

April 16, 2025

Mike Thom, District Ranger  
Forest Service  
Gardiner Ranger District  
Custer Gallatin National Forest  
805 Scott St  
Gardiner, MT 59030  
[Michael.thom@usda.gov](mailto:Michael.thom@usda.gov)

Dear Mike:

The Cooke Pass, Cooke City, Silver Gate County Sewer District is proposing to investigate an area near Lulu pass on US Forest Service property for a potential subsurface wastewater treatment area. The investigation includes excavation of approximately 16 test pits to a depth of ~8 feet using a tracked excavator. 4-inch perforated PVC pipe will be installed in each test pit to allow monitoring for groundwater. ~3 wells are also proposed for installation to the depth of groundwater. The wells will be installed utilizing a drill rig, and consist of ~6" steel casing near the surface and ~2" PVC pipe to the depth of groundwater.

The Forest Service previously granted approval for the District to explore "Area C" directly south, and across Soda Butte Creek from Cooke City including excavation of test pits and installation of PVC monitoring pipes. The test pits were excavated and PVC monitoring pipes were installed. It is now proposed to drill ~6 wells to the depth of groundwater in the same area. The wells will be installed utilizing a drill rig; and consist of ~6" steel casing near the surface and ~2" PVC pipe to the depth of groundwater.

Attached is Standard Form 299 including additional information on the proposed exploration, along with a location map. The Sewer District has removed Area E near Silver Gate from consideration for the drainfield area; and will remove the previously installed monitoring pipes. Thank you for your continued support of our important project. Please call me at (406)855-9901 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

**Cooke Pass, Cooke City, Silver Gate County Sewer District**



Deb Purvis, President

Encl: Standard Form 299 – Application for Transportation, Utility Systems,  
Telecommunications and Facilities on Federal Lands and Property

APPLICATION FOR TRANSPORTATION, UTILITY SYSTEMS, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND FACILITIES  
ON FEDERAL LANDS AND PROPERTYFORM APPROVED  
OMB Control Number: 0596-0249  
Expiration Date: 02/28/2023

## FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

NOTE: Before completing and filing the application for an authorization (easement, right-of-way, lease, license or permit), the applicant should completely review this package, including instructions, and schedule a pre-application meeting with representatives of the agency responsible for processing the application. Each agency may have specific and unique requirements to be met in preparing and processing the application. Many times, with the help of the agency representative, the application can be completed at the pre-application meeting.

Application Number

Date Filed  
121211

## 1. Name and address of applicant

Cooke Pass, Cooke City, Silver  
Gate County Sewer District  
Deb Purvis, President  
PO Box 2492  
Livingston, MT 59047

2. Name and address of authorized agent if  
different from item 1

Triple Tree Engineering  
Brad Koon, PE  
1145 Cap Road  
Helena, MT 59602

3. Applicant telephone number and  
email:

406-855-9901

Authorized agent telephone number  
and email:

406-461-0692

## 4. As applicant are you? (check one)

- a. ☐ Individual  
b. ☐ Corporation\*  
c. ☐ Partnership/Association\*  
d. ☐ State Government/State Agency  
e. ☒ Local Government  
f. ☐ Federal Agency

\* If checked, complete supplemental page

## 5. Specify what application is for: (check one)

- a. ☒ New authorization  
b. ☐ Renewing existing authorization number  
c. ☐ Amend existing authorization number  
d. ☐ Assign existing authorization number  
e. ☐ Existing use for which no authorization has been received \*  
f. ☐ Other\*

\* If checked, provide details under item 7

6. If an individual, or partnership, are you a citizen(s) of the United States? ☒ Yes ☐ No

## 7. Project description (describe in detail): (a) Type of use or occupancy, (e.g., canal, pipeline, road, telecommunications); (b) related structures and facilities; (c) physical specifications (Length, width, grading, etc.); (d) term of days/years needed; (e) time of year of use or operation; (f) Volume or amount of product to be transported; (g) duration and timing of construction; and (h) temporary work areas needed for activity/construction (Attach additional sheets, if additional space is needed.)

The ultimate goal of the project is to construct a community drainfield for the Cooke Pass, Cooke City, Silver Gate Sewer District on property that will ultimately be purchased from the USFS. To permit the drainfield, a MT Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) groundwater discharge permit is required. To obtain the discharge permit and determine the best location for the drainfield, test pits need to be excavated in the "Lulu Pass" area shown on the attached map. The proposed test pits will be 8-10 feet deep, soil types encountered will be logged, and 10-12 feet long x 4" diameter PVC pipes will be installed to monitor groundwater throughout the year. An exhibit of the typical test pit installation is attached.

It is also proposed to drill three wells to the depth of groundwater in the "Lulu Pass Area". Area C

## 8. Attach a map covering area and show location of project proposal.

9. State or Local government approval: ☐ Attached ☐ Applied for ☒ Not Required10. Nonrefundable application fee: ☐ Attached ☒ Not required ☐ To be determined by agency11. Does project cross international boundary or affect international waterways? ☐ Yes ☒ No (if "yes," indicate on map)

## 12. Give statement of your technical and financial capability to construct, operate, maintain, and terminate system for which authorization is being requested.

The Cooke City Sewer District has contracted with Triple Tree Engineering to design and permit the drainfield. The Cooke Pass, Cooke City, Silver Gate County Sewer District has received ARPA, MCEP, RRGL, RDGP, and EDA funding for the project.



13a. Describe other alternative locations considered.

With the 2020 Preliminary Engineering Report, several other sites near Cooke City have been considered for the drainfield including a site near Silver Gate and several sites adjacent to Cooke City.

b. Why were these alternatives not selected?

The other sites considered in the PER have been eliminated for various reasons including soils, distance to Soda Butte Creek, slopes, and distance from Cooke City.

c. Give explanation as to why it is necessary to use or occupy Federal assets (lands or buildings).

There are no other sites available in the area due to rugged mountainous terrain and soils.

14. List authorizations and pending applications filed for similar projects which may provide information to the authorizing agency. (Specify number, date, code, or name)

N/A

15. Provide statement of need for project, including the economic feasibility and items such as: (a) cost of proposal (construction, operation, and maintenance); (b) estimated cost of next best alternative; and (c) expected public benefits.

The test pits and wells are needed to document that groundwater/surface will not be considerably affected by the proposed drainfield, as well as determine the types of soils in the area. The test pits will

16. Describe probable effects on the population in the area, including the social and economic aspects, and the rural lifestyles.

Cooke City residents and businesses utilize individual subsurface wastewater systems. When systems fail, there is very limited room for replacement drainfields. The proposed drainfield will provide a

17. Describe likely environmental effects that the proposed project will have on: (a) air quality; (b) visual impact; (c) surface and ground water quality and quantity; (d) the control or structural change on any stream or other body of water; (e) existing noise levels; and (f) the surface of the land, including vegetation, permafrost, soil, and soil stability; and, (g) historic or archaeological resources or properties.

The proposed test pits will be 8-10 feet deep and consist of 4 inch diameter perforated PVC. The wells will consist of ~6" steel casing near the surface, and ~2" PVC to the depth of groundwater.

18. Describe the probable effects that the proposed project will have on (a) populations of fish, plant life, wildlife, and marine life, including threatened and endangered species; and (b) marine mammals, including hunting, capturing, collecting, or killing these animals.

The anticipated effects include temporary disturbance to existing vegetation. If vegetation and soil are disturbed, the area will be graded back to pre-excavation conditions and reseeded.

19. State whether any hazardous material, as defined in this paragraph, would be used, produced, transported or stored on or in a federal building or federal lands or would be used in connection with the proposed use or occupancy. "Hazardous material" shall mean (a) any hazardous substance under section 101(14) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), 42 U.S.C. § 9601(14); (b) any pollutant or contaminant under section 101(33) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. § 9601(33); (c) any petroleum product or its derivative, including fuel oil, and waste oils; and (d) any hazardous substance, extremely hazardous substance, toxic substance, hazardous waste, ignitable, reactive or corrosive materials, pollutant, contaminant, element, compound, mixture, solution or substance that may pose a present or potential hazard to human health or the environment under any applicable environmental laws. The holder shall not store any hazardous materials at the site without prior written approval from the authorized officer. This approval shall not be unreasonably withheld. If the authorized officer provides approval, this permit shall include (or in the case of approval provided after this permit is issued, shall be amended to include) specific terms addressing the storage of hazardous materials, including the specific type of materials to be stored, the volume, the type of storage, and a spill plan. Such terms shall be proposed by the holder and are subject to approval by the authorized officer.

Equipment fuel will be transported across property to allow equipment operation. Other hazardous material is not proposed to be produced, transported, or stored on Federal lands.

20. Name all the Federal Department(s)/Agency(ies) where this application is being filed.

USFS along with Department of Environmental Quality coordination.

I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I am of legal age and authorized to do business in the State and that I have personally examined the information contained in the application and believe that the information submitted is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Applicant

Date

4/16/2025

Title 18, U.S.C. Section 1001, makes it a crime for any person knowingly and willfully to make to any department or agency of the United States any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or representations as to any matter within its jurisdiction.



PIPE PROPOSED TO DRILL 3 WELLS TO THE DEPTH OF GROUNDWATER

LULU PASS INVESTIGATION AREA

LULU PASS TRAIL ROAD

HIGHWAY 212

DAISY PASS TRAIL ROAD

COOKE CITY TOWN LIMITS

AREA C INVESTIGATION AREA

"AREA C" INVESTIGATION AREA PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY FOREST SERVICE FOR EXPLORATION 15 TEST PITS PREVIOUSLY EXCAVATED & EQUIP WITH 4" PERFORATED PVC MONITORING PIPE PROPOSED TO DRILL 6 WELLS TO THE DEPTH OF GROUNDWATER



### NOTES

1. PERFORATED PVC IS IN THE GROUND FOR 1 YEAR FOR MONITORING PURPOSES.
2. RECLAMATION WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE PERFORATED PVC IS REMOVED.

