Montana Water Court PO Box 1389 Bozeman, MT 59771-1389 1-800-624-3270 (406) 586-4364 watercourt@mt.gov FILED
07/09/2024
Sara Calkins
CLERK
Montana Water Court
STATE OF MONTANA
By: D'Ann CIGLER
41S-0205-R-2024
Block, Nathaniel
4.00

IN THE WATER COURT OF THE STATE OF MONTANA LOWER MISSOURI DIVISION JUDITH RIVER BASIN (41S) PRELIMINARY DECREE

CLAIMANT: Angus McMillan LLC	CASE 41S-0205-R-2024
	41S 101557-00
	41S 101559-00
	41S 101560-00
	41S 101561-00
NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPEAR: McMillan Trust	41S 101562-00
	41S 104276-00
	41S 104280-00
	41S 104281-00

NOTICE OF FILING OF MASTER'S REPORT

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

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, conclusions 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 serve 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 above-captioned claims appeared in the Preliminary Decree for the Sun River (Basin 41K) with issue remarks:

The claims received Notices of Intent to Appear from the McMillan Trust.

The claims were consolidated into Case 41K-0205-R-2023 on February 7, 2024, and a status conference was held which the claimant failed to attend. Claimant Angus McMillan LLC ("Angus McMillan") was ordered to work with the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to resolve the issue remarks on the claims. On May 14, 2024, a Memorandum ("Memo") was filed (Doc. 1 3.00).

The Memo stated that the claimant had failed to contact or otherwise work with the DNRC and made recommendations for resolving the issue remarks on the claims.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Claim 41S 101557-00 was decreed with the following issue remarks:

FLOW RATE MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION BASED ON RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM ACRES ISSUE. THE FERGUS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES SURVEY (1970) APPEARS TO INDICATE 0.00 ACRES IRRIGATED.

USDA AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH NO(S). 30027-278-16 , DATED 09/25/1979 , APPEARS TO INDICATE 16.00 ACRES IRRIGATED. A DESCRIPTION OF THESE ACRES IS IN THE CLAIM FILE.

THE MAXIMUM COMBINED ACRES FOR THIS GROUP OF SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIMS MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION PENDING RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM IRRIGATED ACRES ISSUE.

- 2. The Memo recommended reducing the maximum acres to 16.0 acres and the flow rate to 272.0 GPM. The Memo further stated that these recommendations resolved the issue remarks on the claim.
 - 3. Claim 41S 101559-00 was decreed with the following issue remarks:

FLOW RATE MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION BASED ON RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM ACRES ISSUE. THE CLAIMED FLOW RATE MAY BE QUESTIONABLE. DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED WITH THIS CLAIM INDICATES A FLOW RATE OF 250 GPM.

THE FERGUS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES SURVEY (1970) APPEARS TO INDICATE 0.00 ACRES IRRIGATED.

USDA AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH NO(S). 30027-278-16, DATED 09/25/1979, APPEARS TO INDICATE 0.00 ACRES IRRIGATED.

THE MAXIMUM COMBINED ACRES FOR THIS GROUP OF SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIMS MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION PENDING RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM IRRIGATED ACRES ISSUE.

^{1 &}quot;Doc." numerical references correlate to case file docket numbers in the Water Court's Full Court case management system.

- 4. The Memo recommends dismissal of the claim to resolve the remarks.
- 5. Claim 41S 101560-00 was decreed with the following issue remarks:

FLOW RATE MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION BASED ON RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM ACRES ISSUE. THE FERGUS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES SURVEY (1970) APPEARS TO INDICATE 0.00 ACRES IRRIGATED.

USDA AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH NO(S). 30027-278-16, DATED 09/25/1979, APPEARS TO INDICATE 0.00 ACRES IRRIGATED.

THE CLAIMED POINT OF DIVERSION IS IN QUESTION. THE LOCATION OF THE HEADGATE CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED FROM AVAILABLE DATA.

THE MAXIMUM COMBINED ACRES FOR THIS GROUP OF SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIMS MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION PENDING RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM IRRIGATED ACRES ISSUE.

- 6. The Memo recommends dismissal of the claim to resolve the remarks.
- 7. Claim 41S 101561-00 was decreed with the following issue remarks:

FLOW RATE MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION BASED ON RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM ACRES ISSUE. THE FERGUS COUNTY WATER RESOURCES SURVEY (1970) APPEARS TO INDICATE 0.00 ACRES IRRIGATED.

USDA AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH NO(S). 30027-278-14 AND 30027-278-16, DATED 09/25/1979, APPEARS TO INDICATE 0.00 ACRES IRRIGATED.

THE MAXIMUM COMBINED ACRES FOR THIS GROUP OF SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIMS MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION PENDING RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM IRRIGATED ACRES ISSUE.

- 8. The Memo recommends dismissal of the claim to resolve the remarks.
- 9. Claim 41S 101562-00 was decreed with the following issue remarks:

FLOW RATE MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION BASED ON RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM ACRES ISSUE. USDA AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH NO(S). 30027-278-16, DATED 09/25/1979, APPEARS TO INDICATE 0.00 ACRES IRRIGATED.

THE MAXIMUM COMBINED ACRES FOR THIS GROUP OF SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIMS MAY REQUIRE MODIFICATION PENDING RESOLUTION OF MAXIMUM IRRIGATED ACRES ISSUE.

- 10. The Memo recommends the removal of the flow rate and maximum acres issue remarks.
 - 11. Claim 41S 104276-00 was decreed with the following issue remark:

THE TYPE OF HISTORICAL RIGHT, PRIORITY DATE, AND FLOW RATE MAY BE QUESTIONABLE. THE CLAIMS FOLLOWING THIS STATEMENT USE THE SAME FILED APPROPRIATION TO DOCUMENT THE RIGHT. THE COMBINED FLOW RATE FOR THIS GROUP OF CLAIMS EXCEEDS THE TOTAL OF THE ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION. 41S 104276-00, 41S 104281-00.

12. The Memo recommends reducing the flow rate to 4 GPM to match the GW4 form.

The Memo further states that reduction of the flow rate resolves the issue remark.

13. Claim 41S 104280-00 was decreed with the following issue remark:

ON 07/06/1992 LESTER A. MCMILLAN FILED A LATE OBJECTION TO PRIORITY DATE. THIS WILL BE HEARD AFTER PROPER NOTICE ON THE NEXT OBJECTION LIST.

- 14. Lester McMillan is the predecessor in interest to Angus McMillan. Angus McMillan has not participated in proceedings. The Memo recommends dismissal of the issue remark.
 - 15. Claim 41S 104281-00 was decreed with the following issue remark:

THE TYPE OF HISTORICAL RIGHT, PRIORITY DATE, AND FLOW RATE MAY BE QUESTIONABLE. THE CLAIMS FOLLOWING THIS STATEMENT USE THE SAME FILED APPROPRIATION TO DOCUMENT THE RIGHT. THE COMBINED FLOW RATE FOR THIS GROUP OF CLAIMS EXCEEDS THE TOTAL OF THE ORIGINAL APPROPRIATION. 41S 104276-00, 41S 104281-00.

16. The Memo recommends the removal of the issue remark.

PRINCIPLES OF LAW

- 1. The Montana Water Court has the authority to determine the extent of all water rights in the state as they existed prior to July 1, 1973. *Fellows v. Saylor*, 2016 MT 45, ¶ 25, 382 Mont. 298, 367 P.3d 732; §§ 85-2-233, -102(13), MCA.
- 2. A properly filed Statement of Claim for Existing Water Right is prima facie proof of its content. § 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. Rule 19, W.R.Adj.R.
- 3. If a claimant, objector, or intervenor fails to appear at a scheduled conference or hearing, or fails to comply with an order issued by the water court, the water court, upon motion, or its own initiative, may issue such orders of sanction with regard thereto as are just. Rule 22, W.R.Adj.R. Sanctions applied against claimants may include termination of the water right claim. Rule 22, W.R.Adj.R.
- 4. Active participation by water users, especially claimants, is imperative for the accuracy of the statewide adjudication effort. *In re Korman*, 2014 Mont. Water LEXIS 17, *6. Further, "[t]he time required to process these cases is extended substantially when litigants do not comply with deadlines imposed by the Court." *Huntsman v. Huntsman Ranch Co.*, 2015 Mont. Water LEXIS 2, *6. It is within the power of this Court to terminate a water right claim if a claimant fails to participate. Rule 22. W.R.Adj.R.

CONCLUSION OF LAW

1. Claimant Angus McMillan has failed to participate in proceedings and failed to comply with Orders issued by this Court. Modification and dismissal of the above-captioned claims is appropriate in light of the failure to participate.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. The maximum acres for claim 41S 101557-00 should be reduced to 16.0 acres and the flow rate should be reduced to 272.0 GPM pursuant to the Memo's recommendations.
- 2. Claims 41S 101559-00, 41S 101560-00 and 41S 101561-00 should be dismissed pursuant to the Memo's recommendations and the Claimant's failure to participate.
- 3. The flow rate for claim 41S 104276-00 should be reduced to 4 GPM pursuant to the Memo's recommendations.
- 4. The late objection filed by Lester McMillan should be dismissed due to Angus McMillan's failure to participate or otherwise prosecute the objection.
- 5. Adoption of the above recommendations resolves the issue remarks on claims 41S 101557-00, 41S 101559-00, 41S 101560-00, 41S 101561-00, 41S 104276-00 and 41S 104280-00.
- 6. The issue remarks on claims 41S 101562-00 and 41S 104281-00 should be removed pursuant to the Memo's recommendations.

Post Decree Abstracts of Water Right Claims are attached to this Master's Report for review.

ELECTRONICALLY SIGNED AND DATED BELOW.

Service via USPS Mail:

Angus McMillan LLC 2505 Cottonwood Cut-Off Lewistown, MT 59457

Service via Electronic Mail:

Ryan K. Mattick Cusick, Farve, Mattick & Michael, P.C. PO Box 1288 Bozeman, MT 59771-1288 (406) 587-5511 office@cmrlawmt.com

\UUDHLNSRV-DATA\Share\UUDGALH2OSRV (Datavol)\Share\WC-BASIN FOLDERS\41S PD\Cases\205\NB 41S-0205-R-2024 MR - Resolution of IRs 248 (NEW, multiple claims.dismiss, issue remarks) 6-27-2024 rr.docx

ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM

JUDITH RIVER

BASIN 41S

Water Right Number: 41S 101557-00 STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Version: 4 -- POST DECREE

Status: ACTIVE

Owners: ANGUS MCMILLAN LLC

2505 COTTONWOOD CUT-OFF

LEWISTOWN, MT 59457

Priority Date: MAY 31, 1881

Type of Historical Right: FILED

Purpose (Use): IRRIGATION

Irrigation Type: FLOOD

Flow Rate: 272.00 GPM

*Volume: THE TOTAL VOLUME OF THIS WATER RIGHT SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AMOUNT PUT

TO HISTORICAL AND BENEFICIAL USE.

Climatic Area: 4 - MODERATELY LOW

Maximum Acres: 16.00

Source Name: SPRING, UNNAMED TRIBUTARY OF CROW COULEE

Source Type: GROUNDWATER

Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:

IDGovt LotQtr SecSecTwpRgeCounty1SENWSE2815N17EFERGUS

Period of Diversion: MAY 1 TO OCTOBER 1

Diversion Means: HEADGATE

Period of Use: MAY 1 TO OCTOBER 1

Place of Use:

<u>ID</u>		<u>Acres</u>	Govt Lot	<u>Qtr Sec</u>	<u>Sec</u>	<u>Twp</u>	<u>Rge</u>	County
1		6.57		NESW	28	15N	17E	FERGUS
2		0.85		SENW	28	15N	17E	FERGUS
3		8.58		NWSE	28	15N	17E	FERGUS
	Total:	16.00						

Remarks:

THE WATER RIGHTS FOLLOWING THIS STATEMENT ARE SUPPLEMENTAL WHICH MEANS THE RIGHTS HAVE OVERLAPPING PLACES OF USE. THE RIGHTS CAN BE COMBINED TO IRRIGATE ONLY OVERLAPPING PARCELS. EACH RIGHT IS LIMITED TO THE FLOW RATE AND PLACE OF USE OF THAT INDIVIDUAL RIGHT. THE SUM TOTAL VOLUME OF THESE WATER RIGHTS SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AMOUNT PUT TO HISTORICAL AND BENEFICIAL USE.

101557-00 101559-00 101560-00

ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM

JUDITH RIVER

BASIN 41S

Water Right Number: 41S 101559-00 STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Version: 4 -- POST DECREE

Status: DISMISSED

Owners: ANGUS MCMILLAN LLC

2505 COTTONWOOD CUT-OFF

LEWISTOWN, MT 59457

Priority Date:

Type of Historical Right:

Purpose (Use): IRRIGATION

Flow Rate:

Volume:

Source Name: BEAVER CREEK

Source Type: SURFACE WATER

Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:

Period of Use: Place of Use:

Remarks:

THIS CLAIM WAS DISMISSED BY ORDER OF THE WATER COURT.

ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM

JUDITH RIVER

BASIN 41S

Water Right Number: 41S 101560-00 STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Version: 4 -- POST DECREE

Status: DISMISSED

Owners: ANGUS MCMILLAN LLC

2505 COTTONWOOD CUT-OFF

LEWISTOWN, MT 59457

Priority Date:

Type of Historical Right:

Purpose (Use): IRRIGATION

Flow Rate:

Volume:

Source Name: BEAVER CREEK

Source Type: SURFACE WATER

Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:

Period of Use: Place of Use:

Remarks:

THIS CLAIM WAS DISMISSED BY ORDER OF THE WATER COURT.

ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM

JUDITH RIVER

BASIN 41S

Water Right Number: 41S 101561-00 STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Version: 4 -- POST DECREE

Status: DISMISSED

Owners: ANGUS MCMILLAN LLC

2505 COTTONWOOD CUT-OFF

LEWISTOWN, MT 59457

Priority Date:

Type of Historical Right:

Purpose (Use): IRRIGATION

Flow Rate:

Volume:

Source Name: COTTONWOOD CREEK
Source Type: SURFACE WATER

Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:

Period of Use: Place of Use:

Remarks:

THIS CLAIM WAS DISMISSED BY ORDER OF THE WATER COURT.

ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM

JUDITH RIVER

BASIN 41S

Water Right Number: 41S 101562-00 STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Version: 4 -- POST DECREE

Status: ACTIVE

Owners: ANGUS MCMILLAN LLC

2505 COTTONWOOD CUT-OFF

LEWISTOWN, MT 59457

Priority Date: JUNE 9, 1884

Type of Historical Right: FILED

Purpose (Use): IRRIGATION

Irrigation Type: FLOOD

Flow Rate: 1.90 CFS

*Volume: THE TOTAL VOLUME OF THIS WATER RIGHT SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AMOUNT PUT

TO HISTORICAL AND BENEFICIAL USE.

Climatic Area: 4 - MODERATELY LOW

Maximum Acres: 50.00

Source Name: COTTONWOOD CREEK
Source Type: SURFACE WATER

Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:

IDGovt LotQtr SecSecTwpRgeCounty1NWNWNE3515N17EFERGUS

Period of Diversion: MAY 1 TO AUGUST 31

Diversion Means: HEADGATE

Period of Use: MAY 1 TO AUGUST 31

Place of Use:

<u>ID</u> Acres **Govt Lot Otr Sec Sec Twp** Rge **County** 1 30.00 S2SW 26 15N 17E **FERGUS** 2 **NWSW** 26 15N 17E **FERGUS** 20.00 50.00 **Total:**

Remarks:

THE WATER RIGHTS FOLLOWING THIS STATEMENT ARE SUPPLEMENTAL WHICH MEANS THE RIGHTS HAVE OVERLAPPING PLACES OF USE. THE RIGHTS CAN BE COMBINED TO IRRIGATE ONLY OVERLAPPING PARCELS. EACH RIGHT IS LIMITED TO THE FLOW RATE AND PLACE OF USE OF THAT INDIVIDUAL RIGHT. THE SUM TOTAL VOLUME OF THESE WATER RIGHTS SHALL NOT EXCEED THE AMOUNT PUT TO HISTORICAL AND BENEFICIAL USE.

101561-00 101562-00

ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM

JUDITH RIVER

BASIN 41S

Water Right Number: 41S 104276-00 STATEMENT OF CLAIM

> Version: 3 -- POST DECREE

> > **ACTIVE Status:**

ANGUS MCMILLAN LLC **Owners:**

2505 COTTONWOOD CUT-OFF

LEWISTOWN, MT 59457

Priority Date: DECEMBER 31, 1881

Type of Historical Right: **FILED**

DOMESTIC Purpose (Use): Flow Rate: 4.00 GPM Volume: 1.50 AC-FT

> **Households:** 1

Maximum Acres: 0.25

Source Name: SPRING, UNNAMED TRIBUTARY OF BEAVER CREEK

Source Type: GROUNDWATER

Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:

ID **Govt Lot County** Otr Sec **Sec** <u>Twp</u> Rge SESESE 15N 17E **FERGUS** 28

Period of Diversion: JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31

Diversion Means: FLOWING

Period of Use: **JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31**

Place of Use:

<u>ID</u> Acres **Govt Lot Otr Sec Sec** <u>Twp</u> <u>Rge</u> **County** 0.25 **SWSESE** 28 15N 17E **FERGUS**

Total: 0.25

Remarks:

THE WATER RIGHTS LISTED FOLLOWING THIS STATEMENT ARE MULTIPLE USES OF THE SAME RIGHT. THE USE OF THIS RIGHT FOR SEVERAL PURPOSES DOES NOT INCREASE THE EXTENT OF THE WATER RIGHT. RATHER IT DECREES THE RIGHT TO ALTERNATE AND EXCHANGE THE USE (PURPOSE) OF THE WATER IN ACCORD WITH HISTORICAL PRACTICES.

104276-00 104281-00

ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM

JUDITH RIVER

BASIN 41S

Water Right Number: 41S 104280-00 STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Version: 3 -- POST DECREE

Status: ACTIVE

Owners: ANGUS MCMILLAN LLC

2505 COTTONWOOD CUT-OFF

LEWISTOWN, MT 59457

Priority Date: FEBRUARY 19, 1903

Type of Historical Right: DECREED
Purpose (Use): STOCK
Flow Rate: 15.00 GPM

*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 BEAVER CREEK

Source Type: GROUNDWATER

Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:

<u>ID</u> <u>Govt Lot</u> <u>Qtr Sec</u> <u>Sec</u> <u>Twp</u> <u>Rge</u> <u>County</u> 1 SWNWSW 34 15N 17E FERGUS

Period of Diversion: JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31

Diversion Means: FLOWING

Period of Use: JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31

Place of Use:

IDAcresGovt LotQtr SecSecTwpRgeCounty1SWNWSW3415N17EFERGUS

ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM

JUDITH RIVER

BASIN 41S

Water Right Number: 41S 104281-00 STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Version: 3 -- POST DECREE

Status: ACTIVE

Owners: ANGUS MCMILLAN LLC

2505 COTTONWOOD CUT-OFF

LEWISTOWN, MT 59457

Priority Date: DECEMBER 31, 1881

Type of Historical Right: FILED

Purpose (Use): STOCK

Flow Rate: 4.00 GPM

*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 BEAVER CREEK

Source Type: GROUNDWATER

Point of Diversion and Means of Diversion:

<u>ID</u> <u>Govt Lot</u> <u>Qtr Sec</u> <u>Sec</u> <u>Twp</u> <u>Rge</u> <u>County</u> 1 NWSESE 28 15N 17E FERGUS

Period of Diversion: JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31

Diversion Means: FLOWING

Period of Use: JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31

Place of Use:

IDAcresGovt LotQtr SecSecTwpRgeCounty1SESE2815N17EFERGUS

Remarks:

THE WATER RIGHTS LISTED FOLLOWING THIS STATEMENT ARE MULTIPLE USES OF THE SAME RIGHT. THE USE OF THIS RIGHT FOR SEVERAL PURPOSES DOES NOT INCREASE THE EXTENT OF THE WATER RIGHT. RATHER IT DECREES THE RIGHT TO ALTERNATE AND EXCHANGE THE USE (PURPOSE) OF THE WATER IN ACCORD WITH HISTORICAL PRACTICES.

104276-00 104281-00