

Montana Water Court  
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40A-0287-R-2021

September 17, 2021

Montana Water Court

IN THE WATER COURT OF THE STATE OF MONTANA  
LOWER MISSOURI DIVISION  
MUSSELSHELL RIVER ABOVE ROUNDUP BASIN (40A)  
PRELIMINARY DECREE

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CLAIMANT: Schladweiler Family Trust

**CASE 40A-0287-R-2021**

40A 204353-00

40A 204359-00

**NOTICE OF FILING OF MASTER'S REPORT**

This Master's Report was filed with the Clerk of the Montana Water Court. Please review this Report carefully.

You may file a written objection to this Master's Report if you disagree or find errors with the Master's Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, or Recommendations. The above stamped date indicates the date this Master's Report was filed and mailed. Rule 23 of the Water Right Adjudication Rules requires written objections to a Master's Report be filed within 10 days of the date of the Master's Report. Because this Master's Report was mailed to you, Rule 6(d) of the Montana Rules of Civil Procedure provides an additional 3 days to the 10-day objection period.

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 this 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**  
**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. Claims 40A 204353-00 and 40A 204359-00 were decreed with the following DNRC issue remarks:

**Claim 40A 204353-00**

POINT OF DIVERSION WAS MODIFIED AS A RESULT OF DNRC REVIEW UNDER MONTANA WATER COURT REEXAMINATION ORDERS. IF NO OBJECTIONS ARE FILED TO THIS CLAIM, THESE ELEMENTS WILL REMAIN AS THEY APPEAR ON THIS ABSTRACT AND THE REMARK WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE CLAIM.

THE PRIORITY DATE MAY BE QUESTIONABLE. THIS CLAIM IS FOR A FILED APPROPRIATION ON MUSSELSHELL RIVER WITH A PRIORITY DATE PREDATING CASE NO. 1148, GOLDEN VALLEY COUNTY.

**Claim 40A 204359-00-00:**

POINT OF DIVERSION WAS MODIFIED AS A RESULT OF DNRC REVIEW UNDER MONTANA WATER COURT REEXAMINATION ORDERS. IF NO OBJECTIONS ARE FILED TO THIS CLAIM, THESE ELEMENTS WILL REMAIN AS THEY APPEAR ON THIS ABSTRACT AND THE REMARK WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE CLAIM.

2. No objections or notices or intent to appear were filed.

**PRINCIPLES AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

1. A properly filed Statement of Claim for an existing water right is *prima facie* proof of its content. Section 85-2-227, MCA. This *prima facie* validity may be overcome by evidence showing that one or more elements of the claim are incorrect. This standard of proof applies to objectors or claimants objecting to their own water right claims. Rule 19, W.R.Adj.R., *Nelson v. Brooks*, 2014 MT 120; 375 Mont. 86, 95; 329 P.3d 558, 564.

2. The point of diversion issue remarks appearing on claims 40A 204353-00 and 40A 204359-00 are notice-type issue remarks. As no objections were filed, no further proceedings are required.

3. With respect to the priority date of the claims in this Case, the only evidence before the Court is the existence of Case No. 1148 and the resulting issue remark that appeared on the claims. While historical decrees provide some evidence of existing water rights on a given source, they are not conclusive. Decrees were often the result of a specific controversy between water users; thus, rights were adjudicated on a piecemeal basis by the district courts. Further, decrees were usually limited in scope, and

often multiple decrees were issued on the same stream. *See Albert Stone, Are There Any Adjudicated Streams in Montana?* 19 Mont. L. Rev. 19 (1957).

In short, there are numerous reasons why the claim in this Case may not have appeared in the District Court decree, but objectors bear the burden of establishing that the priority date should be something other than what was claimed. In this Case, the *prima facie* proof of priority date has not been overcome.

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. The issue remarks should be removed from the claims with no changes to the elements of the claims.

Post Decree Abstracts of Water Right Claims are served with the Report to confirm that the recommended changes have been made in the state's centralized record system.

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Anika M. Stern  
Senior Water Master

**Service via USPS Mail:**

Schladweiler Family Trust  
PO Box 233  
Ryegate, MT 59074-0233

**WATER COURT**  
**ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM**  
**MUSSELSHELL RIVER, ABOVE ROUNDUP**  
**BASIN 40A**

**Water Right Number:** **40A 204353-00** STATEMENT OF CLAIM  
**Version:** 3 -- POST DECREE  
**Status:** ACTIVE

**Owners:** SCHLADWEILER FAMILY TRUST  
PO BOX 233  
RYEGATE, MT 59074 0233

**Priority Date:** JUNE 1, 1926

**Type of Historical Right:** USE

**Purpose (Use):** IRRIGATION

**Irrigation Type:** FLOOD

**Flow Rate:** 372.50 GPM

**Volume:** THE TOTAL VOLUME OF THIS WATER RIGHT SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AMOUNT PUT TO HISTORICAL AND BENEFICIAL USE.

**Climatic Area:** 3 - MODERATE

**Maximum Acres:** 22.00

**Source Name:** MUSSELSHELL RIVER

**Source Type:** SURFACE WATER

**Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:**

<u>ID</u>	<u>Govt Lot</u>	<u>Otr Sec</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Twp</u>	<u>Rge</u>	<u>County</u>
1		NENWSE	2	6N	19E	GOLDEN VALLEY

**Period of Diversion:** APRIL 15 TO OCTOBER 15

**Diversion Means:** HEADGATE

**Ditch Name:** SIMMS DITCH

**Period of Use:** APRIL 15 TO OCTOBER 15

**Place of Use:**

<u>ID</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Govt Lot</u>	<u>Otr Sec</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Twp</u>	<u>Rge</u>	<u>County</u>
1	22.00		E2SE	5	6N	20E	GOLDEN VALLEY
<b>Total:</b>	22.00						

**WATER COURT**  
**ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM**  
**MUSSELSHELL RIVER, ABOVE ROUNDUP**  
**BASIN 40A**

**Water Right Number:** **40A 204359-00** STATEMENT OF CLAIM  
**Version:** 3 -- POST DECREE  
**Status:** ACTIVE

**Owners:** SCHLADWEILER FAMILY TRUST  
PO BOX 233  
RYEGATE, MT 59074 0233

**Priority Date:** JUNE 30, 1964

**Type of Historical Right:** USE

**Purpose (Use):** IRRIGATION

**Irrigation Type:** SPRINKLER

**Flow Rate:** 1.04 CFS

**Volume:** THE TOTAL VOLUME OF THIS WATER RIGHT SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AMOUNT PUT TO HISTORICAL AND BENEFICIAL USE.

**Climatic Area:** 3 - MODERATE

**Maximum Acres:** 27.50

**Source Name:** MUSSELSHELL RIVER

**Source Type:** SURFACE WATER

**Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:**

<u>ID</u>	<u>Govt Lot</u>	<u>Otr Sec</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Twp</u>	<u>Rge</u>	<u>County</u>
1		NENENE	8	6N	20E	GOLDEN VALLEY

**Period of Diversion:** APRIL 15 TO OCTOBER 15

**Diversion Means:** PUMP

**Period of Use:** APRIL 15 TO OCTOBER 15

**Place of Use:**

<u>ID</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Govt Lot</u>	<u>Otr Sec</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Twp</u>	<u>Rge</u>	<u>County</u>
1	3.40		NWSW	4	6N	20E	GOLDEN VALLEY
2	9.60		SWSW	4	6N	20E	GOLDEN VALLEY
3	14.50		NWSESE	5	6N	20E	GOLDEN VALLEY
<b>Total:</b>	<b>27.50</b>						