

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: Bruce and Carolyn Rippy  
PO Box 1136  
Condon, MT 59826
2. Type of action: Application For Beneficial Water Use Permit No. 76K 30067191
3. Water source name: Swan River
4. Location affected by project: NWNENW Section 13, T19N R17W, Missoula County
5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:  
Bruce and Carolyn Rippy submitted an Application For Beneficial Water Use Permit to DNRC requesting an appropriation of 19.5 gallons per minute (gpm) up to 1.00 acre-feet of water from the Swan River. The water will be used for domestic use in one household. The applicant proposes to divert water from the river using a 1 hp pump housed in a cistern that is supplied water from the river via an infiltration gallery. Water will be conveyed to the place of use for domestic via 1¼ polypipe. 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	2005 Dewatered Stream List
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.

Swan River is not listed on the 2005 Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks Impaired Stream List. The appropriation of 19.5 gpm up to 1.00 acre-feet of water from the Swan River will not cause or worsen dewatering in the Swan River basin. Consumptive use of the proposed project is estimated to be 10 percent of the diverted volume, or 0.10 acre-feet.

*Determination:* No 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 Department of Environmental Quality has not assessed water quality in the Swan River. The minimal withdraw of water requested by the applicant will not result in impairment of water quality. The applicant will treat wastewater discharge from domestic use in an on-site septic system. Septic discharge can be a source of groundwater contamination resulting in elevated levels of nitrogen and nitrates.

*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

**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 diversion consists of an infiltration gallery buried in the bed of the stream that conveys water to a cistern buried on the stream bank. A submersible electric 1 hp pump located in the cistern will be used to convey water to the domestic residence. The infiltration gallery and cistern will not cause any channel impacts or flow modifications in the Swan River. The use of a pump for domestic water supply will not create any barriers to fish migration. The installed system has been operational for several years at a neighboring parcel; there will not be any disturbance to the existing site. The project does not involve a dam or well.

*Determination:* No significant 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 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 Montana Natural Heritage Program identified the following animal species: Gray Wolf, Canada Lynx, Grizzly Bear, Wolverine, Fisher, Common Loon, Bull Trout, Pygmy Whitefish, and Westslope Cutthroat Trout occurring within the vicinity of Township 19 North, Range 17 West, Missoula County. In addition, the following sensitive plant species were also identified; Pod Grass, Northern Bog Clubmoss, Water Howellia, and English Sundew.

The location of the proposed appropriation is on the Swan River just downstream from the outlets of Lindbergh and Cygnet Lakes in Section 13. This part of the river and lakeshores are developed with many summer and full time residences. Any impact to sensitive mammal species such as gray wolf, lynx and grizzly bear most likely has already occurred. Shoreline development on Lindbergh Lake is limited to the northeastern shoreline in Sections 14 & 23. The remainder of the shoreline is owned by the United States Forest Service and has no development potential. This limits the impacts to larger mammal species due to development. Plant species will not be impaired if they are located on the applicant's property because no construction will take place. It is not known whether these plants exist on the applicant's property.

*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.*

*Determination:* N/A project does not involve wetlands.

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

*Determination:* N/A project does not involve ponds.

**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 use of water from the Swan River for domestic use will not cause degradation of soil quality or stability. The soils at the site are not susceptible to saline seep.

*Determination:* No 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.*

The existing vegetative cover will not be disturbed; the diversion works and pipeline already exist. The project is located entirely on private property, and the applicants will be responsible for controlling noxious weeds.

*Determination:* No impact.

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

Adverse air quality impacts from increased air pollutants are not expected as a result of this project. The water will be diverted using a submersed electric pump. No air pollutants were identified as resulting from the applicant's proposed use of the Swan River for domestic purposes

*Determination:* No 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.*

NA: Project not located on State or Federal Lands.

*Determination:* No impact.

**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 were identified and no further impacts are anticipated.

*Determination:* No impact.

## **HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

**LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS** - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

The project is located in an area with no locally adopted environmental plans

*Determination:* No 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 the 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.

*Determination:* No impact.

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

The project does not pose a significant risk to the human health.

*Determination:* No impact.

**PRIVATE PROPERTY** - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*

*Yes* \_\_\_ *No* **XX** *If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.*

*Determination:* No 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.

**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:**

No reasonable alternatives were identified in the 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:**

*PART III. Conclusion*

**1. Preferred Alternative** None identified.

**2. Comments and Responses**

**3. Finding:**

Yes\_\_\_ No **XX**\_\_\_ 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 THE PROPOSED ACTION BECAUSE NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS WERE IDENTIFIED.

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

Name: Jim Nave

Title: Deputy Regional Manager

Date: January 21, 2014