

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:

Phil and Adele Taylor
1545 MT Highway 41
Dillon, MT 59725-8258

2. Type of action: Application to Change Water Right 41B 30160682

3. Water source name: Beaverhead River

4. Location affected by project:

SENESE, SENE, and NENESE of Section (S) 7 and NWNW, SWNW, NWNWSW of S8, Township (T) 7 South (S), Range (R) 8 West (W), Beaverhead 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.

The Applicant proposes to change the point of diversion (POD) and the place of use (POU) of irrigation Statement of Claim No. 41B 88737-00. The proposed new POD is approximately 2 miles downstream and northeast of the current POD. The proposed POD is located in the SENESE of S7 T7S R8W Beaverhead County and will consist of a 24-inch screened headgate on the Beaverhead River. Diverted water will flow 25 feet through a pipe into an existing pond before being pumped into the pipeline system via an electric 50 horsepower (HP) pump. The pond and associated volume are associated with Groundwater Certificate 41B 107899-00 and will serve as a flow-through system to convey water to the pump but will not contribute to irrigation volume. The proposed 29-acre POU is located in the SENESE, SENE, and NENESE of S7 T7S R8W and the NWNW, SWNW, NWNWSW of S8 T7S R8W in Beaverhead County. The proposed POU is owned by the McCollum Family Trust and the Applicant included a signed purchase agreement stating that upon the approval of this change application the water right would be sold to the McCollum Family Trust.

Applicant proposes to use 1.33 CFS up to 55.9 AF diverted volume and up to 44.8 AF consumed volume. The historical diverted volume under the water right proposed for change was 243.8 AF and the historical consumed volume was 45.7 AF.

The proposed change is to add supplemental water to an existing irrigated field. The proposed place of use has been irrigated since before 1979 and includes the use of irrigation shares from the Clark Canyon Water Supply Company. No additional irrigated acreage is proposed, and no new diversion or conveyance infrastructure is proposed.

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

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: No impact. The Beaverhead River is identified by MT DFWP as chronically dewatered. The proposed action will divert and consume less water than the historical use, therefore no adverse impact is expected.

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: No impact. The Beaverhead River is identified by MT DEQ as impaired. The proposed project will divert and consume less water than the existing use for the same purpose on land already irrigated for agricultural purposes, therefore no adverse impact is expected.

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 impact. The proposed project does not involve groundwater.

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: No impact. The proposed project will utilize existing diversion works, therefore no adverse impacts are expected.

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: No impact. The proposed project does not involve any change to land use or any additional diversion structures on the source. The proposed irrigation water will be supplemental to the existing irrigation on the proposed place of use, utilize the existing diversion, and does not involve an increase in the amount of water diverted from the source of supply. No impact is expected to any wildlife.

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 impact. The proposed project does not involve wetlands.

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

Determination: No impact. The proposed project will utilize an existing pond but only for flow-through purposes – no increase in capacity or storage is proposed for the 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: No impact. The proposed project does not involve any change in use to the proposed place of use, therefore no changes to soils are 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. The proposed project area is already irrigated for agricultural use, and no change to the current use is expected.

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. The proposed project is not expected impact air quality.

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. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.

Determination: No impact. The proposed project does not involve 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 impact.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Determination: No impact.

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. The proposed project is on private land.

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

Determination: No impact. The proposed project is on private land.

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 expected
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? None expected
- (c) Existing land uses? None expected
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? None expected
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? None expected
- (f) Demands for government services? None expected

(g) Industrial and commercial activity? None expected

(h) Utilities? None expected

(i) Transportation? None expected

(j) Safety? None expected

(k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None expected

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:* No mitigation or stipulations are necessary.

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:* No reasonable alternatives are available.

PART III. Conclusion

1. *Preferred Alternative* No preferred alternatives identified

2. *Comments and Responses* None at this time

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:

An Environmental Assessment is the appropriate level of analysis because no significant adverse impacts were identified for the proposed project.

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

Russ Gates
Hydrologist/Water Resource Specialist
12/12/2025