

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Ryegate Rural FTTP
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2018
Proponent:	Midrivers
Location:	6N 21E 10 7N 20E 36
County:	Golden Valley
Trust:	Common

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Mid-Rivers has requested an easement strip 16 feet wide, 8 feet on each side of the centerline through above said tract to install and maintain an underground telecommunication cable.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Northeastern Land Office (NELO)
Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team (MSGOT)
Mid-Rivers Telephone Cooperative
Surface Lessees

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

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

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all required permits for the proposed project. The proponent is responsible for settling all surface damages with the surface lessees.

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 an easement for an underground telecommunication cable.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant an easement for an underground telecommunication cable.

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.

Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail)

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	Component name and % composition Rating reasons
31C	Delpoint-Cabbart-Yamacall loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes	Slight	Delpoint 35% Cabbart 30% Yamacall 20% Megenot 10% Busby 3% Twilight 2%
32D	Twilight-Blacksheep-Rock outcrop, complex, 4 to 25 percent slopes	Slight	Twilight 40% Busby 7% Delpoint 3% Rentsac 3% Bonfri 2%
82E	Cabbart-Delpoint-Rock outcrop complex, 15 to 45 percent slopes	Moderate	Cabbart 45% Slope/erodibility Delpoint 25% Slope/erodibility Blacksheep 5% Slope/erodibility Yawdim 3% Slope/erodibility
84D	Cabbart-Yawdim-Badland complex, 4 to 35 percent slopes	Moderate	Cabbart 35% Slope/erodibility Yawdim 30% Slope/erodibility
84F	Cabbart-Rock outcrop-Yawdim complex, 15 to 60 percent slopes	Severe	Cabbart 35% Slope/erodibility Yawdim 20% Slope/erodibility
182D	Cabbart-Delpoint loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes	Slight	Cabbart 45% Delpoint 40% Yamacall 5% Blacksheep 2%

Areas of with a rating of "severe" are mainly due to slope. These areas will be mitigated by mulching or straw waddles to reduce erosion until permanent grass cover is established.

No cumulative effects to geology and soil quality, stability and moisture are anticipated.

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.

No important ground or surface water will be impacted by the proposed project.

No cumulative effects to the water resources are 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.

The air quality in the area will not be affected.

No cumulative effects to air quality are 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.

The proposed easement route would run through native rangeland and tame pasture. The disturbed area will be limited to the trenching/ripping area. Seeding and reclamation will be required to maintain grass cover on rangeland. If cover hasn't established in two growing seasons the proponent will be responsible for reseeding.

If re-seeding is necessary the proponent will acquire certified, weed free seed and refer to the Plant Materials Tech Note No. MT-46 (Rev. 4) dated September 2013 for seeding rates.

Noxious weeds are known to be in the area from the previous lease evaluations and disturbed sites will be monitored for noxious weeds and treated until eradicated

No rare plants or cover types are present.

No long term cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mt/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs144p2_05773

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.

The area is not considered critical wildlife habitat. Most of the work is done by adjacent public roads where wildlife habitat quality has already been reduced.

No cumulative effects are anticipated.

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.

SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY SUBFAMILY FAMILY ECONOMIC	STATE RANK	STATE RANK	SEVERITY	IMPACT	SEVERITY	IMPACT	IF OF GLOBAL CONCERN RANGE IN MT	IF OF STATE CONCERN RANGE IN MT	IF OF STATE CONCERN RANGE IN MT	IF OF STATE CONCERN RANGE IN MT
Species of Concern 7 Species Revised by the following author: MT State - Species of Concern Compiled by: MSGOT - Based on current Species of Concern											
<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i> Hoary Bat	Proserpinacidae Sitts	C1C4	S1								
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Broadwater, Big Horn, Blaine, Cascade, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, DeWitt, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Mineral, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park.											
<i>Aquila cyreoides</i> Golden Eagle	Accipitridae Hawks / Kites / Eagles	C5	S1								
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Broadwater, Big Horn, Blaine, Cascade, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, DeWitt, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Mineral, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park.											
<i>Ardea herodias</i> Great Blue Heron	Ardeidae Bittern / Egrets / Herons / Night-Herons	C5	S1								
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Broadwater, Big Horn, Blaine, Cascade, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, DeWitt, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Mineral, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park.											
<i>Centurus urophasianus</i> Greater Sage-Grouse	Phasianidae Upland Game Birds	C5C4	S1								
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Broadwater, Big Horn, Blaine, Cascade, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, DeWitt, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Mineral, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park.											
<i>Numenius americanus</i> Long-billed Curlew	Scolopacidae Scaup	C5	S1								
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Broadwater, Big Horn, Blaine, Cascade, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, DeWitt, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Mineral, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park.											
<i>Apalone spinifer</i> Sandy Scaup	Phasianidae Scaup	C5	S1								
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Broadwater, Big Horn, Blaine, Cascade, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, DeWitt, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Mineral, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park.											
<i>Centurus urophasianus</i> Northern Bobwhite	Phasianidae Upland Game Birds	C5	S1								
Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Broadwater, Big Horn, Blaine, Cascade, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, DeWitt, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith, Lake, Liberty, Lincoln, Mineral, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Teton, Yellowstone, and Yellowstone National Park.											

The proposed easement in 7N 20E section 36 lies in the Sage grouse core area. This will need to be reviewed by MSGOT

There are no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources on this site.

No cumulative effects to habitat are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class III intensity level cultural and paleontological resources inventory was conducted of the area of potential effect on state land. Despite a detailed examination, no cultural or fossil resources were identified and no additional archaeological or paleontological investigative work is recommended. The proposed project will have No Effect to Antiquities as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act. A formal report of findings has been prepared 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.

No direct or cumulative effects to aesthetics are 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.

No demands on limited resources are required for this project.

No direct or cumulative effects to environmental resources are 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.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed in this EA Checklist.

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.

There will be some health and safety concerns associated with the operation of heavy equipment. The proponent and their employees are aware of any health and safety hazards and accept them as occupational hazards.

Once the installation has been completed, there will be no health and safety concerns associated with this project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

This project will not add to or deter from other industrial, agricultural, or commercial activities in this 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.

The project will not create any new jobs. These positions are already held by employees of the proponent. No cumulative effects to the employment market are 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.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

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

There will not be any increases in traffic or traffic patterns if this project is approved.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on government services.

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.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting this project.

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.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on recreation or wilderness activities.

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 proposed project does not include any changes to housing or developments. Population and housing will not be affected.

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 project will have no effect on any unique quality 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.

The proposed project will not have any cumulative economic or social effect.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Brandon Sandau Title: Land Use Specialist
Signature: 	Date: 7/9/2018

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant an easement for an underground telecommunication cable.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined that no negative long-term environmental impacts will result from the proposed activity.


27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

XXX

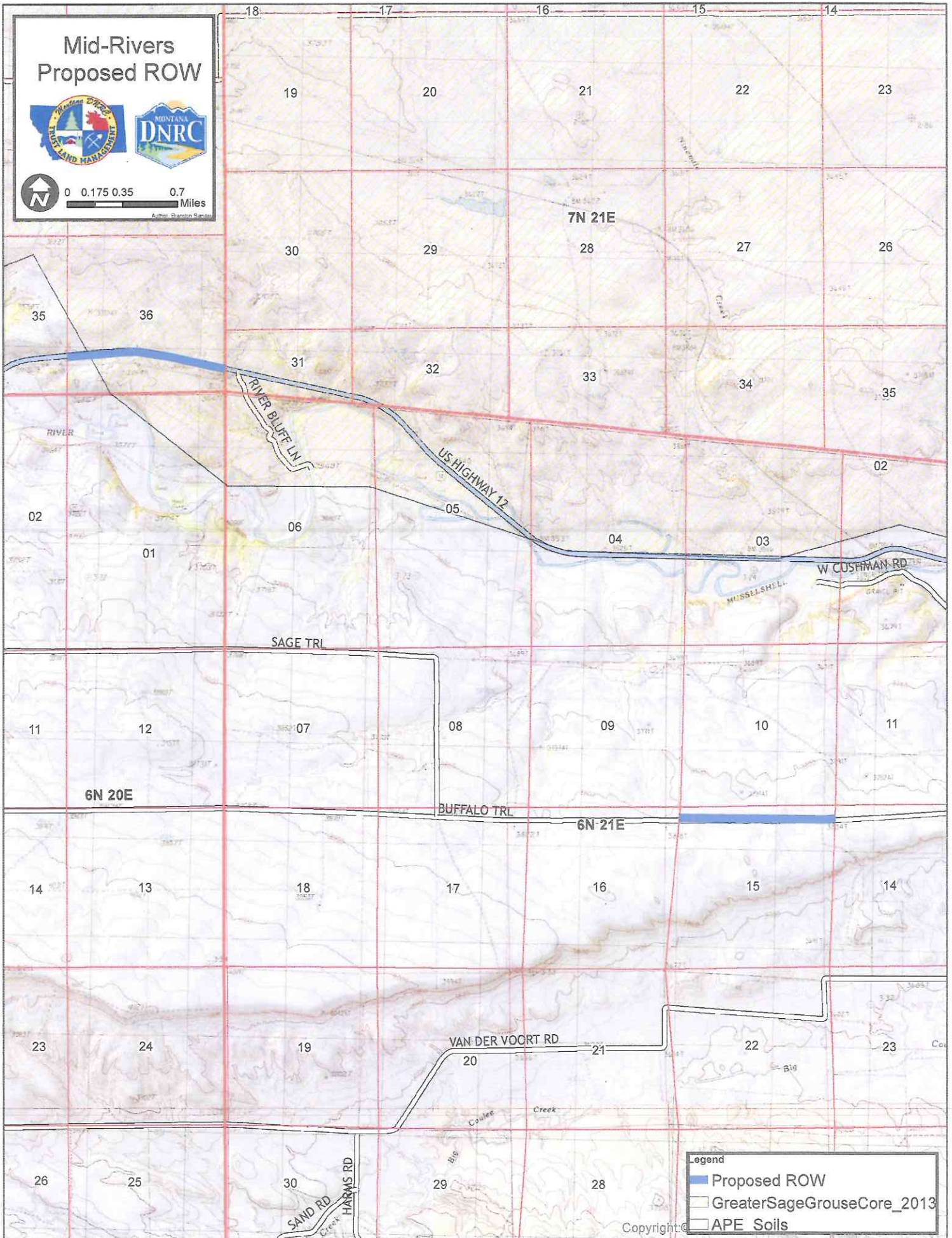
No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Barny D. Smith
	Title: Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
Signature: 	Date: 7/9/2018

Mid-Rivers Proposed ROW



Author: Brandon Sargent



Legend

- Proposed ROW
- GreaterSageGrouseCore_2013
- APE Soils

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