

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Monitoring Wells
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	2018
<b>Proponent:</b>	Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
<b>Location:</b>	T21N-R57E-Sec25 and T21N-R58E-Sec16
<b>County:</b>	Richland County

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology, heretofore referred to as proponent, has requested of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation permission to construct two water monitoring wells with monitoring equipment and have access to the wells for monitoring purposes on state owned tract T21N-R57E-Sec25 and T21N-R58E-Sec16.

### 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 proponent has requested that the DNRC allow the construction of and access to two monitoring wells. DNRC staff has evaluated these sites, and due to the nature of this request, no public comment was sought. The Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program was not consulted as these tracts are not within designated Sage Grouse Habitat.

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

None

**3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

Alternative A- Grant request for the project.

Alternative B- No Action.

### 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.*

Alternative A- Disturbance of the soil will occur through the drilling of the well, but effects should be minimal. There should be no lasting adverse effects to the soil quality, stability or moisture. The soil structures are not fragile or unstable; soils are clay type.

Alternative B-No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- Pollutants and Particulates may be increased during the construction of the project. After the completion of the project pollutant and particulate levels should return to normal preconstruction levels. Increase in pollutants during construction should be almost negligible.

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- Where the construction takes place there may be disturbance to the vegetation cover. Potential disruption to the vegetative community within the area of construction could be expected. Current plant species which occupy the construction area include Western Wheatgrass (*Agropyron Smithii*), Green Needlegrass (*Stipa Viridula*), Blue Bunch Wheatgrass (*Agropyron Spicatum*), Needle and Thread (*Stipa comata*), Prairie Junegrass (*Koleria pyramidata*), Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), Fringed Sagewort (*Artemisia frigida*), Broom Snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and Threadleaf sedge (*Carex filifolia*). The disturbance of these plant species should be minimal and the area should revegetate naturally within two years.

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- There may be minimal effect on any animal habitats within the boundaries of the project construction area. Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed during the construction of the project. After completion of the project wildlife usage should return to pre-construction levels.

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Database showed no species of concern in these general project areas. Richland County is known to be part of the migratory routes of Whooping Cranes and Least Terns, but these limited projects should not have a negative impact on those species. This project is not located within Greater Sage Grouse Habitat.

Alternative B- No Impact

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**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

Alternative A- No historical or archeological sites were noted within the proposed project area upon field inspection and a review of the TLMS database. A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. Because little ground disturbance is expected with the proposed project, and because the local geology is not likely to produce caves, rock shelters, or sources of tool stone, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- There may be above ground structures (small well shacks) associated with the wells and monitoring.

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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

<b>IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</li><li>• Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</li><li>• Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</li></ul>

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**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

Alternative A- There may be risks to human health and safety in the construction of the project, but this should be done by qualified professionals. Safety concerns should be minimized with proper safety protocol employed by the workers.

Alternative B- No impact

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**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

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

Alternative A- No impact expected.

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No impacts expected.

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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*

Alternative A- No Impact expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A- \$525.00 will be returned to the trust through the application process and issuance of a Land Use License.

Alternative B- No Impact

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Aaron Kneeland	<b>Date:</b> 5-23-2018
	<b>Title:</b> Land Use Specialist	

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**V. FINDING**

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**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Alternative A

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**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

The granting of the requested action on state owned trust lands for the proposed Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology monitoring well project should not result in nor cause significant environmental impacts. The predicted impacts should be adequately mitigated through the construction and reclamation plans. An environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action.

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**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Scott Aye
	<b>Title:</b> ELO Land Program Manager
<b>Signature:</b> /s/ Scott Aye	<b>Date:</b> 5-23-2018