



**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR
KALISPELL DRINKING WATER EMERGING CONTAMINANT
RESPONSE TO PFAS PROJECT**

TO: ALL INTERESTED PERSONS

Date: January 8, 2026
Action: New Wells and Transmission Mains Project
Location of Project: Kalispell, Flathead County, Montana
DEQ/DWSRF Funding: \$17,950,000
Total Project Cost: \$17,950,000

An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regarding construction of new wells and transmission mains for the city of Kalispell water system, in Flathead County.

The proposed project involves the construction of four new wells at the Noffsinger Spring area and a transmission main across the golf course to connect to system storage reservoirs and two wells at Dry Bridge Park and a new transmission main along Woodland Avenue. New buildings and treatment facilities will be built at each location. The purpose of the project is to make improvements to the drinking water system that are needed to protect public health by deactivating and replacing PFAS contaminated water sources.

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.

The DEQ utilized the following references in completing its environmental assessment of this project: a Uniform Application and Uniform Environmental Checklist for Montana Public Facility Projects and a Kalispell Drinking Water Emerging Contaminant Preliminary Engineering Report (dated January 2025) which were prepared by Robert Peccia & Associates. Review of potential contaminant sources was also completed by the Source Water Protection Section of DEQ.

In addition to these references, letters were sent to seven local, state, and federal agencies: the Montana Historical Society's Historic Preservation Office (SHPO); the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USCOE); the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (DFWP); USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services; Montana DEQ; and DNRC. Responses have been received from



SHPO and USCOE. These references are available for review upon request by contacting:

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201 1st Ave E.
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OR

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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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "S. Koenig", written over a horizontal line.

Sandie Koenig, DWSRF Supervisor
Engineering Bureau

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KALISPELL DRINKING WATER EMERGING CONTAMINANT
RESPONSE TO PFAS PROJECT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

I. COVER SHEET

A. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Applicant: City of Kalispell
Address: 201 1st Avenue East
Kalispell, MT 59901
Project Number: EQ No. 26-1232 and 26-1367

B. CONTACT PERSON

Name: Susie Turner, P.E
City of Kalispell Public Works Department
Address: 201 1st Avenue East
Kalispell, MT 59901
Telephone: (406) 210-9191

C. ABSTRACT

The City of Kalispell, with a population of approximately 30,000 residents, relies on a public water system that draws groundwater from the deep alluvial aquifer. This system is divided into two pressure zones: the Upper Pressure Zone (UPZ) and the Lower Pressure Zone (LPZ). Groundwater wells located within city limits serve as the primary sources of drinking water for both zones, supporting the community's domestic, commercial, and industrial needs.

In 2022, as part of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR), the City of Kalispell began testing its public water supply for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). These compounds, often referred to as "forever chemicals," have been linked to various health risks. Testing revealed the presence of PFAS in the Grandview Wells (serving the UPZ) and the Armory Well (serving the LPZ). On April 10, 2024, the EPA announced new national regulations limiting the permissible levels of specific PFAS compounds in drinking water.

Continued monitoring confirmed persistent positive detections of PFAS in these wells. The remaining wells, while free of detectable PFAS, are insufficient to meet water demand and ensure compliance with Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulations.

The City of Kalispell hired Robert Peccia & Associates to prepare a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) to evaluate and determine a preferred alternative to address the wells containing PFAS. The preferred alternative includes decommissioning the existing PFAS-containing wells and developing new groundwater well sources in two locations in the city for each pressure zone. Specifically, the project involves constructing 6 new wells (4 in the UPZ and 2 in the LPZ) and two large transmission mains to connect the wells to the city's water distribution system. The project aims to safeguard public health, comply with regulatory requirements, and provide a sustainable, long-term water supply for Kalispell's rapidly growing population.

The project will be jointly funded by the DEQ Emerging Contaminants in Small and Disadvantaged Communities Grant and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Emerging Contaminant Grant in the form of a forgiven 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 during the preparation of this document.

The DEQ Public Water Supply and Engineering Bureaus have prepared this Environmental Assessment (EA) to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

D. COMMENT PERIOD

30 day comment period.

II. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

As documented in the 2025 Preliminary Engineering Report (PER), the City of Kalispell must take decisive action to address the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) detected in critical groundwater wells that supply the municipal drinking water system. The Grandview and Armory wells currently exceed regulatory thresholds for PFAS and must either undergo costly treatment upgrades or be decommissioned. However, removing these wells from service would result in insufficient system capacity to meet existing user demand. To ensure continued compliance with federal and state drinking water standards and to maintain reliable service, the city must develop new groundwater sources and implement associated infrastructure improvements. These measures are essential to replace compromised supply and safeguard public health.

A. EXISTING FACILITIES

The city has an approximate population of 30,000 people served by approximately 8,280 metered residential, commercial, and industrial water service connections. Figure 1.C.1 illustrates the existing water supply and distribution system for the City’s service area, which comprises the following components:



- Two Pressure Zones: The system is divided into two pressure zones: the Upper Pressure Zone (UPZ) and the Lower Pressure Zone (LPZ). These zones cover elevations ranging from 3,102 feet to 2,905 feet above sea level, with a dividing boundary at an elevation of 2,996 feet. Each zone operates independently, utilizing its own groundwater source wells and water storage reservoirs. The two pressure zones are interconnected via a pressure reducing control valve and booster pump stations. During periods of high demand, the LPZ supplies water to the UPZ through booster pumps.
- Water Sources: The system is supplied by thirteen municipal wells and one spring. Table 1 provides details for each source, including the name, year of construction, and the pressure zone it serves. The City’s water is drawn from groundwater wells located within city limits, which supply both the distribution system and storage reservoirs. Water is disinfected at each source using chlorination before it enters the storage and distribution system. It is important to note that Noffsinger Spring is only utilized during periods of high demand, such as the summer irrigation months. More detailed descriptions of each source can be found in Section 2.A.4 (UPZ) and Section 5.A.2 (LPZ) of the PER.

Table 1 – Summary of Kalispell’s Water System Wells

Well	Year Constructed	Pressure Zone
Grandview Well # 1	1997	Upper
Grandview Well #2	1997	Upper
West View Well	2008	Upper
Silverbrook Well	2010	Upper
Section 36 Well	2018	Upper
4 Mile Well	2024	Upper
Tower Well	2024	Upper
Armory Well	1964	Lower
Depot Park Well	1956	Lower
Buffalo Hill Well	1997	Lower
Old School Station Well #1	2007	Lower
Old School Station Well #2	2007	Lower
Noffsinger Spring	1916	Lower
North Main Well	2024	Lower

- **Four Finished Water Storage Reservoirs:** The system includes four storage reservoirs that provide both operational and emergency storage, ensuring an adequate water supply and maintaining consistent pressure during peak demand periods. Table 2 summarizes these storage facilities, detailing their names, construction years, capacities, and the pressure zones they serve. Kalispell is currently constructing a new tank in the UPZ, and as part of this project, an existing tank will be decommissioned.

Table 1 – Summary of Kalispell’s Water System Storage Facilities

Tank	Year Constructed	Type	Size	Pressure Zone	Picture
Shepherd	2008	Concrete	2 MG	Upper	
Elevated Tank	2025	Composite	1 MG	Upper	
Buffalo Hill Elevated Tank ⁽¹⁾	1957	Elevated	0.1 MG	Upper	
Buffalo Hill Reservoir #1 ⁽²⁾	1912	Concrete	1.7 MG	Lower	
Buffalo Hill Reservoir #2 ⁽²⁾	1952	Concrete	2.7 MG	Lower	

(1) Buffalo Hill Elevated tank will be decommissioned upon completion of elevated tank late spring 2025.

(2) Buffalo Hill Reservoirs 1 and 2 are under rehabilitation and are to be replaced in 2025

- **Two Booster Stations:** Located at the Buffalo Hill Site, the two booster stations pump water from the Lower Zone reservoirs to the UPZ distribution mains when water demand is high.
- **Distribution System:** The City’s distribution network includes approximately 141 miles of water mains ranging from 4 to 24 inches in

diameter. This network, which features transmission and distribution piping, instrumentation, controls, booster pumping stations, isolation valves, and fire hydrants.

III. ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. UPPER PRESSURE ZONE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternatives for addressing the upper pressure zone system needs included:

1. **NO ACTION** - The Grandview wells are essential for meeting the growing water demands in the upper pressure zone (UPZ). If the Grandview Wells were removed from the system due to PFAS concentrations exceeding EPA regulatory MCLs, the UPZ would struggle to meet summertime demands during peak demands. Based on this concern, the no-action alternative was not recommended.
2. **TREATMENT OF EXISTING GRANDVIEW WELLS** - The first permanent solution considered is treating the water from the existing Grandview Wells. The following treatment technologies have been identified as Best Available Technologies (BATs) for treating PFAS, as per the EPA:
 - Granular Activated Carbon (GAC)
 - Ion Exchange Resins (IX)
 - Reverse Osmosis (RO)
 - Modified Clay Adsorption
3. **DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW GROUNDWATER SOURCE** - Another approach is to develop new groundwater well sources in locations free from PFAS compounds. Several potential locations for these new wells have been identified and are discussed in detail in Section 3.C of the PER. Establishing a new well is an attractive option as the UPZ continues to grow, with projections indicating sustained future growth. This increased water demand means that additional water sources will be needed regardless of the status of the Grandview Wells.
4. **HYBRID SOLUTION: TREATMENT OF GRANDVIEW WELLS AND A NEW GROUNDWATER SOURCE** - A hybrid approach combines treating the Grandview Wells for PFAS reduction to levels below EPA MCLs with the development of a new groundwater source free of PFAS. This approach has several advantages. The Grandview Wells are known to be highly productive and are strategically located within the UPZ to efficiently feed both water storage tanks. Furthermore, the temporary treatment system currently implemented at the Grandview Wells has shown positive initial results, making a permanent treatment solution a viable option.

B. LOWER PRESSURE ZONE ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternatives for addressing the lower pressure zone system needs included:

1. NO ACTION - The Armory Well, which supplies the lower pressure zone (LPZ) with water, tested positive for PFAS compounds. While these concentrations were below the Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) set by the EPA, the PFOS levels are alarmingly close to exceeding regulatory thresholds. This well is a critical water source for the LPZ, and the implications of removing it from the system are significant and the city has opted for a proactive approach in seeking alternative water sources to replace the Armory Well. Based on this, the no-action alternative was not recommended.
2. TREATMENT OF EXISTING ARMORY WELL - The first solution considered is treating the water from the existing Armory Well. The following treatment technologies have been identified as Best Available Technologies (BATs) for treating PFAS, as per the EPA:
 - Granular Activated Carbon (GAC)
 - Ion Exchange Resins (IX)
 - Reverse Osmosis (RO)
 - Modified Clay Adsorption
3. DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW GROUNDWATER SOURCE - Another approach is to develop new groundwater well sources in locations free from PFAS compounds. Several potential locations for these new wells have been identified and are discussed in detail in Section 6.C of the PER. Establishing a new well near the center of the pressure zone, similar to the Armory, is strategically important to maintaining system hydraulics as close to the existing conditions as possible.

C. PROPOSED ACTION

The project includes the construction of 6 new wells and two large transmission mains to connect the wells to the city's water distribution system. This will occur in the city's two pressure zones as described below:

1. UPPER PRESSURE ZONE - The preferred project alternative involves constructing four new 12-inch diameter wells at Noffsinger Springs, targeting a combined water production rate of 4,000 gpm with a firm capacity of 3,000 gpm. The existing Noffsinger Springs Building will be renovated and upgraded with new piping, a flowmeter, and the necessary mechanical equipment. Additionally, a

new 24-inch transmission main will be constructed to connect the new wells to the LPZ water storage reservoirs, which will serve as reserves for a new UPZ booster station. This station will pump up to 3,600 gpm into the UPZ, replacing the 2,000 gpm capacity of the Grandview Wells and the 1,100 gpm capacity of the aging booster stations.

2. LOWER PRESSURE ZONE - The preferred project alternative involves constructing two new 12-inch diameter wells at Dry Bridge Park, targeting a combined water production rate of 2,000 gpm. A new pump house will be built, equipped with new piping, a flowmeter, and the necessary mechanical equipment. Additionally, the existing 8-inch main on Woodland Avenue will be upsized to a 16-inch transmission main to help reduce pressure spikes in the area.

D. TOTAL ESTIMATED COSTS

Estimated costs were determined for each pressure zone and are as follows:

1. UPPER PRESSURE ZONE - The estimated capital cost associated with this portion of the project is \$10 million. Total capital costs take into consideration electrical service connection, engineering, contingency, water right permitting, and geotechnical investigation. Annual operating and maintenance costs are estimated to be \$135,000. Project costs for this alternative are estimated in Table 3.

Table 2 – Cost Estimates for the UPZ

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QUAN	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
1	Mobilization Bonding and Submittals	1	LS	\$321,000	\$321,000
2	12" Submersible Well	4	EA	\$325,000	\$1,300,000
3	Noffsinger Building Rehabilitation	1	LS	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000
4	Mechanical Equipment - Interior Piping	1	LS	\$350,000	\$350,000
5	Electrical Telemetry, Controls	1	LS	\$350,000	\$350,000
6	Generator 350kW	1	LS	\$250,000	\$250,000
7	Site Grading	1	LS	\$25,000	\$25,000
8	Gravel Access Road	70	SY	\$50	\$3,500
9	Transmission Main	1	LS	\$1,072,750	\$1,072,750
10	Booster Pump Mechanical	1	LS	\$1,017,700	\$1,017,700
11	Booster Pump Structure	1350	SF	\$400	\$540,000
12	Traffic Control	1	LS	\$30,000	\$30,000
13	Golf Course Restoration	1.25	Acres	\$75,000	\$93,750
SUBTOTAL CONSTRUCTION					\$6,854,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST					\$10,000,000
ANNUAL O&M COST					\$135,000

2. LOWER PRESSURE ZONE - The estimated capital cost associated with the Dry Bridge Park Wells and Woodland Avenue Main Upsizing is \$7.95 million. Total capital costs take into consideration electrical service connection, engineering, contingency, water right permitting, and geotechnical investigation. Annual operating and maintenance costs are estimated to be \$35,600. Project costs for this alternative are estimated in Table 4.

Table 3 - Cost Estimates for the LPZ

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	QUAN	UNIT	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL PRICE
1	Mobilization Bonding and Submittals	1	LS	\$186,000	\$186,000
2	12" Submersible Well	2	EA	\$500,000	\$1,000,000
3	Mechanical Equipment - Interior Piping	1	EA	\$150,000	\$150,000
4	12-Inch C900 dr18 PVC Pipe	75	LF	\$200	\$15,000
5	16-Inch C900 dr18 PVC Pipe	5,300	LF	\$225	\$1,192,500
6	Pumphouse	480	SF	\$500	\$240,000
7	Generator	1	EA	\$200,000	\$200,000
8	Water Service Reconnections	36	EA	\$750	\$27,000
9	Water Main Reconnections	7	EA	\$5,000	\$35,000
10	Fire Hydrant Reconnections	7	EA	\$2,000	\$14,000
11	Traffic Control	1	LS	\$250,000	\$250,000
12	Site Work & Grading	1	EA	\$50,000	\$50,000
13	Electrical, Telemetry, & Controls	1	EA	\$200,000	\$200,000
14	Concrete Sidewalk Replacement	1	LS	\$25,000	\$25,000
15	Exploratory Excavation	20	EA	\$600	\$12,000
16	Temporary Water	1	LS	\$100,000	\$100,000
17	Utility Conflicts	1	LS	\$200,000	\$200,000
18	Pavement Removal & Replacement	9400	SY	\$200	\$1,880,000
SUBTOTAL CONSTRUCTION					\$5,777,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST					\$7,950,000
ANNUAL O&M COST					\$35,600

3. TOTAL UPZ AND LPZ ESTIMATED PROJECT COST - The combined cost of for both the upper and lower pressure zones is \$17,950,000 with an annual O&M cost for the city of \$170,600 per year.

IV. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. PLANNING AREA

Kalispell, the largest city in northwestern Montana, is located in Flathead County and serves as both the county seat and the commercial hub of the area. As the primary city in northwest Montana, Kalispell is a center for retail, professional, medical, and governmental activities in the Flathead Valley and surrounding four counties. The economic landscape of Kalispell and Flathead County is varied with leading industries including wood products manufacturing, microelectronics, metals refining, railroads, agriculture, and tourism. Additionally, the area is popular among retirees, and retirement income constitutes a significant and growing segment of the local economy. The city also offers easy access to a range of outdoor attractions, including Glacier National Park, Flathead Lake, Whitefish Mountain Ski Resort, Bob Marshall Wilderness Area, and various other state and national forests and parks.

The project area is located on the eastern side of Kalispell as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 - Project area for UPZ and LPZ



For the UPZ, the wells are located at Noffsinger Springs and the transmission main extends across the Buffalo Hills Golf Course. For the LPZ, the wells are located at Dry Bridge Park and the transmission main is approximately one mile south of the golf course and extends along Woodland Avenue between Center Street and Albina Street. Both locations were selected based on hydrogeologic suitability, proximity to existing infrastructure, and potential to support long-term system capacity. If well development is successful, the new wells will be connected to the water system via the new transmission mains.

B. POPULATION AND FLOW PROJECTIONS

The City of Kalispell, with a population of approximately 30,000 residents, relies on a public water system that draws groundwater from the deep alluvial aquifer. This system is divided into two pressure zones: the Upper Pressure Zone

(UPZ) and the Lower Pressure Zone (LPZ). Groundwater wells located within city limits serve as the primary sources of drinking water for both zones,

The Kalispell Planning Department uses a 2.50% annual growth rate for future population projections. However, since 2010, the city has experienced an average annual population growth rate of 4.04%. For the purposes of this report, an annual growth rate of 2.50% will be used to estimate future population projections.

The 2025 PER calculations for average day demand (ADD) for the entire city were based on historical usage from 2012 to 2023 where annual average water use ranged from 3.36 to 4.17 million gallons with a period average of 3.86 million gallons over the 12 years of data. gallons per EDU day (gpad). The UPZ has a historical average peaking factor of 3.06 and the LPZ has a historical average peaking factor of 2.49 which were used to project MDD in the year 2048 based on the 2.5% growth rate.

The new Noffsinger Spring wells projected production targeting a combined water production rate of 4,000 gpm with a firm capacity of 3,000 gpm and the new 24-inch transmission main connecting the new wells to the LPZ water storage reservoirs, serving as reserves for a new UPZ booster station will pump up to 3,600 gpm into the UPZ, replacing the 2,000 gpm capacity of the Grandview Wells and the 1,100 gpm capacity of the aging booster stations. The new wells at Dry Bridge Park, will also target a combined water production rate of 2,000 gpm.

C. NATURAL FEATURES

At an elevation of 2956 feet, Kalispell lies within the Flathead Valley, a broad glacial basin formed during the last Ice Age. The valley floor is composed of fertile silt loam soils derived from glacial lake sediments and outwash. These

soils are generally well-drained, moderately permeable, and highly productive, supporting both agriculture and natural vegetation. Beneath the surface, unconsolidated deposits of sand and gravel transition into fractured bedrock formations of argillite, quartzite, and dolomitic limestone. These geologic layers form the aquifer systems that supply much of the region's groundwater.

The Flathead River system flows through the valley, with tributaries such as Ashley Creek, Stillwater River, and Whitefish River providing surface water connectivity. South of Kalispell lies Flathead Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake west of the Mississippi River. Groundwater resources are abundant, with both shallow surficial aquifers in glacial deposits and deeper fractured bedrock aquifers. The water table is typically shallow (20–50 feet), making groundwater sensitive to contamination and surface disturbances.

The valley supports a mosaic of land uses, including agriculture, urban development, and natural habitats. Forests of Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, and western larch dominate the surrounding mountain slopes, while riparian corridors along rivers and wetlands provide critical habitat for waterfowl, amphibians, and fish. The Flathead Valley serves as a transition zone between mountain ecosystems to the north and prairie habitats to the south, supporting diverse wildlife populations.

Kalispell experiences a semi-humid continental climate, with cold winters, warm summers, and moderate precipitation. The valley is framed by the Swan, Mission, and Whitefish Mountain ranges, creating a scenic basin that contributes to the region's ecological and recreational value.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED PROJECT

A. DIRECT AND INDIRECT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. Housing and Commercial Development – The entire project falls within the Kalispell city limits and will not affect existing homes or commercial or industrial facilities nor affect the production of such facilities
2. Land Use – The proposed water system improvements (i.e., new wells and transmission mains) are located on land the city already owns or has utility easements in place. No major changes in land use within the project area is expected. Any new developments within the community is subject to existing land use plans and land use controls.
3. Floodplains and Wetlands – Portions of Kalispell, particularly along the Flathead River, Stillwater River, Ashley Creek, and specifically the Noffsinger Springs pump station, are located within FEMA-designated

100-year floodplains. The city has adopted a Floodplain Management Ordinance to regulate development in these areas. Construction would require a Floodplain Development Permit from the City of Kalispell.

According to the National Wetlands Inventory Wetlands Mapper, various wetlands are located within 1 mile of the proposed project. It is not anticipated that any designated wetlands will be impacted by any part of this project.

4. Cultural Resources – Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was contacted. SHPO stated that the UPZ area has been heavily disturbed by the construction of the golf course. They feel work here is unlikely to have any affect to cultural resources. In the LPZ area, there are a few National Register Listed historic resources along Woodland Ave, including the Kalispell Eastside Historic District. As long as ground disturbance is kept within the previously disturbed existing roadway, SHPO feels that there will be no cultural or historic properties affected by this undertaking. While the Noffsinger pump station building is over 50 years old, this structure has been previously altered over the years and according to the Montana National Register of Historic Places website, this building is not listed on the National Register.

For these reasons, a recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time. However, should structures need to be altered or if cultural materials are inadvertently discovered during this project, SHPO would like to be contacted, and the site investigated.

5. Fish and Wildlife – According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website, four threatened species (Canada Lynx, Grizzly Bear, Bull Trout, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo), one proposed threatened species (Monarch Butterfly), and one proposed endangered species (Suckley's Cuckoo Bumble Bee) may be present in the project area. There are potentially 18 different migratory birds that may be present in the project area. However, there is no designated critical habitat for any of the species listed above in the project area. If active eagle nests are present within 0.5 mile of the project during construction, seasonal restrictions and construction distance buffers specified in the 2010 Montana Bald Eagle Management Guidelines: An Addendum to Montana Bald Eagle Management Plan (1994) will be followed in order to avoid/minimize the risk for eagle take.

There are two federally listed threatened plant species in Montana: Spalding's Catchfly and Ute Ladies'-tress. The USFWS does not list any of these species within the project area.

Sage Grouse - According to the Montana Sage Grouse Habitat

Conservation Map, the project is not located in sage grouse habitat designated as core, general, connectivity habitats or BLM priority areas. Therefore, no further coordination regarding sage grouse is required.

Based on the nature, scope, and location of the recommended improvements, no adverse impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources are expected.

6. Water Quality – The City of Kalispell’s public water is supplied by seven groundwater wells, including one well for irrigation only and one test well, and a spring. A deep confined artesian aquifer, consisting of a series of introduced sand and gravel layers with fine-grained interbeds, is utilized for the City’s drinking water. The project includes the replacement of the wells affected by PFAS by the development of new wells in strategic locations to ensure adequate capacity and system stability. The project will have no adverse effects on groundwater resources or aquifers in the area.

The surface water resources in the vicinity of the project include the Stillwater River and Stillwater Slough. The project will have no adverse effects on surface water resources in the area. Construction activities will temporarily disturb soil and could increase the potential for erosion and transport of sediments to surface waters.

If construction disturbs more than 1 acre, a General Discharge Permit for Discharges from Construction Activities under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) must be obtained. As a requirement of the Storm Water Discharge Permit, a Notice of Intent (NOI) form must be prepared and submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency by the contractor. Measures to control runoff and erosion from disturbed areas will be required of the contractor to minimize potential water quality impacts during construction.

Impacts on water quality are expected to be minor and short-term during well drilling and can be controlled through proper construction practices.

7. Air Quality - The project is located within the Kalispell PM-10 and Carbon Monoxide Nonattainment areas. The recommended improvements would not create any new violations of the Federal air quality standards, increase the frequency or severity of existing violations of the standards, or delay attainment of the standards in the Kalispell area.

The project may result in a temporary increase in air quality in construction zones. This impact will be short-term and generally confined to the area where construction equipment is operating.

The application of water or chemicals to control dust in areas subject to heavy vehicle traffic will occur, if deemed necessary, during the construction of the project. Newly disturbed areas would be promptly reseeded or restored when construction activities are completed.

8. Public Health – In 2022, the City voluntarily began testing its public water supply for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and in 2023, mandatory testing began as part of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR). These compounds, often referred to as “forever chemicals,” have been linked to various health risks. Testing revealed the presence of PFAS in the Grandview Wells (serving the UPZ) and the Armory Well (serving the LPZ). On April 10, 2024, the EPA announced new national regulations limiting the permissible levels of specific PFAS compounds in drinking water.

Continued monitoring confirmed persistent positive detections of PFAS in these wells. The remaining wells, while free of detectable PFAS, are insufficient to meet water demand and ensure compliance with Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) regulations. Public health protection is safeguarded by the proposed project. The new water supply well will result in source water redundancy. In addition, it will eliminate the need to rely on the current backup source which does not meet drinking water standards, if the main source were to become inoperable. Also, the current backup source will be disconnected from the system and either be abandoned or transferred to the local fire district.

The project will replace the wells affected by PFAS detections with the development of new source wells in strategic locations, as well as necessary infrastructure upgrades to ensure adequate capacity and system stability. The proposed project aims to safeguard public health, comply with regulatory requirements, and provide a sustainable, long-term water supply for Kalispell’s rapidly growing population.

9. Energy - During construction of the proposed project, additional energy will be used, causing a direct, short-term impact on this resource. There will be no long-lasting adverse impacts on the energy supply of the area. Energy use would increase for a short time during construction of the project due to the need for construction equipment.
10. Noise - Short-term impacts from increased noise levels may occur during construction activities. Temporary increases in noise would be expected during the construction of the project. Such impacts would be localized to the area of construction and short-term in nature. In the long-term, no increase in noise levels associated with this project will occur.

11. Environmental Justice – Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898: The proposed project will not result in disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations. The economic impact will ultimately affect all users of the system proportionately. No disproportionate effects among any portion of the community are expected. The project will not adversely affect any social or ethnic groups. It will not isolate or divide existing residential areas, nor will it impact general housing conditions in the project area, including housing quality, quantity, or affordability.
12. Growth – The City of Kalispell has observed an annual population growth rate of 6.5% from 2020 to 2023, compared to 2.2% prior to 2020. Data suggests that water usage needs are roughly comparable to population growth, with some variation likely attributable to year-to-year drought conditions. It remains uncertain whether Kalispell will continue to experience the elevated post-2020 growth rates or if growth will revert closer to the pre-2020 average of approximately 2.5%. Nevertheless, it is critical to account for the potential continuation of higher growth rates when planning for future water production demand.
13. Cumulative Effects – This project involves the construction of 6 new wells and two large transmission mains to connect the wells to the city’s water distribution system. Based on the size and scope of the proposed project, no significant secondary or cumulative impacts are anticipated with the proposed improvements.

B. UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS

Short-term construction-related impacts, such as noise, dust and traffic disruption, will occur but can be minimized through proper construction management. Energy consumption during construction cannot be avoided. No permanent direct, indirect, or cumulative adverse impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

VI. AGENCY ACTION, APPLICABLE REGULATIONS, AND PERMITTING AUTHORITIES

All water supply and conveyance improvements will be designed to meet DEQ requirements. Proper State regulatory review and approval of the project plans and specifications will be provided. All applicable local, federal, and state permits will be required.

All appropriate easements and access will be addressed with regard to the water system infrastructure improvements. Site Title Opinion has been submitted to the DEQ.

VII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The City of Kalispell has been proactive and transparent with the public regarding PFAS detections in the Armory and Grandview source wells. On April 17, 2024, the Public Works Department issued a public notice informing residents about the PFAS detections in the drinking water. The notice also announced a public workshop to be held during the June 10, 2024, work session to provide updates and information on the situation. Public meetings have also been held with the city and its customers to present the project and associated fees. The city Public Works Department periodically communicates with its users about the water supply plan via newsletters.

VIII. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

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

- A. Preliminary Engineering Report- prepared for the City of Kalispell by Robert Peccia and Associates of Helena, Montana, January 2025.
- B. Uniform Environmental Checklist for Montana Public Water Projects, July 2025, prepared by Robert Peccia and Associates of Helena, Montana.

IX. AGENCIES CONSULTED

Seven state and federal agencies were contacted regarding the proposed construction of this project including:

- Montana Department of Environmental Quality
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- State Historic Preservation Office
- Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Two agencies responded and below is a summary of each response received:

- A. The Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviewed the proposed project and conducted a cultural resource file search for the proposed project area. In a letter dated June 19, 2025, SHPO states The UPZ area has been heavily disturbed by the construction of the golf course. Work here is unlikely to have any affect to cultural resources. In the LPZ area there are a few National Register Listed historic resources along Woodland Ave, including the Kalispell Eastside Historic District. As long as ground disturbance will be kept within the previously disturbed existing roadway, there should be no cultural or

historic properties affected by this undertaking. A recommendation for a cultural resource inventory is unwarranted at this time.

- B. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reviewed the proposed project. A response letter dated June 23, 2025, noted that any work involving the placement of dredged or fill material in jurisdictional waters of the U.S. would require a permit. For the new production wells and transmission mains, a Department of the Army (DA) permit is not required as no waters of the U.S. will be impacted.

X. RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

- EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

C. Rationale for Recommendation:

Through the Preliminary Engineering Report prepared by Robert Peccia and Associates of Helena, the City of Kalispell determined that replacing two existing PFAS contaminated wells with six new wells will ensure public health is protected. The addition of two new transmission mains and associated pumping facilities are needed to serve the community with the new wells. Through this EA, the DEQ has verified none of the adverse impacts of the proposed new wells and associated transmission main 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. This EA is the appropriate level of analysis because none of the adverse effects of the impacts are significant. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be issued and legally advertised in the local newspaper and distributed to a list of interested agencies. Comments regarding the project will be received for 30 days before final approval is granted.

EA prepared by:

Neal Murray
Neal Murray

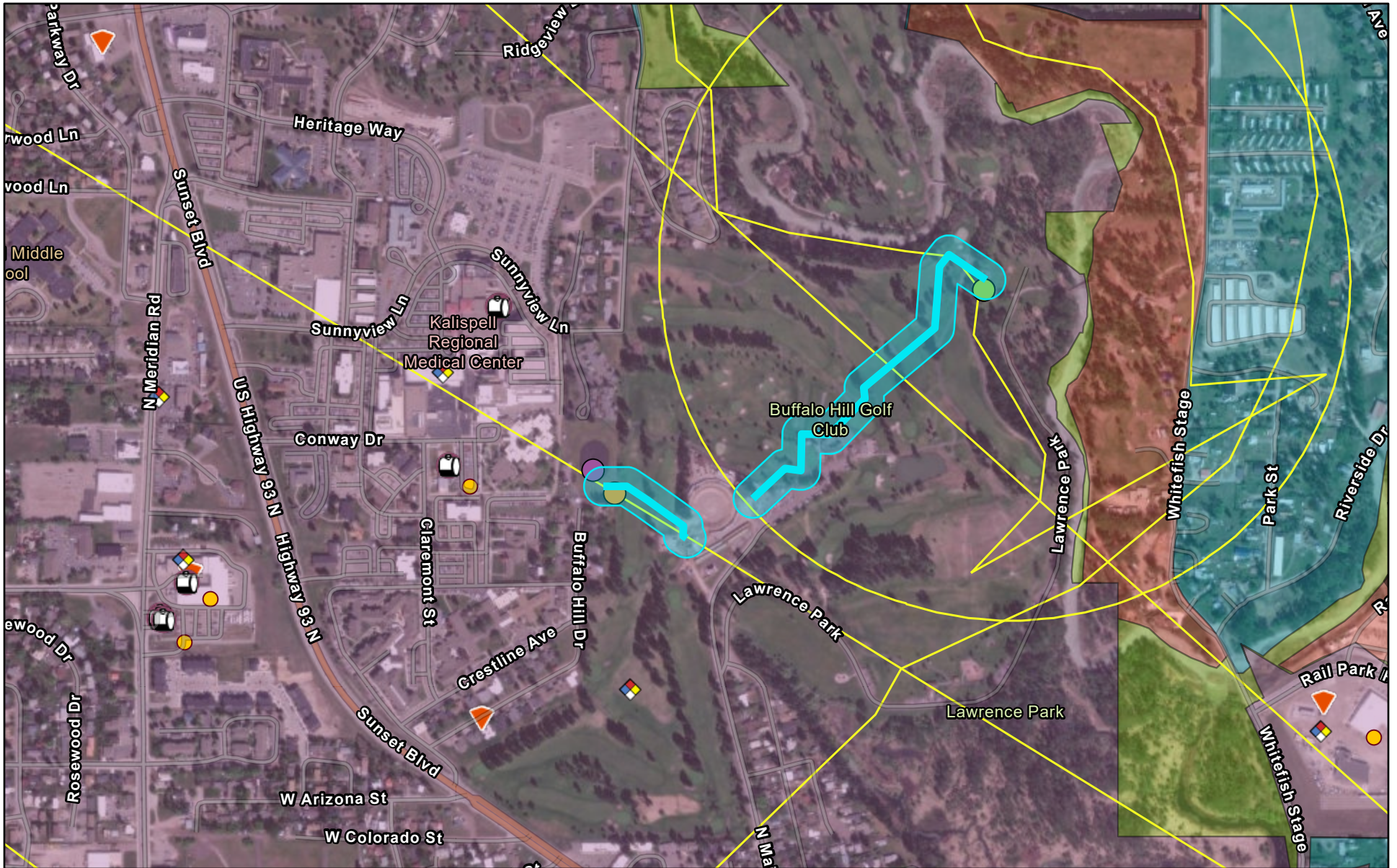
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Approved By:

Sandie Koenig
Sandie Koenig, P.E.

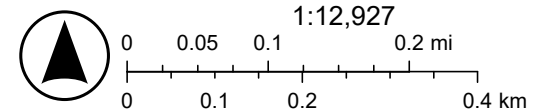
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Potential Contaminant Source Review- Noffsinger



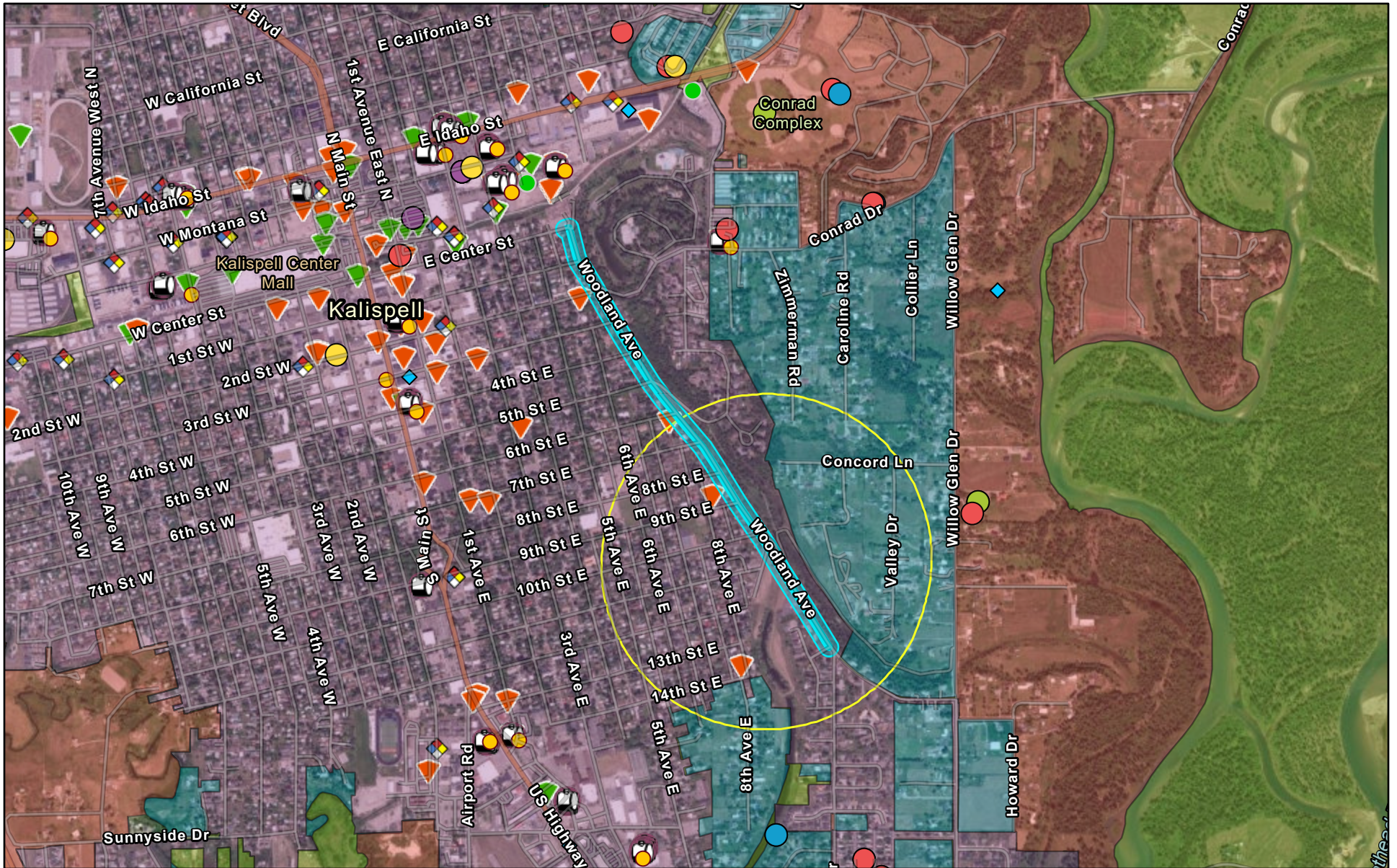
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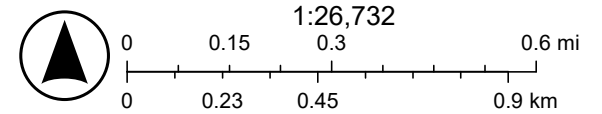
Source: Esri, Vantor, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WELL ● PRESSURE CONTROL ● TREATMENT PLANT ● STORAGE FACILITY ● CONSECUTIVE CONNECTION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Montana Source Water Regions ◆ Montana State Superfund Unit Facilities ● Underground Storage Tank Facilities ● Underground Storage Tanks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Montana Hazardous Waste ● Petroleum Tank Substance Releases ● Reopened | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open ● Resolved | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solid Waste Sites with Septic Tank Pumper Disposal Sites ● Recycling Facility ● Low Septic Density ● Medium Septic Density ● High Septic Density ● Municipal Sewer System |
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Source: Esri, Vantor, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap