



## **DECISION NOTICE**

### **FLINT CREEK STATE WATER PROJECT MAIN CANAL IMPROVEMENTS GRANITE COUNTY, MT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation  
Water Resources Division  
Helena, MT  
December 2022**

The State Water Projects Bureau (SWPB) of the Montana Department of Natural Resources (DNRC) Water Resources Division released an Environmental Assessment for canal improvements on the Flint Creek Project Main Canal. The Main Canal is part of the Flint Creek State Water Project owned by the DNRC and administered by the SWPB within the Water Resources Division. The Flint Creek Project is operated and maintained through contract with the Flint Creek Water Users Association (FCWUA).

The proposed project is located Northeast of East Fork Reservoir in Township 5N, Range 15W, Sections 24 and 36 and Township 5N, Range 14W, Section 19.

#### **Proposed Action**

The Proposed Action involves canal lining to address canal seepage and canal rehabilitation to improve conveyance efficiency on the Main Canal.

The goal of the proposed action is to reduce seepage and improve the hydraulic characteristics of the canal, providing resource benefits both upstream and downstream of the project. Upstream of the project, reducing seepage will allow East Fork reservoir to be maintained at a higher level for longer periods of time. This will reduce the amount of water taken out of East Fork of Rock Creek and benefit fish and wildlife, and the associated recreation opportunities in the Rock Creek watershed. Downstream of the project, reducing seepage will keep more water in the canal, allowing the water to be put to beneficial use for agriculture..

A secondary goal of the proposed action is to protect the recently installed East Fork siphon. The highly pervious reach of canal proposed to be lined is directly above the siphon. Seepage from the canal has potential to migrate down through the siphon pipe bedding, potentially undermining or floating the siphon.

Two alternatives are considered for the proposed Main Canal Improvements project:

**Alternative A:** This alternative is the Proposed Alternative (i.e., Proposed Action). Two independent segments of canal improvements are considered under the Proposed Action. Segment 1 will consist of installation of approximately 1,200 feet of liner which will address the current seepage issues along this segment of the canal by conserving irrigation water, reducing the potential for canal berm failure, and protecting a recently installed siphon located immediately downstream.

Segment 2 will be approximately 3,850 feet of canal rehabilitation directly upstream of the Trout Creek drop. This canal segment, which is overgrown with trees and vegetation, hinders canal conveyance and reduces the capacity in the canal. Over time, the channel geometry has also deteriorated leaving areas with inconsistent channel width, channel slope, and areas of ponding. Recontouring the canal geometry, widening the canal bank, minor improvements to canal structures (rehabilitating spalling/deteriorated concrete), and removing unwanted vegetation will increase the capacity of the canal and improve access for canal maintenance.

**Alternative B:** This alternative is the No-action alternative. Under the No-action Alternative canal lining, canal recontouring, and concrete rehabilitation would not occur, and uncontrolled canal seepage losses would continue.

No other alternatives were considered to remedy seepage and conveyance efficiency, other than the identified above.

### **Montana Environmental Policy Act**

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to assess potential impacts of its Proposed Action to the human and physical environments, evaluate those impacts through an interdisciplinary approach, including public input, and make a decision whether or not to proceed with the project.

In compliance with DNRC's Environmental Document Reporting Policy, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was completed on the Proposed Action by DNRC and released for a 30-day public comment period commencing on November 1, 2022. The official comment period closed on December 1, 2022.

The EA was made available on DNRC's website.

### **Summary of Public Comments**

No public comments were received.

## **Environmental Assessment Summary**

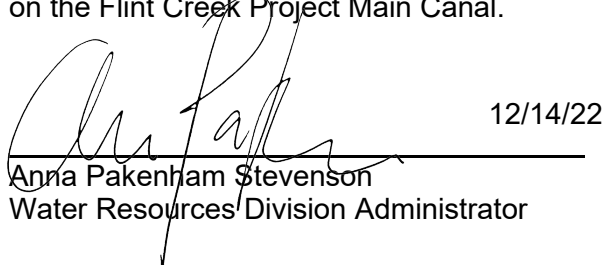
An Environmental Assessment was prepared by DNRC to address canal seepage and conveyance efficiency on the Flint Creek Project Main Canal. Alternatives were considered and a Proposed Action was selected by DNRC and released for public comment. No public comments were received by DNRC.

This environmental assessment is therefore the appropriate level of analysis, and an environmental impact statement is not required.

## **Decision**

Based on the alternatives considered and opportunity for public comment, DNRC considers the Draft Environmental Assessment to be the Final Environmental Assessment and will issue this Decision.

It is my decision to approve the Proposed Action Alternative to implement canal improvements on the Flint Creek Project Main Canal.

 12/14/22  
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Anna Pakenham Stevenson  
Water Resources Division Administrator

The Decision Notice will be posted on the DNRC website at [www.dnrc.mt.gov](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov) in the Environmental Documents section. Please direct questions to:

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