

# **West Glacier RV and Cabin Village, Phase 1 & 2**

## **MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY Final Environmental Assessment Water Quality Division**

**Name of Project:** West Glacier RV & Cabin Village Phase I & II

**Type of Project:** RV Park

**Location of Project:** N ½ of Section 35, Township 32, Range 19W

(South of River Bend Drive, northwest of Hwy 2)

- RV spaces and cabins to be located on Tract 2 of COS#20466 (23.6 acres)
- Utilities on Tract 3 (32.3 acres) & Tract 4 (26.5 acres) of COS#20466
- Tract 1 of COS#20466 (96.7 acres) is also owned by GPI, but is not included in this proposal

**City/Town:** West Glacier

**County:** Flathead

**Project Number:** EQ#18-1341 Subdivision review  
EQ#17-2156 Public Water Supply system review  
EQ#17-2167 Public Wastewater system review

**Applicant:** Glacier Park, Inc., Ron Cadrette, VP & General Manager  
P.O. Box 2025  
Columbia Falls, MT 59912

### **Purpose and Need:**

This environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared by the Department of Environmental Quality (Department) for the subdivision application submitted by Glacier Park, Inc. (GPI) for its proposed West Glacier RV & Cabin Village. The purpose of the GPI application is to receive Department approval for the subdivision's proposed public water supply system, public wastewater system, storm water drainage collection and retention system, and solid waste management plans.

### **Description of Project:**

The proposed subdivision would be located in the North ½ of Section 35, Township 32, Range 19 West, Flathead County. The location is west of the town of West Glacier and south of the Middle Fork of the Flathead River. It is less than one mile from the west entrance to Glacier National Park.

The proposed project consists of two phases. Phase I proposes 25 cabins and 42 RV spaces. Phase II proposes an additional 60 RV spaces. Both phases would use the same public water, public wastewater, storm drainage, and solid waste facilities, consisting as follows:

Public water supply system:

The proposed water system consists of two wells that would operate in a lead/lag/alternate configuration, meaning that only one well would operate at a time. The system was designed based on only one well operating at a time, at a maximum flow rate of 35 gpm, which would feed a 157,000-gallon bolted steel storage tank (24 feet high with 34-ft diameter) and with tri-plex booster pumps (180 gpm each) pressurizing the distribution system. The public water supply system would supply domestic water, irrigation water and fire flow of 500 gpm for 2 hours.

The Department granted approval to drill and test two groundwater wells on July 17, 2017. The wells were drilled in November 2017, designated GWIC# 295262 and #295263. The wells were drilled to 135 feet and 152 feet deep, respectively. They were each pump tested at 82 gpm with less than one foot of drawdown during the test.

Public wastewater collection and disposal system:

The public wastewater system would collect wastewater (sewage) in gravity sewer mains, which then would be pumped in a center lift station through a pressure force main to two lined aerated lagoons (approximately 640,000-gallons each). A design flow rate of 30,000 gpd from May to September was used for design. Air would be applied to the aerated lagoons through a submersible static tube air diffuser system. Influent to the aerated lagoons is expected to have a BOD level of 350 mg/L, and effluent will be treated to a maximum BOD level of 30 mg/L, or approximately 10% of that found in residential household wastewater.

Effluent from the aerated lagoons then would gravity flow to the two lined storage cells (approximately 1.6 million gallons each). Finally, effluent from the storage cells would be pumped to a spray irrigation system where two central pivots would apply wastewater to a pasture grass crop. Each irrigation pivot would comprise approximately 4.5 acres. The irrigation system would include rain and wind sensors to ensure that effluent would not be applied on rainy or windy days. A certified wastewater operator would be hired by GPI to operate the wastewater facility.

The aerated lagoons would be located over ¼ mile from the nearest home or business structure. The spray irrigation system would include a 200-ft buffer around the irrigation area, which would be fenced.

Storm water collection and retention system:

Storm water would be collected in many (approximately 40) individual landscaped swale areas (called Bio-Detention areas by the engineer) located throughout the RV spaces and cabin area. Additionally, off-site storm water would be collected and routed around the RV spaces and cabin area to natural depressions located on adjacent land, Tract 1 (96.7 acres), Tract 3 (32.3 acres) and Tract 4 (25.6 acres), also owned by GPI.

### Solid waste management:

Solid waste would be stored in bear-proof containers and transported to the Flathead County landfill.

### **Agency Action and Applicable Regulations:**

The proposed agency action is the issuance of a certificate of subdivision approval, an approval of the public water supply system, and an approval of the wastewater treatment facilities.

The Department has statutory authority for subdivision review under the Sanitation in Subdivisions Act, Title 76, Chapter 4, MCA. The Department reviews subdivisions to determine the adequacy of water, sewage, solid waste, and storm drainage systems. The Department reviews public water and sewage treatment systems for compliance with the Montana public water supply laws, Title 75, Chapter 6, MCA, and, when appropriate, for compliance with nondegradation rules (Title 17, Chapter 30, Subchapters 5 and 7, ARM) under the Water Quality Act, Title 75, Chapter 5, MCA. The Department has no other regulatory functions regarding subdivisions.

All actions requiring subdivision approval are also subject to the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), which requires the Department to identify public concerns and to evaluate alternatives to address significant concerns in order to ensure informed decisions are made. The extent of the Department's MEPA review of a subdivision proposal is limited to the impacts relating to water supply, sewage, solid waste, and storm water facilities. *Mont. Wilderness Ass'n v. Bd. of Health & Env't'l Sciences*, 171 Mont. 477, 559 P.2d 1157 (1976).

Subdivision rules require that a certificate of subdivision approval be issued when the requirements of the subdivision rules and MEPA have been met and when the Department determines that the following conditions would be met:

- sewage will not pollute or degrade state waters or endanger public health;
- the water and wastewater facilities will be adequate;
- solid waste disposal will be in accordance with applicable state laws and rules; and
- storm drainage will have proper drainage ways and the drainage will not pollute state waters.

If these requirements have been met, the Department must issue an approval.

### **Other Regulatory Agencies**

The Flathead County Board of Commissioners reviewed the proposed subdivision as dictated by the Subdivision and Platting Act, Title 76, Chapter 3, MCA. The commissioners granted preliminary plat approval on May 19, 2017. Several conditions of approval for the preliminary plat provided means to minimize impacts from the proposed project, including, but not limited, to the following: bear-proof garbage cans; "dark-sky" compliant lighting; quiet hours between 10 pm

and 8 am; implementation of a Weed Control Plan; adhering to guidelines within the Dust and Air Pollution Control and Mitigation Plan; water storage for fire protection; and approval of the water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities by the Department. The Department has no authority to modify conditions not related to the Sanitation in Subdivisions Act, the public water supply laws, or the Water Quality Act.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) regulates water right permits. DNRC has issued final Ground Water Certificates 76L30115573 and 76L30115574, with a January 16, 2018 priority date. Because the project is located within the Glacier National Park Compact area, concurrence from the United States National Park Service was obtained.



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

Y = Impacts may occur.

N = Not present or No significant impact expected.

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?	<p>[N] No surface water or groundwater discharges are proposed for the site. No development of steep slopes is proposed.</p> <p>Several acres of temporary soil disturbance would occur during construction of the road, wastewater lagoon cells and utilities. The Department requires construction sites with greater than 1 acre of disturbance to obtain a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) utilizing Best Management Practices (BMP). The submitted plans and specifications would require the SWPPP and installation by the contractor during construction. The Department requires BMPs to be maintained until the site has been 70% restored/revegetated. The SWPPP and BMPs would prevent erosion by slowing and minimizing surface flow during construction activities and by retaining sediment so that the sediment does not reach surface water.</p> <p>Regarding long-term effluent application in the land application (spray irrigation) area, soils would be tested annually to track nutrient levels. The Department requires a Certified Wastewater Operator to operate and sample this facility. The results of the effluent and soil sampling must be made available to the Department upon request and during on-site inspections. Members of the public may also request to view the results.</p> <p>No significant adverse impacts to geology, soil quality or stability are expected as a result of construction or spray irrigation.</p>

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] No water discharges to groundwater or surface water are proposed as a part of this proposal. Therefore, no impact would be made to water quality. Wastewater effluent would be spray irrigated on pasture grass crops at agronomic rates, so that nutrients are fully utilized by the grass plants. The maximum monthly hydraulic loading rate of the proposed irrigation system would not exceed the maximum soil permeability rate in Department design standards, and the maximum monthly nitrogen loading rate would not exceed the maximum crop nutrient uptake in Department design standards. These design standards ensure that the soil would be able to accept all the wastewater applied and that 100% of the nitrogen would be taken up by the crops.

The Department requires any facility operating a spray irrigation system to sample effluent water quality samples each year to verify application of effluent at agronomic rates, based on the pasture grass crop proposed. Soils would be sampled to ensure nutrient levels do not increase. Sample results are public information, which must be made available to MDEQ and interested parties. Leakage from the lagoon would be minimized by Department requirements that lagoon liners be leak-tested before being put into use. Department design standards allow up to six inches of leakage per year, which would result in this case in approximately 18 pounds of nitrogen per year that would reach the groundwater table. The impact to groundwater would be minimal: a single household drainfield discharges approximately 31 pounds of nitrogen in a year, so this project would discharge slightly more than half that of a single family. Further, incidental leakage from lagoons and land application of sewage at agronomic rates is statutorily nonsignificant for nondegradation purposes under § 75-5-317 because of its low potential for harm to human health and the environment.

No flood plain or wetland is present within the proposed project area.

The proposed public water supply system would use two groundwater wells in a lead/lag/alternate configuration, meaning that only one well would operate at a time. The proposal would pump seasonally at a flow rate of 35 gpm per well. Both wells were pump tested at a flow rate of more than double the long-term pumping rate. During

## IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	<p>these pump tests, the drawdown of water level was less than 1 foot, meaning the cone of depression was minimal and the aquifer was not significantly impacted by the pumping. Both water quality and quantity testing illustrate adequate sources of water for consumption without adverse impacts to the aquifer.</p> <p>Water rights are regulated by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. DNRC has issued final Ground Water Certificates 76L30115573 and 76L30115574, completed January 16, 2018, for a maximum of 35 gpm flow rate for each well (70 gpm total) and a maximum of 9.6 acre-feet volume for both wells combined.</p>
<p>3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulates be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>[N] No significant adverse impacts to air quality are expected as a result of the proposed facilities. Impacts on air quality resulting from issuance of subdivision approval would be short-term due to construction of the facility. Minimizing dust and soils tracking outside the proposed development would be covered in the SWPPP and associated BMPs. The SWPPP and BMPs minimize dust impacts by using water or chemicals to limit airborne particles.</p> <p>The effluent spray irrigation system would operate within required setback distances. Wind monitors would shut down the spray irrigation system during periods of high wind. Other air quality issues related to the development or occupation of the subdivision are not direct or secondary impacts of the proposed facilities.</p>

#### IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be significantly impacted? Are any rare plants or cover types present?

[N] The Natural Heritage Program identifies the following species of special concern within the general surrounding area: velvetleaf huckleberry, pale corydalis, treelike clubmoss, whitebark pine, moonworts, slender wintergreen, and floriferous monkeyflower. The Flathead County planning process concluded that plant species of special concern were located north of the project site.

The Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction Activity would apply to this site, which proposes to disturb more than 1 acre during construction, and requires sites to achieve final stabilization prior to terminating coverage by the permit. As such, the site must maintain the mitigation components identified in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) until final stabilization is achieved. Final stabilization requires the site to establish vegetative cover with a density of 70% of the pre-disturbance level. Final stabilization using vegetation must be accomplished using seeding mixtures of forbs, grasses, and shrubs that are adapted to the conditions of the site. Accordingly, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

## IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:  
Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?

[N] The National Heritage Program identifies abundant wildlife in the area, but DEQ does not anticipate significant adverse impacts to wildlife. Because no water discharges to ground or surface water are proposed as a part of this proposal, impacts to water quality and fish species are not expected to be impacted. Construction of the proposed facilities could cause temporary disturbance to bird nesting or bird and wildlife habitat in the immediate vicinity of the project site, but no long-term adverse effects on biological resources in the area are anticipated. Once completed, the facilities would consist of the lagoons, wastewater pumping stations, spray irrigation area, a water storage tank, and a water pump house, all of which would take up approximately 13.6 acres. More than 120 acres owned by GPI would not be disturbed by the project, leaving ample habitat in the surrounding vicinity.

Space on the site would allow wildlife to travel through the property outside the fenced wastewater lagoons and spray irrigation area. Specifically, GPI-owned property provides a minimum width of 350 feet undeveloped on the west side of the fenced area and 200 feet undeveloped on the east side of the fenced area, which would allow wildlife to travel. At the request of FWP, the applicant also incorporated connecting some of the green area on the west side of the irrigation fields and the wetlands with open space corridor.

As noted throughout the Final EA and these responses to comments, the potential impacts from the proposed subdivision itself are outside the scope of DEQ's MEPA analysis. Nevertheless, impacts to wildlife from the proposed subdivision were considered as part of the county review of the proposed subdivision, during which the applicant consulted with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. In doing so, the county found that impacts to wildlife would be minimal: "Minimal impacts to wildlife habitat as a result of the proposed RV park are anticipated because the subject property contains no particular sensitive habitat, surface waters, wetlands, or riparian areas, and site development would aim to maintain connected open space."



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] The Natural Heritage Program identified the following bird species of concern in the surrounding area: harlequin duck, common loon, varied thrush, pileated woodpecker, brown creeper, Cassin's finch, bald eagle, northern goshawk, and bobolink. DEQ does not anticipate adverse impacts to these species for the reasons stated in paragraph 5.

NHP identified westslope cutthroat trout, bull trout, and pygmy whitefish as fish species of special concern. NHP also identified western toads and reticulate taildropper, both of which are typically found close to water. Aquatic insect species of special concern are the brush-tipped emerald, hooked snowfly, and Alberta snowfly. The proposed facilities would not be constructed near any surface waters or wetlands, so DEQ does not anticipate adverse impacts to these species.

NHP identified the following mammal species of concern in the surrounding area: grizzly bear, Canada lynx, fisher, wolverine, little brown myotis, and pygmy shrew. In general, DEQ does not anticipate significant adverse impacts to these species for the reasons stated in paragraph 5.

Bears may be attracted to sewage in some instances. However, DEQ is involved with lagoon permitting and technical assistance throughout bear country in Montana and is not aware of bear attraction being a pervasive problem. Glacier National Park maintains a sewage lagoon in the immediate vicinity of the proposed facility, and personnel with GNP has informed DEQ that they do not have a problem with bear attraction on the west side of the park. They also informed DEQ that the west-side lagoon is protected only with a chain-link fence. Personnel with Montana FWP indicated to DEQ that FWP does not have a written standard regarding bears and sewage lagoons, but that Yellowstone National Park uses chain-link fences with barbed wire. In response to this information, the applicant decided to supplement the proposed chain-link fence with barbed wire.

The county conditions of approval required the use of bear-proof containers and required that locations for the containers be established within the proposed subdivision. The county conditions also required that wildlife

IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	<p>attractants would be able to be stored in bear-proof containers at all RV spaces and that appropriate signage be installed to identify RV park rules to minimize wildlife attractants to limit potential conflicts with wildlife. Additionally, the Carver Engineering EA states that a number of bear-proof garbage cans are spread throughout the campground and that employees would empty the cans once a day into a large dumpster that would be emptied by Evergreen Disposal on a regular basis. Accordingly, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated.</p>
<p>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: <a href="http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/sage-grouse">http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/sage-grouse</a>? 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.</p>	<p>[N] The Department has verified the facility is not within core, general, or connectivity sage grouse habitat.</p>
<p>8. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] The project is located entirely on private property. No structures exist on the site. Per the Carver Engineering EA prepared for the Flathead County planning process, a search was completed with the Montana State Historic Preservation Office that indicated no known historical or archaeological sites are present on the proposed site.</p>

### IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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 significant visual impacts are expected to occur from the proposed water, wastewater, or stormwater facilities. The facilities are proposed to be located in a treed area that is currently vacant adjacent to the West Glacier Village, comprised of residential homes and commercial businesses. The facilities would be screened from the view from Hwy 2 and the Middle Fork of the Flathead River by trees. The facilities would be located at an elevation that is at least 20 feet lower than surrounding property to the east. The wastewater aerated lagoons and storage cells would be located at least ¼ mile from the nearest existing residence or business structure.

No significant odor impacts are expected to occur from the proposed wastewater lagoon. In addition to being located at least ¼ mile from the nearest existing residence or business structure, the lagoons are proposed to be aerated, which greatly minimizes odor.

Construction of the proposed facilities would cause some short-term noise, but no significant noise is expected from the operation of the facilities. No lighting has been proposed for the facilities under review by the Department. Commenters should also be aware that GPI's major land use permit, issued by the county, requires the proposed subdivision to use dark-sky lighting and requires quiet hours from 10 p.m. to 8 a.m.

Aesthetic impacts caused by the development and occupation of the subdivision as a whole, such as issues involving light and noise pollution, are not direct or secondary impacts of the facilities under review by the Department, and were considered by Flathead County during the local platting process.



IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
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)	<p>[N] The project would use groundwater as its source water. Water rights are regulated by the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. (DNRC has issued pending Ground Water Certificates 76L30115573 and 76L30115574, completed January 16, 2018, for a maximum of 35 gpm flow rate for each well (70 gpm total) and a maximum of 9.6 acre-feet volume for both wells combined).</p> <p>See #2 above regarding the well pump testing.</p>
11. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N] At present, there are no other nearby activities that would affect the project.

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
12. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>[N] Public Water Supply drinking water standards would ensure water quality standards would be met and human health would be protected. No impacts are expected.</p> <p>The wastewater aerated lagoon, spray irrigation area and the 200-ft setback area would be fenced and locked to prohibit human entry. No impacts are expected.</p>
13. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] The proposed water, wastewater, storm water and solid waste facilities are not expected to alter industrial, commercial and agricultural activities and production in the area.
14. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N] Operation of the wastewater facility is expected to result in one permanent seasonal job. Several temporary construction jobs will be created to build the water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure.
15. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N] Operation of the water, wastewater, storm water and solid waste infrastructure is not expected to impact tax base.

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
16. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed?	<p>[N] Construction and operation of the water and wastewater utilities are not expected to result in direct or secondary impacts on schools or police government services. Other impacts on government services caused by the development and occupation of the proposed subdivision are not direct or secondary impacts of the facilities under review by the Department.</p> <p>The construction of the proposed systems would have some impact on the local roadways and local services, but DEQ does not expect that any impact would be significant. Traffic generated by the construction of the proposed systems would be limited in severity, duration, and frequency, since the impact would cease as soon as construction was completed. Likewise, traffic generated by the construction of the proposed systems would be significantly less than the traffic generated by the subdivision as a whole, which the Flathead County Board of County Commissioners found to be acceptable for the reasons listed in the response to comment above. Traffic generated by the operation of the systems would be negligible because the systems would be operated by a single operator.</p>
17. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] The applicant must comply with all applicable federal, state, county, and other local requirements related to zoning, authorizations, permits, and approvals. Flathead County has issued preliminary plat approval.
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] This project would be located adjacent to Glacier National Park. The facility would provide a location where visitors can camp to access such recreation. No direct recreational access route exists through this private parcel. See also Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity (21).

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
19. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N] The area surrounding the proposed subdivision is comprised of commercial (tourist-based) and residential property. Some of the proposed cabins within this proposed facility are intended to be used for seasonal employee housing. No significant adverse impacts are expected from the facilities under review by the Department.
20. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N] The project is in an area comprised of developed commercial and residential property. There are no direct or secondary impacts to social structures, mores, or lifestyles resulting from the facilities under review by the Department. See also Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity (21).
21. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N] The proposed subdivision would be located near Glacier National Park and the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, a federally designated Wild and Scenic River. The immediate area consists of the town of West Glacier and developed commercial and residential properties, including a golf course and other tourist-based development. The proposed facilities would serve tourist RV spaces and cabins that are located within a few miles of the Apgar Campground, which is the largest campground in Glacier National Park. The facilities under review by the Department are not expected to cause any significant adverse impacts to the unique qualities of the area.
22. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N]
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.	[Y]

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
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 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.	[N]

#### 24. Description of and Impacts of Other Alternatives Considered:

##### No Action Alternative

The no action alternative is required under MEPA to describe what would happen if the proposed subdivision project were not to receive Department approval. Under this alternative, the facilities and subdivision would not be built, and no impacts would occur. It must be noted, however, that if the proposed subdivision meets all legal requirements of the Sanitation in Subdivisions Act, the public water supply laws, and the Water Quality Act, the Department is required to approve the subdivision, and this alternative could not be implemented.

##### Agency-Modified Alternatives

The Department does not propose an agency-modified alternative for this project because an agency-modified alternative would not mitigate or eliminate impacts beyond that of the applicant-submitted proposal. The Department does not propose an agency-modified alternative for the storm water drainage facilities because the applicant-submitted proposal has been designed so that offsite runoff will not exceed pre-development conditions. The Department does not propose an



agency-modified alternative for the public water supply system because the pump-test results of the applicant-submitted proposal showed no significant adverse impact to the aquifer.

The Department also does not propose an agency-modified alternative for the proposed wastewater lagoon and spray irrigation facilities. As discussed throughout this EA, the location of the wastewater lagoons and spray irrigation system was selected to be over ¼ mile from an existing home or business. Additionally, the site was selected to be partially concealed by trees and at a lower elevation than surrounding homes, so visual impact would be minimal. The lagoons are proposed to be aerated, which greatly minimizes odor.

The Department eliminated from consideration alternatives that would involve the construction of facilities not proposed by the applicant. Such alternatives are outside the needs and goals of the applicant, and MEPA does not require the consideration of alternative facilities or an alternative to the proposed project itself. Section 75-1-220(1), MCA.

## **25. Summary of Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impacts:**

### Storm Water drainage:

Public comments have expressed concerns about how storm water runoff would be managed and how it would affect River Bend Drive and adjacent properties. The Department has determined that no significant adverse impacts to the physical or human environment associated with the proposed storm water drainage system would occur, since the proposed Bio-Detention areas and site grading would allow storm water to be managed without off-site flows exceeding pre-development amounts. The storm water plans were designed to ensure that roads within the RV park would not be overtopped during a 10-year storm event. Cabin building sites were designed to not be inundated during a 100-year storm event.

### Aquifer sustainability to support the proposal and drinking water quality:

The project would use groundwater as its source water. Aquifer testing of the proposed public water supply wells illustrates a sustainable water source with high water quality. Both wells were pump tested at a flow rate of more than double the long-term pumping rate. During these pump tests, the drawdown of water level was less than 1 foot, meaning the cone of depression (i.e., the distance where the aquifer water level is lowered due to a pumping well) was minimal and the aquifer was not significantly impacted by the pumping. Both water quality and quantity testing illustrate adequate sources of water for consumption without adverse impacts to the aquifer. The proposal is to pump seasonally at a flow rate of 35 gpm per well.

DNRC has issued pending Ground Water Certificates 76L30115573 and 76L30115574, completed January 16, 2018, for the proposed wells. The proposed Public Water Supply system would be required to meet drinking water standards to protect consumers.

### Wastewater treatment and disposal:

Public comments have expressed concerns about the wastewater lagoon, including concerns about sewage odors, effects of wastewater effluent spray on residents' homes, and effects of the sewage system on the local aquifer. The Department has determined that the proposed wastewater lagoon would cause no significant adverse impacts. The proposed wastewater aeration lagoon cells, storage cells and effluent spray irrigation system would allow the wastewater effluent to be treated and applied at agronomic rates to a pasture crop. With this system, no ground water or surface water discharge takes place, thus no impact to groundwater or surface water quality results. The aeration system design achieves the required oxygen levels to achieve significant BOD removal. The aerated lagoons and storage cells would be located over one ¼ mile from the nearest existing home or business. The site is surrounded by trees, is proposed in a location that is more than 20 feet lower in elevation than surrounding area to the east, and provides 200 feet of horizontal setback from surrounding land use, making the facility less noticeable visually and minimizing any drift from the spray irrigation system. Leakage would be minimized by installation of a liner that must be leak-tested before being put into use, and allowed incidental leakage would be minor, as discussed above.

#### Solid Waste Disposal

No significant impacts are expected to occur from the disposal of waste in the Flathead County landfill.

#### **26. Cumulative Effects:**

Under § 75-1-208(11), an agency shall, when appropriate, evaluate the cumulative impacts of a proposed project. Cumulative impacts are the collective impacts on the human environment of the proposed action when considered in conjunction with other past and present actions related to the proposed action by location or generic type. Related future actions must also be considered when these actions are under concurrent consideration by any agency through preimpact statement studies, separate impact statement evaluations, or permit processing procedures.

No significant adverse cumulative impacts are expected to occur from the proposed storm water, water supply, or wastewater facilities. As discussed throughout this EA, the proposed storm water facilities would not increase offsite runoff, the proposed water supply facilities would not significantly impact the aquifer, and the proposed wastewater facilities would not increase nutrient discharge in the area.

Cumulative impacts from other State actions at this site are related to water appropriation for the project's water supply wells. Because these impacts are related to water appropriation, they are not direct or secondary impacts of the proposal to install public water supply wells.

Cumulative impacts related to the construction and operation of the proposed facilities is not a significant adverse change from the current commercial and residential development in the area. Cumulative impacts related to the development and use of the proposed subdivision are not direct or secondary impacts of the proposed storm water, water supply, or wastewater facilities.

**27. Preferred Alternative and Rationale:**

The preferred alternative is the applicant-submitted proposal for the subdivision, public water system, and public wastewater treatment and disposal system, utilizing the design methods proposed by Carver Engineering. As noted above, the no action alternative cannot be implemented if the proposal meets applicable legal requirements, and modifications would not mitigate or eliminate impacts beyond that of the applicant-submitted proposal.

**Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:**

☐ EIS    ☐ More Detailed EA    ☒ No Further Analysis

Rationale for Recommendation:

The Department has determined that no further analysis is needed. As discussed throughout this EA, the design and location of the proposed facilities would limit the probability, severity, and extent of any impacts, including cumulative impacts. Groundwater pump testing and water quality sampling illustrates ample aquifer production to serve the proposed wells without impact to adjacent groundwater wells. Further, the probability, severity, and extent of any impacts of the proposed wastewater treatment and disposal system would be low, as the proposed design would allow wastewater to be handled without discharge to groundwater or surface water. Aesthetic impacts, such as visual and odor impacts, would be low because the proposed aerated lagoons minimize odor; the lagoon and storage cells are located ¼ from any existing homes or business and are located at a lower elevation than the adjacent highway and West Glacier homes and business; the naturally treed area provides visual screening; and the rain and wind sensors shut down the spray irrigation system on rainy or windy days. The probability, severity, and extent of impacts, including cumulative impacts, from the storm drainage and solid waste proposals would be low, since storm water runoff would be routed and detained onsite and solid waste would be contained in bear-proof containers and hauled to the Flathead County landfill.

Because the probability, severity, and extent of impacts from the proposed facilities would be low, the proposed facilities would not impact Glacier National Park, the Middle Fork of the Flathead River, or other important state resources or values, and would not change the already tourist-based West Glacier area. Broader impacts of the proposed subdivision are not direct or secondary impacts of the facilities under review by the Department. For all these reasons, no precedent that would commit the Department to future actions would occur, and there would be no conflict with other laws or requirements. Accordingly, the project lacks significant adverse effects to the human and physical environment based on the criteria in ARM 17.4.608, so an environmental impact statement is not required.

**28. Public Involvement:**

A 21-day public comment period was held. DEQ reviewed and responded to all substantive comments in the responsiveness document attached to this document.



29. **Persons, agencies and documents consulted in the preparation of this analysis:**

- West Glacier RV and Cabin Village Environmental Assessment, prepared for Flathead County Planning Department by Carver Engineering
- Flathead County Preliminary Plat, West Glacier RV and Cabin Village, Conditional Approval and Findings of Fact by Flathead County Board of Commissioners, May 19, 2017
- Flathead County Board of Commissioners approval of the Major Land Use Permit #FCMU 17-01 to establish a Planned Community on a property within the Middle Canyon Region of the Canyon Area Land Use Regulatory System (CALURS), May 19, 2017
- Department of Natural Resources and Conservation pending Ground Water Certificates 76L30115573 and 76L30115574, completed January 16, 2018.
- KRO 18-16 DNRC Water Right Review of West Glacier RV and Cabin Village PWS Tract 2 COS 20466 BLA of Tracts 2 and 6 of COS 19288 Retracement (2012), January 20, 2018
- On-going DEQ review of the proposed project by Emily J. Gillespie, PE:
  - EQ#18-1341 Subdivision review
  - EQ#17-2156 Public Water Supply system review
  - EQ#17-2167 Public Wastewater system review
- Tom Cowan, PE, Carver Engineering
- Brad Bennett, Applied Water Consulting LLC
- Kevin Frey, Grizzly Bear Specialist, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, regarding bears and sewage lagoons.
- Jay Burrell, West Lakes Utility Supervisor, Glacier National Park, regarding bears and sewage lagoons.

**EA Prepared By:**

Emily J. Gillespie      Engineering Bureau  
Aaron Pettis          Legal Review

**Approved By:**

  
Mark Smith, Acting Bureau Chief, Engineering Bureau

5/14/18  
Date