

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Land Use License for storage of power poles and equipment onto state land
Proposed Implementation Date:	August 1, 2018
Proponent:	NorthWestern Energy, 11 East Park St., Butte MT, 59701
Location:	NE4NE4 of Section 29, T32N, R15E approx. 2.8 acres
County:	Hill

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

To store power poles and other equipment near a substation owned by NorthWestern Energy and WAPA for an upcoming project to replace power poles between Havre and Chester, MT.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:
NorthWestern Energy, 11 East Park St, Butte Montana, Dylan Swanson - Representative
Montana DNRC, Havre Field Office, Ryan Call - Land Use specialist
WAPA

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:
None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:
Alternative A: The "No Action" alternative
Alternative B: The alternative to allow for storage of power poles and other equipment necessary in the project to replace old power poles along powerlines from Havre to Chester, MT.

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.

The soil is an Attewan Loam composed of 13.4% clay, 60.3% sand, and 26.3% silt with 0-4% slopes. This soil has a medium risk for compaction and is not rated for being susceptible to degradation. This soil can hold up to 12cm of water is not at risk of flooding, and has adequate drainage. There are no unique geological functions at this are

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 is a very low probability of any water degradation from this project.

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.

Pollutants or particulates could be produced due to traffic from line trucks, overall there is not expectancy of pollutants or particulates being produced in a significant manner

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 vegetation at this site is normal for what to be expected in a silty site in north-central Montana, along with dominant stands of crested wheatgrass (*Agropyron cristatum*). There are no rare plants or cover types present. No cumulative effects are anticipated.

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.

There are seven Avian species of concern listed to be found in this area, however, none were observed and the impact to them is expected to be minimal. Aquatic life will not be adversely affected. There is no aquatic habitat on this tract of land. After project completion, 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.

At this time, no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources have been identified within the project area.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

There are no historical, paleontological or archaeological resources present.

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.

This project is located behind a substation off of highway 87. It will be visible from the highway but it should not distract drivers from the highway as their view will be obstructed primarily by the substation, the purpose of this project is to facilitate the maintenance of powerline poles which will improve the aesthetics of surrounding areas.

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.

There are no other activities nearby that should affect this 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.

None

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.

Human health and safety will not be affected by this proposed project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

There are affects to industrial, commercial, or agricultural resources

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.

New jobs will not be created. There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes for this project.

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 tax base will not be affected. There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes for this 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

Additional services will not be required. No cumulative effects are expected.

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 other management plans or zoning laws that will affect this proposed 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 is minimal recreational potential within this section. 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.

Additional housing will not be a requirement of this project. No direct or cumulative effects are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Disruption is not likely. There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:


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

There should be no shift in the 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.

Improvements to the powerline and poles in the surrounding area will be present in conjunction with this project. The return to the DNRC School Trusts will be the one-time LUL fee. This section of trust land is currently a vacant tract and is only in use by NorthWestern Energy in situations of need.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Ryan S Call, Havre Land Use Specialist DNRC-TLMD
	Date July 10, 2018
	Signature 


V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED: "B"

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS: *Minimal impacts are expected.*

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

- EIS
 More Detailed EA
 No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: <i>Barney Smith</i>
	Title: <i>Lewis town trust Manager TLMA - DNRC</i>
Signature 	Date <i>7/10/18</i>