

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Building a small turn off road on State of Montana land, along Highway No. 24 in Valley County.

Proposed Implementation Date: Spring of 2017

Proponent: Montana Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena Montana, 59620-1001

Type and Purpose of Action: The Montana Department of Transportation has made a Land Use License application to build a small turn off road that will parallel Highway No. 24 in Valley county. This road project will address vehicle movement along the edge of Highway No. 24 during bridge replacement on a bridge that crosses the Middle Fork Porcupine creek. The new bridge construction will provide a bridge that facilitates safe, comfortable and efficient movement of traffic and improves regional mobility. The State of Montana Lands that will be impacted by the issuance of a Land Use License is a total of .62 acres. The area of impact consists of native rangeland.

Location: SW4SW4, Section 11 Township 34 North Range 40 East

County: Valley

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Montana Department of Transportation has made a Land Use License application to use .62 acres of State land for a temporary road that will be constructed next to Highway 24. This temporary road is needed for bridge repair on Highway 24. The Montana Department of Transportation has conducted public hearings with those parties involved in Valley County. The Montana Department of Transportation has also completed an environmental analysis. The surface lessee of the State land has been contacted and is aware of the impacts to his lease hold interest. Mitigation measures will be implemented to alleviate impacts to the lessees lease hold interest.

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

The other government agencies with jurisdiction for this project are the United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Montanan Department of Environmental Quality, United States Army Corp. of Engineers, United States Environmental Protection Agency, and Valley County Commissioners. There may be other State or Federal agencies involved with this project, that the writer of this

document is not aware of.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action Alternative: Grant a Land Use License to Montana Department of Transportation to use .62 acres of State land for new a road.

No Action Alternative: Deny a Land Use License to Montana Department of Transportation to use .62 acres of State land for a new road.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?

Action Alternative: This type of project will impact the silty, sandy and clay loam soils on the State land. The impacts will be semi-permanent on those areas that will be covered with rock/gravel material. The area that is disturbed will be reclaimed under a reclamation plan. Those soils that are reclaimed will produce native grass and forb species upon project completion. Montana Department of Transportation reclamation plans are developed with specifics for this type of land reclamation.

No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the soils on the State land under this alternative.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?

Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impacts on the water quality, quantity and distribution associated with this tract of state land. The project area is located on the Middle Fork Porcupine Creek. There will be an installation of a temporary culvert on the Middle Fork Porcupine Creek for the road that will bypass the bridge re-construction site. During the culvert installation there will be some impacts to the water quality at the culvert installation site. These impacts will be temporary and water quality will return to normal upon culvert installation.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to water resources under this alternative.

6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?

Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impacts on the air quality of the land involved with the project. The project will produce some dirt particles to become air borne from the new road/culvert installation by heavy equipment. The road construction equipment will be moving various amounts of overburden soils that will be stockpiled near the project site for later reclamation. There will be extensive heavy equipment use at the road construction site and culvert installation area.

No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the air quality under this alternative.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?

Action Alternative: The area of impact consists of native rangeland. The native rangeland contains native grass and forb species. The new road construction will destroy the existing plant community on the State land. The area next to the new road will have topsoil stored for reclamation. The topsoil will be replaced when gravel on the road has been removed and area will be reclaimed with topsoil replaced on project site. The impacted area will then be seeded to native grass and forb species.

No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the vegetation under this alternative.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?

Action Alternative: This type of activity will disturb the native plant community on the State land. The area of impact is small in scope and there will be no impacts to the wildlife and upland bird resources of the area. The native rangeland on tract has no Silver or Big sagebrush plants. The State land is not part of identified

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	<p>areas containing known sage grouse leks. Some of the wildlife that inhabits the areas around this tract consists of whitetail deer, bald and golden eagles, sharptail grouse, pheasant, song birds etc. There will be no loss of habitat on this tract of State land. The Montana Natural Heritage Program list the following species of concern for this township: Swift Fox, Bairds Sparrow, Chestnut-collard Longspur, McGowans Longspur.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the wildlife habitat resources associated with the land under this alternative.</p>
<p>9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project area contains no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources. The area of impact contains no known threatened or endangered species. The native rangeland area of impact contains habitat resources for wildlife, upland birds and song birds. The new road construction will have minimal impacts to the habitat resources associated with this tract of native rangeland.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the environmental resources under this alternative.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There are no known historical or archaeological sites on or near the area to be impacted by the road way construction. Portions of the state land were inspected by Matt Poole, Unit Manager, Glasgow Unit Office, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to historical or archaeological sites under this alternative.</p>
<p>11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project site is located next to Highway 24. The road construction will be visible to</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	<p>the general public. Vehicle traffic on Highway 24 will see construction with the operation of heavy equipment and large trucks. The construction equipment will emit loud noise and cause dirt particles to become airborne. The road construction will have minimal impacts to the aesthetic values associated with the state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the aesthetics associated with the land under this project.</p>
<p>12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The use of the State land for a temporary road will place no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the environmental resources of land, water, air or energy under this alternative.</p>
<p>13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The construction of a temporary road will not impact other projects or plans that may be occurring on the state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the plans, studies or other projects on the land under this alternative.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative; The construction of a temporary road that detours new bridge construction has various types of human health and safety risks. The human health and safety risks are identified as occupational hazards by employee and employer. The general public traversing the construction zone will be warned. Road signs will inform the public of a construction</p>

	<p>zone area. The bridge construction will have minimal human health and safety risks for the general public.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to human health or safety under this alternative.</p>
<p>15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>Action alternative: The new bridge construction will have minimal impact to the agricultural activities that are occurring on the land. The current agriculture activities occurring on the two State land tracts are livestock grazing. Temporary and new fences will be built by the bridge construction company along the edge of the State land right of way. Livestock on the State land would not be allowed to access the bridge construction site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the agricultural activities under this alternative.</p>
<p>16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project may create some local jobs for the new bridge construction. Those jobs would be for various activities, excluding heavy equipment operation that requires operator licensing.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not create additional tax revenue for Valley county. The writer of this document is not aware of taxes levied for new bridge construction on the local populace.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the local and state tax base under this alternative.</p>
<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands for government services. Highway No. 24 will see no additional traffic other than construction workers going to the</p>

	<p>bridge construction site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts for government services under this alternative.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and goals under this alternative.</p>
<p>20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the hunting or hiking recreational values associated with the State land. There will also be no impacts to the surrounding deeded lands near the bridge construction zone.</p> <p>No Action Alternative; There would be no impacts to the hunting recreational values associated with the land under this alternative.</p>
<p>21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of the population and housing near this rural area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the density and distribution of the population and housing under this alternative.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the social structures of the local communities. The bridge construction will disrupt traffic flow as they are directed around the bridge construction site. The traffic will be required to leave Highway No. 24 and use the graveled detour road.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social structures under this alternative.</p>
<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the State land.</p>

