# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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| **Project Name:** | Lease Improvement Request for livestock water pipelines and two stock tanks. |
| **Proposed Implementation Date:** | Fall 2013 |
| **Proponents:** | Miller Colony, Attn: Jacob Hofer, 5130 Highway #89, Choteau, MT 59422 |
| **Location:** | SE4, Section 11, T25N, R6W<br>SW4, Section 12, T25N, R6W |
| **County:** | Teton |
| **Trust:** | Common Schools |

## I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Miller Colony lessee of state lease #3598 have requested to place a livestock water line in two places across state land and two stock tanks on state land located in the SE4, Section 11, T25N, R6W and SW4, Section 12, T25N, R6W. This will allow them to connect to an existing well located on deeded land and pipe water to an additional two tanks located on deeded land. This project is an addition to a livestock water system that was started in 2011. This project consisted of piping water from a well on deeded land to a stock tank on deeded land and a stock tank on state land. The well on deeded land is dry and the new project will provide water to this existing water system as well. The water lines will be 2.00" HDPE pipe placed at a depth of 6' for a distance of approximately 3,608.00' on state land. Two stock tanks will be placed on state land. A detailed map showing the location for this project lay out is included within this assessment.

## II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Miller Colony-Proponent, Surface Lessee, Leases #3598
DNRC-Surface Owner

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

There are no other agencies with jurisdiction on this project.

### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Deny the proponent permission to place the livestock water lines and two stock tanks.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant the proponent permission to place the place the livestock water lines and two stock tanks.

## 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.*

The soil types are primarily made up of silty and thin hilly sites. These soil types are made up of gently rolling to steep topography. The concerns over the steepness of the slopes will be mitigated as the water line will be installed in order to avoid the steep slopes. Also, the proponent is required to control any erosion problems that may occur. Equipment will cause localized areas of soil compaction and will disturb the soil were the livestock water lines are being placed. Reclamation requirements are to compact and level the trench scar created in the installation of the water line. Then seed the impacted area with the existing grass types and seeding rates that are listed in item 7 of this assessment. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected and any difficulties will be further mitigated by the use of an excavator to place the livestock water lines which will cause limited soil disturbance. In addition, the disturbed areas will be reclaimed and reseeded by the proponent.

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**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.*

There are no documented and/or recorded water rights associated with the proposed project area. The proposed action will improve overall water reliability and quantity for the proponent on the adjacent state and deeded pasture. Cumulative effects to water resources are not expected from the project. The livestock water lines will be buried and the additional stock tanks will provide reliable water to livestock therefore lessening the impact on the ephemeral drainages. Other water quality and/or quantity issues will not be impacted by the proposed action.

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**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.*

The proposed action will not impact the air quality.

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**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.*

Vegetation will be minimally impacted as approximately 3,608.00' of 2.00" HDPE pipe will be placed 6' deep. The pipe will be installed by the utilization of an excavator. Noxious and annual weeds within the proposed construction areas are a concern, but this concern will be mitigated as the proponents are responsible for controlling weeds within the construction areas. Cumulative impacts on the vegetative resources are not expected as the proposed construction areas will be reclaimed and reseeded. The reseeding mixture will consist of a grass seed mixture of 30% Slender Wheatgrass, 30% Rough Fescue, 15% Green Needlegrass, 10% Western Wheatgrass, 10% Bluebunch Wheatgrass, and 5% Cicer Milkvetch. If drilled the rate will be 8#/acre and if broadcast the rate will be doubled.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted and there was zero plant species of concern noted and zero potential species of noted on the NRIS survey.

**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.*

The area is not considered critical wildlife habitat. However, this tract provides habitat for a variety of big game species (mule deer, whitetail deer, pronghorn antelope), predators (coyote, fox, badger), upland game birds (sharp tail grouse, Hungarian partridge), other non-game mammals, raptors and various songbirds. The proposal does not include any land use change which would yield changes to the wildlife habitat. The proposed action will not impact wildlife forage, cover, or traveling corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover. Wildlife usage is expected to return to "normal" (pre-action usage) following the completion of the project. The proposed project will also provide a reliable water source for wildlife.

**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.*

The tracts are located in the NCD grizzly bear recovery zone. Grizzly bears will not be impacted by the project because construction will occur next to existing roads and the livestock water line will be buried. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by proposal.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T25N, R6W. There were six animal species of concern, two potential species of concern, and one special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Mammals-Grizzly Bear. Birds-Ferruginous Hawk, Black Tern, Horned Grebe, McCown's Longspur, Hooded Merganser, and Bald Eagle. Fish-Brook Stickleback and Northern Redbelly X Finescale Dace. These particular tracts of grazing land do not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a livestock water line.

**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**
*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

A cultural resource inventory was completed by the Conrad Unit Office on October 25, 2013. No cultural resources were found within the project area, so it is assumed that cultural resources will not be impacted by this proposed project.

**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.*

The livestock water line will be buried so there will be no aesthetic impacts.

**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.*

The demand on environmental resources such as land, water, air, or energy will not be affected by the proposed action. The proposed action will not consume resources that are limited in the area. There are no other projects in the area that will affect the proposed project.

**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.*

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tract listed on this EA.

## 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.*

The proposed project will not change human safety in the area.

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

The proposed livestock water development will improve livestock distribution and generally improve the proponent's ranching opportunities.

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**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.*

The proposed action will not significantly affect long-term employment in the surrounding communities.

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**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.*

The proposed action will not affect tax revenue.

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**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*

This project is of a small scale and being funded by the proponent. There will be no excessive stress placed of the existing infrastructure of the area.

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**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.*

The proposed action is in compliance with State and County laws. No other management plans are in effect for the area.

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**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.*

These tracts of state land are rural and generally have low recreational value. The tracts are not legally accessible and the proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational and wilderness activities on these state tracts.

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**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*

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

The proposed action will not impact the cultural uniqueness or diversity of the area.

**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.*

Cumulative impacts are not likely as the area is only used for livestock grazing and the buried livestock water lines will improve the long-term viability of grazing on the tracts. The addition of the water tanks will provide a reliable source of water to the pasture which will positively impact livestock distribution. This project is authorized under the lease improvement request form.

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| **EA Checklist Prepared By**: | **Name:** | Tony Nickol | **Date:** | October 29, 2013 |
| | **Title:** | Land Use Specialist, Conrad Unit, Central Land Office | | |
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## V. FINDINGS

### 25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant the proponents permission to place the livestock water lines and two stock water tanks.

### 26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

This livestock water development will improve livestock distribution and generally allow for better management of the state lease. No known archaeological sites are present within the project area. Overall, no negative environmental impacts are expected.

### 27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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| [ ] EIS | [ ] More Detailed EA | [X] No Further Analysis |

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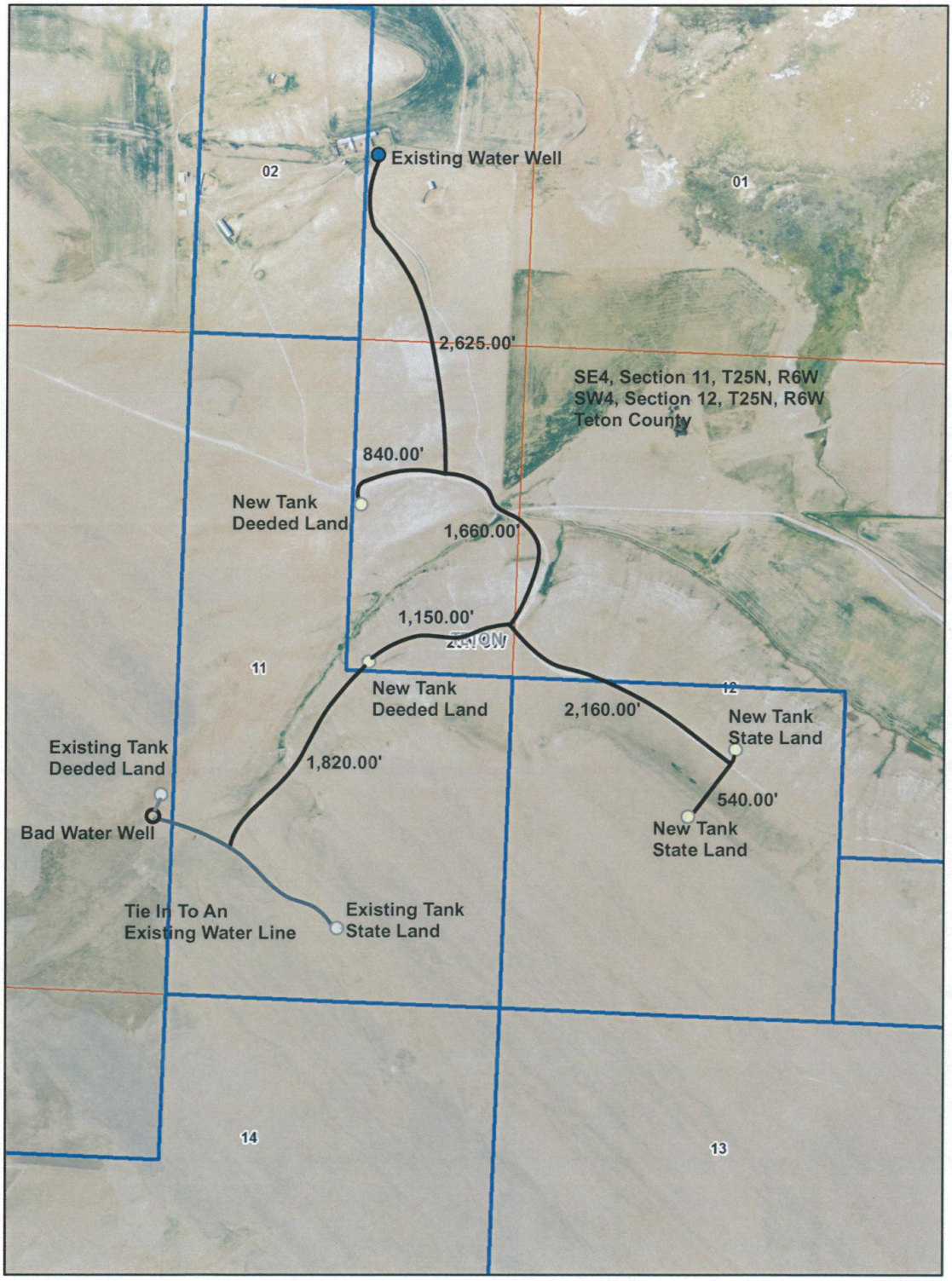
| **EA Checklist Approved By**: | **Name:** Erik Eneboe<br>**Title:** Conrad Unit Manger, CLO, DNRC |
| **Signature:** | **Date**: October 31, 2013 |


Existing Water Well
02
01
2,625.00'
SE4, Section 11, T25N, R6W
SW4, Section 12, T25N, R6W
Teton County
840.00'
New Tank
Deeded Land
1,660.00'
1,150.00'
11
New Tank
Deeded Land
12
2,160.00'
New Tank
State Land
Existing Tank
Deeded Land
1,820.00'
540.00'
Bad Water Well
New Tank
State Land
Tie In To An
Existing Water Line
Existing Tank
State Land
14
13