

MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Environmental Assessment

Water Quality Division
Water Protection Bureau

Name of Project: Town of Stanford (Stanford) Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF) – Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) permit MT0022161 renewal

Type of Project: Permit Renewal – Minor POTW

Location of Project: one mile east of Stanford, Montana on Route 80 behind the cemetery.

City/Town: Stanford

County: Judith Basin

Description of Project: Stanford WWTF is a publicly owned domestic wastewater treatment facility located in Stanford, MT. The facility treats domestic sewage from the population of Stanford through operation of a 3-cell facultative lagoon system and batch discharges to an unnamed reservoir on Skull Creek which is ephemeral. The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) proposes to renew the Stanford WWTF discharge permit.

Agency Action and Applicable Regulations: The proposed action is to renew the MPDES permit for another five-year cycle according to the following regulations:

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Subchapter 2 - Water Quality Permit Application and Annual Fees.
ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Subchapter 5 - Mixing Zones in Surface and Ground Water.
ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Subchapter 6 - Surface Water Quality Standards.
ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Subchapter 7 - Nondegradation of Water Quality.
ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Subchapters 12 and 13 – MPDES Standards.
Montana Water Quality Act, MCA 75-5-101, *et seq.*

Summary of Issues: The receiving water is an unnamed reservoir. Final effluent limits are calculated to assure compliance with the water quality in the receiving water.

Benefits and Purpose of Action: The permit will ensure compliance with the Montana Water Quality Act and protect beneficial uses of the unnamed reservoir on Skull Creek.

Affected Environment & Impacts of the Proposed Project:

Y = Impacts may occur.

N = Not present or No Impact will likely occur.

IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are soils present which are fragile, erosive, susceptible to compaction, or unstable? Are there unusual or unstable geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	[N]
2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	[N] Effluent limits will continue to enforce discharge quality and protect receiving water beneficial uses.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N]
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be significantly impacted? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[N] Based on a search of the Natural Heritage Database, there are no vegetative species of concern in or within one mile of the site.
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] Based on a search of the Natural Heritage Database, there is one species of concern in or within one mile of the site: the wolverine. Since Stanford has maintained a wastewater treatment facility at this site, the Department does not foresee any impact on these or other communities.
6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	[N] See #4 and #5. Since Stanford has maintained a wastewater treatment facility at this site, the Department does not foresee any impact on this renewal.
7. SAGE GROUSE EXECUTIVE ORDER: Is the project proposed in core, general or connectivity sage grouse habitat, as designated by the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program (Program) at https://sagegrouse.mt.gov ? If yes, did the applicant attach documentation from the Program showing compliance with Executive Order 12-2015 and the Program's recommendations? If so, attach the documentation to the EA and address the Program's recommendations in the permit. If project is in core, general or connectivity habitat and the applicant did not document consultation with the Program, refer the applicant to the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program.	[N] The Department confirmed that the facility is not within core, general, or connectivity sage grouse habitat.
8. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] The Department believes that this project has a low likelihood of impacting cultural properties. However, should structures need to be altered or if cultural materials be inadvertently discovered during this project the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) should be contacted.
9. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	[N] Stanford has operated a wastewater treatment facility at this location with the most recent upgrades in 2002.

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
10. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project? Will new or upgraded powerline or other energy source be needed)	[N] Stanford has operated a wastewater treatment facility at this location with the most recent upgrades in 2002.
11. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N] No significant impacts on other environmental resources have been identified.
12. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[N] Effluent limits will protect public health.
13. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N]
14. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N]
15. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N]
16. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed?	[N]
17. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] The Department is not aware of zoning or management plans that may impact this project or will be impacted by this project.
18. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	[N]
19. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
20. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]
21. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N]
22. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N]

IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
23(a). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Are we regulating the use of private property under a regulatory statute adopted pursuant to the police power of the state? (Property management, grants of financial assistance, and the exercise of the power of eminent domain are not within this category.) If not, no further analysis is required.	[N]
23(b). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Is the agency proposing to deny the application or condition the approval in a way that restricts the use of the regulated person's private property? If not, no further analysis is required.	[N]
23(c). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: If the answer to 21(b) is affirmative, does the agency have legal discretion to impose or not impose the proposed restriction or discretion as to how the restriction will be imposed? If not, no further analysis is required. If so, the agency must determine if there are alternatives that would reduce, minimize or eliminate the restriction on the use of private property, and analyze such alternatives. The agency must disclose the potential costs of identified restrictions.	[N/A]

- 24. **Description of and Impacts of other Alternatives Considered:** No other alternatives have been considered.
- 25. **Summary of Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts:** None
- 26. **Cumulative Effects:** None
- 27. **Preferred Action Alternative and Rationale:** Approve. The preferred action is to renew the MPDES permit. This action is preferred because the permit program provides the regulatory mechanism for protecting water quality by enforcing the terms of the MPDES permit.
- 28. **Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:**
 EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis
- 29. **Rationale for Recommendation:** An EIS is not required under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) because the renewal of the Stanford WWTF MPDES permit lacks significant adverse effects to the human and physical environment. All of the anticipated effects to the physical and human environment will be mitigated or eliminated during project implementation.
- 30. **Public Involvement:** A 30-day public notification/comment period will be held.
- 31. **Persons and agencies consulted in the preparation of this analysis:** Montana Natural Heritage Program.

EA Checklist Prepared By:

Carolina Davies
(Name)

July 7, 2016
(Date)

Approved By:

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Jon Kenning, Chief
Water Protection Bureau

Date