CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	E-Bar-L Guest Ranch Guided Trail Ride License.
Proposed Implementation Date:	June 1, 2013
Proponent:	E-Bar-L Ranch
Location:	Parts of sections 2,4,10,14,16,and 34 in T14N R14W (see map)
County:	Missoula

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The purpose of this License is for conducting non-exclusive commercial guided horseback trail rides associated with the E-Bar-L Guest Ranch across scattered sections of school trust lands within T14N - R14W. The proposed season of use is from June 1 through October 30. Only existing trails and roads would be utilized for this activity. Frequency of use is estimated at 2-3 times per week for short durations during daylight hours. The proposal is to issue a five year license with the opportunity for renewal. The E-Bar-L owns land adjacent to these school trust lands and has used these trails for years. This License would compensate the trusts for this use on state land.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Contact was made to MT Fish Wildlife and Parks, Jay Kolbe for any issues or concerns. He had none. Also Garrett Schairer, DNRC Wildlife Biologist, was contacted and has given input for the development of this EA. Also Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archeologist, was contacted during the development of this EA.

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

A. No action – Do not issue a license to E-Bar L
B. Action – Issue a License to E-Bar-L for commercial guided horseback trail rides

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

There is no unique geology or unstable soils on this project site. Soils are mainly deep well-drained cobbly loams such as Yourame gravelly loam and Winkler gravelly loam. Old horse trails are present on this site and have been used for years. Some compaction is evident in the trails but due to the soil types these impacts are minimized. The disturbed areas on the trail do promote weed establishment, the licensee would be required to monitor and spray noxious weeds spread or introduced from this use. The disturbed soil will be reseeded with

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:
Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

None

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:
List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

Within the last 15 years, the DNRC has completed several Environmental Assessments (EA's) for timber sale projects as well as an EA for a reciprocal access easement exchange affecting school trust lands in this area. One new Environmental Assessment for the Nemo timber sale project has just been completed (finding 5/1/13) and involves timber harvest within Section 34, T14N-R14W. This timber harvest will likely occur within the next 3 calendar years.

All of these activities have been analyzed for environmental impacts including cumulative effects.

Guided horseback trail rides are an existing use that has occurred historically and does not constitute a new additional use of the land creating a potential cumulative effect.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

None

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

None

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:
Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

Short-term temporary jobs will be maintained by the authorization of this easement due to the guided horseback rides.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:
Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Tax revenue would stay the same for this action.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:
Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

No change is anticipated.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:
List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

Sections 2,4,10 and a part of 16 are within the Seeley Lake Regional Plan. This plan was adopted by Missoula County on October 20, 2010. These trust land parcels have a land use designation of one (1) dwelling unit per 80 acres. They are un-zoned.

Forty acres (SESE) of Section 4, 160 acres (W2) of Section 16, and approximately 320 acres (NW, N2NE, SENE, NESE) of Section 34 are under conservation easement. Adjacent private lands including those of the potential licensee are also under conservation easement.

Since the proposed action (guided trail rides) does not involve the construction of dwellings it is consistent with local planning. The proposed activities are also consistent with the terms of the conservation easements.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:
Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

The school trust land as well as the licensee's adjacent private lands, are within the "Blackfoot" Block Management Area administered by Region 2 of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. This block management area is seasonally in effect during the period September 1 through December 1 of each year. During this time period, recreational use of State trust lands is regulated by the rules for this block management area.

Licensed activities are consistent with the rules for use of this block management area.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:
Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

There will not be an impact to population or housing.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

None

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

None

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:
Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

No Action: Existing uses including grazing leases, forest management and recreational activities would continue to generate revenue. New proposed activities would be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Action: Issuance of a non-exclusive commercial guided horseback trail ride license would provide an annual return to the school trusts of approximately $800.00 per year. Other uses such as Grazing, timber management, and recreational use would continue unaffected in all of these parcels.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name: David M. Poukish** **Title: Clearwater Unit Manager**	**Date: May 23 2013**

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I select the action alternative; the issuance of a land use license for guided horseback trail rides as described above to specifically include the limitation on season of use, restricting activities to existing roads and trails and prohibiting motorized uses (unless specifically authorized by DNRC)..

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

There will be no significant effects as a result of implementation of the action alternative (Issuance of a license as described)

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

[ ] EIS [ ] More Detailed EA [x] No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name: Robert H. Storer** **Title: Lands Program Manager**	
Signature: // Robert H Storer		**Date:** May 29, 2013

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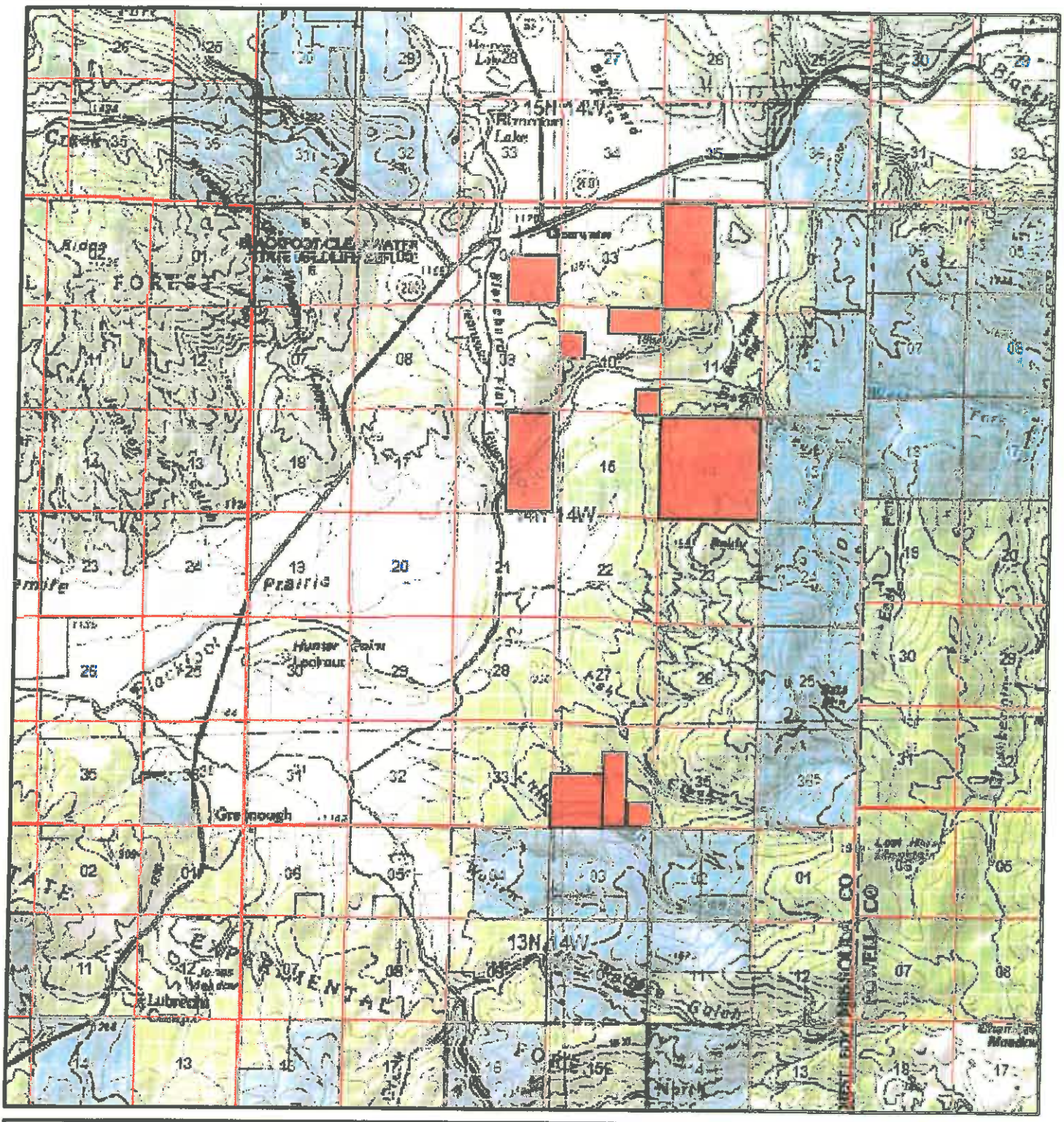

E-Bar-L LUL

Areas in Red for LUL

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