

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:**  
City of Missoula, Deputy Director of Public Works  
435 Ryman St  
Missoula, MT 59802
2. **Type of action:** Ground Water Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 76M  
30163647
3. **Water source name:** Ground Water (Bitterroot River Valley Shallow Aquifer)
4. **Location affected by project:** Sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, and 14 T12N, R20W, Missoula County.
5. **Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:** The City of Missoula proposes to divert groundwater from a well to provide additional flow rate and volume to the municipal water supply. 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:**  
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (DFWP)  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)  
Montana Natural Heritage Program Species of Concern Report  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey

## **Part II. Environmental Review**

### **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.*

N/A – source is groundwater

*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.*

NA – source is groundwater

*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 proposed source aquifer is hydrologically connected to the Bitterroot River. The Bitterroot River is not chronically or periodically dewatered in this area, and no negative effects to water quality are anticipated as a result of this proposal. The City of Missoula proposes to mitigate its depletions to the Bitterroot River through Application to Change a Water Right No. 76H 30165219.

*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.*

According to the Department's Technical Analysis for this application, the maximum modeled drawdown outside the well casing is 0.29 ft at the end of August (day 1703) of the fifth year of pumping using the proposed pumping schedule and occurs 0.5 ft from the well. As such, no meaningful effects to future well construction is expected.

*Determination:* No significant impacts.

## 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, or aquatic species that could potentially be impacted by this project. “Species of special concern” were also included in this search.

According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program, observations from the past 50 years indicate that 19 animal species of concern may be found in the area of potential impact. Of these, 2 species are listed as threatened by the USFWS in this area: the Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*) and the Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*).

Animal species of concern include:

Fisher (*Pekania pennanti*)  
Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*)  
Northern Hoary Bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*)  
Bobolink (*Dolichonyx oryzivorus*)  
Brewer’s Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)  
Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*)  
Cassin’s Finch (*Haemorhous cassinii*)  
Clark’s Nutcracker (*Nucifraga columbiana*)  
Evening Grosbeak (*Coccothraustes vespertinus*)  
Flammulated Owl (*Psiloscops flammeolus*)  
Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)  
Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*)  
Lewis’s Woodpecker (*Melanerpes lewis*)  
Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*)  
Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius*)  
Veery (*Catharus fuscescens*)  
Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*)  
Westslope Cutthroat Trout (*Oncorhynchus lewisi*)  
Monarch (*Danaus Plexippus*)

Plant species of concern include:

Short-pointed Flatsedge (*Cyperus acuminatus*)  
Shining Flatsedge (*Cyperus bipartitus*)  
Annual Muhly (*Muhlenbergia minutissima*)  
Toothcup (*Rotala ramosior*)  
Columbia Water-meal (*Wolffia columbiana*)

The municipal use of water for domestic and lawn and garden irrigation purposes is not anticipated to cause any adverse impacts on any of the species listed.

*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.*

No wetlands are identified in the project area.

*Determination: No significant impact.*

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

No ponds were identified as being adversely affected.

*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.*

Erosion and degradation of soil quality is not anticipated as a result of the proposed change. Soils are not heavy in salts, and not likely to create saline seep.

*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.*

Water from the proposed application will partly be used for lawn and garden irrigation. No change to vegetative cover is anticipated as a result of this change, nor is the establishment or spread of noxious weeds predicted.

*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.*

No negative effects to air quality are expected as a result of this proposal.

*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: N/A – 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.

No additional impacts to land, water, or energy 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.

This project does not violate any known locally adopted environmental plans or 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 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

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

No impacts on human health are anticipated as a result of this project.

*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? 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:*** None identified

**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:**

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:*

No significant environmental impacts were identified as a result of the EA.

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

*Name:* Benjamin Thomas

*Title:* Water Conservation Specialist

*Date:* 5/22/2025