

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Leinart Family LP Break Request

**Proposed**

**Implementation Date:** Fall 2017

**Proponent:** Tom Leinart

**Location:** 24N 8E 10,11,15

**County:** Chouteau

**Trust:** Common Schools

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Tom Leinart has requested to break 440 acres of expiring CRP. 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

Chouteau County Area, Montana  
Survey Area Version and Date: 10 - 11/26/2013

Map symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Map unit percent
15E	Lambeth silt loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	6	91
15F	Lambeth silt loam, 25 to 70 percent slopes	7	90
37B	Evanston loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	3	93
58B	Lonna silty clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	4	90
58C	Lonna silty clay loam, 4 to 8 percent slopes	4	95
60A	Havre loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	3	85
73B	Yetull-Lonesome loamy fine sands, 0 to 6 percent slopes	6	95
351B	Kenilworth-Fortbenton fine sandy loams, 0 to 3 percent slopes	4	90
362C	Chinook-Yetull complex, 2 to 10 percent slopes	4	55
365B	Fortbenton-Chinook fine sandy loams, 0 to 6 percent slopes	4	92
602A	Havre silty clay loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	3	85
603A	Havre-Glendive complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes, occasionally flooded	3	45

#### Farmland Classification

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

Chouteau County Area, Montana  
Survey Area Version and Date: 10 - 11/26/2013

Map symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Map unit percent
15E	Lambeth silt loam, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	100
15F	Lambeth silt loam, 25 to 70 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	100
37B	Evanston loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated	100
58B	Lonna silty clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	100
58C	Lonna silty clay loam, 4 to 8 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	100
60A	Havre loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated	100
73B	Yetull-Lonesome loamy fine sands, 0 to 6 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	100
351B	Kenilworth-Fortbenton fine sandy loams, 0 to 3 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	100
362C	Chinook-Yetull complex, 2 to 10 percent slopes	Not prime farmland	100
365B	Fortbenton-Chinook fine sandy loams, 0 to 6 percent slopes	Farmland of statewide importance	100
602A	Havre silty clay loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Prime farmland if irrigated	100
603A	Havre-Glendive complex, 0 to 2 percent slopes, occasionally flooded	Farmland of statewide importance	100

There are pockets of soils in the proposed break area that do not meet the capability class requirements and are susceptible to erosion, mostly by wind. It is not possible to farm around them, but erosion should be reduced with farming conservation practices such as no till and chemical fallow. The majority of the proposed break area consists of soils that are classified as "farmland of statewide importance."

**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 losses 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 crested wheatgrass and alfalfa as noted in the last field evaluation. It was also noted that there is an unacceptable amount of bare ground due to the almost monoculture of crested wheatgrass.

**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.*

No substantial habitat value.

**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 CODE	FAMILY OR ORDER FAMILY COMMON	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	STATUS	USFS	SLR	FWS SWAP	WETLANDS WETLAND RANK DIST.	WETLANDS WETLAND RANK	HABITAT
<i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i> Black-tailed Prairie Dog	Sciuridae Squirrels	G4	S3	SENSITIVE			SGCH	15%	71%	Grasslands
<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i> Hoary Bat	Vesperugo Bats	G4	S2				SGCH	2%	100%	Riparian and forest
<i>Ardea herodias</i> Great Blue Heron	Ardeidae Bittern / Egrets / Herons / Night Herons	G5	S3				SGCH	3%	100%	Riparian forest
<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i> Greater Sage-Grouse	Pterinidae Upland Game Birds	G3G4	S2	SENSITIVE			SGCH2	17%	75%	Sagebrush
<i>Aplousiepe spinifera</i> Spiny Softshell	Trionychidae Softshell Turtles	G3	S3	SENSITIVE			SGCH	2%	26%	Prairie rivers and larger streams
<i>Phrynosoma hernandesi</i> Greater Short-horned Lizard	Phrynosomatidae Sagebrush / Spiny Lizards	G3	S2	SENSITIVE			SGCH, SGN	1%	69%	Sandy / gravelly soils
<i>Cyprinus alburnus</i> Blue Sucker	Cyprinidae Suckers	G3	S3	SENSITIVE			SGCH2	1%	7%	Large prairie rivers
<i>Micropterus salmoides</i> Sandier Crub	Percidae Perches	G3	S2	SENSITIVE			SGCH2	1%	10%	Large prairie rivers
<i>Scaphirhynchus albus</i> Pallid Sturgeon	Acipenseridae Sturgeons	G2	S1	LE	ENDANGERED	SPECIAL STATUS	SGCH	10%	1%	Large prairie rivers

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.

**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.*

Tract is located by the intersection of two major highways. Breaking of this tract will be highly visible, but not out of the ordinary with the dominate land use of surrounding properties being farming.

**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.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Brandon Sandau <b>Title:</b> Land Use Specialist
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> February 2, 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:**

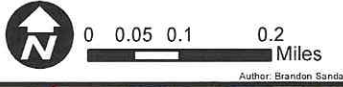
No significant impacts are anticipated.

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

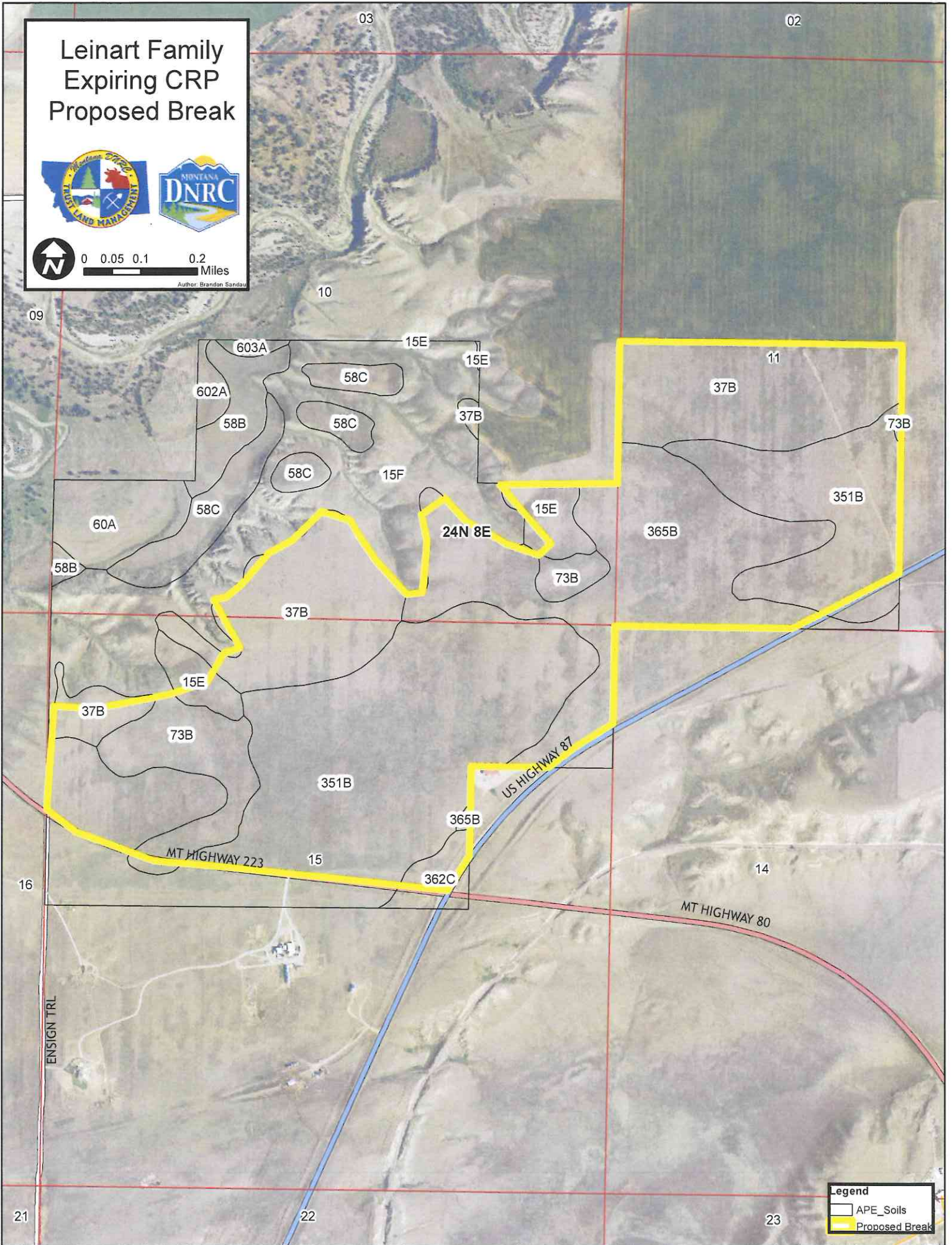
<input type="checkbox"/> EIS	<input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis
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<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Barny D. Smith <b>Title:</b> Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> February 2, 2017

# Leinart Family Expiring CRP Proposed Break



Author: Brandon Sandau



**Legend**

- APE\_Soils
- Proposed Break