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:

BIG MOUNTAIN WATER COMPANY
PO BOX 1400
WHITEFISH, MT 59937

2. Type of action:

Beneficial Water Use Permit 76LJ 30164348

3. Water source name:

Groundwater

4. Location affected by project:

(1) W ½ of Section 2, in Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County, Montana
(2) W ½ of the SE ¼ of Section 2, in Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County, Montana
(3) NW ¼ of the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 2, in Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County, Montana
(4) E ½ of the NE ¼ of Section 3, in Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County, Montana

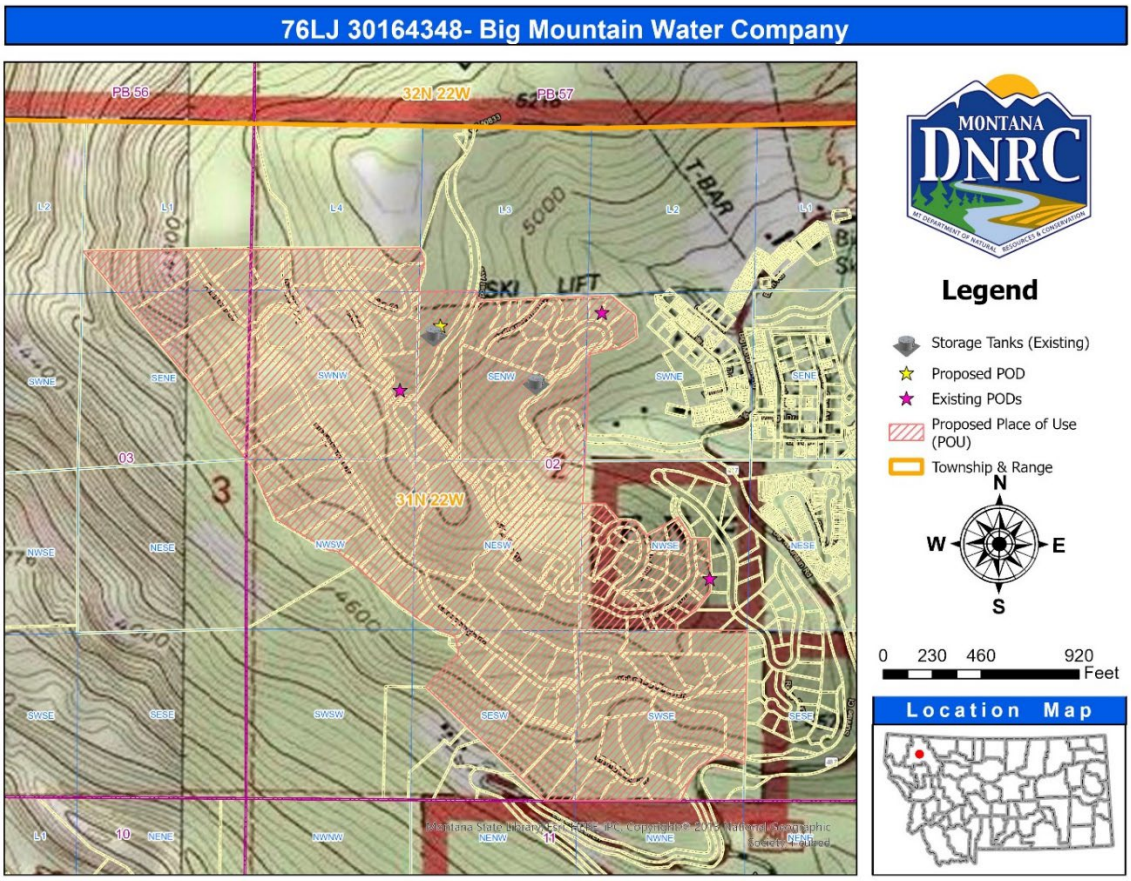

Figure 1. Map of the proposed project

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

The Applicant proposes to supplement their existing permitted multiple domestic and lawn & garden purposes from January 1st through December 31st of every year up to zero AF for multiple domestic and lawn & garden purposes. This accounts for annual domestic use up to zero AF and 4/15 – 10/15 lawn & garden use up to zero AF. The place of use is generally located in (1) W ½ of Section 2, in Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County, Montana, (2) W ½ of the SE ¼ of Section 2, in Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County, Montana, (3) NW ¼ of the SE ¼ of the NE ¼ of Section 2, in Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County, Montana, (4) E ½ of the NE ¼ of Section 3, in Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County, Montana.

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 (MTDFWP): Dewatered Stream Information
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MTDEQ): Clean Water Act Information Center
- U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS): Web Soil Survey

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.*

Although the source of water for this proposed beneficial water use permit is groundwater, the inherent link of groundwater to surface water implies that withdrawal of water for this project could ultimately affect water levels in Whitefish Lake. Whitefish Lake is part of the Whitefish River system, which is not listed as chronically or periodically dewatered by the Montana Department of Fish and Wildlife.

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.*

Whitefish Lake is classified as oligotrophic, meaning the waters are clear, cold, and biodiverse with low nutrients and high oxygen levels. In this assessment, Whitefish Lake was deemed fully supporting for primary contact water uses, agricultural, and aquatic life including mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls. The Lake was not assessed for drinking water.

There is no data supporting whether Whitefish Lake is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, according to the MDEQ Clean Water Act Information Center's 2020, 2018, or 2016 Water Quality Information, accessed June 27, 2025.

Whitefish Lake: MDEQ Clean Water Act Information Center's 2020 Water Quality Information report lists Whitefish Lake as:

i. Water Quality Category 5: Waters where one or more applicable beneficial uses have been assessed as being impaired or threatened, and a TMDL is required to address the factors causing the impairment or threat;

ii. Use Class A-1: Waters classified as suitable for drinking, culinary and food processing purposes after conventional treatment for removal of naturally present impurities;
iii. "Fully supporting" for: primary contact recreation, agriculture, and aquatic life including mercury and polychlorinated biphenyls;
iv. "Not assessed" for: drinking water

The diversion of water for multiple domestic use and lawn & garden irrigation is not anticipated to significantly affect water quality in these 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.*

Although the source of water for this proposed beneficial water use permit is groundwater, the inherent link of groundwater to surface water implies that withdrawal of water for this project could ultimately affect water levels in Whitefish Lake. The proposed use includes year-round and seasonal consumed volumes.

For purposes of modeling depletions from drawdown, a recommended aquifer Transmissivity (T) of 194.0 ft² per day was derived from the Moench (1984) solution applied to the pumping well (GWIC ID 316598). The recommended Aquifer bulk Storativity value (S') of 6.0 x 10^{-4} was generated when the Agarwal (1980) method was applied in conjunction with the Moench (1984) solution for the pumping well.

As identified in **Table 1**, the derived aquifer T of 194.0 ft^2/day is reasonable when compared to other T values of the bedrock aquifer derived from nearby pumping test data. A T value equal to 194.0 ft^2/day is within the broad range of values that have been demonstrated through other aquifer tests conducted in the Belt Supergroup bedrock.

Table 1: Nearby Aquifer Tests. Note: T = Transmissivity.

Water Right No.	GWIC ID	Well Depth (ft)	Aquifer Test Analysis Solution	Distance from Applicant Well (miles)	Aquifer Test Length (hours)	Pumping Rate (gpm)	T (ft^2/day)	Storativity (-)
76LJ 30104499	284164	997	Cooper-Jacob (1946)	1.85	24	70	213	0.01
76LJ 30063777	88014	1,131	Moench (1984)	0.24	24	80	52.6	N/A
76LJ 30163288[1]	237308	640	Moench (1984)	62.9	72	270	1,200	$2.1x10^{-4}$
76LJ 30149715	253145	440	Dougherty-Babu (1984)	2.42	72	256	1,473	$4.7x10^{-4}$

[1]This test is not nearby the Production Well test but is included here to illustrate aquifer properties for a bedrock aquifer with similar lithology.

An evaluation of the remaining available water column in the Production Well was modeled using the Moench (1984) solution with a T = 194.0 ft^2/day and S' = 6.0 x 10^{-4}. Predicted theoretical drawdown for the Production Well was modeled for the period of diversion using the monthly pumping schedule identified in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Assumed monthly pumping schedule for the Production Well. Irrigated volume for July and August was proportioned to June and September, respectively, to not exceed 100 gpm in any month.

Month	IWR 80% Dry Year, Whitefish (in)	Irrigation Diverted Volume (AF)	Multiple Domestic Diverted Volume (AF)	Total Diverted Flow Rate (gpm)
January	0.0	0.0	6.15	45.0
February	0.0	0.0	5.56	40.6
March	0.0	0.0	6.15	45.0
April	0.3	0.0	5.95	48.3
May	2.1	0.6	6.15	74.6
June	4.0	4.0	5.95	99.4
July	3.9	7.6	6.15	99.6
August	3,9	7.5	6.15	99.4
September	2.7	7.4	5.95	81.5
October	0.2	5.2	6.15	46.1
November	0.0	0.1	5.95	43.5
December	0.0	0.0	6.15	45.0
Total	**17.2**	**32.6**	**72.4**	

As identified in **Table 3,** total drawdown is the sum of interference drawdown and predicted drawdown with well loss. Since one well is proposed no interference drawdown was calculated. Well loss is calculated by dividing the predicted theoretical maximum drawdown by a well efficiency value. Well efficiency is calculated by dividing the modeled maximum drawdown for the aquifer test by the maximum observed drawdown of the aquifer test. The aquifer adjacent to the proposed well would experience a predicted total drawdown of 145.6 ft at the end of July of the first year of pumping (**Figure 8**). The remaining available water column for the proposed well is 287.5 ft and is equal to the available drawdown above the bottom of the well minus total drawdown.

Table 3: Remaining available water column for the Production Well.

Drawdown Estimate	GWIC 316598
Total Depth at Bottom of Perforated Interval (feet)	740.0
Pre-Test Static Water Level (feet btc)	306.9
Available Drawdown Above Bottom of Well (feet)	433.1
Observed Drawdown of Aquifer Test (feet)	115.4

Modeled Drawdown Using Mean Aquifer Test Rate (feet)	51.7
Well Efficiency (%)	44.8
Predicted Theoretical Maximum Drawdown (feet)	87.8
Predicted Drawdown with Well Loss (feet)	145.6
Interference Drawdown (feet)	0.0
Total Drawdown (feet)	145.6
Remaining Available Water Column (ft)	**287.5**

The proposed Production Well (GWIC ID 316598) is completed to 720-feet below ground surface (bgs) in the Flathead Deep Aquifer.
A 72-hour aquifer test was conducted on the Production Well, GWIC ID 316598. Water levels during the aquifer test were collected using In-Situ Level Troll Model 700 dataloggers in the Production Well and Observation Wells (GWIC ID 88014 and 234814). GWIC ID 88014 is 1,270 ft east of the Production Well. GWIC ID 234814 is 650 ft southwest of the Production Well.

A Department analysis of Applicant supplied data from a 72-hour aquifer test performed at 100.0 GPM on the aforementioned well concluded that there is a sufficient supply of groundwater in the source aquifer to satisfy the proposed appropriation.

A physical and legal availability analysis of the hydraulically connected surface water sources (Whitefish Lake) concluded that there is a sufficient supply of water in those sources to satisfy existing legal demands and the anticipated depletions from groundwater pumping.

With respect to adverse effect from net depletion to surface water, Whitefish Lake is approximately 6,000 feet southwest of the proposed wells and is identified as being hydraulically connected to the source aquifer.

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 proposed appropriation includes an additional public water supply well that will be manifold into and serve the Sunrise Area Water System. The latter is within the Big Mountain Water Company (BMWC) Service Area and serves higher elevation residential users. At the current time, this includes 156 residential lots in the following subdivisions: Sunrise Ridge – Phases 3 & 4, Northern Lights, Northern Lights West – Phases 1 & 2, and Elk Highlands – Phases 1 & 2. Additionally, lots in the Northern Light West – Phase 3 and

Medicine Rock subdivisions were recently approved. There are no future plans to extend the system to serve other users as site topography and adjacent land ownership preclude expansion of the service area.

The Applicant specified the maximum flow rate that would be apportioned to each proposed well. All three wells would be pumped up to 280 GPM and a volume of 105 AF per year for multiple domestic and lawn & garden purposes.

Aquifer Test & Drawdown Modelling:

As identified in **Table 4,** total drawdown is the sum of interference drawdown and predicted drawdown with well loss. Well loss is calculated by dividing the predicted theoretical maximum drawdown by a well efficiency value. Well efficiency is calculated by dividing the modeled maximum drawdown for the aquifer test by the maximum observed drawdown of the aquifer test. The aquifer adjacent to the proposed well would experience a predicted total drawdown of 145.6 ft at the end of July of the first year of pumping (**Figure 8**). The remaining available water column for the proposed well is 287.5 ft and is equal to the available drawdown above the bottom of the well minus total drawdown.

Table 4: Remaining available water column for the Production Well.

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Well Efficiency (%)	44.8
Predicted Theoretical Maximum Drawdown (feet)	87.8
Predicted Drawdown with Well Loss (feet)	145.6
Interference Drawdown (feet)	0.0
Total Drawdown (feet)	145.6
Remaining Available Water Column (ft)	**287.5**

The pump and connection to the water system was designed by Carver Engineering and approved by DEQ. The well was pump tested for 72 hours at a flow rate of 100 GPM. A Goulds model 95L 15 pump with a 20 hp motor has been installed in the well. The well pump is set on three-inch drop pipe to a depth of 520 feet. Based on the hydraulic analysis completed by Carver Engineering, the well will deliver 99.5 GPM at a total dynamic head of 435.4 feet. This includes a pumping water level of 408 feet, and is based on the water level in the tank (elevation of 5,157 feet). As shown, the pump is capable or producing 100 GPM under the design conditions.

The Sunrise Are Water System is designed to supply a total of 154 single-family lots. The water system is a permitted public water supply under the regulation of the Montana DEQ (PWS ID MT000060). The distribution and storage system has designed by Carver Engineering in accordance with waterworks standards established by the State of Montana

DEQ. Water is pumped from the wells via three-inch drop pipe and is metered prior to entering the water system. Water from the wells is connected to the existing water system that is dominantly comprised of 6-, 8-, and 10-inch water main. A booster pump station is utilized to provide water to the lots associated with Northern Lights West, Phase 3. The water delivery system is expected to be well maintained with a delivery efficiency nearing 100 percent.

The Sunrise Area water system consists of three wells, a 300,000-gallon storage tank, supply lines from the wells to the system, and from the system to the tank. In total, the maximum rate of diversion will be 280 GPM from the three wells. The wells are designed to feed directly into the water system, but are controlled by the water level in the 300,000-gallon storage tank. The water system is designed to meet a peak demand and fire flows in excess of the 1,500 GPM. The storage tank is relied upon to ensure adequate water supply during periods of peak demand. Water from the wells is pumped directly into the water system of 6-, 8-, and 10-inch water mains to maintain the water level in the tank.

Water diversion is controlled by demand in the subdivision. A pressure transducer in the 300,000-gallon reservoir sends a 4-20 mA signal, proportional to the water level in the reservoir to remote telemetry units in the wells (BMWC 3, BMWC 5, and BMWC 6). The respective well pumps are started and stopped based on preset reservoir levels. When the water level in the reservoir falls to 19.0 feet the "pumps" start. When the water level rises to 21.8 feet the pumps shut off. A copy of the design report was provided to (and approved by) DEQ to address connection of well BMWC 6 to the water system.

The Department finds that the system is capable of supplying the requested flow rate of 280 GPM and volume of 105 AF. The project will not have effect on channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, and well construction.

Determination: No significant impact.

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, aquatic species, or any "species of special concern" in Sections 2 & 3 of Township 31N, Range 19W that could be impacted by the proposed project. 13 animal and four plant species of concern (Tables 1 and 2, respectively) were identified within Section 2, Township 31N, Range 22W. Of these species, the Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*), Wolverine (*gulo gulo*), Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), and Whitebark Pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) are listed as threatened by the USFWS. Additionally, the Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) and Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) have been identified as having critical habitat. 14 animal and three plant species of concern (Tables 3 and 4, respectively) were identified within Section 3,

Township 31N, Range 22W. Of these species, the Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*), Wolverine (*gulo gulo*), Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), and Whitebark Pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) are listed as threatened by the USFWS. Additionally, the Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) and Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) have been identified as having critical habitat. It is not anticipated that any species of concern will be further impacted by the proposed project.

Table 1. Animal Species of Concern in and around Section 2, Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County.

	Common Name	Scientific Name	U.S. FWS – Status under the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973
Mammals	Canada Lynx	*Lynx canadensis*	Listed Threatened (LT); Critical Habitat (CH)
	Fisher	*Pekania pennanti*	N/A
	Grizzly Bear	*Ursus arctos*	Listed Threatened (LT)
	Wolverine	*Gulo gulo*	Listed Threatened (LT)
Birds	Brown Creeper	*Certhia americana*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)
	Cassin's Finch	*Haemorhous cassinii*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA); Birds of Conservation Concern, Region 10
	Evening Grosbeak	*Coccothraustes vespertinus*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA); Birds of Conservation Concern, Region 10
	Pacific Wren	*Troglodytes pacificus*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)
	Pileated Woodpecker	*Drycopus pileatus*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)
	Varied Thrush	*Ixoreus naevius*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)
Reptiles	Northern Alligator Lizard	*Elgaria coerulea*	N/A
Fish	Bull trout	*Salvelinus confluentus*	Listed Threatened (LT); Critical Habitat (CH)
	Westslope Cutthroat Trout	*Oncorhynchus lewisi*	N/A

Table 2. Plant Species of Concern in and around Section 2, Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County.

	Common Name	Scientific Name	U.S. FWS – Status under the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973
Vascular Plants	Beck Water-marigold	*Bidens beckii*	N/A
	Dense-flower Rein Orchid	*Piperia elongata*	
	Floriferous Monkeyflower	*Mimulus floribundus*	N/A
	Whitebark Pine	*Pinus albicaulis*	Listed Threatened (LT)

Table 3. Animal Species of Concern in and around Section 3, Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County.			
	Common Name	**Scientific Name**	**U.S. FWS – Status under the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973**
Mammals	Canada Lynx	*Lynx canadensis*	Listed Threatened (LT); Critical Habitat (CH)
	Fisher	*Pekania pennanti*	N/A
	Grizzly Bear	*Ursus arctos*	Listed Threatened (LT)
	Wolverine	*Gulo gulo*	Listed Threatened (LT)
Birds	Brown Creeper	*Certhia americana*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)
	Cassin's Finch	*Haemorhous cassinii*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA); Birds of Conservation Concern, Region 10
	Evening Grosbeak	*Coccothraustes vespertinus*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA); Birds of Conservation Concern, Region 10
	Pacific Wren	*Troglodytes pacificus*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)
	Pileated Woodpecker	*Drycopus pileatus*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)
	Varied Thrush	*Ixoreus naevius*	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)
Reptiles	Northern Alligator Lizard	*Elgaria coerulea*	N/A
Fish	Bull trout	*Salvelinus confluentus*	Listed Threatened (LT); Critical Habitat (CH)
	Westslope Cutthroat Trout	*Oncorhynchus lewisi*	N/A
Invertebrates	Sheathed Slug	*Zacoleus idahoensis*	N/A

Table 4. Plant Species of Concern in and around Section 3, Township 31N, Range 22W, Flathead County.			
	Common Name	**Scientific Name**	**U.S. FWS – Status under the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973**
Vascular Plants	Beck Water-marigold	*Bidens beckii*	N/A
	Dense-flower Rein Orchid	*Piperia elongata*	
	Whitebark Pine	*Pinus albicaulis*	Listed Threatened (LT)

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.*

There are several wetlands in the immediate vicinity of the project location that would be minimally impacted. These include:

Freshwater Pond (Classification code: PABG)
System **Palustrine (P)**: The Palustrine System includes all nontidal wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses or lichens, and all such wetlands that occur in tidal areas where salinity due to ocean-derived salts is below 0.5 ppt. It also includes wetlands lacking such vegetation, but with all of the following four characteristics: (1) area less than 8 ha (20 acres); (2) active wave-formed or bedrock shoreline features lacking; (3) water depth in the deepest part of basin less than 2.5 m (8.2 ft) at low water; and (4) salinity due to ocean-derived salts less than 0.5 ppt.
Class **Aquatic Bed (AB)**: Includes wetlands and deepwater habitats dominated by plants that grow principally on or below the surface of the water for most of the growing season in most years.
Water Regime **Intermittently Exposed (G)**: Water covers the substrate throughout the year except in years of extreme drought.

Riverine habitat (Classification code: R4SBC)
System **Riverine (R)**: The Riverine System includes all wetlands and deepwater habitats contained within a channel, with two exceptions: (1) wetlands dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, emergent mosses, or lichens, and (2) habitats with water containing ocean-derived salts of 0.5 ppt or greater. A channel is an open conduit either naturally or artificially created which periodically or continuously contains moving water, or which forms a connecting link between two bodies of standing water.
Subsystem **Intermittent (4)**: This Subsystem includes channels that contain flowing water only part of the year. When the water is not flowing, it may remain in isolated pools or surface water may be absent.
Class **Streambed (SB)**: Includes all wetlands contained within the Intermittent Subsystem of the Riverine System and all channels of the Estuarine System or of the Tidal Subsystem of the Riverine System that are completely dewatered at low tide.
Water Regime **Seasonally Flooded (C)**: Surface water is present for extended periods especially early in the growing season, but is absent by the end of the growing season in most years. The water table after flooding ceases is variable, extending from saturated to the surface to a water table well below the ground surface.

Determination: No significant impact.

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

N/A: the proposed project does not include ponds.

Determination: No significant 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.*

Soils in the area are dominated by gravelly silt loam and rock outcrop complexes. Minus rock outcrop complexes, the soils are classified by Hydrologic Soil Groups C according to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) web soil survey. Rock outcrops are classified by Hydrologic Soil Group Percent slopes range from 20 to 90 percent slopes. The silt loam variations have a low-to-moderate capacity to transmit water whereas structural breaklands have a high capacity to transmit water. The parent materials of the soil groups are glacial till derived from metasedimentary rocks, silty till, metasedimentary rocks, and volcanic ash and colluvium derived from argillite, quartzite and/or calcareous siltstone.

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.*

The applicant is seeking a beneficial water right for multiple domestic and lawn & garden use. 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.

According to the Montana Natural Heritage (MNHP) Map Viewer, the land cover within the project area is dominated by forest & woodland systems (52%), human uses (31%), and recently disturbed or modified forest (10%). Wetland & riparian systems (5%), grassland systems (1%), and shrubland, steppe & savanna systems (1%) account for the remaining land cover types.

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.*

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

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.

NA – project is not located on State or Federal Lands

Determination: No significant impact.

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. No further impacts 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.*

The project is consistent with planned land uses. It shall be the landowners' responsibility to comply with all local county & city planning and zoning 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 land surrounding this segment of the Flathead River is managed by private property owners and the United State Forest Service (USFS). 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. While the proposed place of use exists in a controlled 602 area, the associated restrictions will not apply for beneficial surface water uses.

Determination: No significant impact.

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

This proposed use will not adversely impact human health.

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? This project may increase demand for government services.

(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:***

It is the responsibility of Big Mountain Water Company to mitigate any environmental risks in development and use of this property in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

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 appropriation of groundwater for multiple domestic and lawn & garden purposes.

PART III. Conclusion

1. ***Preferred Alternative***

   Authorize a water right change if the Applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 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 <u>why</u> the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

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

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

Name: Joseph Howerton
Title: Water Resources Specialist
Date: 06.29.2025