

**MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**  
**Environmental Assessment**

**Water Protection Bureau**

**Name of Project:** Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) permit MT0021636 renewal for the Town of Hobson Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF).

**Type of Project:** The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) proposes to renew the MPDES permit to the Town of Hobson for the discharge of wastewater from their WWTF.

**Location of Project:** 47° 00' 07" N latitude, 109° 51' 57" W longitude

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

**Applicable Rules and Statutes:**

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30

- Subchapter 2 - Water Quality Permit Application and Annual Fees.
- Subchapter 5 - Mixing Zones in Surface and Ground Water.
- Subchapter 6 - Surface Water Quality Standards.
- Subchapter 7 - Nondegradation of Water Quality.
- Subchapters 12 and 13 – MPDES Standards.

Montana Water Quality Act, MCA 75-5-101, *et seq.*

**Summary of Issues:** The Town of Hobson WWTF serves a current population of 120 people with over 12,500 feet of gravity sewer line, an influent wastewater lift station, and a force main to transport wastewater to the treatment facility. The current two-celled facultative lagoon was constructed in 1993 on the footprint of the former lagoon and lacks disinfection capabilities. Typical operation is with the cells in series, although either can be bypassed. Discharge is intermittent to an unnamed drainage ditch with a design flow of 0.039 million gallons per day (mgd).

After 25+ years of operation, the treatment system is beginning to show its age. The Town is working to complete necessary sludge removal and tend to additional needs of the WWTF. The overall process for planning, design, and construction typically takes 3-4 years and is currently pending funding.

**Affected Environment & Impacts of the Proposed Project:**

Y = Impacts may occur (explain under Potential Impacts).

N = Not present or No Impact will likely occur.

<b>IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
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] No new impacts present.
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] The permit contains effluent limits and monitoring requirements that will assure discharge quality.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N] No new impacts present.
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, no species of concern were found 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, no species of concern were found in or within one mile of the site.
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 #5
7. SAGE GOUSE EXECUTIVE ORDER: Is the project proposed in core, general or connectivity sage grouse habitat, as designated by the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program at <a href="https://sagegrouse.mt.gov/">https://sagegrouse.mt.gov/</a> ? If so, attach the documentation to the EA and address the Program's recommendation 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] DEQ verified that this 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] No new impacts present.
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] No new impacts present.
10. LAND USE: (waste disposal, agricultural lands [grazing, cropland, forest lands, prime farmland], recreational lands [waterways, parks, playgrounds, open space, federal lands), access, commercial and industrial facilities [production & activity, growth or decline], growth, land-use change, development activity)	[N] No new impacts present.
11. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N] No new impacts present.

<b>IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
12. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
13. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
14. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
15. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
16. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed?	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
17. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
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] No impacts are expected at this time.
19. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
20. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
21. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
22. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N] No impacts are expected at this time.
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.	Not applicable
23(c). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: If the answer to 23(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.	Not applicable

- 24. **Description of and Impacts of other Alternatives Considered:** None
- 25. **Summary of Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impact:** None
- 26. **Cumulative Effects:** None
- 27. **Preferred Action Alternative and Rationale:** The preferred action is to renew the MPDES permit because the MPDES program provides the regulatory mechanism for protecting water quality by enforcing the terms of the permit.

**Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:**

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)     More Detailed EA     No Further Analysis

**Rationale for Recommendation:** An EIS is not required under the Montana Environmental Policy Act because the project lacks significant adverse effects to the human and/or physical environments.

- 28. **Public Involvement:** A 30-day public notification/comment period will be held.
- 29. **Persons and agencies consulted in the preparation of this analysis:** None

**EA Checklist Prepared By:** Haley Sir, May 2019

**Approved by:**

**DRAFT**

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Jon Kenning, Chief  
Water Protection Bureau

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Date