CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	DEQ Air Monitoring Station
Proposed Implementation Date:	2016
Proponent:	Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MT DEQ)
Location:	T25N R54E Sec36
County:	Richland County

Definitions

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality, heretofore referred as proponent, has applied for a Land Use License for the purpose of establishing an air monitoring station on this tract of state trust land. This would include installing an 8' x 12' building on skids and as needed parking for a 7' x 16' trailer. An area of approximately .25 acres may be fenced to protect the equipment from grazing animals.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:
Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

The proponent has submitted a DS-401 Application for a land use license for the purpose establishing an air monitoring station. Due the very small acreage, location, and nature of this proposal, no public comment was sought. DNRC staff has evaluated the site.

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

None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A- Grant proponent a land use license to establish an air monitoring station.

Alternative B- No Action

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.

Alternative A- Placement of the equipment may require slight grading of the site. No significant impact is expected.

Alternative B- No Impact.

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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.

Alternative A- No impact expected.

Alternative B- No Impact

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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.

Alternative A- No impact expected.

Alternative B- No Impact

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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.

Alternative A- No significant impacts expected.The dominant specie on this site is Crested Wheatgrass (Agropyron cristatum). Other current plant species which occupy the area include Western Wheatgrass (Agropyron smithii), Intermediate Wheatgrass (Agropyron intermedium),Curlycup Gumweed (Grindelia squarrosa), Green Needlegrass (Stipa viridula), Blue Bunch Wheatgrass (Agropyron spicatum), Prairie Sandreed (Calamovilfa longifolia), Needle and Thread (Stipa comata), Prairie Junegrass (Koleria pyramidata), Blue Grama (Bouteloua gracilis), Threadleaf Sedge (Carex filifolia), Fringed Sagewort (Artemisia frigida), Broom Snakeweed (Gutierrezia sarothrae). Any noxious weed infestations caused by this activity on state land will be the responsibility of the proponent to control.

Alternative B- No Impact

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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.

Alternative A-No impact expected.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program Database shows no threatened, endangered or sensitive species within the general project area. A field review of the site also noted no species of concern within the project area. This location is not located within Greater Sage Grouse Core, General or Connectivity habitat.
Alternative B- No Impact

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

Alternative A-A search of the TLMS data base and a field inspection found no historical or archeological sites within the proposed lease area. There are cairns on this tract, but not in the proposed project area.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- The structure will be visible from the state highway. As it is located near overhead power lines, no significant impact to the viewshed is expected.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- No significant impact. No nearby activities would be impacted.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

None required.

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.

Alternative A- There may be potential safety risks associated with this project. These risks can be mitigated with proper training and on site safety protocols.

Alternative B- No Impact

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

Alternative A- This proposed project should have no long term effect on industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities or production. The proponent will be responsible for the upkeep of any needed fences and associated infrastructure.

Alternative B- No Impact

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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.

Alternative A- No significant impact.

Alternative B- No Impact

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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.

Alternative A- No impact expected.

Alternative B- No impact.

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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

Alternative A- No impacts to traffic are expected.
Alternative B- No Impact

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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.

Alternative A- No impact expected.

Alternative B- No Impact

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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.

Alternative A- This request should have no effect on access to recreational and wilderness activities.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- This project should have no effect on population and housing demand.
Alternative B- No Impact

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Alternative A- This project should cause no disruption of native or traditional lifestyles.

Alternative B- No Impact

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Alternative A- No Significant Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- This project would require the purchase of a 10 year Land Use License for activity on this tract of Trust Land. The revenue to the trust would be $2,000.00.

Alternative B- Additional revenue to the trust through the issuance of a Land Use License would not be realized.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Aaron Kneeland	**Date:**	10-31-2016
	Title:	Land Use Specialist		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative A

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The granting of the requested land use licenses on state owned trust lands for the proposed air monitoring station should not result in nor cause significant environmental impacts. The predicted environmental impacts have been identified and mitigation measures addressed in the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation land use license stipulations. The proposed action satisfies the trusts fiduciary mandate and ensures the long term productivity of the land. An environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Scott Aye
	Title:	Eastern Land Office, Lands Program Manager
Signature: /s/ Scott Aye		**Date**: 10-31-2016