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:

WEST GLACIER ASSETS LLC
PO BOX 215
WEST GLACIER MT 59936-0215

2. TYPE OF ACTION:

Groundwater Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit No. 76LJ 30160349

3. WATER SOURCE NAME:

Groundwater

4. LOCATION AFFECTED BY PROJECT:

NESE of Section 11 and NWSW of Section 12, Township 31N, Range 19W, Flathead County, Montana.

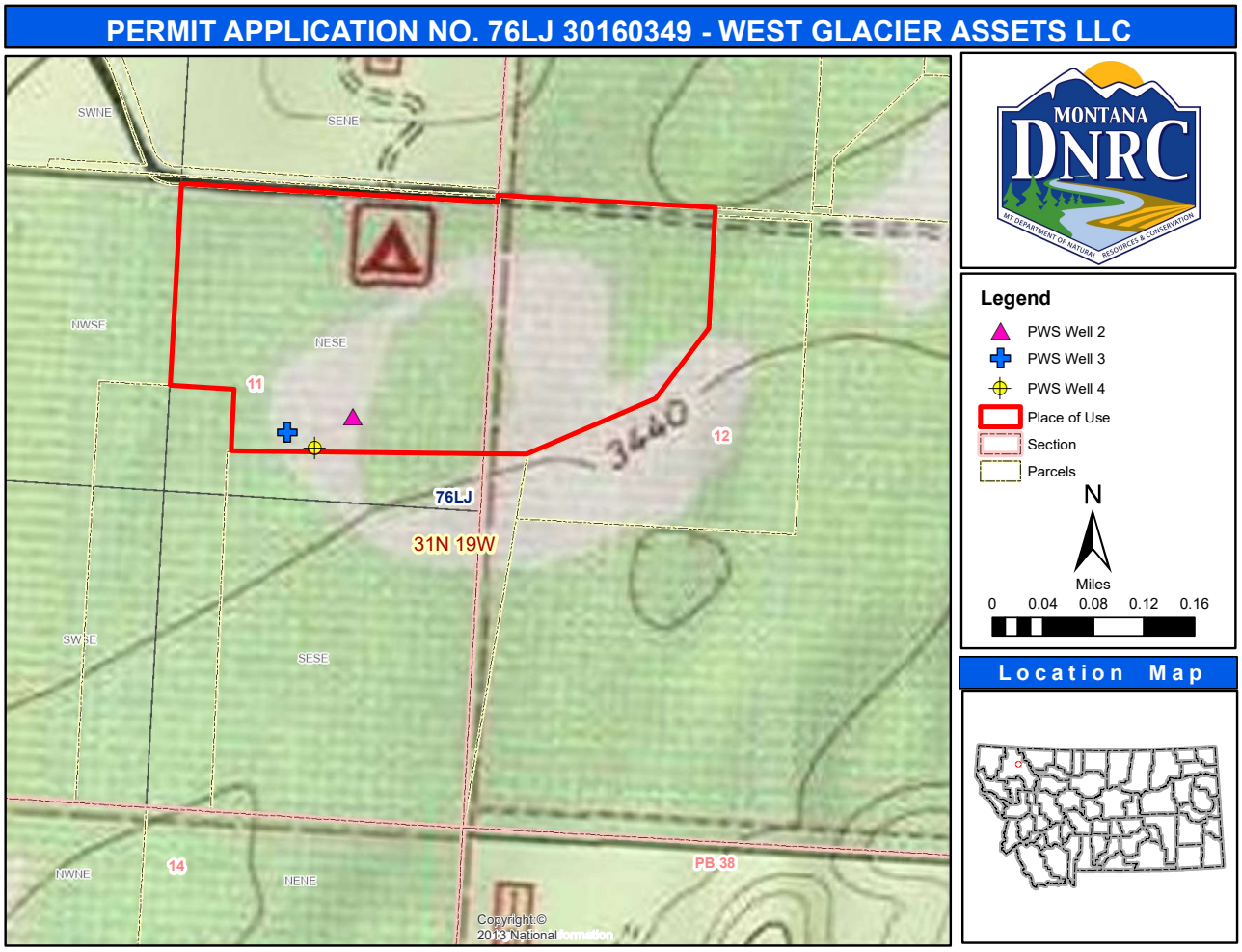

Figure 1. Map of the proposed place of use and point of diversion.

5. NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF THE PROPSED PROJECT, PURPOSE, ACTION TO BE TAKEN, AND BENEFITS:

The Applicant proposes to divert up to 32.59 AF of groundwater volume annually at a flow rate of 137.8 GPM by means of three wells from January 1 – December 31 for commercial use and from April 25 – October 5 for lawn and garden irrigation. The Applicant proposes to use volumes of up to 13.49 AF/year to supply the commercial uses and up to 19.10 AF/year to irrigate 8.0 acres of lawn and garden areas associated with the West Glacier KOA's PWS system. The proposed appropriation will consume 14.72 AF/year; 1.35 AF/year will be consumed by the commercial uses (equal to 10-percent of the requested 13.49 AF/year), while 13.37 AF/year will be consumed by lawn and garden irrigation (equal to 70-percent of the requested 19.10 AF/year).

The three wells, referred to as PWS 2 (GWIC ID: 87707; Depth: 200 feet), PWS 3 (GWIC ID: 224823; Depth: 210 feet), and PWS 4 (GWIC ID: 276379; Depth: 217 feet), will divert water at flow rates of 35.0 GPM, 62.1 GPM, and 48.4 GPM, respectively. While the total combined flow rate capacity of the three wells is 145.5 GPM, the Applicant has stated they will apply system controls preventing the wells from exceeding a diverted flow rate of 137.8 GPM when operating the wells simultaneously. The centroid of the three proposed wells is approximately 4,700 feet and 6,800 feet east southeast of Halfmoon Lake and Lake Five, respectively.

The three PODs are in the SENESE (PWS 2) and SWNESE (PWS 3 and 4) of Section 11, Township 31N, Range 19W, Flathead County, Montana (Figure 1). The proposed places of use are in the NESE of Section 11 and the NWSW of Section 12, Township 31N, Range 19W, Flathead County, Montana (Figure 1).

The PODs are in Water Right Basin No. 76LJ (the Flathead River, to and including Flathead Lake), in an area that is not subject to water right basin closures or controlled groundwater area restrictions.).

The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if the applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

6. AGENCIES CONSULTED DURING PREPARATION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS): National Wetlands Inventory Wetlands Mapper
- Montana Natural Heritage Program: Endangered, Threatened Species, and Species of Special Concern
- Montana Department of Fish Wildlife & Parks (DFWP): Dewatered Stream Information
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ): Clean Water Act Information Center
- U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS): Web Soil Survey

Part II. Environmental Review

1. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CHECKLIST:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1 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.*

The Applicant's diversion of groundwater will deplete Lake Five and Halfmoon Lake, which are hydraulically connected to the source aquifer. Neither Lake Five nor Halfmoon Lake are identified in the MTDFWP list of chronically or periodically dewatered waterbodies.

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.*

The MDEQ Clean Water Act Information Center's 2020 Water Quality Information database was consulted to assess the potential for the proposed groundwater pumping to affect water quality of Lake Five and Halfmoon Lake. The water quality of Lake Five and Halfmoon Lake has not been assessed by MDEQ through the most recently published assessment cycle (2020). It is not anticipated that the depletions to surface water of 6.0 GPM to Halfmoon Lake and 3.1 GPM to Lake Five will significantly affect water quality in these hydraulically connected surface water sources.

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 three proposed PWS wells, PWS 2, PWS 3, and PWS 4 are completed to 198.0-, 210.0-, and 217.0-feet below ground surface (BGS), respectively, in the local basin-fill aquifer consisting of sand and gravel lenses underlying or within deposits of glacial till and fine-grained glacial-lake sediments.

The Applicant performed three aquifer tests in support of this application:

i. A 24.0-hour constant-rate aquifer test was conducted on well PWS 3 (GWIC ID: 224823) at an average flow rate of 62.1 GPM;
    a. Wells PWS 4 (GWIC ID: 276379) and PWS 2 (GWIC ID: 87707) were used as observation wells for this aquifer test.

ii. A 25.3-hour constant-rate aquifer test was conducted on well PWS 4 (GWIC ID: 276379) at an average flow rate of 48.4 GPM; and,

iii. A 24.0-hour constant-rate aquifer test was conducted on well PWS 2 (GWIC ID: 87707) at an average flow rate of 35.0 GPM.

The Department determined the physically available volume of water in the source aquifer using the aquifer properties derived from the aquifer test conducted on well PWS 3 (using wells PWS 4 and PWS 2 as observation wells). The 25.3-hour and 24.0-hour constant-rate aquifer tests on wells PWS 4 and PWS 2 were conducted in lieu of 8.0-hour yield and drawdown tests. The total requested flow rate of 137.8 GPM could not be obtained from a single well, so the Applicant demonstrated through the three constant-rate aquifer tests that the three production wells can produce the total requested flow rate in combination, as allowed by ARM 36.12.121(3)(b).

Surface water depletion resulting from the Applicant's proposed wells pumping from the source aquifer would primarily occur from propagation of drawdown through the source aquifer to Halfmoon Lake and Lake Five. The Department conducted physical and legal availability analyses for aquifer and the hydraulically connected surface water sources and found that water is both physically and legally available in all three sources.

Determination: No significant impact.

1.2 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 West Glacier KOA's PWS system consists of:

i. PWS 2 (GWIC ID: 87707; drilled to 200.0 feet BGS and completed to a depth of 198.0 feet BGS by Billmayer Drilling (WWC-335) on April 16, 1984 in the local alluvial aquifer. The well is perforated between 195.0 and 198.0 feet BGS);
    a. Equipped with a 3.0-HP submersible pump of unknown make and model controlled by a Franklin Electric Constant Pressure Controller SubDrive 300 VFD modified to allow up to 80

Hertz instead of typical 60 Hertz. This pump is limited to 35.0 GPM per DEQ information, which was confirmed through the pump test.

b. Maximum diversion rate: 35.0 GPM.

ii. PWS 3 (GWIC ID: 224823; drilled and completed to a depth of 210.0 feet BGS by Billmayer Drilling (WWC-335) on May 5, 2006 in the local alluvial aquifer. The well is completed with an open bottom.)

c. Equipped with a 5.0-HP Goulds 55GS50 submersible pump controlled by a Franklin Electric Constant Pressure Controller SubDrive 300 VFD modified to allow up to 80 Hertz instead of typical 60 Hertz.

d. Maximum diversion rate: 62.1 GPM.

iii. PWS 4 (GWIC ID: 276379; drilled and completed to a depth of 217.0 feet BGS by Billmayer Drilling (WWC-335) on October 28, 2013 in the local alluvial aquifer. The well is completed with an open bottom.)

e. Equipped with a 5.0-HP Goulds 55GS50 submersible pump controlled by a Franklin Electric Constant Pressure Controller SubDrive 300 VFD modified to allow up to 80 Hertz instead of typical 60 Hertz.

f. Maximum diversion rate: 48.4 GPM.

iv. Pump house containing pump controls, flow meters, and pressure tanks;

v. Two 2.0-inch volumetric flow meters, one meter for PWS 2 and 3, and one meter for PWS 4;

vi. Four Well-X-Trol WX-350 pressure tanks;

vii. Two-inch water mains associated with PWS 2 and 3, and 3.0-inch water mains associated with PWS 4; and,

viii. Assorted galvanized, PVC, and HDPE distribution piping and fittings.

The existing system is an approved and registered PWS regulated by the Montana DEQ (Water System Nos. MT0000882 and MT0004901) and the proposed expansion design and engineering will be reviewed and approved by the Montana DEQ prior to operation.

Based on the results of the aquifer tests conducted on wells PWS 2, PWS 3, and PWS 4, the positive remaining available water column values for the wells, the system design and specifications, and the Applicant's plan of operation, the Department finds that the diversion and conveyance system is adequate to supply the requested flow rate of 137.8 GPM and annual volume of 32.59 AF.

The Department determined that this project will not have any channel or riparian impacts, nor will it create barriers or dams on the potentially affected surface water sources.

Determination: No significant impact.

1.3 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, 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, aquatic species, or any "species of special concern" in the project area that could

be impacted by the proposed project. Seven animal and one plant species of concern (Table 1) were identified in the general vicinity of the project area. Of these species, the Grizzly Bear and the Wolverine are listed as threatened by the USFWS. This general area is already developed. It is not anticipated that any species of concern will be further impacted by the proposed project. This project will not create any barriers to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife.

Table 1. Species of Concern

Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name
Mammals	Fisher	*Pekania pennanti*
Mammals	Grizzly Bear*	*Ursus arctos*
Mammals	Wolverine*	*Gulo gulo*
Birds	Bobolink	*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*
Birds	Evening Grosbeak	*Coccothraustes vespertinus*
Birds	Pileated Woodpecker	*Dryocopus pileatus*
Invertebrates	Brush-tipped Emerald	*Somatochlora walshii*
Vascular Plants	Velvetleaf Huckleberry	*Vaccinium myrtilloides*

** Listed Threatened by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.*

Determination: No significant impact.

Wetlands and Ponds - *Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted. For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.*

Determination: N/A, project does not involve wetlands or ponds.

1.4 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 proposed commercial and lawn and garden uses are not anticipated to negatively impact the soil quality, stability, or moisture content. The soil types in the project area are Dystric Eutrochrepts, till substratum, and Dystric Eutrochrepts, till substratum, steep, both formed from till parent material. These soils have a high capacity to transmit water. Soils in this general area are not typically saline and thus not susceptible to saline seep.

Determination: No significant impact.

1.5 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.*

The majority of the project site has already been developed as a commercial campground facility. Any existing native vegetation has likely already been disturbed. It is not anticipated that issuance of a water use permit will contribute to the establishment or spread of noxious weeds in the project area. Noxious weed prevention and control will be the responsibility of the landowners, who must follow local noxious weed regulations.

Determination: No significant impact.

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

There will be no impact to air quality associated with issuance of the proposed permit for beneficial use of groundwater.

Determination: No significant impact.

1.7 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.

1.8 DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY - *Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water, and energy not already addressed.*

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

Determination: No significant impact.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

The land uses associated with this project are consistent with planned land uses.

Determination: No significant impact.

1.10 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.

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

This proposed use will not adversely impact human health.

Determination: No significant impact.

1.12 PRIVATE PROPERTY - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights. If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights*.

This project will not result in government regulatory impacts on private property rights.

Determination: No impact.

1.13 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:

The only alternative to the proposed action would be the no action alternative. The no action alternative would not authorize the diversion of groundwater at this location.

Part III. Conclusion

1. PREFFERED ALTERNATIVE:

Issue a water use permit if the Applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

2. COMMENTS AND RESPONSES:

None.

3. FINDING:

Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? **___Yes _X_No**

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

No significant impacts related to the proposed project have been identified.

4. NAME OF PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE FOR PREPARATION OF EA:

Name: Travis Wilson
Title: Water Resource Specialist
Date: July 30, 2025