

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	
Project Name: Access a pipeline across School Trust lands for the purpose of a maintenance dig within the Right of Way granted for the pipeline.	Proposed Implementation Date: April 2016
Proponent: Plains Pipeline, L.P., 303 6 th St. NE, Belfield, ND	
Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to access a pipeline (under ROW Application No. 7003) across School Trust lands for the purpose of digging within the ROW to inspect an anomaly found within the line during testing. This will require the driving of vehicles and heavy equipment across land classified as grazing acreage for approximately 950 ft., in a straight line from a county road to the dig location.	
Location: E2 Section 16, Township 37N, Range 53E	County: Sheridan

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Corey Schmitt, ROW agent for Plains Pipeline, LP, contacted the Glasgow Unit Office to discuss the planned digging project and inquire what was needed to move forward. An application for a Land Use License was then sent to the GUO. The LUL is only applicable on those School Trust lands not under ROW #7003, which already allows for maintenance of the pipeline.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	Montana Board of Oil & Gas, DNRC has jurisdiction over the digging project, and will be notified of the proposed access trail. Montana Department of Environmental Quality would also be involved in the event of a spill or leak during the dig.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Action Alternative: Grant permission to Plains Pipeline, LP to access the pipeline across School Trust lands. No Action Alternative: Deny permission to Plains Pipeline, LP to access the pipeline across School Trust lands.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compatible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>The area of impact contains a Zahill-Williams complex of soils, which is a clayey loam. This soil is not fragile or unstable. There are small intermittently-wet potholes nearby, which means an increased possibility of erosion and disturbance when driven over, especially in rainy conditions.</p> <p>Action Alternative: There will be some soil compaction with vehicle traffic, as well as rutting and soil disturbance. The impacts will not be permanent, as a condition of the LUL is that the area will be reclaimed to the GUO's satisfaction within 30 days of completion of the project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no changes to soils on the State land.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>There are no important water resources present within the area of impact. There are some intermittently-wet potholes nearby that fill with groundwater seasonally, but the access trail is approximately 200' from the nearest pothole. The project would have no impact on drinking water in the area.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The proposed access trail would not negatively impact the quality, quantity and distribution of water.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative, there will be no impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution.</p>
<p>6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I</p>	<p>This project is not influenced by any air quality regulations or zones. A short-term increase in vehicle traffic will result in a slight increase in</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
<p>airshed)?</p>	<p>dust. No pollutants will be produced.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of project on the State land will have minimal impact to the air quality. Some dust may occur due to vehicle use.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to air quality.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>The current vegetative community consists primarily of native grasses, forbs and shrubs. The project would slightly reduce the quantity and quality of vegetation on the State land. There would be increased potential for noxious weed introduction. No rare plants are present.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Under the terms of the LUL, the proponent would be required to reclaim the impacted area to the GUO's satisfaction, so no permanent impacts are expected.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the plant communities on the State land.</p>
<p>8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>The School Trust land provides habitat for upland birds, waterfowl and deer. There is slight potential for recreation (hunting) on this School Trust land.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The area of impact is small and will only degrade habitat for a short period. Any impacts in the short-term will be mitigated during reclamation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the possible use of the State land as wildlife habitat.</p>
<p>9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR</p>	<p>The area of impact is within prairie</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:
Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?

pothole/wetland habitat that is important nesting habitat for waterfowl species. There are two species of concern that use the area seasonally: Baird's Sparrow and Le Conte's Sparrow.

Action Alternative: Access across the approx. 950' of School Trust land will result in short term loss/degradation of a small amount of habitat. These losses will be mitigated during reclamation.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the environmental resources.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?

The area of impact contains no historical, archaeological or paleontological resources. There are potential stone circles on surrounding hilltops in the area.

Action Alternative: The proposed access route will have no impact on historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

No Action Alternative: There will be no impact to historical or archaeological sites under this alternative.

11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?

The proposed access route will have minimal impact on the aesthetics of the area. The area of impact is directly adjacent to a county road, so the project will be visible to the public. Noise levels may increase slightly due to increased vehicle traffic, but there will be no excessive levels of noise or light.

Action Alternative: Minimal impacts to the aesthetics of the School Trust land are expected.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	to aesthetics associated with the School Trust land.
12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	<p>Environmental resources in the area are not specifically limited and are not affected by the proposed project. No nearby activities will affect the project.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The proposed access route will place no demands on any environmental resources in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no demands placed on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p>
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	<p>There are currently no other studies, plans or projects on this tract. It will be inspected this summer (2016) as part of the standard lease renewal process.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This project will not impact any other plans or studies that Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has on the State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the plans or studies that Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has on the State land.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>The operation and movement of heavy equipment and vehicles has inherent risks that are not impacted by access across the School Trust land.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The access route would slightly increase the risk of</p>

	<p>fire during the project due to increased vehicle traffic.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to human health or safety.</p>
<p>15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>The area of impact is classified as grazing acreage, but the lessee does not graze the area and there is no economic impact from the proposed project.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impact on the agricultural activities on this tract.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to agricultural activities on the State land.</p>
<p>16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not create nor impact any jobs in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the local and state tax base and tax revenues.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the local and state tax base under this alternative.</p>
<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will increase traffic along the nearby county road during the course of the project. There would be no additional demand for governmental services.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no additional demand for government services.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal,</p>	<p>There are no special management plans in effect on the School Trust land. It is managed for typical agricultural</p>

<p>etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>activities (livestock grazing).</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project has cleared State (DNRC) management plans.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this type of alternative there will be no impacts on locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</p>
<p>20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?</p>	<p>This tract has a small potential for upland bird and waterfowl hunting. No wilderness areas or additional public lands are accessed through this tract.</p> <p>Action Alternative: No changes to public land access or recreational potential are expected.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the recreational values associated with the State land under this alternative.</p>
<p>21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of population and housing.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the density and distribution of population and housing.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not disrupt the traditional lifestyles of the local community.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social structures under this alternative.</p>
<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of this rural area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.</p>
<p>24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</p>	<p>This access route would be the most convenient way for Plains Pipeline, LP</p>

to access the pipeline for the purpose of a maintenance dig. The impacts to the School Trust land would be mitigated during reclamation of the impacted area, as required by an issued Land Use License.

Action Alternative: Allowing access across School Trust land would have no additional impacts on social circumstances in the area. The DNRC will receive payment of a small, one-time fee for the Land Use License.

No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social and economic circumstances under this alternative.

EA Checklist Prepared By: s/Jack Medicott\s Date: 3/29/2016
Jack Medicott, Land Use Specialist

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action alternative
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	No significant impacts are anticipated.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis: <input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By: Matthew Poole Glasgow Unit Manager
Name Title
s/Matthew Poole\s Date: March 29, 2016
Signature