

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:*

Quinns Canyon LLC 305 S Tracy Bozeman, MT 59715	H & L Properties LLP P O Box 249 Paradise, MT 59856
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2. *Type of action:* Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit 76M 30064114
3. *Water source name:* Groundwater Well
4. *Location affected by project:* NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ and NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 9, Township 18 N, Range 25 W, Sanders County, approximately 4.5 miles south of Paradise MT.
5. *Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:*
The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.

The applicant proposes to divert groundwater from an existing 45.5 foot deep groundwater well approximately 260 feet south of the Clark Fork River. The proposed appropriation is for the expansion of the Quinn's Hot Springs Resort. The expansion consists of 18 single cabins, 3 duplex's, an 8-plex and convention center, totaling 23 buildings. The period of diversion will be from January 1 through December 31 at a diversion rate of 26 GPM up to 7.24 AF, from a point in govt. lot 9, SENESW Section 9, T18N, R25W, Sanders County, for commercial use. The place of use Quinn's Hot Springs Resort is generally located in the NWSE and NESW of Section 9, T18N, R25W, Sanders County approximately 4.5 miles south of Paradise MT.

The Applicant is applying for a beneficial water use permit because there is an existing groundwater certificate (76M 46509-00) recorded on the proposed well with a flow rate of 80 GPM and a volume of 5.25 AF for commercial and lawn and garden use. A beneficial water use permit is required because the well is already pumped in excess of 35 GPM, and the requested volume for this appropriation will result in more than 10 AF being pumped from the well. The proposed new use will increase the flow rate and volume pumped from the well to 106 GPM and 12.49 AF. Wastewater from the Resort is collected and sent to one of five on-site drain fields

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

Montana Natural Heritage Program
USDA Nat'l Resources (NRCS) Soils Data Website
MT Department of Fish and Wildlife Dewater list

United State Fish and Wildlife Wetland Mapper
MT Department of Environmental Quality Website

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.*

N/A –The source of supply is groundwater diverted from a well

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.*

N/A - The source of supply is groundwater diverted from a well

Determination: No 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 has shown that water is physically available at the proposed diversion by calculating the aquifer flux, using parameters' granted in a variance, to be 352.6 AF/YR. The Applicant is requesting a total annual appropriation of 7.24 AF/YR. Impacts to groundwater quantity were addressed by modeling drawdown in the groundwater aquifer from pumping the proposed public water supply well at the request rate and volume. According the Applicant's model, less than 1.0 foot of drawdown will occur in the local groundwater aquifer outside of the Applicant's property boundary after 5 years of pumping the proposed public water supply wells. Drawdowns of this magnitude will not lessen the quantity of groundwater available for present and future appropriations of groundwater. The wells were constructed to Department of Environmental Quality public water supply system specifications, and no sources of groundwater contamination were identified. The groundwater is hydraulically connected to

surface water, including the Clark Fork River. The applicant estimates an annual depletion of 0.72 acre-feet, which equals a depletion rate to the Clark Fork River of 0.45 GPM. This depletion rate will not have a measurable impact on the Clark Fork River.

Data was assessed and the Department finds that senior ground water appropriators will not be adversely affected and that predicted depletions will not prevent surface water appropriators from reasonably exercising their water rights

Determination: No immediate 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 well was drilled by a licensed well drilling company in accordance to state laws, rules and regulations. The Montana Department of Environmental Quality approved the well locations. The project does not involve disturbance of any stream channels and/or riparian areas. The project will not create any barriers or utilize any dams, or cause any flow modifications in adjacent surface water sources. The aquifer test performed by the applicant indicates that the drawdown resulting from pumping from the well will have no noticeable affect on neighboring wells, and will not prevent any future well construction in the area.

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 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. In the vicinity of Section 9, T18N, R25W in Sanders County, the Program identified the Bald Eagle as a “species of concern”. Within the vicinity of T18N, R25W, Westslope, Cutthroat Trout, Bull Trout and Lake Trout were identified as species of concern.

The Quinn’s Hot Springs Resort where the public water supply well is located and where the groundwater will be put to use was originally constructed in the late 1970’s and has been in existence ever since. The expansion of the resort will not result in a loss of habitat to the above mentioned species.

Determination: No immediate 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.

The proposed place of use is not within the boundaries of wetlands mapped by the National Wetlands Inventory program.

Determination: No impact

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

Determination: No ponds; no impacts.

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 soils in this area are Yellowbay gravelly loam, McCollum fine sandy loam, that is well drained with a moderately high to high transmittal capacity. None of these soil types are susceptible to saline seep. Applying water to soils for lawn and garden irrigation is not part of the project.

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.

A portion of existing vegetation cover will be removed during construction. Noxious weeds can become established in areas where soil disturbance occurs. The project site is located on private property, and it is ultimately the landowner's responsibility to control the spread or establishment of 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.

Determination: N/A

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.

Determination: N/A

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

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

Determination: Developed / planned in accordance with Department of Environmental Quality standards.

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 impact

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

Determination: No 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 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? N/A
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? Possible increase in local revenue for local services
- (c) Existing land uses? The proposed project will not alter or interfere with the productivity of the existing land use of the area.
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? Possible increase in employment

- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? Increased housing density and human population of the area.
- (f) Demands for government services? No impact
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? No impact
- (h) Utilities? Expansion as needed
- (i) Transportation? Increased traffic to area
- (j) Safety? Safety concerns addressed in State EIS
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances?

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

Secondary Impacts None

Cumulative Impacts None

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:

PART III. Conclusion

1. Preferred Alternative None identified

2. Comments and Responses None

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: Kathy Schubert
 Title: Water Resource Specialist
 Date: January 31, 2014