Well #2 at time of aquifer testing. These production wells are 903 feet apart, Well #1 located between lot 7 and 8 and Well #2 is located on lot 10 within the subdivision, and were completed in 1996. This public water supply system was designed by Birk Engineering and will be regulated by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). By design, the two wells will be pumped alternately. A Grundfos Model 150S200-9 20.0 hp submersible pump will occupy Well #1 and a Grundfos Model 60S50-7 7.0 hp submersible will occupy Well #2. These pumps are rated at a capacity of 160 GPM at approximately 400 feet of total dynamic head in Well #1 and 42 GPM at approximately 300 feet of total dynamic head in Well #2. A pump control house containing 4 X-Troll pressure tanks is located between Lots 17 and 18. Water is distributed in 3” PVC lines to individual 3/4” service connections. Pump curve and system specifications were included in the application. Pump curve and system 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.”

The Montana Natural Heritage Program’s website was used 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. The following animals were identified on that list located regionally: Great Blue Heron, Brown Creeper, Pileated Woodpecker, Cassin’s Finch, Common Tern, Trout, Pygmy Whitefish, Bull Trout, Lake Trout, Bristly Sedge, Guadalupe Water-nymph and Columbia Water-meal.

Determination: 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.

There appears to be a freshwater pond to the west of the subdivision with an emerging freshwater wetland surrounding it.

Determination: Applicant will need to contact the Corps of Engineers for further regulation on the emerging wetland that may impact Lots 31, 32, 33,34 and 37 of the subdivision.

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.

The majority of soils in this area are Somers silty clay loam (Sg and Sd) that occurs in 0 to 3 percent slopes of moderately well-drained soils that is classified as nonsaline to very slightly saline; Kalispell loam (Kr), moderately deep over sand, 3 to 7 percent slopes Tuffit-Somers silty clay loams (Tf), 0 to 5 percent slopes.

Determination: No impact to soil quality or alteration of soil stability expected.

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. Development should reduce chance 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 impacts are anticipated.

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: N/A – 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 were identified in this EA.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Determination: This subdivision appears to be in compliance with regulations of the Flathead County Planning Office.

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 expected.

HUMAN HEALTH - Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.

Determination: No impact expected.

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? None identified.
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? Increase in tax revenues
- (c) Existing land uses? Irrigation to residential
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? None
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? Standard growth impacts
- (f) Demands for government services? Developmental/growth impacts
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? None identified
- (h) Utilities? Greater demands for electricity and natural gas
- (i) Transportation? Not significant
- (j) Safety? Not significant
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None identified

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

Secondary Impacts None expected

Cumulative Impacts None expected

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:*

PART III. Conclusion

1. *Preferred Alternative* Complete project as permitted

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: Those impacts have been regulated through this agency and other agencies

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

Name: Marc Pitman

Title: Regional Engineer

Date: March 27, 2015