DEQ
Montana Department
of Environmental Quality

# FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
# FOR THE
# DRY-REDWATER REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY
# EAST YELLOWSTONE WATER MAIN EXTENSION PROJECT

**TO: ALL INTERESTED PERSONS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Date: | March 9, 2016 |
| Action: | East Yellowstone Water Main Extension Project |
| Location of Project: | Richland County, Montana |
| DWSRF Funding: | $155,000 |
| Richland County Funding: | $52,000 |
| DNRC Grant: | $400,000 |
| Montana Dakota Utilities: | $100,000 |
| Total Project Cost: | $720,900 |

An environmental review has been conducted by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program regarding the East Yellowstone Water Main Extension project proposed by the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority.

The project consists of construction of water main extensions to serve some businesses and 152 residents by installing 4,450 lineal feet of 8-inch diameter water main in Montana Highway 23 right-of-way east to the Yellowstone River, along with 2-inch and 3-inch diameter extensions to the west, as shown on the attached map. The project site is located in Sections 8 and 9, T22N, R59E, PMM. The project will not include fire hydrants and is not intended to provide fire-fighting flows. Water will be supplied by the Sidney municipal water system. The affected environment will be the vicinity of Montana Highway 23 one mile south of the Sidney city limits in Richland County, Montana. The human environment affected will include residents and visitors of the area. Based on the environmental assessment, the project is not expected to have any significant adverse impacts upon terrestrial and aquatic life or habitat, including endangered species, water quality or quantity, air quality, geological features, cultural or historical features, or social quality. No potential contaminant sources were identified within the project area. The project specifications will contain necessary actions that the construction contractor must take in the event that soil or groundwater contamination is encountered during construction.

The following documents were used in preparing the environmental review of this project: 1) Contract Documents and Specifications, East Yellowstone Waterline Extension, Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority, February 2016, prepared by Interstate Engineering, Sidney, Montana; 2) Construction Plans for Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority, East Yellowstone Waterline Extension, February 2016, prepared by Interstate Engineering, Sidney, Montana; 3) Engineering Design Report, Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority, East Yellowstone Waterline Extension,

Sections 8 and 9, T22N, R59E, PMM, February 2016, prepared by Interstate Engineering, Sidney, Montana; and 4) Uniform Application Form for Montana Public Facility Projects, submitted to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality by the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority on October 19, 2015. These references are available for review upon request by contacting:

Gary J. Wiens, P.E.
Department of Environmental Quality
1520 East Sixth Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601
Phone: 406-444-7838
E-mail: gwiens@mt.gov

or:

Mandi Nay, Coordinator
Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority
106 10th Street
Circle, Montana 59215
Phone: 406-485-3792

Comments on this finding or on the EA may be submitted to DEQ at the above address. Comments must be postmarked no later than 30 days after the date of publication of this FONSI in the newspaper. After evaluating substantive comments received, DEQ will revise the EA or determine if an EIS is necessary. Otherwise, this finding of no significant impact will stand if no substantive comments are received during the comment period or if substantive comments are received and evaluated and the environmental impacts are still determined to be non-significant.

Signed,

Todd Teegarden

Todd Teegarden, Chief
Technical & Financial Assistance Bureau

c: file

DRY-REDWATER REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY
EAST YELLOWSTONE WATER MAIN EXTENSION

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

# I. COVER SHEET

## A. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

| | |
|---|---|
| Applicant: | Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority |
| Address: | 106th 10th Street<br>Circle, Montana 59215 |
| Project Number: | E.Q. #16-1691 |

## B. CONTACT PERSON

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | Mandi Nay, Coordinator<br>Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority |
| Address: | P.O. Box 276<br>Circle, Montana 59215 |
| Telephone: | 406-485-3792 |

## C. ABSTRACT

The Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority is proposing to construct water main extensions to serve some businesses and 152 residents by installing 4,450 lineal feet of 8-inch diameter water main in Montana Highway 23 right-of-way east to the Yellowstone River, along with 2-inch and 3-inch diameter extensions to the west, as shown on the attached map. The project site is located in Sections 8 and 9, T22N, R59E, PMM. The project will not include fire hydrants and is not intended to provide fire-fighting flows. Water will be supplied by the Sidney municipal water system.

The project will be funded by a combination of state and local grants and a State Revolving Fund loan. Environmentally sensitive characteristics such as wetlands, floodplains and threatened or endangered species are not expected to be adversely impacted as a consequence of the proposed project. No significant long-term environmental impacts were identified.

## D. COMMENT PERIOD

Thirty (30) calendar days.

# II. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

## A. EXISTING WATER SUPPLIES

Residences and businesses are currently served by wells that are subject to chronic bacterial growth and unpleasantly high concentrations of minerals, often requiring the installation and maintenance of costly water treatment systems.

## B. PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project includes the following:

- Install 4,450 lineal feet of 8-inch diameter water main east to the Yellowstone River in Montana Highway 23 right-of-way, as shown on the attached map.

- Connect the new water main to the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority system, a 10-inch diameter existing water main one mile south of the city limits of Sidney.
- Install 581 lineal feet of 2-inch diameter water main extension west from the connection point to the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority system.
- Install approximately 1,320 lineal feet of 3-inch diameter water main extension west from the intersection of Lincoln Avenue and Montana Highway 23.

A safe and reliable water supply is important for the public health and welfare of the residents of the district.

## III. ALTERNATIVES, INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

### A. WATER SUPPLY ALTERNATIVES

Two alternatives for meeting the area's water supply needs were addressed:

1. No action.
2. Extend service from the Sidney municipal water system.

1. NO ACTION – This alternative would involve making no improvements to the existing water supply facilities. The no action alternative does not adequately address the water supply issues facing the area and is therefore not recommended.

2. EXTEND CITY OF SIDNEY WATER SERVICE – The city has sufficient drinking water treatment capacity and the willingness to extend service to his area. Eventually, upon completion of the Dry-Redwater regional water system, drinking water would be supplied from a new water treatment plant on the North Fork of Rock Creek on the Fort Peck Reservoir.

### B. TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS

The total estimated cost of the proposed water system improvements is $720,900. The Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority will receive a $400,000 grant from the state Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, a $52,000 grant from Richland County, and $100,000 from Montana Dakota Utilities. The Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority will take out a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan for $155,000 with a term of 20 years and an interest rate of 2.5 percent. The project is expected to result in an average monthly water rate of approximately $53.80, based on 41 residential and 114 total projected equivalent dwelling units.

## IV. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

### A. PROJECT AREA

The proposed water main extension would begin approximately one mile south of the city of Sidney and extend to the west bank of the Yellowstone River. The project location is shown in the attached vicinity map.

### B. POPULATION AND FLOW PROJECTIONS

Assuming the number of persons per household is 2.6, the existing population is estimated at 240 people. Design year projection is for 283 people and 109 equivalent dwelling units. Based upon estimates of current water usage, the design flow is 60 gallons per minute.

C. NATURAL FEATURES

Richland County lies in the eastern part of Montana, bordering on North Dakota to the east. Sidney, the county seat, is in the east-central part of the county, west of the Yellowstone River. Agriculture became an important part of the region after the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project was completed in 1909. The area later experienced an oil boom and bust in the late 1970s and early 1980s, bringing an influx of people to the town for a short period of time. In recent years the town has experienced another surge in oil exploration activity.

The city has a total land area of 2.66 square miles and experiences a semi-arid climate with long, cold, dry winters. Precipitation averages approximately 14 inches a year.

As part of a geotechnical evaluation, four soil borings were conducted in the project area. At the surface, three of the borings encountered fill materials to depths of 2 to 4 feet, while one of the borings disclosed less than ½ foot of fat clay topsoil. Below the fill, the borings revealed alluvium deposits to depths ranging from 6½ feet to the termination depths of two of the borings. Below the alluvial deposits, the borings encountered weathered bedrock deposits likely associated with the Tongue River formation. These soil conditions are not expected to present any major obstacles to the construction work proposed.

Big game in the surrounding region includes mule deer, white-tailed deer, pronghorn antelope, and Rocky Mountain Elk. Fisheries are limited to the Yellowstone River and its major tributaries. Fish species of special concern in the Yellowstone River are paddlefish, pallid sturgeon, shortnose gar, and sturgeon chub. Paddlefish is a species of concern because only seven populations are thought to be in existence in the world. The Yellowstone and Missouri rivers contain one of the last stable populations of paddlefish.

Non-game animals include the long-eared bat, snapping turtle, Canadian toad, spotted bat, spiny softshell turtle, black-footed ferret, milk snake, swift fox, smooth green snake, lynx, fringed myotis, black-tailed prairie dog, Merriam's shrew, and Preble's shrew.

Game birds of the region include the sharp-tailed grouse, sage grouse, wild turkey, pheasants and waterfowl, including Canadian geese and 19 species of ducks. Non-game birds include the bald eagle, whooping crane, common loon, burrowing owl, peregrine falcon, northern goshawk, mountain plover, piping plover, white-face ibis, loggerhead shrike, dickcissel, Baird's sparrow, LeConte's sparrow, sage sparrow, black tern, and least tern.

## V. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED PROJECT

### A. DIRECT AND INDIRECT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. Housing and Commercial Development – No change is anticipated as a result of this project.

2. Future Land Use – Land use in the immediate vicinity of the project is predominately residential, commercial, and agricultural. Land use within the project area is not expected to change significantly in the future. No adverse impacts to land use are expected from the proposed project.

3. Floodplains and Wetlands – The project area is not within a designated floodplain. No wetlands have been identified in the vicinity of the proposed project.

4. Cultural Resources – No cultural resources have been identified in the project area. All construction work will be conducted in previously-disturbed land.

5. Fish and Wildlife –The Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program was contacted regarding potential impacts on sage grouse habitat. In a letter dated February 9, 2016, Carolyn Sime, Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program Manager, responded that based on the information provided the project is "outside of sage grouse habitat designated as a core area, general habitat, or a connectivity area for the purposes of conservation." Because the project-related construction impacts are temporary or will occur in a previously-disturbed setting, significant adverse effects to fish, wildlife, and habitat resources are unlikely.

6. Water Quality – The proposed project is not expected to have any long-term impacts on surface or groundwater quality. Short-term impacts on water quality can be controlled through proper construction practices. Since no discharge or placement of fill in wetlands or waters of the United States is anticipated, a Section 404 (Clean Water Act) permit will not be required.

7. Air Quality - Short-term negative impacts on the air quality may occur from heavy equipment, dust, and exhaust fumes during project construction. Proper construction practices and dust abatement measures will be implemented during construction to control dust, thus minimizing this problem.

8. Public Health – The proposed project is not expected to have adverse impacts on public health, and should instead enhance public health by providing a safe and reliable drinking water supply.

9. Energy - During construction of the proposed project additional energy will be consumed, causing a direct short-term impact on this resource.

10. Noise - Short-term impacts from increased noise levels may occur during construction of the proposed project improvements. Construction activities are anticipated to last several months and will occur only during daylight hours.

B. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Short-term construction related impacts, such as noise, dust and traffic disruption, will occur but should be minimized through proper construction management. Energy consumption during construction cannot be avoided.

## VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Water rates for the proposed project will be considered at a public meeting to be held by the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority at least 90 days before construction begins.

## VII. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The following documents were used in the environmental review of this project and are considered to be part of the project file:

A. Contract Documents and Specifications, East Yellowstone Waterline Extension, Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority, February 2016, prepared by Interstate Engineering, Sidney, Montana.

B. Construction Plans for Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority, East Yellowstone Waterline Extension, February 2016, prepared by Interstate Engineering, Sidney, Montana.

C. Engineering Design Report, Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority, East Yellowstone Waterline Extension, Sections 8 and 9, T22N, R59E, PMM, February 2016, prepared by Interstate Engineering, Sidney, Montana.

D. Uniform Application Form for Montana Public Facility Projects, submitted to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality by the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority on October 19, 2015.

## VIII. AGENCY ACTION, APPLICABLE REGULATIONS AND PERMITTING AUTHORITIES

The Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority must receive approval from the Department of Environmental Quality to construct and operate the water system improvements outlined in this environmental assessment. In addition, the proposed action may require other permits that must be obtained by the construction contractor, as described in the project documents approved by the department. The contractor will be required to submit the necessary documentation, including a notice of intent and storm water pollution prevention plan, to the department's storm water permitting program prior to beginning construction.

## IX. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

☐ EIS ☐ More Detailed EA ☑ No Further Analysis

Rationale for Recommendation: Through this environmental assessment, the department has determined that none of the adverse impacts of the proposed project are significant. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. The environmental review was conducted in accordance with the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.4.607, 17.4.608, 17.4.609 and 17.4.610. The environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis because none of the adverse effects of the project are considered significant.

**EA Prepared By:**

Gary J. Wiens, P.E — 3/8/16 Date

**Approved By:**

Mark A. Smith, P.E. — 3/8/16 Date

| Revision No. | Date | By | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

G:\Projects\2012\S12-06\188 - Sidney\Sidney South Extensions\East Yellowstone Extension.dwg - 10/17/2014 - 10:00 AM - JEK Plotted

DRWA
SIDNEY SOUTH EXTENSIONS
EAST YELLOWSTONE EXTENSION
RICHLAND COUNTY, MONTANA

Drawn By: BMA
Project No.: S12-06-188
Checked By: JEK
Date: OCT 2014

Interstate Engineering, Inc.
P.O. Box 648
425 East Main Street
Sidney, Montana 59270
Ph (406) 433-5617
Fax (406) 433-5618
www.interstateeng.com
Other offices in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota

INTERSTATE ENGINEERING
Professionals you need, people you trust

00
SHEET NO.