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:

JOHN M MURPHY
13832 SIENA LOOP
LAKEWOOD RANCH, FL 34202-2442

2. TYPE OF ACTION:

Permit Registration for Groundwater Use Within the National Park Service Compact Area No. 76LJ 30171946

3. WATER SOURCE NAME:

Groundwater

4. LOCATION AFFECTED BY PROJECT:

NWSE Section 22, Township 32N, Range 20W, Flathead County, Montana.

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

This application is to obtain a water use permit for a well located within the Glacier National Park Compact Area. The Applicant proposes to divert groundwater at a rate of 25.0 gallons per minute (GPM) up to 3.55 acre-feet (AF) per year. The proposed appropriation is for lawn and garden for 1 acre from April 1-October 31, domestic use from January 1 – December 31, and stock use from April 1 to October 1, annually. The point of diversion and place of use is in the NESE of Section 22, Township 32N, Range 20W, Flathead County, Montana (Figure 1).

The project is in the Flathead River Basin (76LJ) 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 85-20-401 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
- U.S. National Park Service (NPS) Water Rights Branch

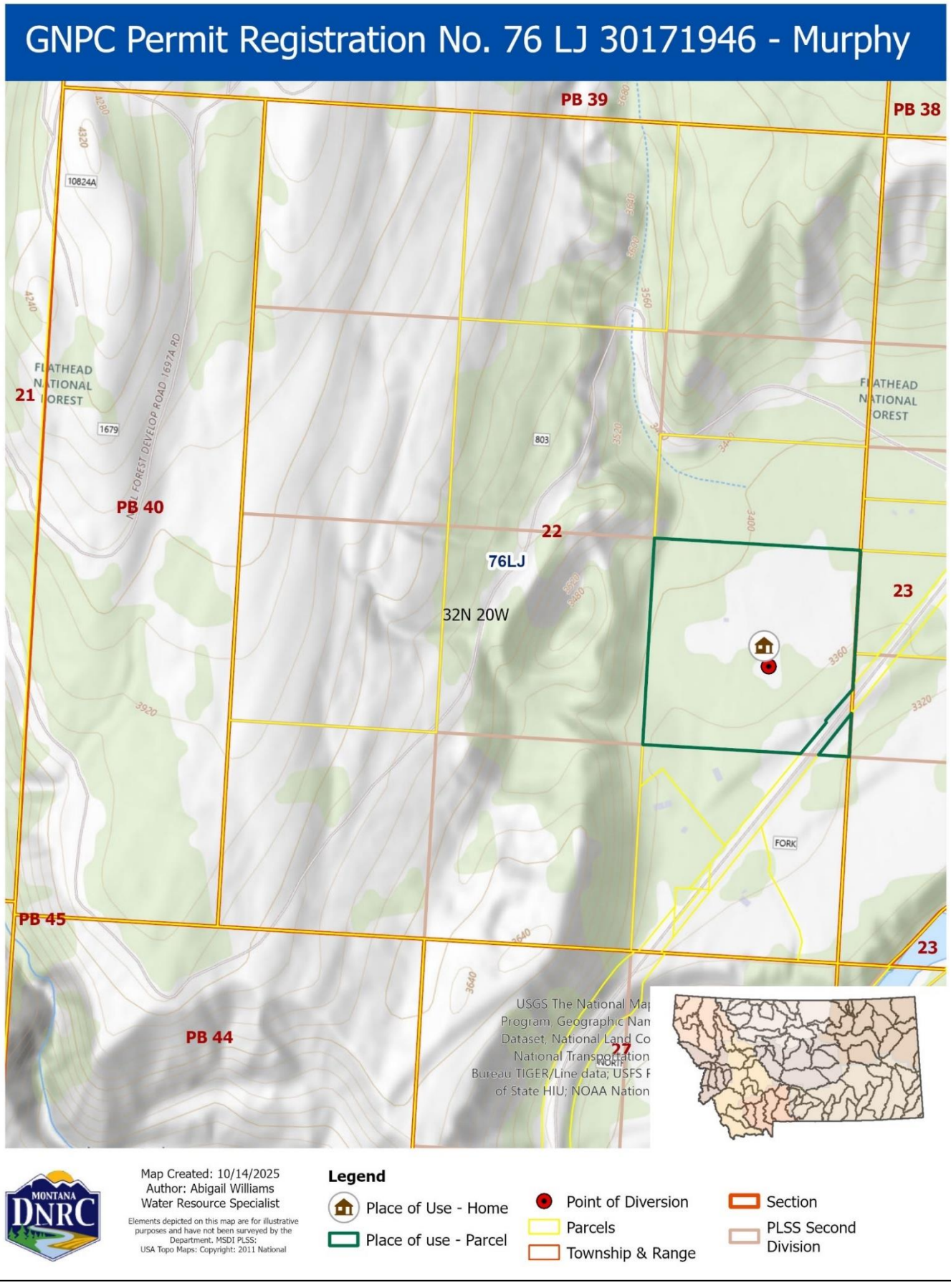

Figure 1. Map of the proposed place of use and points of diversion.

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 proposes to divert groundwater from a well that is approximately 0.38 miles northwest of the North Fork Flathead River. The North Fork Flathead River is not on the DFWP list of chronically or periodically dewatered streams.

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 Applicant proposes to divert and use groundwater. The nearest surface water sources to the proposed groundwater diversion are the North Fork Flathead River. Diversions in this area may deplete the North Fork Flathead River.

North Fork Flathead River: MDEQ Clean Water Act Information Center's 2020 Water Quality Information report lists the North Fork Flathead River as:

i. Water Quality Category 1: Waters for which all applicable beneficial uses have been assessed and all uses have been determined to be fully supported;

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.

It is not anticipated that the appropriation of groundwater will result in significant water quality impacts to the nearby 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 Applicant will divert groundwater from the aquifer at a rate of 25.0 GPM.

The well is expected to be ~ 300 feet deep and is approximately 0.38 miles northwest of the North Fork Flathead River. The NPS did not object to this application, therefore the flow rate will not be included in the calculation of total consumptive use for the North Fork Flathead River per the Glacier National Park Compact.

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 means of diversion, a well, has not yet been drilled. As this is a groundwater appropriation, there will be no channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, dams, or riparian impacts to surface water.

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. Eight animal species of concern (Table 1) were identified within the project area. Of these species, the Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*), the Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), the Canada Lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), and the Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) are listed as threatened by the USFWS. An adequate quantity of water will still exist in the North Fork Flathead River to maintain existing populations of Bull Trout, should they exist there currently. It is not anticipated that any species of concern will be impacted by the proposed project.

Table 1. Species of Concern

Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name
Fish	Bull Trout	*Salvelinus confluentus*
Fish	Westslope Cutthroat Trout	*Oncorhynchus clarkii lewisi*
Mammals	Canada Lynx	*Lynx canadensis*
Mammals	Fisher	*Pekania pennanti*
Mammals	Grizzly Bear	*Ursus arctos*
Mammals	Wolverine	*Gulo gulo*
Birds	Harlequin Duck	*Histrionicus histrionicus*
Birds	Pileated Woodpecker	*Dryocopus pileatus*

Determination: No significant impact.

Wetlands & 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 domestic use will not negatively impact the soil quality, stability, or moisture content in the project area. The soil type in the project area is, "Dystric Eutrochrepts, till substratum" formed from till material. This soil has a high capacity to transmit water. Soils in this area are not typically saline and are therefore not likely 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.*

It is not anticipated that this project will impact the existing vegetative cover beyond what has been cleared for construction of the dwelling in the project area. 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 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 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*.

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 groundwater at this location.

Part III. Conclusion

1. PREFFERED ALTERNATIVE:

Issue a water use permit if the Applicant proves the criteria in 85-20-401 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: Abigail Williams
Title: Water Resource Specialist
Date: 11/18/2025