**Montana Department
of
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

Region One
490 North Meridian Rd.
Kalispell, MT 59901
(406) 752-5501
FAX: 406-257-0349
Ref:DV281.95
March 15, 1995

TO: Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Helena, 59620-1704
Department of Health & Environmental Sciences, Director's Office, Room C108, Cogswell Bldg.,
Helena, 59620-0901

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office
Fisheries Division
Regional Supervisor
Design and Construction

Parks Division
Wildlife Division
Lands Section
Legal Unit

Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, 225 North Roberts, Veteran's
Memorial Building, Helena, 59620-1201

Montana State Library, 1515 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, 59620-1800

Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, 59624

George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, 59624

Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon Council, PO Box 595, Helena, 59624

Montana Department of Livestock, Game Farm Applications, 301 Roberts, Helena 59620

Montana Wildlife Federation, PO Box 1175, Helena, 59624

Joe Gutkoski, 304 North 18th, Bozeman, 59715

Dave Majors, 3289 Wood Duck Lane, Stevensville, 59870-6696

Herb Johnson, 900 W. Reserve St., Apt. 225, Kalispell, 59901

Arlene Montgomery, Friends of the Wild Swan, PO Box 5103, Swan Lake, MT 59911

Flathead Wildlife, Inc., Bob Cole, PO Box 4, Kalispell, 59903

Sanders County Commissioners, Sanders County Courthouse, Thompson Falls, 59873

Noxon Rod & Gun Club, c/o Robert Flansaas, Noxon, 59853

USFS, Cabinet Ranger Dist., Trout Creek, 59874

Rep. Jim Elliot, 100 Trout Crk. Rd., Trout Creek, 59874

Thompson Falls Archery Club, Box Holder, Thompson Falls, 59873

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for Virginia Waterman Game Bird Farm and is submitted for your consideration. Please direct your questions or comments to Game Warden Mark Soderlind, Box 1347, Thompson Falls, MT 59873 (406) 827-4817 by March 30, 1995. Thank you.

Sincerely,

for Dan Vincent
Regional Supervisor

/nb

Enclosure

DRAFT

EA Checklist Game Bird Farm License

PART I. GAME BIRD FARM LICENSE APPLICATION

The department's authority to regulate game bird farms is contained in section 87-4-901 through 87-4-916, MCA and ARM 12.6.1601 through 12.6.1604.

1. Name of Project: Application for Game Bird Farm License
2. Name, Address and Phone Number of Applicant: Virginia Waterman, 1549 Blue Slide Rd., Thompson Falls, MT 59873 - (406) 827-4931

3. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: 01/01/95

Estimated Completion Date: 03/01/95

Is this an application for expansion of existing facility or is a future expansion contemplated?

4. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township)
Sec. 31 T24N, R30W Sanders County, Montana

5. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed:
Residential..... 1/2 acres
Industrial..... 0 acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/
Areas..... acres
1 Single family dwelling

(c) Wetlands/Riparian
Areas..... acres

(d) Floodplain..... acres

(e) Productive:
Irrigated cropland... acres
Dry cropland..... acres
Forestry..... acres
Rangeland..... acres

(f) Other..... acres

6. Map/site plan: See Appendix B.
7. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action.

To include game birds in the current inventory of ornamental fowl. The game birds covered by the license will be a small percentage of the total number of birds raised. The license will allow the applicant to sell surplus birds.

8. Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.

(a) Permits:

Agency Name: _____ Permit: _____ Date Filed/#: _____

None

(b) Funding:

Agency Name: _____ Funding Amount: _____

None

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name: _____ Type of Responsibility: _____

None

9. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

None

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

A. Evaluation of the Impacts of the Proposed Action Including Secondary and Cumulative Impacts on the Physical and Human Environment:

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		x				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		x				
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		x				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		x				
e. Other: _		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality?		x				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		x				
c. Other: _		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

The applicant currently has a large number of ornamental fowl. The addition of a few game birds will not impact any objectional odors currently generated by the nonregulated fowl.

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACTS				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comments Include
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity or pathogens?		x				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		x				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		x				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		x				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		x				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		x				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		x				
h. Increase in the risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		x				
i. Violation of the Montana Non Degradation Statute?		x				
j. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		x				
k. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		x				
l. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		x				
m. Other: _____		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

4. <u>VEGETATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?		x				
b. Alteration of a plant community?		x				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species?		x				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		x				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		x				
f. Other: _		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed)

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (continued)

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> A. Based on design of the proposed game farm, and physical attributes and wildlife values of the site, what is the potential for any of the following to occur?	POTENTIAL FOR OCCURRENCE				Can Potential Be Reduced? *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	Minimal *	Significant Moderate *	Significant High *		
a. Through-the-fence contact between game farm animals and wildlife (consider traditional seasonal habitat use and location of travel routes and migration corridors).		x				
b. Escape of game farm animals - consider site-specific factors that could reduce effectiveness of perimeter fences built to standards outlined in Rule 12.6.1503A (including steepness of terrain, winter snow depths/drifts, susceptibility of fences to flood damage, etc.).		x				
c. Ingress of wildlife - consider site-specific factors that could reduce effectiveness of perimeter fences (see b.) built to standards outlined in Rule 12.6.1503A, as well as circumstances that could attract wildlife to or into the game farm (traditional seasonal habitat use and location of travel routes and migration corridors).		x				
d. Deterioration of critical wildlife habitat (capability to produce or sustain wildlife populations).		x				
e. Displacement of wildlife from critical habitat(s) as a result of proposed fences or other factors.		x				
f. Creation of barriers to travel routes or seasonal migration corridors used by wildlife populations.		x				
g. Other conditions that may stress wildlife populations, affecting their diversity, abundance or distribution.		x				
h. Changes in the diversity, abundance or distribution of game populations (include redistribution of wildlife from habitats that would be rendered unsuitable or inaccessible because of fencing or other factors).		x				
i. Changes in the diversity, abundance or distribution of nongame populations (include redistribution of wildlife from habitats that would be rendered unsuitable or inaccessible because of fencing or other factors).		x				
j. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened or endangered species, or their habitats.		x				
k. Introduction of any species not presently or historically occurring in the affected area.		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish/Wildlife Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

Escaped game farm birds would be killed by predators. The applicant keeps over 15 types of fowl not covered by law. The permitted birds are a small percentage of the total number of ornamental birds.

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT (Continued)

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u> (Continued) B. What degree of impact would any of the following (a.-f.) have on wildlife populations associated with the site? For items (a.-f.) that would result in impacts, provide a narrative that describes potential consequences.	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated? *	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Introduction and/or transmission of diseases or parasites to wildlife populations associated with the site.		x				
b. Establishment of feral population(s) of escaped game farm animals.		x				
c. Habitat degradation or competition as a result of feral populations or exclusion of wildlife populations from traditional seasonal habitat (including migration corridors).		x				
d. Hybridization/ genetic pollution of wildlife populations associated with the site.		x				
e. Displacement and/or redistribution of wildlife populations from traditional seasonal habitat (including migration corridors).		x				
f. Other: _		x				
C. Species potentially significantly impacted: For each wildlife species (or group of species) that would be potentially significantly impacted, state the factor(s) to which the impact(s) are attributed and address the following:		x				
a. Estimated size of affected wildlife population(s).		x				
b. Year-round distribution of affected wildlife population(s).		x				
c. Characterization of wildlife use (year-round v. seasonal) of the area to be impacted, including reference to any special habitat features.		x				
d. Proportion (%) of the total habitat area that is currently used, that will be enclosed or otherwise impacted.		x				
e. Other: _		x				

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown*	None	Minor*	Potentially Significant*		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		x				
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		x				
c. Other: _		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

The applicant's peacocks, guinea hens and peafowl make a lot of noise, but are not covered by the permit.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		x				
b. Conflict with a designated wildlife management area, natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		x				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		x				
d. Conflict with any existing land use that would be adversely affected by the proposed action.		x				
e. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		x				
f. Other: __		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Risk of dispersal of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to chemicals or pathogens) in the event of an accident or other form of disruption?		x				
b. Creation of any hazard or potential hazard to domestic livestock?		x				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		x				
d. Creation of any safety hazard to nearby dwellings, residents or recreationists as a result of firearms discharge on the premises of the proposed game farm?		x				
e. Other: __		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		x				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		x				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		x				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		x				
e. Changes in historic or traditional recreational use of an area?		x				
f. Changes in existing public benefits provided by affected wildlife populations and wildlife habitats (educational, cultural or historic)?		x				
g. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		x				
h. Other: _		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impacts (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered services provided by FWP and Dept. of Livestock to accomplish regulation of the game farm industry (inspections, animal counts, disease testing and monitoring, tattoo inspections, etc.)		x				
b. Have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		x				
c. Result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		x				
d. Other: _		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (Attach additional pages of narrative needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		x				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		x				
c. Changes in the quality or quantity of recreational opportunities and settings?		x				
d. Other: _		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT (continued)

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		x				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural or historic values?		x				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		x				
d. Other: _		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT				Can Impacts Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant *		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		x				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		x				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		x				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		x				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		x				
f. Other: _____		x				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed).

The applicant is currently raising a large number of nonregulated, ornamental birds. The addition of game birds will not affect the total number of birds held on site nor any impacts resulting from the current nongame birds facility.

*Include an attachment with a narrative explanation describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (Continued)

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Alternative 1: Not issue a game bird permit.

Alternative 2: Issue permit.

The applicant is currently raising ornamental fowl, including about 10 kinds of pheasants, pea and guinea fowl, peacocks, ducks, and a few others. The addition of a few game birds will have no effect on the overall environment. The surrounding habitat is marginal for upland game birds. The survival rate for escaped birds, both regulated and unregulated, would be very low.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

If the permit were denied, the applicant would continue to raise a great many kinds of nonregulated birds.

3. Based on the significant criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? NO/YES If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action: See #1.

4. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

A 15 day public comment period is appropriate for this proposed action.

5. Duration of comment period, if any: Fifteen days.

6. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

Mark Soderlind, State Game Warden
Box 1347
Thompson Falls, MT 59873
(406) 827-4817

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

LITERATURE CITED

FWP Game Biologist Bruce Sterling, Thompson Falls, Montana.

WATERMAN.3A
February 28, 1995
REV 02/94