

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	
Project Name: Install a 4-strand barbed wire fence across School Trust land.	Proposed Implementation Date: Spring 2018
Proponent: Larry Matthews, Trustee of H. Dewain and Lola Matthews Revocable Trust, Box 1383, Malta, MT 59538	
Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to install a new 4-strand barbed wire fence across approximately 1 mile of School Trust land which he leases, with the purpose of separating grazing acreage from Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acreage.	
Location: N2 of Section 34, Township 28N, Range 30E	County: Phillips

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	The proponent submitted an Improvements Request Form containing details of the project to the Glasgow Unit Office. Glasgow Unit staff reviewed the proposal and determined that the fence would be beneficial to the management of the lease.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	DNRC manages the surface of these lands and no other agencies have jurisdiction over the project. No additional permits needed.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Action Alternative: Grant permission to the applicant to install a new fence on School Trust land.  No Action Alternative: Deny permission to the applicant to install a new fence on School Trust land.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are	The area of impact consists mostly of a Phillips-Elloam complex of soils,

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

fragile, compatible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?

with a small amount of various other soil complexes, on 0 to 4 percent slopes. These soils are not unusual, fragile or unstable.

Action Alternative: The proposed fence would have no impact to soils on the School Trust land.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no changes to soils on the School Trust land.

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?

There are no important surface or groundwater resources in the area, and no special consideration of water quality standards, etc.. is necessary.

Action Alternative: The proposed fence would not negatively impact the quality, quantity and distribution of water.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative, there will be no impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution.

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 proposed fence project will have no impact on air quality, nor is it influenced by air quality regulations.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to air quality.

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

The south side of the fence is grazing land that consists primarily of native grasses, forbs and shrubs. The north side of the fence is CRP acreage that consists mostly of non-native grasses and shrubs and various forbs.

Action Alternative: No permanent alteration of the vegetative community is expected to occur.

No Action Alternative: Under this

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

alternative there will be no impacts to the plant communities on the School land.

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

The School Trust land provides habitat for antelope and upland birds occasionally, as well as prairie-grassland birds.

Action Alternative: The proposed fence will have minimal impact to wildlife in the area. Antelope movements across the area may change slightly.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the possible use of the School Trust land as wildlife habitat.

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?

Several species of concern are present (or seasonally present) in the area. These include: Black-tailed Prairie Dog, Baird's Sparrow, Sprague's Pipit, Burrowing Owl, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Greater Sage-Grouse, Mountain Plover, Bobolink, Loggerhead Shrike, Long-billed Curlew, Sage Thrasher, McCown's Longspur, Brewer's Sparrow, and Plains Hog-nosed Snake. The area is classified as "Core Habitat" or "General Habitat" for Greater Sage-Grouse by the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team, however, this particular tract is poor sage-grouse habitat and the nearest lek is approximately 4 miles away. There are no wetlands within the area of impact. The proponent has applied for cost-share from the Rancher's Stewardship Alliance (RSA) and will likely have to meet requirements for wildlife-friendly fencing (fence markers, etc..). The proponent plans on using a smooth bottom wire with a height of 18" and fence markers.

Action Alternative: By following any recommendations from the RSA and wildlife-friendly fencing guidelines, minimal impacts on important species or habitats is expected.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the environmental resources.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	<p>There have been no archaeological or paleontological resources noted within the area of impact as part of the standard lease renewal process.</p> <p>Action Alternative: No historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources will be impacted by the fence.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impact to historical or archaeological sites under this alternative.</p>
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?	<p>The area of impact is very rural and will only be visible to the public from nearby Regina Rd. (Phillips Co. road). Agricultural activities and fences are very prominent in the area.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The proposed project will not significantly alter the aesthetics of the land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to aesthetics associated with the State land.</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>Action Alternative: The proposed project would place no additional demands on any environmental resources in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no additional demands placed on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p>
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	The School Trust land is managed for the grazing of livestock by the lessee, and the land being fenced out is enrolled in CRP. There are no other studies, plans or projects on

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	<p>the School Trust land.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This project will benefit both the lessee and Glasgow Unit staff, by providing better control over distribution of livestock.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the plans or studies that Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation has on the School Trust land.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed project will not add to human health and safety risks in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to human health or safety.</p>
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	<p>Action Alternative: The fence will keep cattle from grazing CRP acreage, and keep them in the acreage managed as grazing land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative the lessee would be unable to regularly graze cattle on the lease.</p>
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not create nor impact any jobs in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impact to quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create	Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the local and state

<p>or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>tax base and tax revenues.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impact 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 not create an additional demand for government services, nor will it impact traffic along existing roads.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no additional demand for government services.</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 has already cleared DNRC (GUO) management plans before implementation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts on locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</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: There is slight potential for recreation within the tract, with access through adjacent tracts of School Trust land. The project would have no impact on this potential.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the recreational values associated with the School Trust 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 population and housing.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the density and distribution of population and housing.</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 disrupt the traditional lifestyles of the local community.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social structures</p>

	under this alternative.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of this rural area.  No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	Action Alternative: The installation of this fence would allow for improved livestock grazing use of the lease and should improve the lessee's/proponent's ability to manage the School Trust land.  No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the economic circumstances under this alternative.

EA Checklist Prepared By: s/Jack Medicott Date: 3/14/2018  
Jack Medicott Land Use Specialist

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action Alternative
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	No significant impacts expected.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:  <input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By: Matthew Poole Glasgow Unit Manager  
Name Title

s/Matthew Poole\s Date: March 15, 2018  
Signature