EA Form R 1/2007

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:

Becky Noffsinger
15960 US 2 East
Essex, MT 59916

2. **Type of action:** Permit to Appropriate Water 76I 30104283

3. **Water source name:** Groundwater

4. **Location affected by project:** W2NESW Section 24, Township 29N, Range 15W, Flathead County.

5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:

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 22 GPM up to 1.86 acre-feet per year. The proposed use is for multiple domestic and stock (4 horses) use from January 1 to December 31, lawn and garden irrigation April 1-October 31 and for a shower house for hunters October 15-November 30. A total of 0.30 acres will be irrigated.

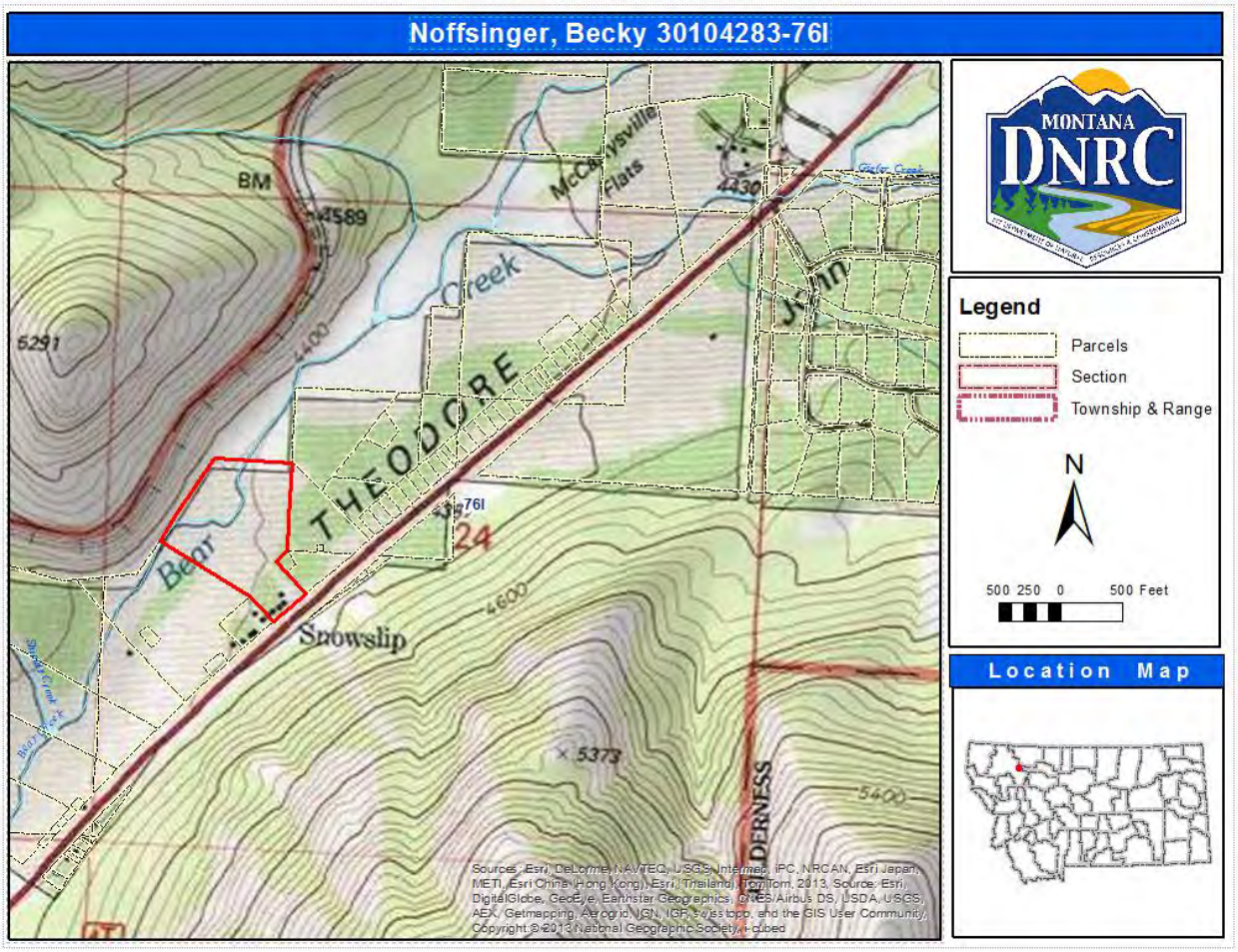
6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:
(include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

-U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Montana Natural Heritage Program: Endangered, Threatened Species and Species of Special Concern, Wetland Mapper program
-Montana Department of Fish Wildlife & Parks (DFWP); Dewatered Stream Information
-Montana Department of Environmental Quality's (MDEQ) Clean Water Act Information and PWS Drinking Water Watch databases
-U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS); web soil survey
-Montana Historical Society

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.

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.

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 of 22 GPM. The well is 32 feet deep. Impacts to adjacent surface waters are not anticipated.

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: This well has already been drilled. 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."*

The Montana Natural Heritage Program and DFWP websites were reviewed 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.

According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program in Township 29N, Range 15W there is three plant species of concern: Stalk-leaved Monkeyfower (Mimulus ampliatus), Greville's dicranella moss (Dicranella grevilleana), and Fringed Chocolate Chip Lichen (Solorina spongiosa).

Thirteen species of concern exist: Cordilleran Forestfly (Zapada cordillera), Bull Trout (Salvelinus confluentus), Westslope Cuthroat Trout (Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi), Wolverine (Gulo gulo), Fisher (Martes pennanti), Canada Lynx (Lynx canadensis), Grizzly Bear (Ursus arctos), Northern Goshawk (Accipiter gentilis), Brown Creeper (Certhia americana), Harlequin Duck (Histrionicus histrionicus), Varied Thrush (Ixoreus naevius), Pileated Woodpecker (Dryocopus pileatus), and Pacific Wren (Troglodytes pacificus). The source of water is groundwater; enough water will exist in surface sources for fish and macroinvertebrate species. This land has been developed for several years, any impacts to sensitive mammal species most likely has already occurred.

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.*

Determination: Not applicable, project does not involve wetlands or critical riparian habitats

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: According to soil survey data provided by the NRCS, soil within the place of use consists mostly of Fluvents and till, which are quick to drain. Soils within the place of use are not susceptible to saline seep. No degradation of soil quality shall occur.

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: The land use will not change so no impact is anticipated.

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

Determination: Adverse air quality impacts from increased air pollutants are not expected as a result of this project. No air pollutants were identified as resulting from the applicants proposed use of groundwater.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project.*

Determination: N/A, project is not located on state or federal land.

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: All impacts to land, water and energy have been identified and no further impacts are anticipated.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Determination: The project is consistent with planned land 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: The well is drilled on private property. The proposed project will not inhibit, alter or impair access to present recreational opportunities in the area. The project is not expected to create any significant pollution, noise, or traffic congestion in the area that may alter the quality of recreational opportunities. The proposed place of use and diversion do not exist on land designated as wilderness.

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

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 proposed

2 ***Comments and Responses:*** None

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: No significant impacts have been identified; therefore, no EIS is necessary.

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

Name: Melissa Brickl
Title: Hydrologist/Water Resources Specialist
Date: November 24, 2015