EA Form R 1/2007

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: Missoula County Fairgrounds
   200 W Broadway St.
   Missoula, MT 59802

2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Use Permit No. 76M 30151075

3. Water source name: Groundwater Wells – Missoula Aquifer

4. Location affected by project: NWNW Section 33, T13N, R19W
   N2SWNW Section 33, T13N, R19W

5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:
   The applicant requests a flow rate of 135 gallons per minute (gpm) and up to 10.8 acre-ft (AF) per annum for 13.1 acres of lawn and garden irrigation during the period of diversion 4/1 to 9/30. The permit application is a request to allow additional flow rate and volume to be diverted from two existing wells (groundwater certificates 76M 30068060 and 76M 30068062) which currently supply 35 gpm (70 gpm total) up to 9.1 AF per annum for lawn and garden irrigation on 9.45 acres. The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:
   (include agencies with overlapping jurisdiction)

Montana Natural Heritage Program	Species of Concern
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks	2006 Montana dewatered streams
Montana Department of Environmental Quality	303(d) list of impaired streams

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.*

Determination: No significant impact - see groundwater section below

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.*

Determination: The source is groundwater, see below

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 proposes to utilize groundwater. Groundwater quality or supply will not be impacted in the surrounding area. The groundwater appropriation is hydraulically connected to the Clark Fork and Bitterroot Rivers; total combined depletions in both surface water sources are calculated to be 10 AF annually, with a total annual depletion of 6 AF in the Clark Fork River and 4 AF of annual depletion in the Bitterroot River.

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 wells are existing; therefore, the proposed use of groundwater will not impact any channels, cause adverse effect due to flow modifications, create any barriers or impact riparian areas, dams, or other existing or future wells.

Determination: No 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 (MNHP) was contacted to determine if there are any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any "species of special concern", that could be impacted by the proposed project. The MNHP identified the following

species of concern: Hoary Bat, Canada Lynx, Long-eared Myotis, Fringed Myotis, Long-legged Myotis, Fisher, Grizzly Bear, Northern Goshawk, Great Blue Heron, Evening Grosbeak, Yellow-billed Cuckoo,Bobolink, Pileated Woodpecker, Cassin's Finch, Harlequin Duck, Varied Thrush, Lewis's Woodpecker, Clark's Nutcracker, Flammulated Owl, Great Gray Owl, Northern Alligator Lizard,Western Skink, Western Toad, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Bull Trout

There will be no changes and any impacts to the above-listed species have likely already occurred as a result of prior land conversions. It is unlikely that any additional impacts will occur as a result of the proposed change.

Determination: No significant impacts

Wetlands **-** *Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.*

Determination: No significant impacts
There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the proposed project

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

Determination: No significant impacts
There are no ponds associated with the proposed project

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.*

Determination: No significant impacts
The groundwater wells have been in existence for over a decade. Soil stability, quality and moisture content would not change as a result of the project

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.*

Determination: No significant impact
Existing vegetative cover will remain in place, some new lawn and garden area will be developed. It will be the owner's responsibility to control noxious weeds.

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

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: NA – 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.*

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.*

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.*

Determination: No significant impact

HUMAN HEALTH - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts on 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

(*b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues?* None

(c) Existing land uses? None

(*d) Quantity and distribution of employment?* None

(e) *Distribution and density of population and housing?* None

(f) *Demands for government services?* None

(g) *Industrial and commercial activity?* None

(h) *Utilities?* None

(i) *Transportation?* None

(j) *Safety?* None

(k) *Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?* None

2. ***Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:***

Secondary Impacts None identified in this EA

Cumulative Impacts None identified in this EA

3. ***Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:***
None identified in this EA

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:*** No alternative identified

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative

2 Comments and Responses

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: An EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action because no significant impacts have been identified as a result of the proposed action.

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

Name: Kathy Schubert
Title: Water Resource Specialist
Date: October, 29, 2021