CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Bresnan Communications ROW
Proposed Implementation Date:	2012
Proponent:	Bresnan Communications ROW
Location:	Pine Hills
County:	Lewis & Clark
Trust:	Pine Hills *(Section 18 & 30 T12N R3W)*, Common Schools *(other 4)*

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Bresnan Communications LLC wishes to obtain an easement for construction, operation and maintenance of a fiber optic communication line across 6 tracts of State Land. The 6' in width easement would involve a total of 3.053 acres. The proposed easements would allow the proponent to enhance their communication system for rural areas north of Helena. The line in sections 18 & 30, T12N R3W would be overhead attached to existing power poles and underground on the remaining 4 tracts.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

The State lessees have been contacted as well as adjacent private owners.

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

NA

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

1. Recommend issuing the ROWs as proposed.
2. Not issue the ROWs.

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.

None. Disturbance would be limited to a narrow strip during construction/installation. Project would utilize an existing abandoned gas pipeline in 16, T14N, R4W and part way through section 8, T13N, R4W. It would then be buried (plowed in) the remainder of the way through section 8, and 16, T13N, R4W and through section 30, T13N, R3W. In sections 18 & 30, T12N, R3W the line would be overhead, being placed on existing poles. Minimal effects are anticipated from this installation.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

None. No surface or groundwater impacts are expected.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

None. No impacts are expected.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

None. Disturbance would be minimal and limited to a narrow strip during construction. No rare plants or types have been identified.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

None. Some deer and elk use is present in the area however the limited nature and duration of the project would not be of impact.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

None. No T&E species or habitat has been identified in the project area.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

None. Actions were reviewed by DNRC Archaeologist Pat Rennie, and no further review was recommended.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

None. The proposed area is not prominent and would be visible during a short duration for a limited distance adjacent to I 15.

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. Currently the State tracts are leased for grazing. Adjacent private land use is similar.

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.

None. Currently the State tracts are leased for grazing. The area involved is adjacent to existing road and utility infrastructure.

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.

No effects anticipated.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

No effects anticipated.

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.

No effects anticipated.

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.

No effects anticipated.

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 effects 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.

None.

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.

No effects anticipated.

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.

No effects anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

No effects anticipated.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

No effects anticipated.

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.

Some income to the trust would be generated. Land value of $500/acre is estimated (based on fee schedule). This estimated rate would yield $508.50 for Pine Hills Trust and $1018.00 for Common Schools. The limited scope of the project and standard stipulations in the easements would limit and mitigate any potential impacts. ROW application fees were paid by Advanced Communications, Inc.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	D.J. Bakken	**Date:**	1/3/2012
	Title:	Helena Unit Manager		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the alternative to recommend issuance of the easements.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Minimal impacts are anticipated. On two tracts, the line would be placed within an abandoned gas pipeline, two other tracts would be buried, and on the remaining two tracts, the line would be placed on existing overhead poles.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Gavin Anderson
	Title:	CLO Forest and Lands Program Manager
Signature:	Gavin Anderson	**Date**: 1/3/12

Bresnan ROW tracts