

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:**
Town of Stevensville
206 Buck St
Stevensville, MT 59870-2021
- 2. Type of action:** Change Application 76H 30170801
- 3. Water source name:** Groundwater
- 4. Location affected by project:** Sections 23, 26, 27, 34, and 35, Township 9 North, Range 20 West, Ravalli County.
- 5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:** The Applicant proposes to add two existing wells as points of diversion for Provisional Permit 76H 89376-00 which provides municipal water for the Town of Stevensville. The place of use will be expanded from the W2 Section 26 and the E2 Section 27 in Township 9 North, Range 20 West to include all of Section 26, and portions of Sections 23, 27, 34, and 35.
The DNRC shall issue a change authorization if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-402 MCA are met.
- 6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:**
Montana Natural Heritage Program Species of Concern Report
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory

Part II. Environmental Review

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.

N/A – Groundwater application

Determination: No significant impact

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.

N/A – Groundwater application

Determination: No significant impact

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 change is to add new groundwater wells as points of diversion to

The proposed change is to add more wells as points of diversion and enlarge the place of use of Provisional Permit 76H 89376-00. No increase in the permitted volume will occur. No increase in depletions to the Bitterroot River is anticipated as a result of this change, nor any alteration in the location and timing of depletions.

Determination: No significant impact

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.

The diversion works already exist. No new construction will occur.

Determination: No significant impacts.

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 website was reviewed to determine if there are any “threatened” or “endangered” fish, wildlife, plants, or aquatic species that could potentially be impacted by this project. “Species of special concern” were also included in this search.

According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program, 18 animal species of concern and 4 plant species of concern may be found in the area of potential impact. Of these, 2 species are listed as threatened by the USFWS in this area: the Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) and the Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*).

Animal species of concern include:

Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)
Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*)
Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*)
Cassin's Finch (*Haemorhous cassinii*)
Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)
Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)
Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*)
Hooked Snowfly (*Isocapnia crinita*)
Lewis's Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)
Little Brown Myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*)
Long-billed Curlew (*Numenius americanus*)
Long-eared Myotis (*Myotis evotis*)
Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*)
Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)
Silver-haired Bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*)
Townsend's Big-eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)
Western Bumble Bee (*Bombus occidentalis*)
Western Toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*)
Westslope Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus lewisi*)

Plant species of concern include:

Columbia Water-meal (*Wolffia columbiana*)
Pointed Broom Sedge (*Carex scoparia*)
Shining Flatsedge (*Cyperus bipartitus*)
Western Pearl-flower (*Heterocodon rariflorum*)

The DRNC’s Water Science Bureau has determined that no change in amount, timing, or location of depletions will occur in the Bitterroot River as a result of this change. While the enlargement of the place of use of the subject water right is to allow future development, this change is not for any specific development. Future developments should be evaluated based on their own specific impacts.

Determination: No significant 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.

N/A – No wetlands are involved in this change.

Determination: No significant impact.

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

Determination: N/A – This project does not involve ponds.

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.

No new construction or development is proposed to occur under this specific change. No change to the soils is expected.

Determination: No significant 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.

No new construction or development is proposed to occur under this specific change. No spread of noxious weeds will occur.

Determination: No significant impact

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

No negative effects to air quality are expected as a result of this proposal.

Determination: No significant 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. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located 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.*

No additional impacts to land, water, or energy are anticipated.

Determination: No significant impact

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

This project does not violate any known locally adopted environmental plans or regulations.

Determination: No significant 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.*

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.

Determination: No significant impact

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

No impacts on human health are anticipated as a result of this project.

Determination: No significant 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 significant 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:* None identified

PART III. Conclusion

1. *Preferred Alternative*

Issue a water use permit if the Applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-402 MCA are met.

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 environmental impacts were identified as a result of the EA.

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

Name: Benjamin Thomas

Title: Water Conservation Specialist

Date: 3/9/2026