CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Dunham Gulch SMZ Alternative Practice
Proposed Implementation Date:	May 2018
Proponent:	Bureau of Land Management, Missoula Field Office Field Contact: Kyle Johnson
Location:	Section 19 Township 14 North Range 15 West Section 24 Township 14 North Range 16 West
County:	Missoula

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Kyle Johnson, on behalf of the Missoula Field Office BLM, has applied for a Streamside Management Zone (SMZ) Alternative Practice on approximately 500 feet of an unnamed Class 3 SMZ in the Dunnigan Gulch drainage. The purpose of the Alternative Practice is to reconstruct a road prism located inside of the SMZ for a segment and to open the road to allow vehicle access for logging activity.

The application involves the following specific requests:

-Heavy road construction along 500 feet of a Class 3 SMZ segment
-Brush Removal from Road prism located inside the Class 3 SMZ

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

This project is located on Bureau of Land Management ownership. Scoping of work was done throughout project development.

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

N/A

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action Alternative: Timber harvest would likely occur and meet all SMZ rules. However, the current legacy road is in need of BMP improvements and reconstruction in the requested 500-foot segment, and vehicle use would add to sediment delivery to the Class 3 stream. Continued erosion of the road prism would add to sediment delivery and degrade the road surface further. Brush and fallen timber from both inside and outside the stream channel are in the road prism and access is impossible without the removal of this vegetation and material.

Action Alternative: Under this alternative, an Alternative Practice would be granted. The Alternative Practice would allow the proponent to conduct road maintenance within the SMZ along the 500 feet of road surface that has slumped into the stream channel. Additionally, brushing of encroaching shrubs and trees along the road prism adjacent to the stream channel will allow the passage of vehicles and allow the road to once again become functional.

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 proposed Alternative Practice area is located on an existing historical road running along the bottom of a draw and very close to the Class 3 stream channel (average of 10 feet away). It is unlikely there would be further impacts to geology, soil quality, stability and moisture under either alternative.

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.

Is it possible that implementing this alternative practice would impact the integrity of the SMZ and these specific functions?

-Ability to act as an effective sediment filter.
-Ability to provide shade to regulate stream temperature.
-Protection of stream channel and banks.
-Ability to provide large woody debris for eventual recruitment into the stream to maintain riffles, pools, and other elements of channel stability.

Existing Condition

This road stretch is located in the Dunnigan Gulch area near Ninemile Prarie. This is a historical access road that is located behind an existing gate that was probably developed a century ago. The road is located at the bottom of a deep draw and placed adjacent to an unnamed Class 3 SMZ that is usually dry. The road cannot be relocated due to the steep slope adjacent to it. The SMZ dissipates into a meadow at the bottom of the draw. The road continues up the said draw, but the SMZ runs for roughly 1500 feet and then dries up and becomes a dry draw.

Part of this old legacy road was not constructed with favorable materials, and over time, it has slumped washed out to become lower than the SMZ along a 100-foot stretch. This has allowed part of the SMZ to run onto the road surface during flood conditions and continue for approximately 500 feet before re-entering the stream at an existing natural drain dip location. This segment of road does not meet current BMP drainage and construction standards. Because of the close proximity to the seasonally wet draw, brush and small trees have grown in the cut and fill slope of the road prism. The road is located within the 50-foot SMZ and in some cases, located very close to flowing water.

Potential Environmental Effects

No Action Alternative:

-The SMZ law would be followed for this commercial timber harvest operation. Because of the road's close proximity and failure to meet BMPs, there would be access issues and increased sediment delivery to the Class 3 stream. Sediment delivery would remain and possibly worsen over time if this road was to be used in current condition.

Action Alternative:

Under the action alternative an Alternative Practice would be granted to allow the BLM conduct road maintenance within the SMZ and remove brush and downed trees from the road prism.

-The ability of the SMZ to act as an effective sediment filter shall be maintained by retaining all remaining vegetative cover and grass.

-The ability of the SMZ to provide shade is maintained by the remaining sub-merchantable trees and shrubs. No trimming of brush, shrubs, regeneration, or downed trees will extend beyond the immediate fill slope of the road prism.

-Full protection of the stream channel and banks is maintained by keeping equipment on existing roads.

-Large woody debris and existing fallen material found within the stream channel will remain intact and in place.

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.

Slash created from the project would need to be disposed of in accordance with all applicable laws. Impacts would be expected to be the same under either alternative.

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.

No Action: Road would continue to be overgrown by existing vegetation and become more impassible.

Action Alternative: Only vegetation located within the road prism would be affected. Road would be cleared of vegetation to allow vehicle access.

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.

No Action: The SMZ law would followed and no impacts to fish, wildlife or birds would be expected.

Action Alternative: The ability of the road surface to meet BMP standards would improve road drainage and reduce the sediment delivery of this road stretch.

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.

No impacts to unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources would be expected under either alternative.

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

If the proposed action alternative is selected no impacts beyond those expected under the no action alternative would likely occur.

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.

If the proposed action alternative is selected no impacts beyond those expected under the no action alternative would likely occur.

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.

If the proposed action alternative is selected no impacts beyond those expected under the no action alternative would likely occur.

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.

None.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

None.

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.

Under either alternative the project would be expected to keep current jobs active for the duration of the project. If the action alternative were selected the jobs could last a few weeks longer.

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.

No change in local and state tax base and tax revenues would be expected under either alternative.

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

No change in government services would be expected under either alternative.

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.

None.

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.

The proposed action alternative and the no action alternative would have the same impacts to access and quality of recreational and 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 project has no direct implications for density and distribution of population and housing.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

No measurable impacts related to social structures and mores would be expected under either alternative.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

No measurable impacts related to cultural uniqueness and diversity would be expected under either alternative.

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.

N/A

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Brad French	**Date:**	May 17, 2018
	Title:	Clearwater Service Forester		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Following a review of the document as well as the corresponding Department policies and rules, the Action Alternative has been selected because it meets the intent of the project objectives outlined in Section I – Type and Purpose of Action. This includes but is not limited to the need to clear trees for a home site and create defensible space for the future home.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS

I find that the Action Alternative will not have significant impacts for the following reasons:

- The Action Alternative is in compliance with the existing laws, rules, policies, and standards applicable to this type of proposed action.
- Appropriate mitigations have been proposed to minimize potential impacts to resources such as terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats; soil; vegetation; and water quality, quantity, and distribution.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

☐	EIS	☐	More Detailed EA	**X**	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name: Kristen S. Baker-Dickinson** **Title: Clearwater Unit Manager**	
Signature:	***/s/ K. Baker-Dickinson***	**Date**: 5/17/2018