

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Turner Enterprises Fence Replacement Request 2016
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	Spring, 2016
<b>Proponent:</b>	Turner Enterprises Inc., Lessee
<b>Location:</b>	T9S R5W Sections 22 & 27
<b>County:</b>	Madison County, Montana

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The lessee of the Trust Land in Sections 22 & 27, T9S R5W is requesting to replace approximately 1 mile of existing barbed wire fence with 4 strand high tensile fence. The existing barbed wire fence and posts would be removed and hauled away. The replacement fence would be a 4 strand high tensile electric fence configured with wire spacing (starting from top) will be approximately: 42", 33", 24", 16". Brace posts would be fabricated using steel pipe. Four each 16' metal gates would be installed for access, one near each end, one on top of the butte, and off the edge of the butte as depicted on the attached quadrangle map. The line posts would be 1.5" fiberglass at 30' spacing. Fence construction would allow for electrification of the fence when grazing the pasture using a solar powered fence charger. The top and third wires would be intended to carry electricity for containment of livestock. The replacement fence would consist of 5,810 feet of new fence constructed in the exact location of the existing dilapidated barbed wire fence that will be removed. Let downs will be put in the fence to allow for easy wildlife passage in times when pasture is not in use.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Dean Waltee, Wildlife Biologist for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks – Sheridan,  
Patrick Rennie, Archaeologist for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.  
Martin Miller, Montana Natural Heritage Program

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

No other agencies jurisdiction or need of additional permits were identified in scoping for this project.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

- 1) Allow re-construction of the fence
- 2) Do not allow re-construction of the fence

### 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.*

This project is a replacement for an existing fence-line and will not cause further impacts to soils on the site.

**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.*

No important water resources are located in the proposed project vicinity.

**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 project would not alter air quality in the area.

**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 vegetative community would not be altered as a result of this proposed project as it is a fence line replacement project and will be constructed on the old line. Current vegetative community is dominated by native perennial bunchgrasses such as bluebunch wheatgrass, Idaho fescue on the North aspects, and needle-and-thread grass. The existing plant community will not be altered by the completion of the proposed project.

**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.*

No cumulative effects to fish and wildlife would occur as a result of this proposed project. The existing barbed wire fence would be removed and replaced with a 4 strand smooth wire electric fence with a 16" bottom wire and a 42" top wire. DFWP Biologist Dean Waltee was contacted by both TEI and Chuck Maddox for input on mitigating wildlife concerns. Dean made recommendations which were incorporated into the fence proposal from TEI regarding number of wires and wire height/spacing.

**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 Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) was contacted regarding species of concern within and around the project area. Three Species of concern were identified in the report and are listed below.

**Golden Eagle** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – Golden eagles are a protected species under U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service regulations; it is also a BLM sensitive species and classified in the State of Montana as a species potentially at risk. The proposed project will not alter the existing vegetative community type and would not influence use of the area by golden eagles. The project would not have cumulative effects on golden eagle habitat or species distribution in the area.

**Brewer's Sparrow** (*Spizella breweri*) – Brewer's sparrow is a BLM sensitive species. Per Montana Natural Resource Information Service (NRIS), the species prefers nesting in sagebrush averaging 16 inches in height. The proposed project would not significantly alter the current vegetative community of predominantly native grasses with little to no sagebrush. Proper grazing management of the affected pastures would not alter the vegetation on-site or lead to negative cumulative effects on Brewer's sparrow populations of the area.

**Ferruginous Hawk** (*Buteo regalis*) Ferruginous hawks have been documented using the general area around the project as nesting and hunting habitat. The state of Montana lists the bird as an S3B species meaning it is at potential risk due to limited and potentially declining numbers, extent, or habitat even though it may be abundant

in some areas. The low surface impacts resulting from the project would not significantly alter vegetative composition or nesting habitat for the hawks. The primary vegetation on-site is native grass species and they would not be impacted if the project is approved. The project would not cause direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to this species.

**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archaeologist, was contacted regarding cultural resource listings for the tracts. Patrick checked the records and responded that there were no cultural resource issues with this proposal.

**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 proposed project is to re-construct an existing fence and would not alter the aesthetics of the area.

**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 project would not negatively affect the areas environmental resources.

**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.*

No other studies, plans, or projects were reported to DNRC Dillon Unit from other agencies during the scoping process.

**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 health or safety risks would result from this proposed project.

**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

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

The project would improve livestock management on the affected Trust Land by allowing better utilization of the tracts.

**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 project would not have cumulative effects on the employment market.

**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 tax revenue would be created or eliminated as a result of the approval of this project.

**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 additional government services would be required as a result of this proposed project.

**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 other environmental plans or goals were reported during the scoping for this document.

**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 proposed project will not alter recreational activities on the tract. An access gate would be placed on the tract for recreationists.

**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 proposed project will not alter populations or housing.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

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

The proposed project would not disrupt local communities.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

The proposed project would not affect the unique qualities 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.*

There would be no monetary increase to the trust as a result of this proposed project. Potential benefits of the project, if completed, would be improved management in controlling livestock utilization of upland rangeland sites. Both sections 22 & 27 are Common Schools Grant.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Chuck Maddox	<b>Date:</b> 4/11/2016
	<b>Title:</b> Land Use Specialist	

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Allow re-construction of the fence

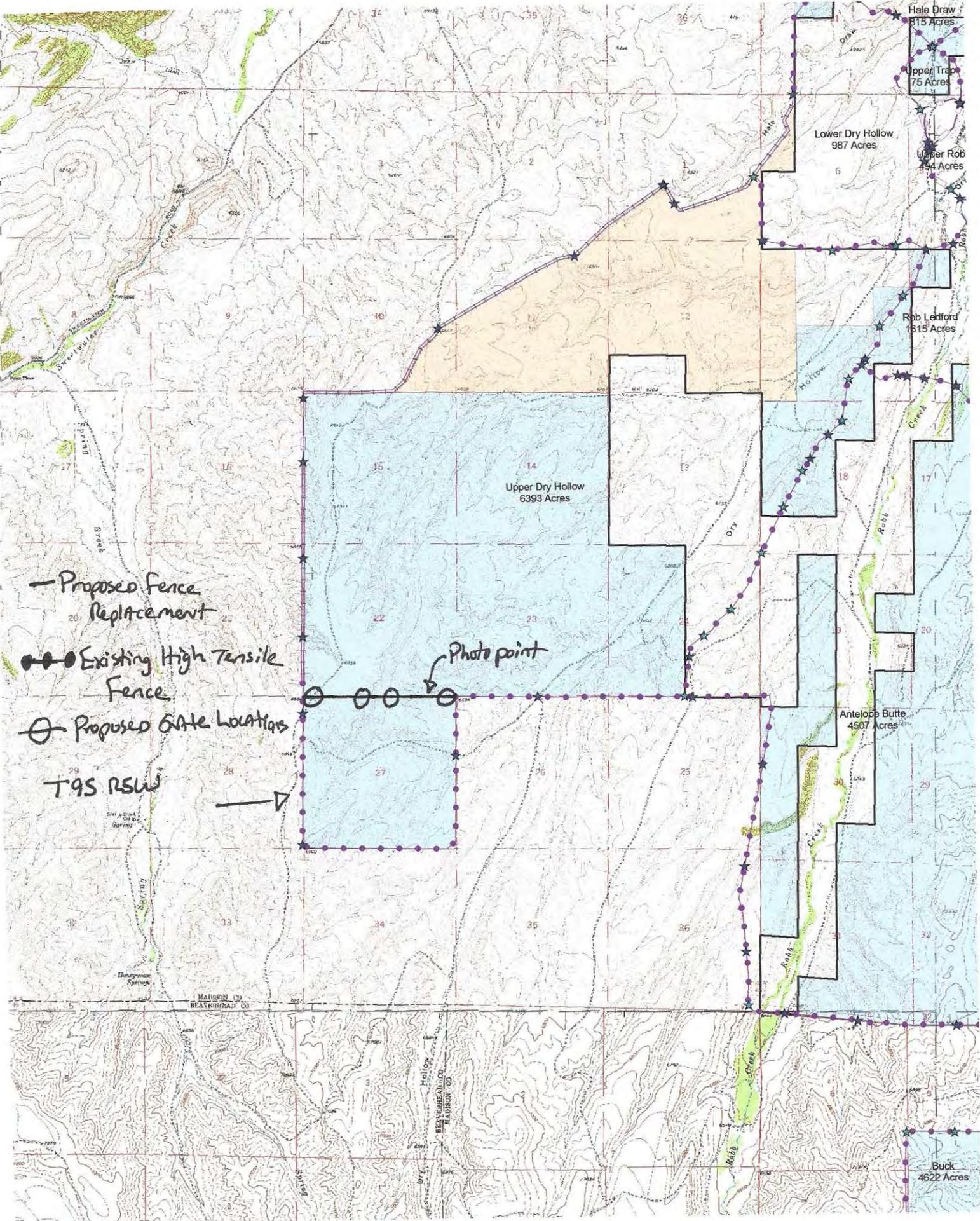
**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

Short term impacts may occur during the re-construction of the fence, however no long term impacts are anticipated. This is an existing fence replacement project with no changes in use by the lessee anticipated.

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

EIS       More Detailed EA       No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Timothy Egan
	<b>Title:</b> Dillon Unit Manager
<b>Signature:</b> /S/ Timothy Egan	
<b>Date:</b> April 13, 2016	



— Proposed Fence Replacement

●●● Existing High Tensile Fence

⊗ Proposed Gate Locations

T95 NSLW

Photo point

Hale Draw  
815 Acres

Upper Tract  
75 Acres

Lower Dry Hollow  
987 Acres

Upper Rob  
494 Acres

Rob Ledford  
1815 Acres

Upper Dry Hollow  
6393 Acres

Antelope Butte  
4507 Acres

Buck  
4622 Acres

MADISON CO  
BEAVERHEAD CO

Hollow Creek  
MADISON CO  
BEAVERHEAD CO

Robb Creek

Photo Point:

Looking West: Boundary Between Section 22 (Right of fence) and 27 (Left of fence)



Photo Point:

Looking East: Boundary Between Section 27 (Right) and 22 (Left of Fence)

Fence Corner visible is the corner of sections 22, 23, 26, 27 (High Tensile fence)

