CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Ennis Rural Fiber-to-the-Home Project - Madison River Bore
Proposed Implementation Date:	April 2017
Proponent:	3 Rivers Communications
Location:	T6S R1W Section 4
County:	Madison
Trust:	Navigable Rivers

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The purpose of these easements is to provide Fiber to the Home (FTTH) facilities capable of providing telephone, high-speed data, and broadband services. The current copper lines are ageing and have reached their useful life limit, preventing 3 Rivers Telephone Coop from being able to fulfill service requests.
The fiber optic cables will be buried and placed within existing cable corridors along state highway or county road rights-of-way both in public rights-of-way and utilizing some private easements.
The cables will be bored under the Madison River in this location.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

None

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

Madison Conservations District – 310 permit.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action: Process the application for utility Right of Way Easements.

No Action: Do not process the application for utility Right of Way Easements.

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.

Action alternative – a bore will be placed under the Madison River. No surface disturbance will occur; therefore no adverse effects would be expected.

No actions alternative – no boring activity would take place, no change to current status.

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.

Action alternative – a bore will be placed under the Madison River. With no surface disturbance no adverse effects would be expected to surface our groundwater resources.

No actions alternative – no boring activity would take place, no change to current status.

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.

No adverse effects would be expected with either alternative.

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.

Action alternative – a bore will be placed under the Madison River. With no surface disturbance no adverse effects would be expected to vegetation.

No actions alternative – no boring activity would take place, no change to current status.

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.

Action alternative – a bore will be placed under the Madison River. With no surface disturbance no adverse effects would be expected to fish and wildlife.

No actions alternative – no boring activity would take place, no change to current status.

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 Townsend's Big-eared Bat, Great Blue Heron, Ferruginous Hawk, Brewer's Sparrow, Arctic Grayling, and Western Pearlshell have been listed as species of concern by the Montana Natural Heritage Program. No adverse effect would be expected with either alternative.

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

No known historical or archaeological sites have been identified.

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.

Neither alternative will yield aesthetic changes.

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.

None.

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.

A 310 permit has been applied for, and it must be approved before an easement will be granted.

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 effect with either alternative.

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

Action Alternative – Improve data transmission infrastructure would be available.

No Action Alternative – Data capacity infrastructure would not be improved.

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 effect with either alternative.

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 effect with either alternative.

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 effect with either alternative.

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.

None

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.

No effect with either alternative.

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.

No effect with either alternative.

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

No effect with either alternative.

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

No effect with either alternative.

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.

The determined value for a Madison River navigable rivers easement would be $600.00 per acre.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Katie Svoboda	Date: 4/21/17
	Title: Bozeman Unit Office Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action: Process the application for utility Right of Way Easements.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have determined that none of the anticipated environmental impacts outlined in the EA are significant according to the criteria outlined in *ARM 36.2.524*. I find that no impacts are regarded as severe, enduring, geographically widespread, or frequent. Further, I find that the quantity and quality of various resources, including any that may be considered unique or fragile, will not be adversely affected to a significant degree. I find no precedent for future actions that would cause significant impacts, and I find no conflict with local, State, or Federal laws, requirements, or formal plans. In summary, I find that the identified adverse impacts will be avoided, controlled, or mitigated by the design of the project to the extent that the impacts are not significant.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Martin Balukas	
	Title: Trust Land Program Manager	
Signature:		Date: 4/24/17