

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

The Applicant proposes to divert Flathead River water by means of a pump at 30.0 GPM up to 0.45 AF/year for domestic use from January 1 – December 31 and 0.63 AF/year for irrigation of 0.25 acres of lawn and garden from April 25 – October 5 (1.08 AF/year total).

The proposed POD is in the SENESE of Section 32, Township 31N, Range 19W, Flathead County, Montana (Figure 1). The proposed place of use is in Government Lot 6 in the SENESE of Section 32, Township 31N, Range 19W, Flathead County, Montana (Figure 1).

The POD is in Water Right Basin 76LJ (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 Flathead River is not listed as chronically or periodically dewatered on the Montana DFWP list of dewatering concern areas.

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.

Flathead River: MDEQ Clean Water Act Information Center's 2024 Water Quality Information report lists the Flathead River as:

- i. Water Quality Category 3: Waters for which there is insufficient data to assess the use support of any applicable beneficial use, so no use support determinations have been made;
- ii. Use Class B-1: Waters classified as suitable for drinking, culinary, and food processing purposes after conventional treatment; bathing, swimming and recreation; growth and propagation of salmonid fishes and associated aquatic life, waterfowl and furbearers; and agricultural and industrial water supply; and,
- iii. "Not assessed" for aquatic life, agricultural, drinking water, and primary contact recreation uses.

The diversion of water for domestic and lawn and garden irrigation uses is not anticipated to significantly affect water quality in this source.

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.

Determination: N/A, project does not involve groundwater.

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 Applicant proposes to divert Flathead River water at 30.0 GPM up to 0.45 AF/year for domestic use and up to 0.63 AF/year for irrigation of 0.25 acres of lawn and garden area (1.08 AF/year total) using a Franklin Electric model MF5060 submersible pump with a 3.0-horsepower motor. A pump housing cylinder comprised of a 10-foot-length of six-inch steel pipe with a capped bottom will be buried vertically to 8-feet below ground surface 20 feet from the river's edge in which the submersible pump will be installed.

A foot valve-equipped buried two-inch poly pipe connected at the base of the pump housing cylinder will extend into Flathead River below the frost line. Water will be drawn by the pump into the pump housing cylinder through the intake line. The pump will be installed on a pitless adapter below the frost line and will convey water through a 2-inch poly main supply line 495-feet from the pump housing cylinder to a buried 3,700-gallon storage tank. The pump will be controlled by a float switch in the storage tank. There will be two curb-stop shut off valves installed in the system, one between the intake and the pump housing cylinder and one between the pump housing cylinder and the storage tank. A Dole Valve will be installed in the main line prior to the storage tank to limit the flow to the requested 30.0 GPM flow rate. A flow meter will be installed between the Dole Valve and the storage tank. Water will be pumped from the storage tank to the domestic fixtures and hose-bib connections through a one-inch pipe by a Dab Diver variable frequency drive cistern pump.

The Applicant calculated a maximum TDH for their system of 330.65 feet based on:

- i. An elevation head of 55 feet;
- ii. An outlet pressure set at 60 PSI, which is equivalent to 138.6-feet of head; and,
- iii. Friction and fitting losses associated with the 495-feet of two-inch poly pipe, elbows, adapters, the flow meter, Dole Valve, etc. These head losses sum to 137.05 feet.

The Applicant provided the pump performance curve. At the maximum TDH of 330.65-feet, the pump performance curve demonstrates that the pump is capable of producing the requested 30.0 GPM

The installation of the pump housing cylinder and intake pipe is not anticipated to have any long-lasting channel or riparian impacts, nor will it create barriers or dams on the Flathead River. The Applicant must obtain all required permits from all relevant agencies prior to disturbing the streambed/bank and adjacent riparian areas for installation of the diversion and conveyance works.

Determination: Minimal impact; additional permits (such as a 310 permit) are likely required.

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. Nine animal and four plant species of concern (Table 1) were identified in the general vicinity of the project area. Of these species, the Grizzly Bear and the Bull Trout are listed as threatened by the USFWS. 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	<i>Pekania pennanti</i>
Mammals	Grizzly Bear	<i>Ursus arctos</i>
Mammals	Townsend's Big-eared Bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>
Mammals	Western Pygmy Shrew	<i>Sorex eximius</i>
Birds	Pacific Wren	<i>Troglodytes pacificus</i>
Birds	Pileated Woodpecker	<i>Dryocopus pileatus</i>
Fish	Bull Trout	<i>Salvelinus confluentus</i>
Fish	Westslope Cutthroat Trout	<i>Oncorhynchus lewisi</i>
Invertebrates	Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee	<i>Bombus suckleyi</i>
Vascular Plants	Sparrow's-egg Lady's-slipper	<i>Cypripedium passerinum</i>
Vascular Plants	English Sundew	<i>Drosera anglica</i>
Vascular Plants	Slender Cottongrass	<i>Eriophorum gracile</i>
Bryophytes	Meesia Moss	<i>Meesia uliginosa</i>

*Listed as "Threatened" by the USFWS.

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.

There are no ponds or wetlands within the proposed place of use. The point of diversion is within a riverine habitat directly adjacent to an area of forested/shrub wetland. It is not anticipated that the proposed pumping of water at this location will have significant impacts on the wetland resource.

The installation of the pump housing cylinder and intake pipe is not anticipated to have any long-lasting wetland impacts. The Applicant must obtain all required permits from all relevant agencies prior to disturbing the streambed/bank and adjacent riparian or wetland areas for installation of the diversion and conveyance works.

Determination: Minimal impact; additional permits (such as a 310 permit) are likely required.

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 domestic and lawn and garden uses are not anticipated to negatively impact the soil quality, stability, or moisture content. The soil type in the project area is Dystric Eutrochrepts, till substratum, formed from till parent material. This soil has a high capacity to transmit water. Soils in this general area are not typically saline and thus are not anticipated to be 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 development of the project site is already underway. 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 landowner, 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 surface water.

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.*

This project is 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.*

There are no 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 surface water at this location.

Part III. Conclusion

1. PREFERRED 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: November 26, 2025