

MEPA ENVIRONMENTALASSESSMENT SUMMARY FORM

Project Name: Toston Dam Sediment Removal

Proposed Implementation Date: June 2025

Proponent: DNRC – State Water Projects Bureau (Owner of Toston Dam)

Type and Purpose of Action: Sediment has accumulated on the upstream side of Bay 7 at the Toston Dam on the Missouri River. Dam stability analyses have determined that the maximum safe level for sediment is 3941.6 feet NGVD (3944.78 feet NAVD88), or 11 feet below surface water pool level which is maintained at a constant elevation by this run-of-river hydropower project. Currently, the level of sediment in Bay 7 exceeds what is deemed safe under calculated seismic events. This project will involve using a hydro-jet to remove the accumulated sediment, approximately 15 cubic yards of alluvium, and flush it downstream during spring runoff.

Location: NW ¼, NW ¼ Section 7, T4N, R3E;

County: Broadwater

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief summary of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Inspections by SWPB and an engineering consulting firm indicate that the sediment needs to be removed to maintain structural stability. Groups/agencies involved and/or contacted include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• U.S Army Corps of Engineers• MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks• MT Dept. of Environmental Quality• Broadwater County Floodplain Administrator• MT Dept. of Natural Resource & Conservation
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	The project is located entirely on state-owned land within the reservoir upstream of the dam. A Joint Application has been submitted for all the appropriate permits from the Agencies listed above: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nationwide #18 Permit• SPA 124• 318 Authorization• Section 404 Permit, Section 10 Permit• Floodplain Permit• Navigable Rivers Land Use License, Lease or Easement (Waived in 2023)

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	<p>Action Alternative: Hydro-jetting approximately 15 cubic yards of accumulated sediment away from the upstream face of Bay 7 during spring runoff.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Sediment will continue to accumulate on the upstream face of Bay 7 potentially affecting dam stability.</p>
-----------------------------	--

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:</p> <p>Are fragile, compatible or unstable soils present?</p> <p>Are there unusual geologic features?</p> <p>Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>The surrounding area includes soils consisting of Nielsen channery loam. The actual project is in the Missouri River streambed alluvium. These soils are not fragile or unstable. There are no unusual geologic features or any special reclamation considerations.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Approximately 15 cubic yards of sediment disturbance is anticipated during this project. Under this alternative there will be no impacts to surrounding geology and soil quality, stability, or moisture.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the geology and soil quality, stability, or moisture.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:</p> <p>Are important surface or groundwater resources present?</p> <p>Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>The project will take place in the streambed of the Missouri River during spring runoff when natural sediment loads are high. A negligible increase in total suspended solids is anticipated, which will be limited to the time needed to complete the project.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Sediment removal will have no permanent impact on drinking or ambient water quality in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative, there will be no impacts to water quality and quantity. Long term impact of no action may be sudden failure of the dam and large release of sediment.</p>

<p>6. AIR QUALITY:</p> <p>Will pollutants or particulate be produced?</p> <p>Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I air shed)?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to air quality.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to air quality.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:</p> <p>Will vegetative communities be permanently altered?</p>	<p>The surrounding area currently has vegetative community consisting of common native grasses, forbs, woody shrubs, and sagebrush. The actual project area is in the reservoir which is not vegetated.</p> <p>Action Alternative: No impacts to vegetation are anticipated during this project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the vegetative communities.</p>
<p>8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:</p> <p>Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>The area contains habitat for common wildlife and aquatic species.</p> <p>Action Alternative: No impacts to wildlife are anticipated. No significant impacts to aquatic life are anticipated due to the naturally occurring high sediment load during spring runoff.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to terrestrial, avian and aquatic habitats.</p>

<p>9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:</p> <p>Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present?</p> <p>Any wetlands?</p> <p>Any sensitive species or Species of Special Concern?</p>	<p>The project is in an area listed as habitat for the following State Species of Special Concern:</p> <p>Fauna: Fringed Myotis, Little Brown Myotis, Hoary Bat, Spotted Bat, Townsend's Big-Eared Bat, American White Pelican, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Peregrine Falcon, Pileated Woodpecker, and Pinyon Jay. Canada Lynx and Grizzly Bear are also federally listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).</p> <p>Flora State Species of Special Concern: Andean Water Milfoil and Rocky Mountain Twinpod. Ute Ladies' Tresses and Whitebark Pine are also federally listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). There are no wetlands near the work area.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impact on unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts on unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL / ARCHAEOLOGICAL :</p> <p>Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>A Historic Properties Management Plan exists for the Broadwater Power Project (Toston Dam). This Plan includes cultural resource documentation including Class I and Class III cultural surveys and has identified two historic properties within the area of potential effect (APE). The plan also references a documented cultural site that includes the Historic Irrigation System: Broadwater-Missouri eastside and westside canals which are eligible for listing.</p> <p>Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to historical/archaeological/paleontological resources under this alternative.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to historical/archaeological/paleontological resources under this alternative.</p>

<p>11. AESTHETICS:</p> <p>Is the project on a prominent topographic feature?</p> <p>Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas?</p> <p>Will there be excessive noise or light?</p>	<p>The site is directly upstream of the Toston dam submerged below water surface pool elevation and is not visible from the Toston Dam Road or from the Missouri River.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to aesthetics.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to aesthetics.</p>
<p>12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:</p> <p>Will the project use resources that are limited in the area?</p> <p>Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Sediment removal will not change the existing demand/use of resources in the area. There are no other activities nearby that would affect the project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no new demands placed on environmental resources of land, water, air, or energy.</p>
<p>13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:</p> <p>Are there other studies, plans or projects on this site?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This project will not impact any other plans or studies.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts.</p>
<p>III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>	
<p>14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:</p> <p>Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impact to public safety or health in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative public safety risk of dam failure will be increased due to sediment accumulation.</p>

<p>15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:</p> <p>Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have positive impacts on agriculture by reducing risk of dam failure ensuring that irrigation water availability supported by the Toston Dam would continue uninterrupted.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there could be negative impacts as dam failure would prevent irrigation delivery for agricultural use.</p>
<p>16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:</p> <p>Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Other than the employment related to the actual implementation of the project, which will be completed by existing staff, the project will not impact any jobs in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no positive impacts to quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:</p> <p>Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the local and state tax base and tax revenues.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the local and state tax base under this alternative.</p>
<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:</p> <p>Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads?</p> <p>Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no additional demand for government services.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no additional demand for government services.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:</p> <p>Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There are no locally adopted environmental plans, goals, zoning, or management plans that would be affected by the project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts on locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</p>

<p>20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:</p> <p>Is wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through the project location?</p> <p>Is there recreational potential within the project location?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed project will not affect the upstream BLM recreation area. There are no wilderness areas in the immediate vicinity of the project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the recreational resources.</p>
<p>21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:</p> <p>Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of population and housing.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the density and distribution of population and housing.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:</p> <p>Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not disrupt any traditional lifestyles or communities.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to social structures under this alternative.</p>
<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:</p> <p>Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of this rural area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.</p>

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

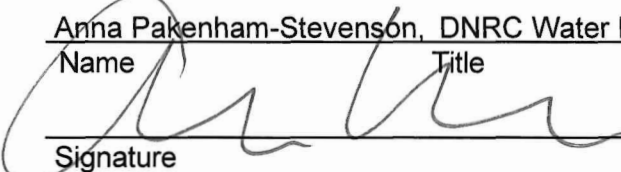
Action Alternative: Sediment removal will help to maintain the structural integrity of the Toston dam, preventing loss of recreation, irrigation, and power generation for the region.

No Action Alternative: There could be negative impacts to economic circumstances including recreation, irrigation, and power generation should the dam fail.

IV. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action alternative.
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	No significant impacts anticipated.
27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS: <input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Prepared By: Jillian Hendrix, DNRC-SWPB Environmental Scientist Date: 4/4/25
Name Title

EA Approved By: Anna Pakenham-Stevenson, DNRC Water Resources Division Administrator
Name Title
 Date: 4/1/25
Signature

Attachments: No attachments are included.

Additional Information:

This EA will be published for 30 days on the DNRC website at:

<https://dnrc.mt.gov/Environmental-Docs/>

Questions and comments should be directed to:

Jillian Hendrix
Montana DNRC
Water Resources Division
State Water Projects Bureau
1424 9th Avenue; P.O. Box 201601
Helena, MT 59620-1602
(406) 444-2932
jillian.hendrix@mt.gov

Thank you for your interest.