

43B-0475-R-2021

December 17, 2021

Montana Water Court

MONTANA WATER COURT, YELLOWSTONE DIVISION
YELLOWSTONE RIVER ABOVE AND INCLUDING BRIDGER CREEK BASIN
BASIN 43B
PRELIMINARY DECREE

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CLAIMANTS: Rebecca Johnson; Wendy Thomas

CASE 43B-0475-R-2021

43B 194610-00

OBJECTOR: United States of America (USDA Forest Service)

NOTICE OF FILING OF MASTER'S REPORT

This Master's Report was filed with the Montana Water Court on the above stamped date. Please review this report carefully.

You may file a written objection to this Master's Report within **10 days** of the stamped date if you disagree or find errors with the Master's findings of fact, conclusion of law, or recommendations. Rule 23, W.R.Adj.R. If the Master's Report was mailed to you, the Montana Rules of Civil Procedure allow an additional 3 days be added to the 10-day objection period. Rule 6(d), M.R.Civ.P. If you file an objection, you must mail a copy of the objection to all parties on the service list found at the end of the Master's Report. The original objection and a certificate of mailing to all parties on the service list must be filed with the Water Court.

If you do not file a timely objection, the Water Court will conclude that you agree with the content of this Master's Report.

MASTER'S REPORT

The United States of America (USDA Forest Service) objected to Rebecca Johnson and Wendy Thomas claim 43B 194610-00. This claim appeared in the Preliminary Decree with the following remark:

STARTING IN 2008, PERIOD OF DIVERSION WAS ADDED TO MOST CLAIM ABSTRACTS, INCLUDING THIS ONE.

On November 16, 2021 the parties filed a Stipulation To Resolve Objections. The Stipulation is viewable in the Court's FullCourt Enterprise case management system.

APPLICABLE LAW

A properly filed Statement of Claim for Existing Water Right is *prima facie* proof of its content pursuant to section 85-2-227, MCA. This *prima facie* proof may be contradicted and overcome by other evidence that proves, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the elements of the claim do not accurately reflect the beneficial use of the water right as it existed prior to July 1, 1973. This is the burden of proof for every assertion that a claim is incorrect including for claimants objecting to their own claims. Rule 19, W.R.ADJ.R.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The following clarification remark should be added to the point of diversion: THE POINT OF DIVERSION IS LOCATED ENTIRELY ON PRIVATE LAND.
2. The following clarification remark should be added to the place of use: THE PLACE OF USE IS LOCATED ENTIRELY ON PRIVATE LAND.
3. The period of diversion remark provides notice of this change made prior to issuance of the Preliminary Decree and does not raise an unresolved issue which needs to be addressed. The remark should be removed as having served its notice purpose.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

The settlement filed by the parties is sufficient to contradict and overcome the *prima facie* claim.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the above Findings of Fact and Conclusion of Law, this Master recommends that the Court make the changes specified in the Findings of Fact to correct the Preliminary Decree for this Basin. A Post Decree Abstract of Water Right Claim is served with this Report to confirm the recommended changes have been made in the state's centralized record system.

Kathryn L. W. Lambert
Senior Water Master

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WATER COURT
ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM
YELLOWSTONE RIVER, ABOVE & INCLUDING BRIDGER CREEK
BASIN 43B

Water Right Number: **43B 194610-00** STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Version: 3 -- POST DECREE

Status: ACTIVE

Owners:
REBECCA JOHNSON
PO BOX 458
GARDINER, MT 59030

WENDY THOMAS
PO BOX 458
GARDINER, MT 59030 0458

Priority Date: DECEMBER 31, 1954

Type of Historical Right: USE

Purpose (Use): STOCK

Flow Rate: A SPECIFIC FLOW RATE HAS NOT BEEN DECREED BECAUSE THIS USE CONSISTS OF STOCK DRINKING DIRECTLY FROM THE SOURCE, OR FROM A DITCH SYSTEM. THE FLOW RATE IS LIMITED TO THE MINIMUM AMOUNT HISTORICALLY NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN THIS PURPOSE.

Volume: THIS RIGHT INCLUDES THE AMOUNT OF WATER CONSUMPTIVELY USED FOR STOCK WATERING PURPOSES AT THE RATE OF 30 GALLONS PER DAY PER ANIMAL UNIT. ANIMAL UNITS SHALL BE BASED ON REASONABLE CARRYING CAPACITY AND HISTORICAL USE OF THE AREA SERVICED BY THIS WATER SOURCE.

Source Name: SPRING, UNNAMED TRIBUTARY OF CEDAR CREEK

Source Type: GROUNDWATER

Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:

ID	Govt Lot	Otr Sec	Sec	Twp	Rge	County	
1		NENWNE		13	8S	7E	PARK

Period of Diversion: OCTOBER 15 TO APRIL 30

Diversion Means: LIVESTOCK DIRECT FROM SOURCE

THE POINT OF DIVERSION IS LOCATED ENTIRELY ON PRIVATE LAND.

Period of Use: OCTOBER 15 TO APRIL 30

Place of Use:

ID	Acres	Govt Lot	Otr Sec	Sec	Twp	Rge	County
1				13	8S	7E	PARK

THE PLACE OF USE IS LOCATED ENTIRELY ON PRIVATE LAND.

Remarks:

THE WATER RIGHTS FOLLOWING THIS STATEMENT ARE ASSOCIATED WHICH MEANS THE RIGHTS SHARE THE SAME PURPOSE AND SOURCE.