

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	
Project Name: East Medicine Lake Rural Water Development Project.	Proposed Implementation Date: 2016/2017
Proponent: Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority, P O Box 517, Culbertson, Montana 59218	
Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to install a new water pipeline for rural water development purposes. The area of impact will be 30 feet in width, 15 feet on either side of a center line. The total area of impact will be 1.82 acres, more or less. The purpose of the Right of Way Easement is for the pipeline construction, inspection, operation, maintenance, repair and replacement of the underground water pipeline and necessary structures for use in conjunction therewith.	
Location: NW4NE4 & NE4NE4 Section 16, Township 34N, Range 57E	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.	Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority has submitted a Right of Way Easement application to the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Glasgow Unit Office. Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority has submitted the Right of Way Easement application to place a water pipeline on School Trust land. The purpose of the water pipeline is for rural water development. Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority has also contacted the surface lessee and explained the purpose for the Right of Way Easement application.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	Other government agencies that have jurisdiction for this type of project are United States Army Corps of Engineers, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource and Conservation Service, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, Valley County Conservation District and Valley County Commissioners, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Water Rights Division.

<p>3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Grant a Right of Way Easement to Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority to place a water pipeline on School Trust land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Deny a Right of Way Easement to Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority to place a water pipeline on School Trust land.</p>

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 Williams loams, Zahill clay loams and a complex of these soils. These soil types consist of well-drained loams that are not fragile, unstable or unusual. The soils are currently cultivated for the purpose of small grains and pulse crop production in the majority of the area of impact. No unusual features are present and no special reclamation considerations are necessary.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of project will alter the surface soils on the School Trust land. The surface soils will be replaced upon project completion.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no changes to soils on the School Trust 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>No important groundwater resources are within/near the area of impact. There is no potential for degradation of water quality due to the installation of the water pipeline.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The water pipeline project will improve the water quality standards for rural areas. The water will supply a continuous source of</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

water for rural area water consumers.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution.

6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?

There are no special restrictions/air quality regulations in place in the area of impact.

Action Alternative: This type of project on School Trust land will have minimal impact to air quality. There will temporarily be some dust that will become air borne from the construction of the water pipeline.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to air quality.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?

The project area is, in part, farmed for the production of small grains and pulse crops. Normal farming practices mean that the vegetative community is generally altered on a yearly basis (or more frequently). Other acreage impacted by the project consists of non-native grasses, with a small amount of native range plants mixed into the vegetative community.

Action Alternative: With normal farming practices resuming after the installation of the pipeline, there will be no impact to the small grains/pulse crops on the State land. There may be increased potential for introduction of noxious weeds and/or non-native invader species on the grazing acreage. With sufficient reclamation at the end of installation, no long term impacts are expected.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the plant communities on the School

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Trust land.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?

The School Trust land provides temporary habitat to mule deer, whitetail deer, antelope, upland birds and various songbirds. Being that a part of the area of impact is farmed by the lessee and is very close to a paved highway as well as a county road, the use of the area by wildlife is infrequent and provides relatively poor habitat.

Action Alternative: The installation of the pipeline may temporarily impact wildlife use of the area due to the presence of vehicles and humans, but no long term impacts are expected.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the possible use of the School Trust land as wildlife habitat.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?

Three species of special concern are listed as being present in the area, including: Nelson's sparrow, Whooping crane and Black Tern. There are no wetlands or other sensitive habitat types present in the area of impact.

Action Alternative: The project has no impact on any unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources.

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?

As part of the standard lease renewal process, inspections of the area have been done and no historical, archaeological or paleontological resources are present.

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

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	<p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to historical, archaeological or paleontological sites under this alternative.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>The project is located next to a highway and county road. The project will be visible to the general public during pipeline construction.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of project on School Trust land will not impact the aesthetics of the surrounding area. The project is short term and will have no impacts of noise or light.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to aesthetics associated with the School Trust land.</p>
<p>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>	<p>Action Alternative: The writer of this document does not know if this project will place demands for limited water resources of the Missouri River. Missouri River is the source of water for the Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no demands placed on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p>
<p>13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>No other studies, plans or projects occur on the School Trust land impacted by the project.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This project will have a short term impact on the normal agricultural practices used on the School Trust lands. The proponent has contacted the surface lessee and arrangements have been made to settle any potential damages.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the plans or studies that Montana</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has on the School Trust land.

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The installation of a water pipeline has various human health and safety risks. There may be some safety risks for workers during the construction of the project. This should be mitigated by using trained professionals with proper safety efforts.</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>Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impact on these activities. The farmed acreage will be temporarily disturbed during installation of the water pipeline, but after installation there will be no lasting impacts.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to agricultural activities on the School Trust 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 may create jobs for the construction companies that will construct the water pipeline.</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</p>

	no impacts to the local and state tax base under this alternative.
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will place no additional demands for government services.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no demand for government services.</p>
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will need to clear State, County and National management plans before implementation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this type of alternative there will be no impacts on locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</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>Action Alternative: There is good recreational potential on the tract. The project will have no impacts on recreational potential of the tract.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the recreational values associated with the School Trust land under this alternative.</p>
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	<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>
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not disrupt the traditional lifestyles of the local community. The water project should enhance the day to day lives of the rural communities by supplying a reliable water source.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social structures under this alternative.</p>
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in	Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and

some unique quality of the area?	<p>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>
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	<p>Action Alternative: The installation of a water pipeline will improve the social and economic circumstances for the residents of Northeastern Montana communities. The project will provide a reliable source of water for rural areas of Northeastern Montana.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the economic circumstances under this alternative.</p>

EA Checklist Prepared By: s/Jack Medlicott Date: 10/5/2015
Jack Medlicott Land Use Specialist

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	<p>Action Alternative: Grant a Right of Way Easement to Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority to construct, maintain and replace a water pipeline on School Trust land. This alternative will provide additional revenue for the School Trust.</p>
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	<p>The construction of a water pipeline will have no lasting impacts to the agricultural resources associated with this tract of School Trust land.</p>
<p>27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis</p>	

EA Checklist Approved By: Matthew Poole Glasgow Unit Manager
Name Title

s/Matthew Poole\s
Signature

Date: October 27, 2016