

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

CLAIMANT: Jennifer W. Hammontree

CASE 41S-0958-R-2024
41S 126832-00

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 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

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Jennifer W. Hammontree (Hammontree) is the record owner of irrigation claim 41S 126832-00.
2. Claim 41S 126832-00 was decreed with DNRC 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). 30027-178-57 , DATED 09/18/1979 , APPEARS TO INDICATE 0.00 ACRES IRRIGATED.
 - THE POINT OF DIVERSION MAY BE INCORRECT. THE LOCATION OF THE DIKE CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED FROM AVAILABLE DATA.
3. Hammontree was ordered to meet with a DNRC employee to address the issue remarks decreed on claim 41S 126832-00.
4. DNRC Water Resource Specialist Carli Bluhm filed a Memorandum on December 20, 2024. (Doc.¹ 3.00). The Memorandum indicates the DNRC received no contact from Hammontree. Ms. Bluhm reports she reviewed the Judith Basin County Water Resources Survey and an aerial photograph to prepare the Memorandum. Ms. Bluhm explained that she found no irrigation and she recommended dismissal of claim 41S 126832-00.
5. An Order was issued to determine if Hammontree agreed or disagreed with Ms. Bluhm's recommendation to dismiss claim 41S 126832-00. (Doc. 4.00). The Order indicated that if nothing were filed by the deadline, this Water Master would conclude Claimant Jennifer W. Hammontree agreed with the recommended dismissal of claim 41S 126832-00, and a Master's Report would be issued recommending the claim be dismissed. Nothing was filed.

PRINCIPLES AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Water Court must address all issue remarks decreed on a claim. Section 85-2-248, MCA.

¹ "Doc." numerical references correlate to case file docket numbers in the Water Court's Full Court case management system.

2. 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.

3. Pursuant to Rule 22, W.R.Adj.R., 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 may issue such orders of sanction with regard thereto as are just.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Claim 41S 126832-00 should be dismissed.

An abstract is attached for review.

ELECTRONICALLY SIGNED AND DATED BELOW.

Service via USPS Mail:

Jennifer W. Hammontree
PO Box 217
Hobson, MT 59452-0217

**POST DECREE
ABSTRACT OF WATER RIGHT CLAIM
JUDITH RIVER
BASIN 41S**

Water Right Number: 41S 126832-00 STATEMENT OF CLAIM

Version: 4 -- POST DECREE

Status: **DISMISSED**

Owners: JENNIFER W HAMMONTREE
PO BOX 217
HOBSON, MT 59452-0217

Priority Date:

Type of Historical Right:

Purpose (Use): IRRIGATION

Flow Rate:

Volume:

Source Name: HAUCK COULEE

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.