

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND RECLASSIFICATION CAPABILITY INVENTORY

Project Name: Holland Ranch Co Home site Re-Classification	Proposed Implementation Date: November, 2017
Proponent: Holland Ranch Co.	
Description of Project: Convert a Homesite Lease to a Grazing Lease Agreement.	
Type of Reclassification: FROM: Grazing Timber Ag Other X TO: Grazing X Timber Ag Other ACRES: 1 acre TRUST(s): Common Schools	
Location: T7S R12W, Section 16	County: Beaverhead

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Proponent: Holland Ranch DNRC, Dillon Unit DNRC, REMB & AGMB, DNRC Archeologist Patrick Rennie Montana Sage Grouse Conservation Program
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	DNRC is not aware of other agencies with jurisdiction. DNRC is not aware of other permits needed to complete this project.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Action Alternative: Convert existing Home Site Lease to a Grazing Lease. No-Action Alternative: Do not convert Home Site Lease to a Grazing Lease.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS N = Not Present or No Impact will occur. Y = Impacts may occur (explain below) LAND CAPABILITY CHARACTERISTICS
4. GEOLOGY, SOILS AND MINERALS: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations? Are there any mineral characteristics and how would reclassification impact development? If any lands are proposed for breaking, what are the soil types & capability classes, texture, "T"	[Y/N] Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts to soils geology or minerals are anticipated from this re-classification of the tract. The vegetation on the 1 acre parcel will be grazed, no other changes will occur. Disturbed areas around the home site will be seeded with an appropriate grass seed mix. No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts would occur under this alternative.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<p>factor, Wind Erodibility Group (WEG), and slopes? <i>What crops will be grown and what are their potential yields? Will there be any mitigation measures implemented to address identified soil limitations?</i></p>	
<p>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?</p>	<p>[Y/N] Action Alternative: There are no surface or ground water resources present at the location of the home site lease. Because of this no negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts to water quality, quantity or distribution are expected under this alternative. No Action Alternative: Under this alternative no negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution would occur.</p>
<p>6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>[Y/N] Action Alternative: No changes or impacts to air quality will occur under the action alternative. No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur under this alternative.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present? <i>What is the existing vegetation?</i></p>	<p>[Y/N] Action Alternative: An NRIS search of the site revealed one rare plant, Slender Thelypody growing near the home site location. The plant is within 3/4 mile of the home site. No other rare plants or rare cover types were identified at this location. The existing home, an old school house, was removed and disturbed ground was seeded to a mix of slender wheatgrass, western wheatgrass, Idaho fescue and Bluebunch wheatgrass in the fall of 2017. Once vegetation is re-established, the site will be grazed by livestock. If proper grazing practices are followed by the lessee no long term or cumulative effects to vegetation will occur. The Dillon Unit inspects grazing tracts every 10 years to appraise grazing practices and inspect for noxious weeds. If there are changes that are needed the lessee will be required to make the changes to keep the lease. Control of noxious weeds is required of the lessee under this alternative. No Action Alternative: Under this alternative the re-classification would not occur and the tract would remain an abandoned home site lease without a lessee. No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts to vegetation would occur.</p>
<p>8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish? <i>What wildlife resources use or occupy the area?</i></p>	<p>[Y/N] The area is in Core Area sage grouse habitat. The Bureau of Land Management classifies this area as a Priority Habitat Management Area. The tract also provides habitat for a variety of big game species including pronghorn, mule deer, and occasionally elk. Predators may include, wolf, coyote, fox, and badger. Occasional sage grouse and upland game birds, other non-game mammals, raptors and various songbirds may also utilize the area. Action Alternative: Under this alternative livestock will graze the former home site. The wildlife mentioned above will continue to have access to the site and utilize the habitat that the tract provides. There will be less of a human presence allowing mammals and birds use of the tract with less human disturbance. No Action Alternative: Nothing will change under this alternative. No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts would occur.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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?

[Y/N]

The Montana Sage Grouse Conservation Program was contacted about this proposal to find out if there were restrictions associated with its implementation. The DNRC was given permission to clean up the home site starting after July 15, 2017. Due to the home site being in core area habitat cleanup work was not allowed between March 15 and July 15 due to a sage grouse lek being present within 2 miles of the home site. All remaining debris from the home site was removed in late July, and the site re-claimed and grass seeded in the fall of 2017.

Ranching, farming, and residential activities are common in the area, and State highway 278 lies within ¼ mile of the track. The area is used as a winter grazing ground by the lessee.

Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts would occur under this alternative. A search of Natural Heritage data through NRIS was completed for Section 16, T7S, R12W. Two mammals, Great Basin Pocket Mouse, and Pygmy Rabbit, three bird species, Greater Sage Grouse, Ferruginous Hawk, and Golden Eagle, one fish species, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, and one invertebrate, Western Pearlshell were identified and may be present in and around the project area. This alternative is small and more of a rehabilitation of the site than any further ground disturbance in the area. This should limit any further disturbance of wildlife species.

Restoring the home site to grazing range land may improve habitat for a number of these identified species and will not cause any long term or cumulative impacts to their habitats.

No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur under this alternative.

10. **HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:** Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?

[Y/N]

No cultural resources have been identified on the 1 acre home site tract.

Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts to historical, archeological or paleontological resources will occur under this alternative.

No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.

11. **AESTHETICS:** Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light? Are there notable aesthetic features on the tract?

[Y/N]

The area is representative of a typical rural Montana farming and ranching area. Montana Highway 278 is near the project. The highway receives limited use from ranchers, tourist and residents. The site is approximately ¼ mile off the highway so views of the home site are limited from the highway.

Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts to aesthetics are expected from this re-classification process. Removing the old home site may improve aesthetics to the surrounding countryside. The old school house was rundown and in poor condition.

No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.

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?

[Y/N]

The area is representative of a typical rural Montana farming and ranching community.

Action Alternative: This alternative will increase the amount of grazing ground available for livestock use

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	<p>by one acre. No other changes or demands to the environmental resources of land, water, air or energy will be affected.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p>
<p>13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>[Y/N]</p> <p>There are no other projects or plans being considered on this tract listed in this Environmental Assessment Checklist. No other documents are known to exist. Neither of the proposed alternatives will be affected by other environmental documents associated with this area.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS & CAPABILITY CHARACTERISTICS
<p>14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>[Y/N]</p> <p>Health and safety risks associated with re-classification will remain unchanged.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Implementation of the action alternative will not change human safety in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p>
<p>15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>[Y/N] Industrial, commercial and agricultural activities will remain unchanged under both of the proposed alternatives.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Implementation of the action alternative will not affect industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities and production. No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p>
<p>16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>[Y/N] No new employment opportunities will occur under either of the proposed alternatives.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Implementation of the action alternative will not affect the quantity and distribution of employment. No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>[Y/N]</p> <p>Neither of the proposed alternatives will affect the current tax base, and tax revenues will remain unchanged.</p>

	<p>Action Alternative: Implementation of the action alternative will not affect the local and state tax base and tax revenues. No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</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>[Y/N]</p> <p>Action Alternative: A reduction of government services may occur under this alternative. Without a home site no emergency services such as fire protection, or ambulance service will be required from the home site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No changes would occur to 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>[Y/N]</p> <p>The DNRC is unaware of other projects, environmental, zoning or management plans/goals in this location of Beaverhead County.</p>
<p>20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is the land legally accessible and is there recreational potential within the tract?</p>	<p>[Y/N]</p> <p>This tract is legally accessible from Highway 278 and open to recreational use.</p> <p>Action Alternative: No impacts to recreational activities will occur under this alternative. With the home site removed there will be greater opportunity for recreational use of the tract.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur 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>[Y/N]</p> <p>Action Alternative: Implementation of the action alternative will reduce the density and distribution of population and housing by one residence. No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur to the population of the area by implementing this alternative.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts to the density and distribution of population will occur under this alternative.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>[Y/N] The area is representative of a typical farming and ranching community in southwest Montana.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Implementation of the action alternative will not affect social structure and mores. No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur to the traditional ranching lifestyles if this alternative is implemented.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p>
<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>[Y/N] Cultural uniqueness and diversity will remain unchanged by the conversion of the home site to a grazing lease.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Implementation of the action alternative will not affect cultural uniqueness and diversity. No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No negative, detrimental or cumulative impacts will occur.</p>
<p>24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC</p>	<p>[Y/N] The home site is abandoned and the home site</p>

CIRCUMSTANCES:

lease with the state has been canceled. The site is currently not generating any revenue for the trust. Converting this site to a grazing lease will allow the ground to generate a yearly grazing fee for the trust based on the animal unit months, AUM's present on the section.

Document Prepared By: Timothy Egan

Date: November 8, 2017

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED: Action Alternative: Convert Home Site Lease to a Grazing Lease.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS: There are no significant impacts.

27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

Martin Balukas

CLO Trust Land Program Manager

Name

Title



11/21/17

Signature

Date


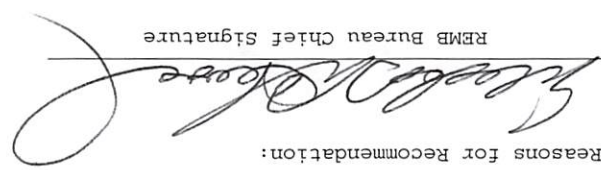
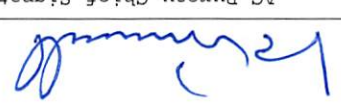
V. RECLASSIFICATION RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL

28. Land Office Recommendation, including Highest and Best Use: Highest and best use of the parcel is to incorporate the home site into the existing grazing lease.

29. Bureau Chief Recommendation

Recommendation by AG Bureau Chief:

Reasons for Recommendation:

<p>Signature</p> <p>11/27/17</p> <p>Date</p>	<p>Signature</p>  <p>Deny</p> <p>Approve</p> <p>30. Final Decision on Reclassification by Trust Land Management Division Administrator:</p>
<p>Signature</p> <p>11-27-2017</p> <p>Date</p>	<p>Signature</p>  <p>Reasons for Recommendation:</p> <p>Recommendation by RMB Bureau Chief: <i>Recorrupts</i></p>
<p>Signature</p> <p>27 NOV 17</p> <p>Date</p>	<p>Signature</p>  <p>AG Bureau Chief Signature</p>