CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Experimental Wind Generating Tower
Proposed Implementation Date:	April 2006
Proponent:	WindCatcher Windmills and Windraulics
Location:	NWNWSW Section 8-T11N-R3W
County:	Lewis and Clark
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Construct a temporary experimental and demonstration wind generating tower. The facility would consist of a small concrete slab on which a single pole tower of approximately 40 feet and supporting an 8 blade rotor would be erected. The electrical generating facilities would ground mounted reducing the weight supported by the tower and eliminating the need for a more substantial structure. A small shed would be constructed on the slab to house the generating components, hydraulic storage, computer and video monitoring system. The facility is expected to produce approximately 20kW of electricity which will be donated for use at the on site DNRC office facilities. The purpose of the project is to construct a prototype component of a potentially larger system to be constructed elsewhere and to monitor and collect electrical conversion efficiency data. The tower would be constructed by spring 2007 and would be in place for 1-5 years.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

A letter was distributed in October 2006 to all adjacent landowners informing them of the proposed project and asking for comments or concerns. One landowner responded with a concern if more facilities were to be constructed after the prototype but had no concerns after learning no further construction is considered.

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

The proponent will be responsible for securing appropriate permits and agreements with the power company.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Alternative: Issue a Land Use License allowing construction of the temporary wind generating facilities.

No Action Alternative: Deny the proposal.

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.

Soils on the tract are generally a deep gravelly loam with slopes less than 3%. Soils will not be impacted by the proposed project

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 water features on the proposed site and the project will not use water resources. Construction of the facilities will not affect water quality or distribution.

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 project will not affect air quality.

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.

The vegetation on the project area is grassland species typical of the Helena Valley. There are no rare or unusual plant species. Vegetation will not be impacted other than the 20 x 20 foot concrete slab.

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 proposed site is located approximately 150 feet from Montana Avenue, a busy roadway connecting Helena Valley developments with the City of Helena and surrounding areas have been developed for residential purposes. Consequently there is little value for wildlife species other than occasional deer, small mammals such as rabbits or gophers and song birds which in habit adjacent shelter belt plantings. The proposed construction will not affect wildlife species. The prototype project is small scale and will not have rotor speeds or size sufficient to impact avian populations.

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.

There are no unique, endangered or fragile resources in the vicinity of the proposed project.

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

A visual inspection of the site was conducted and no evidence of historical, cultural or paleontological resources was evident.

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 tower would be visible form Montana Avenue and near by residences. However the height is no greater then near by telephone poles and buildings. The visual landscape will not be affected. The rotors are designed to minimize noise and will not generate noise levels sufficient to disturb nearby residences.

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 area adjacent to the proposed project is an administrative facility for a field office of the DNRC. There are several office buildings, shop and warehouse facilities and a helicopter pad for fire fighting operations. The proposed tower will not be of sufficient height to affect existing helicopter operations and will not impact existing uses.

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.

A range evaluation was conducted on the tract in 1999.

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 impacts to human health and safety would occur as a result of the proposal..

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

The tract of land is currently leased for grazing purposes but has not been grazed for several years. If grazing activity resumes, the CLO will construct a fence to protect the proposed project.

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 proposal would have no affect on quantity and distribution of employment.

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.

none

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

The proposed sale would not have an impact on government services.

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.

No local plans will affect the proposed project

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 tract is available for recreational uses and occasionally individuals walk dogs on the site. Recreational use will not be impacted by the proposal.

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.

None

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?

No unique qualities to 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.

The LUL will generate $100 for the term of the License while generating far more value in energy resources for the administrative site. No other economic or social effects are anticipated as a result of the proposed activity.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	DJ Bakken	**Date:**	11/14/06
	Title:	Helena Unit Supervisor		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the proposed project and recommend issuing a Land Use License for the construction of a temporary wind tower..

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Significant impacts will not occur as a result of the proposed project. The use is temporary and there are no unique species, critical habitat, water resources or social concerns to be impacted by the project.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Garry Williams		
	Title:	Area Manager, Central Land Office		
Signature:	Garry Williams		**Date**:	November 14, 2006