CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	**Rudyard FTTP**										
Proposed Implementation Date	Spring 2016										
Proponent:	Triangle Telephone Communications										
Location:	Twp:	35N	Rge:	10E	Sec:	15	Legal:	N2NE4	Acres:	1.209
	Twp:	33N	Rge:	9E	Sec:	16	Legal:	E2, SE4	Acres:	1.212
	Twp:	36N	Rge:	9E	Sec:	1	Legal:	S2S2	Acres:	2.424
	Twp:	35N	Rge:	9E	Sec:	33	Legal:	NE4NE4	Acres:	0.61
	Twp:	35N	Rge:	9E	Sec:	16	Legal:	E2SE4	Acres:	1.26
	Twp:	34N	Rge:	9E	Sec:	16	Legal:	E2E2	Acres:	2.459
	Twp:	35N	Rge:	9E	Sec:	26	Legal:	N2N2	Acres:	2.349
	Twp:	37N	Rge:	9E	Sec:	9	Legal:	S2SW4, SE4SE4	Acres:	0.716
	Twp:	37N	Rge:	9E	Sec:	16	Legal:	N2NW, E2SE	Acres:	2.401
	Twp:	35N	Rge:	10E	Sec:	21	Legal:	W2NW4	Acres:	1.212
County:	Hill									
Trust:	Common Schools									

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proponent is requesting to install an underground telecommunications cable through a new R/W corridor.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Public posting of EA.

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

The Montana Department of Resources and Conservation/ Trust Lands Management Division (DNRC/TLMD) and Minerals Management Division (DNRC/MMB) – Helena, MT and the Northeastern Land Office (NELO) have jurisdiction over this project.

Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program has evaluated the tracts in question and granted approval for the project.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the DNRC **does not** allow the proponent install the underground telecommunications cable.
Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the DNRC **does** allow the proponent to install the underground telecommunications cable.

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 tract and the surrounding area consist of gently rolling plains with glacial till as parent material. These soils are well drained and more than eighty inches to any restrictive feature. There is minimal surface cobble and minimal erosion problems on any part of the tracts. The soils in the proposed project area are a Loam and Clay Loam past sixty inches. Soils have the potential to be slightly to moderately saline.

No negative effects on the soil quality, stability or moisture are anticipated.

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 groundwater resources are expected to be impacted.

No cumulative effects to the water resources are anticipated.

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.

Heavy equipment has the potential to generate airborne dust. These activities will minimally affect air quality for a very limited amount of time.

No cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated.

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.

There is minimal disturbance from trenching. Any disturbed soils will be reseeded with a native seed mix.

No rare plants or cover types are present.

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 installation has a very minimal footprint that causes little disturbance, both in habitat and time.

There will be little to no effect to aquatic life.

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 known federally listed threatened or endangered species in the proposed project area. No wetlands are present.

35N10Sec21, 37N9ESec16, 37N9ESec9, 35N9ESec26, are all located in General Sage Grouse Habitat. The Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program has evaluated the tracts in question and granted approval for the project with recommendations.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program lists the Burrowing Owl, Brewers Sparrow, and the Plains hog-nosed snake as species of concern in these townships.

The cumulative effects of the proposed project to the wildlife habitats and the associated Species of Concern would be minimal and short-term.

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

A Class III cultural and paleontological resources inventory was conducted of the area of potential effect on state land. During the course of inventory three cultural resources (24HL1614, 24HL1616, and 24HL1622) were located on state land. Because all three resources can be avoided with cable installation work, the proposed project will result in No Effect to Antiquities as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act. A formal report of findings has been prepared and is on file with the DNRC and the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer.

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 not located on a prominent topographic feature.

The state land does not provide any unique scenic qualities.

The proposed activity will be conducted in a remote area, so there would be no change to the aesthetics in either alternative.

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.

No demands on limited resources are required for this project.

No direct or cumulative effects to environmental resources are anticipated.

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 known documents at this time.

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.

There are some human safety risks associated with operating heavy machinery. The proponent and their employees accept these risks.

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

There will be no impact to industrial or commercial activities.

The proposed project will help with the oil production on Bowes Field.

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 cumulative effects to the employment market are 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.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed 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

There will be no increases in traffic, no changes in traffic patterns, and no need for additional fire protection, or police services.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects 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.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting these lands.

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.

There are no wilderness areas or access routes through this tract.

This area has public access from the county road and is used primarily for antelope and upland bird hunting.

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?

No affect.

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.

Allowing the project and right of way easement will return $ $10,188.35 to the common schools trust.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:** Monte McNally **Title:** Land Use Specialist		
Signature:	/s/ Monte N. McNally	**Date**:	10/31/2016

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the **Alternative B (Proposed Action),** and recommend that the DNRC **does** allow the proponent to install the underground telecommunications cable.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I conclude all identified potential impacts will be mitigated and no significant impacts will occur as a result of implementing the selected alternative.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	**XXX**	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Barny D. Smith
	Title:	Unit Manager, Lewistown Unit Office
Signature: /s/ Barny D. Smith		**Date**: 11/1/16