

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Beeman Break Request
Proposed
Implementation Date: Fall 2017
Proponent: Tracy Beeman
Location: 5N 23E 26
County: Golden Valley
Trust: Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Tracy Beeman has requested to break and farm 291 acres of expiring CRP in Golden Valley. The proposed ground will enter into a crop/fallow rotation with small grains being the crop of choice. The proponent will implement no till practices to reduce soils erosion.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
 Northeastern Land Office (NELO)
 Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS)
 Farm Service Agency (FSA)

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

The DNRC, and NELO have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant permission to break and farm expired CRP.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission to break and farm expired CRP.

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.

Nonirrigated Capability Class

Aggregation Method: Dominant Condition
Tie-break Rule: Higher

Golden Valley County Area, Montana
Survey Area Version and Date: 10 - 12/04/2013

Map symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Map unit percent
82E	Cabbart-Delpoint-Rock outcrop complex, 15 to 45 percent slopes	7	53
84C	Cabbart-Yawdim-Delpoint complex, 4 to 15 percent slopes	6	65
87B	Delpoint, calcareous-Cabbart loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes	4	50
182D	Cabbart-Delpoint loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes	6	50

Farmland Classification

Aggregation Method: No Aggregation Necessary
Tie-break Rule: Lower

Golden Valley County Area, Montana
Survey Area Version and Date: 10 - 12/04/2013

Map symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Map unit percent
82E	Cabbart-Delpoint-Rock outcrop complex, 15 to 45 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	100
84C	Cabbart-Yawdim-Delpoint complex, 4 to 15 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	100
87B	Delpoint, calcareous-Cabbart loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	100
182D	Cabbart-Delpoint loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	100

The soils on this tract are sandy and extremely vulnerable to erosion, mostly by wind.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Farming this tract will result in some soil erosion. Conservation practices such as no till and chemical fallow will mitigate these loses to acceptable levels.

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.

There are no perennial streams in the area of potential effect.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect 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.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect 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.

Current plant community is pubescent wheatgrass, crested wheatgrass and alfalfa.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- Current vegetation will be removed when put into small grain production.

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.

Current plant community is pubescent wheatgrass, crested wheatgrass and alfalfa.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- : Potential nesting habitat for various avian species will be lost with the removal of permanent vegetation. Addition of a small grain crop will increase forage availability for those wildlife species that utilize grain.

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.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program for Species of Concern with a state rank of 3 or higher was conducted in the township that includes the area of potential effect. (State rank of 3 means Potentially at risk because of **limited** and/or **declining** numbers, range and/or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas.)

SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BUS	FWS SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT
<i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i> Black-tailed Prairie Dog	Sciuridae Squirrels	G4	S3		SENSITIVE	SENSITIVE	SGCN3	15%	71%	Grasslands
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Montana, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Yellowstone.										
7 SPECIES										
BIRDS (AVES)										
<i>Athene cucularia</i> Burrowing Owl	Strigidae Owls	G4	S3B		SENSITIVE	SENSITIVE	SGCN3	2%	82%	Grasslands
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Bowman, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Divide, Fallon, Fergus, Galatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Madison, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Prairie, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Williams, Yellowstone.										
State Rank Reason: Species has a negative short-term population trend.										
<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i> American Bittern	Ardeidae Bitterns / Egrets / Herons / Night-Herons	G4	S3B		SENSITIVE		SGCN3	4%	100%	Wetlands
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Fergus, Flathead, Glacier, Golden Valley, Lake, Mussola, Phillips, Powder River, Petroleum, Sanders, Sheridan, Teton, Valley, Yellowstone.										
<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i> Greater Sage-Grouse	Phasianidae Upland Game Birds	G3G4	S2		SENSITIVE	SENSITIVE	SGCN2	17%	75%	Sagebrush
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Fergus, Galatin, Garfield, Golden Valley, Harding, Hill, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Rosebud, Silver Bow, Slope, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux, Yellowstone.										
<i>Chlidonias niger</i> Black Tern	Laridae Gulls / Terns	G4	S3B		SENSITIVE		SGCN3	7%	100%	Wetlands
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Daniels, Flathead, Glacier, Golden Valley, Lake, Madison, Mussola, Phillips, Pondera, Powell, Roosevelt, Sanders, Sheridan, Teton, Valley, Yellowstone.										
State Rank Reason: Species has a small breeding population size and negative short-term population trends.										
<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i> Black-necked Stilt	Recurvirostridae Avocets	G5	S3B				SGCN3	1%	8%	Wetlands
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Cascade, Chouteau, Galatin, Glacier, Golden Valley, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Phillips, Ravalli, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone.										
<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> Loggerhead Shrike	Laniidae Shrikes	G4	S3B		SENSITIVE		SGCN3	4%	100%	Shrubland
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Galatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Liberty, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux, Yellowstone.										
<i>Spizella breweri</i> Brewer's Sparrow	Emberizidae Sparrows	G5	S3B		SENSITIVE		SGCN3	12%	100%	Sagebrush
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Butte, Carbon, Carter, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Galatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Powell, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sanders, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux, Yellowstone.										
State Rank Reason: Species faces threats from loss of sagebrush habitats it is dependent on as a result of habitat conversion for agriculture and increased frequency of fire as a result of weed encroachment and drought.										
2 SPECIES										
AMPHIBIANS (AMPHIBIA)										
<i>Anaxyrus cognatus</i> Great Plains Toad	Bufoidea True Toads	G5	S2		SENSITIVE	SENSITIVE	SGCN2	8%	62%	Wetlands, floodplain pools
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Garfield, Golden Valley, Lewis and Clark, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Toole, Valley, Yellowstone.										
<i>Spea bombifrons</i> Plains Spadefoot	Scaphiopodidae Spadefoots	G5	S3		SENSITIVE	SENSITIVE	SGCN3	12%	73%	Wetlands, floodplain pools
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Fergus, Galatin, Garfield, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Yellowstone.										

The current plant community does not provide habitat that is required by the potential species of concern in the area. The tract does not reside in the Sage grouse core area. It is classified as general habitat for Sage grouse. This tracts suitability for Sage grouse habitat is limited due to the surrounding farmland and the lack of sage brush on the tract itself.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. Because the the Holocene age soils in the APE are relatively thin, and because the local geology is not likely to produce caves, rock shelters, or sources of tool stone, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

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 (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

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 Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect 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.

Alternative A (No Action)-No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

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 (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

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 Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect 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.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

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 Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

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 Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

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 (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

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 (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Alternative A (No Action)- No effect anticipated.


Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

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 (No Action)- No effect anticipated.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action)- No effect anticipated.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Brandon Sandau Title: Land Use Specialist
Signature: 	Date: January 30, 2017

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:


Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission to break and farm expired CRP.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The soils being proposed to break do not meet the Departments break criteria, due to highly erodible characteristics. The Department feels the proponent has submitted an adequate plan that addresses the soil loss with no till and chemical fallow.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

<input type="checkbox"/> EIS	<input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> XXX No Further Analysis
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EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Barny D. Smith Title: Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
Signature: 	Date: January 30, 2017

23

BOXCAR RD

CRP Break Tracy Beeman



0 0.0275 0.055 0.11 Miles

Author: Erinna Skoda

82E

Not Farmed

182D

5N 23E

25

26

SWARTZ RD

87B

84C

35

36

Legend

- Proposed Break
- APE Soils

