



Flathead City-County Health Department

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Community Health Services
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Flathead Family Planning
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Population Health Services
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406-752-1310 FAX 406-752-1546

6/19/2023

James and Lynette Haun
4395 US Highway 93 W
Whitefish, MT 59937

SUBJECT: Request to connect to/alter existing permit(s) # 21-2145N and 04-2553N for Tract 5AD in Section 24, Township 31 North, Range 23 West

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Haun

A site visit to your property was performed on 6/15/2023 to review feasibility of adding an existing four-bedroom house to an existing septic system (# 21-2145N) in place of a proposed cabin that was never installed, as well as removing an existing one-bedroom cabin from the existing septic system (# 21-2145N) and reconnecting it to the existing system (# 04-2553N), to which it was previously connected. The existing system (# 04-2553N) was found to be inconsistent with current Flathead County Construction Standards for Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems, meaning that this office cannot issue a permit for any reconnection to/alteration of this system. The existing septic system (# 21-2145N) lacks the capacity to accommodate the four-bedroom house in addition to the two, one-bedroom cabins currently connected to the system. Hence, connecting the house to this system cannot be permitted without a modification to increase the system's capacity. Three options are available, which would allow the connection of the existing four-bedroom home to a permitted septic system.

- A replacement system could be installed to serve only the four-bedroom house. This system would require a 1,500-gallon septic tank, plus a pump chamber (likely 500 gallons), and a drainfield with an area of 1,167 square feet, or 389 lineal feet of drainfield lateral lines.
- The existing septic tank and pump chamber for (# 21-2145N) could be modified into a 2,500-gallon septic tank, a pump chamber (likely 1,000 gallons) could be added, and Level II treatment pods could be added. Level II treatment would allow the existing drainfield to accommodate the two existing cabins and the four-bedroom home.
- The existing septic tank and pump chamber for (# 21-2145N) could be modified into a 2,500-gallon septic tank, a pump chamber (likely 1,000 gallons) could be added, and an additional 256 lineal feet of lateral lines could be added to the existing drainfield.

Thank you for your diligence in your efforts to comply with Flathead County Regulations for Onsite Sewage Treatment Systems. Please find attached a list of licensed septic system installers, as well as a list of consultants and engineers, who may be able to assist you in determining the best option for moving forward.

This letter does not constitute final approval for the system. In order to receive final approval for this system, inspection of the exposed connection must be performed by our department.



Providing quality public health services to ensure the conditions for a healthy community.

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If you have questions, please call our office at 751-8130.

Sincerely,

Jake Rubow, RS
Flathead City-County Sanitarian

Email from Jake Rubow, RS
Environmental Health Services
Flathead City-County Health Department

August 18, 2023

Hi Jim,

Sorry for not getting back to you sooner, but the person in our office who handles subdivision review was out for a bit and I wanted to double check things with her before responding.

I'm not sure that subdividing would benefit your plans. There are no requirements to bring existing systems up to current standards when subdividing, and the existing, permitted systems are fine to remain in use, even for short-term rental usage, provided the proposed occupancy does not exceed the permitted design capacity.

Without making any changes to the existing hookups, the 2004 system can remain in use for the house. Since it was designed as a 6-bedroom system, the maximum occupancy that could be approved is 12. As we discussed, reconnecting the cabin that was moved to the 2021 system would constitute an alteration of the system, which would require a permit and bringing the system up to current standards.

The 1975 system can remain in service for the cabin. Since it was designed as a 1-bedroom system, the maximum occupancy that could be approved is 2, although this could potentially be increased if the occupancy were based on the 40 gallons/person/day wastewater flow for resort cabins, rather than the residential standard occupancy of two people per bedroom. Please note that this is not a guarantee that the increased occupancy would be approved, as the system is undersized by current standards. Given the age of the system, I would hesitate to increase the usage, were I the owner.

The 2021 system was designed for resort cabin occupancy of 9 persons, divided among three cabins. Given the permitted capacity, the existing two cabins could be approved for a combined total occupancy of up to nine. Alternatively, the originally-proposed third cabin could be added to the system. I have already conducted the site evaluation on the property, and since this cabin was approved on the existing permit, I could issue a tank-only permit that would allow for the installation of the new tank and connection to the forcemain without your having to pay for a new permit. There would simply be a "re-inspection" (fee of \$100) to verify that the tank and connection meet regulations and construction standards before they are buried.

The existing four-bedroom house could not be permitted as a short-term rental, regardless of whether it is on the same parcel as the other units, without replacing the existing system with a permitted system, or approved connection to a permitted system, as described in my previous letter. Connecting the house to the 2021 system would, of course remove the option to connect the originally-proposed cabin. The existing system is fine to remain in use for the house in its current long-term rental usage, as long as it remains in good working order. The existing system predates permitting and non-degradation analysis requirements, so replacing the system (for the house alone) or connecting it to the 2021 system via the approved methods would not trigger non-degradation analysis or DEQ review. The wastewater flows from the house would not be considered an increase as long as the preexisting four-bedroom/eight-person capacity were maintained.

I hope this helps. Please let me know if you have any other questions, or if I've completely misunderstood what you were asking.

Thanks,

Jake Rubow, RS
Environmental Health Services
Flathead City-County Health Department
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