

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Easement applications for the installation of buried fiber optic cables to upgrade 3 Rivers Telephone Co-Op Inc.'s current facilities and services in the Choteau exchange serving area in and around Choteau, MT.
Proposed Implementation Date:	Spring/Summer 2017
Proponent:	3 Rivers Telephone Co-Op Inc., PO Box 429, Fairfield, MT 59436
Location:	See below list of tracts.
County:	Teton
Trust:	Common Schools (CS), Public Land Trust-Navigable Rivers (PLT-NR), MSU Morrill (MSUM), Western/Eastern (W/E), Capitol Buildings (CB)

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

3 Rivers Telephone Co-Op Inc. has requested to install a buried fiber optic cable in order to upgrade their facilities and services in the Choteau exchange serving area in and around Choteau, MT. The proposed easement routes are located just off of the edge of the county roads, across state owned land, and across the Teton River bed. The fiber optic cable will cross 30 tracts of state land. The fiber optic cable will be buried 36" to 42" deep and will be installed using a vibratory plow. Any of the crossings of the Teton River will be installed with a directional boring machine. The easements will be 20.00' wide through the state owned tracts.

Township	Range	Section	Fiber Optic Cable Location	Acres Affected	Trust	County
25N	3W	25	NW4NW4, SE4NW4	0.613	MSUM	Teton
25N	3W	25	SE4NW4	0.062	PLT-NR	Teton
24N	3W	8	NW4SW4	0.037	PLT-NR	Teton
24N	4W	23	SW4SE4	0.082	PLT-NR	Teton
23N	4W	16	SW4SW4	0.684	CS	Teton
23N	6W	36	W2NE4, SE4NE4, E2SE4, SW4SE4	2.740	CS	Teton
24N	5W	36	SE4NW4, NE4SW4, N2SE4, SE4SE4	2.660	CS	Teton
23N	6W	17	SE4SE4	0.610	CS	Teton
23N	6W	16	S2SW4, S2SE4	2.510	CS	Teton
24N	7W	25	NE4NW4, NW4NE4	1.100	W/E	Teton
24N	7W	24	SW4SW4	0.700	CB	Teton
24N	7W	24	SE4SW4	0.410	W/E	Teton
24N	7W	23	E2SE4	0.730	CB	Teton
24N	7W	23	W2SW4	1.220	W/E	Teton
24N	7W	26	NW4NW4	0.660	W/E	Teton
25N	7W	35	SE4NE4	0.092	PLT-NR	Teton
25N	6W	34	NW4NWN4	0.021	PLT-NR	Teton
25N	8W	14	SE4SE4	0.885	CB	Teton
25N	8W	24	NW4NW4, E2NW4, SW4NE4	2.020	CB	Teton
25N	8W	13	SW4SW4	0.092	CB	Teton
25N	7W	19	NW4SE4, NE4SE4, SWSE4	1.270	CB	Teton
25N	7W	30	NW4NE4, S2NE4, NE4SE4	2.550	CB	Teton
25N	7W	29	NW4SW4, SW4SW4	0.792	CB	Teton
23N	8W	13	SW4SW4	0.645	CS	Teton
23N	8W	24	NW4NW4	0.596	CS	Teton

23N	8W	23	NE4NE4	0.082	CS	Teton
24N	7W	28	NW4SW4	0.627	CB	Teton
24N	3W	22	NW4NW4	0.049	CS	Teton
24N	3W	21	SE4SE4	0.382	CS	Teton
24N	3W	27	W2W2	2.410	CS	Teton
25N	6W	19	NE4SW4, NW4SE4, S2SW4	1.470	CS	Teton
25N	6W	30	NW4NW4, SW4NW4	1.210	CS	Teton
24N	5W	14	SW4NW4, NW4SW4	0.031	PLT-NR	Teton
TOTALS				0.613	MSUM	
TOTALS				0.325	PLT-NR	
TOTALS				16.048	CS	
TOTALS				3.390	W/E	
TOTALS				9.666	CB	
TOTAL				30.042		

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

3 Rivers Telephone Co-Op Inc.-Proponent
 DNRC-Surface Owner
 Corey Ranch Co.-Surface Lessee, Lease #3581
 Priest Butte Farm Inc.-Surface Lessee, Lease #3590
 Wilson Hodgskiss Family Trust-Surface Lessee, Lease #3592
 Higgins/Bunn Ranch Partnership-Surface Lessee, Lease #4538
 Teton Prairie LLC-Surface Lessee, Lease #7492
 Lazy F6 Cattle LLC-Surface Lessee, Lease #1247
 The Conservation Fund-Surface Lessee, Lease #975 and #6728
 Deep Creek Ranch and Mgmt. Co. LLC-Surface Lessee, Lease #9749 and #10584
 Brett and Kay Debruycker-Surface Lessee, Lease #10643
 John A., John D., and William S. Peebles-Surface Lessee, Lease #2128

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

The applicant is required to a 310 permit for construction in and around the Teton River.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Deny 3 Rivers Telephone Co-Op Inc. permission to install the buried fiber optic cables.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant 3 Rivers Telephone Co-Op Inc. permission to install the buried fiber optic cables.

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.

Soils at the proposed project site are silty, sandy, and shallow to gravel in texture. The topography is gently rolling and the fiber optic cable will be installed along existing county roads, across state owned land, and across the Teton River bed. These soils and slopes are generally suitable for the installation of the buried fiber optic cable. Equipment will cause localized areas of soil compaction and will disturb the soil were the buried fiber optic cable is being placed. Reclamation requirements are to compact and level the plow scar created in the installation of the buried fiber optic cable. Then, seed the impacted area with the existing grass types and seeding rates that are listed in item 7 of this assessment. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected as the use of a vibratory plow will minimize the surface disturbance caused by the construction project. Equipment will not be placed in the riverbed, so no damage to the soils is expected due to the proposed project. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected as the use of a direction boring machine will minimize the surface disturbance caused by the construction project.

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 numerous water rights associated with these tracts; however none of these water rights will be impacted by the proposed easements. Other water quality and/or quantity issues will not be impacted by the proposed action.

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.

The proposed action will not impact the air quality.

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.

Vegetation will be minimally impacted as approximately 12.39 miles of buried fiber optic cable will be installed by the utilization of a vibratory plow, except for under the Teton River which will be installed by a direction boring machine. The vegetation consists primarily of native species and introduced species. Noxious and annual weeds within the proposed construction areas are a concern, but this concern will be mitigated as the applicants are responsible for controlling weeds within the construction areas. Cumulative impacts on the vegetative resources are not expected as the proposed construction areas will be reclaimed and reseeded. The reseeding mixture will consist of a grass seed mixture of 35% Western Wheatgrass, 35% Slender Wheatgrass, 15% Bluebunch Wheatgrass, 10% Green Needle grass, and 5% Lewis blue flax. If drilled the rate will be 8#/acre, but if broadcast seeded, the rate will be doubled.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T25N, R3W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T24N, R3W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T24N, R4W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T23N, R4W: There was one species of concern and zero potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey: Flowering Plants (Dicots)-Great Basin Downingia. This species was not identified in the proposed project area.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T23N, R6W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T24N, R5W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T24N, R7W: There were ten species of concern and one potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey: Flowering Plants (Dicots)-Low Braya, Great Basin Downingia, and Mealy Primrose. Flowering Plants (Monocots)-Beaked Spikerush, Tapered Rush, Simple Kobresia, Tufted Club-rush, Rolland's Bullrush, and Small Yellow Lady's-slipper. Bryophytes-Cinclidium Moss and Meesia Moss. These species were not identified in the proposed project area.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T25N, R7W: There were four species of concern and zero potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey: Flowering Plants (Monocots)-Beaked Spikerush, Tufted Club-rush, Rolland's Bullrush, and Crawe's Sedge. These species were not identified in the proposed project area.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T25N, R6W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T25N, R8W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T23N, R8W: There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

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.

These areas are not considered critical wildlife habitat. However, these tracts provide habitat for a variety of big game species (mule deer, whitetail deer, and pronghorn antelope), predators (coyote, fox, and badger), upland game birds (sharp tail grouse, Hungarian partridge), other non-game mammals, raptors and various songbirds. The proposal does not include any land use change which would yield changes to the wildlife habitat. The proposed action will not impact wildlife forage, cover, or traveling corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover. Wildlife usage is expected to return to "normal" (pre-action usage) following the installation of the buried fiber optic cable. The proposed action will not have long-term negative effects on existing wildlife species and/or wildlife habitat.

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 parcels located in T25N, R8W: T23N, R8W, T23N, R4W: T23N, R6W: T24N, R5W: T24N, R7W: T25N, R7W: and T25N, R6W are in the NCD grizzly bear recovery zone. Grizzly bears will not be impacted by the project because construction will occur along existing county roads, across state owned land, and across the Teton River bed. The fiber optic cable will also be buried. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by proposal.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T25N, R3W. There were two animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and zero special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Fish-Northern Redbelly X Finescale Dace and Sauger. These particular tracts of grazing land do not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T24N, R3W. There were three animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and zero special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Fish-Sauger. Birds-Great Blue Heron and Long-billed Curlew. This particular tract of agricultural and grazing land does not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T24N, R4W. There were six animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and one special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Birds-Golden Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Long-billed Curlew, and Bald Eagle. Fish-Northern Redbelly Dace, Northern Redbelly X Finescale Dace, and Sauger. This particular tract of grazing land does not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T23N, R4W. There were twenty animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and two special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Birds-Red Knot, Bald Eagle, Clark's Grebe, Baird's Sparrow, Sprague's Pipit, Golden Eagle, Great Blue Heron, Burrowing Owl, American Bittern, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Black Tern, Black-necked Stilt, Caspian Tern, Franklin's Gull, Long-billed Curlew, Black-crowned Night Heron, White-faced Ibis, Horned Grebe, Common Tern, and Forster's Tern. Reptiles-Greater Short-horned Lizard. Fish-Sauger. This particular tract of grazing land does not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T23N, R6W. There were five animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and zero special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Mammals-Grizzly Bear. Birds-Ferruginous Hawk, Bobolink, Long-billed Curlew, and McCown's Longspur. These particular tracts of grazing land do not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T24N, R5W. There were six animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and one special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Birds-Ferruginous Hawk, Bobolink, Long-billed Curlew, Sprague's Pipit, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, and McCown's Longspur. This particular tract of grazing land does not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T24N, R7W. There were nineteen animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and zero special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Mammals-Grizzly Bear. Birds-Sprague's Pipit, Golden Eagle, American Bittern, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Black Tern, Long-billed Curlew, Horned Grebe, Ferruginous Hawk, Veery, Evening Grosbeak, Bobolink, Alder Flycatcher, Cassin's Finch, Clark's Nutcracker, McCown's Longspur, Brewer's Sparrow, and Pacific Wren. Reptiles-Greater Short-horned Lizard. These particular tracts of hay and grazing land do not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T25N, R7W. There were sixteen animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and zero special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Mammals-Grizzly Bear. Birds-Sprague's Pipit, Golden Eagle, American Bittern, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Long-billed Curlew, Horned Grebe, Veery, Evening Grosbeak, Bobolink, Alder Flycatcher, Cassin's Finch, Clark's Nutcracker, McCown's Longspur, Brewer's Sparrow, and Pacific Wren. This particular tract of grazing land does not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T25N, R6W. There were six animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and one special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Mammals-Grizzly Bear. Birds-Ferruginous Hawk, Black Tern, Horned Grebe, McCown's Longspur, and Bald Eagle. Fish-Northern Redbelly X Finescale Dace. This particular tract of grazing land does not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T25N, R8W. There were twenty animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and zero special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Mammals-Grizzly Bear, Fisher, and Wolverine. Birds-Sprague's Pipit, Golden Eagle, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Long-billed Curlew, Veery, Evening Grosbeak, Bobolink, Alder Flycatcher, Cassin's Finch, Clark's Nutcracker, McCown's Longspur, Brewer's Sparrow, Northern Goshawk, Peregrine Falcon, Harlequin Duck, Boreal Chickadee, and Pacific Wren. These particular tracts of grazing land do not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T23N, R8W. There were seven animal species of concern, zero potential species of concern, and zero special status species noted on the NRIS survey: Mammals-Grizzly Bear, Wolverine, Canada Lynx, and Fisher. Birds-Sprague's Pipit and Golden Eagle. Fish-Westslope Cutthroat Trout. These particular tracts of grazing land do not contain many, if any of these species. Threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern or potential species of concern will not be impacted by the installation of a buried fiber optic cable.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

Western Cultural, Inc. was contracted by 3 Rivers Communications to conduct a Class III cultural resources inventory of the area of potential effect. During the course of inventory, eight cultural resources (24TT0417, 24TT0715, 24TT0718, 24TT0721, 24TT0728, 24TT0729, 24TT0732, and 24TT0734) were formally documented as being wholly or partially on state land. Cultural resource site 24TT0718 is a low-profile cairn. The proposed cable route will avoid this small cluster of stone. All other cultural resources are irrigation ditches. The proposed telecommunications cable will either be plowed through or bored beneath these ditches. The cable crossing points will be restored to preconstruction conditions so that the ditches can continued to be used. Proposed telecommunications cable installation work will have *No Effect* to *Antiquities* as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act. A formal report of findings has been prepared by Western Cultural, Inc. and is on file with the DNRC and the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer.

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.

Installation of the buried fiber optic cable will not affect the aesthetics of the land in any way as it will not be visible. It will lead to no erosion of the soil resources on the tracts as the line is located below the soil surface.

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.

The demand on environmental resources such as land, water, air, or energy will not be affected by the proposed action. The proposed action will not consume resources that are limited in the area. There are no other projects in the area that will affect the proposed project.

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.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tract listed on this EA.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The proposed project will not change human safety in the area.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

The results of this project will not affect the industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities or production in the area.

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.

This project will not create any new jobs, as the project will be completed in house by the proponent.

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.

The proposed action will add to the tax revenue.

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

This project is of a small scale and being funded by 3 Rivers Telephone Co-Op Inc. There will be no excessive stress placed of the existing infrastructure of the area.

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.

The proposed action is in compliance with State and County laws. No other management plans are in effect for the area.

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.

This proposed project area is next to existing county roads which generally have low recreational value. These tracts are legally accessible and the proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational and wilderness activities on these state tracts.

These proposed project areas are on tracts which either have legal access or on portions of the navigable Teton River. These tracts generally have high recreational value. The proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational and wilderness activities on these state tracts.

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

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

The proposed action will not impact the cultural uniqueness or diversity of the area.

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.

This project will benefit the school trust in terms of the \$50.00 fee generated from each of the thirty easement applications for a total of \$1,500.00. The easement on the Common Schools, Public Land Trust-Navigable Rivers, MSU Morrill, Western/Eastern, and Capitol Buildings trust land will be compensated at fair market value. Cumulative impacts are not likely as the area is only used for agriculture, hay, or grazing and the buried fiber optic cable will not affect the long-term viability of the tracts.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Tony Nickol	Date: January 20, 2017
	Title: Land Use Specialist, Conrad Unit, Central Land Office	

V. FINDINGS

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant 3 Rivers Telephone Co-Op Inc. permission to install the buried fiber optic cables.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:


The applicant is applying for an easement across 30 tracts of state land with a buried fiber optic cable. This project will provide area residents with upgraded (state of the art) telecommunications services. Significant impacts are not anticipated as a result of the selected alternative. Disturbed areas will be reclaimed and reseeded in accordance with specifications outlined in this EAc. The surface lessee's have been notified and do not anticipate any damages.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Erik Eneboe
	Title: Conrad Unit Manger, CLO, DNRC
Signature: 	Date: January 23, 2017