

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	DNRC Exploration
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	2018
<b>Proponent:</b>	DNRC
<b>Location:</b>	Surface and Minerals- T10S-R10W-Sec 9
<b>County:</b>	Beaverhead

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (Henceforth referred to as the proponent) has requested to conduct excavation of aggregate test holes on the State Trust land mentioned above. This project would utilize a backhoe to dig multiple test holes to a depth of up to 20 feet and backfill the holes once they have been evaluated. The purpose of the action to explore portions of the property for aggregate resources.

### 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 submitted a Permit to Test for Aggregate to the DNRC to explore for aggregate resources to provide material for future sale and Trust Land revenue. The Dillon Unit and Minerals Management Bureau staff have conducted a field review on the project on July 25, 2018.

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

None are known.

**3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

Alternative A- Allow the proponent to conduct the test hole survey of these parcels of State Trust Land

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- Site geology consists of alluvial deposits from coalescing alluvial fans deposited during the Quaternary.

Overlying soils in the vicinity are very stony and made up of primarily Trimad-Bronec complex, 4 to 15 percent slopes and Bronec-Kalsted-Geohrock, very stony complex, 4 to 15 percent slopes.

For the purpose of this proposal, soil would be excavated from a test pit, set aside, and then returned to its original position once the test pit was backfilled.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

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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- There are no perennial streams within or nearby the project area. Test hole sites are proposed to be located outside of and upslope from any ephemeral drainage bottoms in the area. Excavated test pits will be open a very short amount of time before being backfilled.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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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- No significant impact expected.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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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- The vegetation at this site is normal for what is to be expected in a stony site in southwest Montana, including various wheatgrasses, sagebrush, rubber rabbit brush, and other grasses and forbs. There are no known rare plants or cover types present. No cumulative effects are anticipated.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

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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 disruption to the wildlife that inhabit the area during the day of equipment operation. The scale and length of the project should not be enough to permanently disrupt the wildlife species. Species in the area include mule deer, antelope, raptors and other birds, various rodents, rabbits, reptiles, etc.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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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 shows that no species of concern have been identified within or near the general project area.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

Alternative A- The DNRC archeologist would be present during the project to oversee any ground disturbing activity and ensure no cultural resources are impacted by a test pit.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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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- Very little impact should be felt aesthetically in the scope of this project. There should be minimal lasting affects on the landscape from this project. The project should only last a couple days and the landscape will be allowed to recover.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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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 Impacts expected

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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 known

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

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

Alternative A- Typical safety risks for laborers working with mechanized equipment would be present, but the potential risk should be minimal with proper safety efforts.

Alternative B- No Impact Expected

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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- The proposed project is for testing a resource only and would have minimal effects on industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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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- This project would have minimal effects on creating, moving, or eliminating jobs.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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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 Impacts 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 Impact 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

**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- This project will provide the trust with the potential for future development of aggregate resources and royalty income.

Alternative B- No Impact

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Bryan Allison	<b>Date:</b> August 2018
	<b>Title:</b> Mineral Resource Specialist	

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Alternative A

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

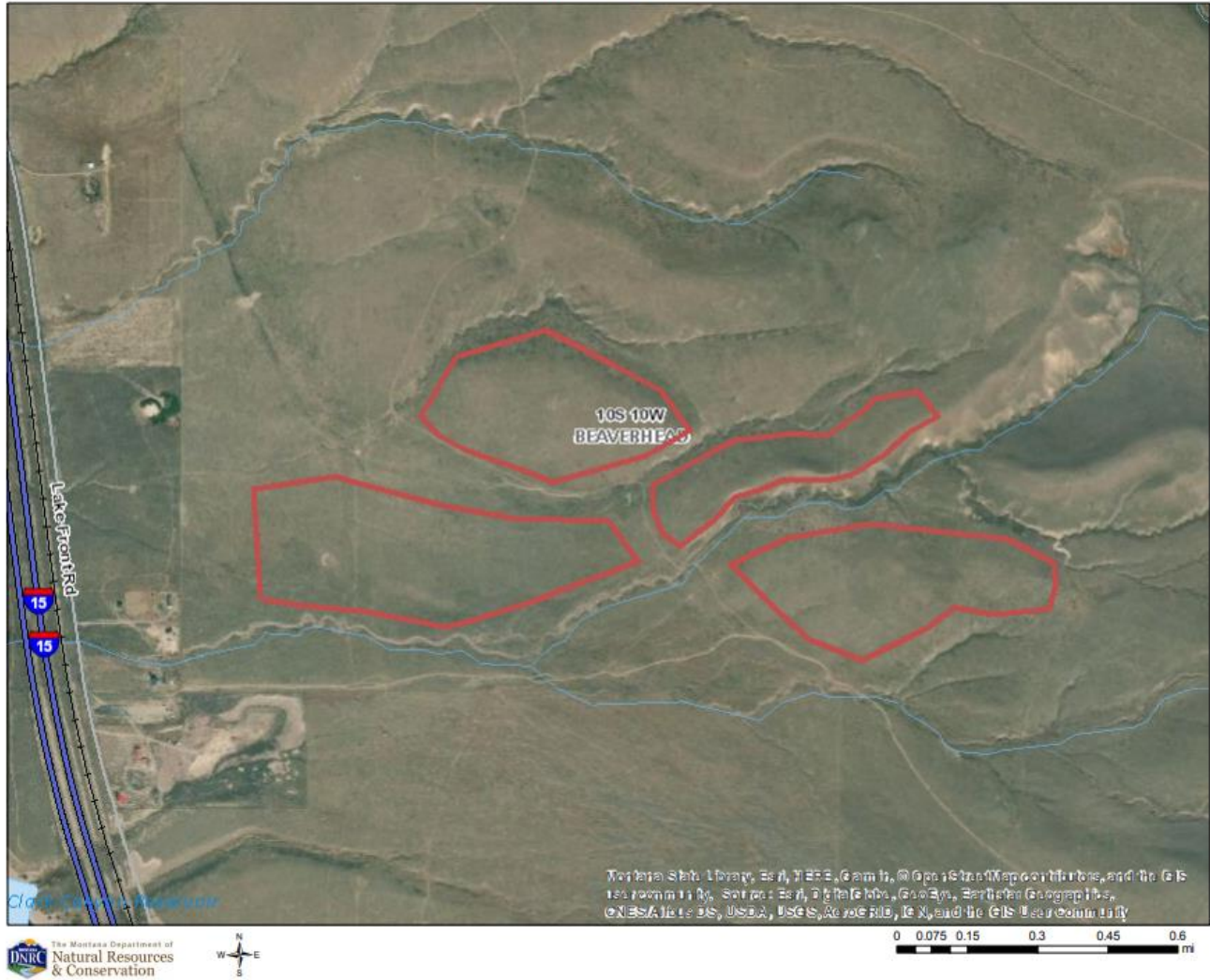
The granting of the requested borrow material test pits on these tracts of state-owned trust lands should not result in nor cause significant negative environmental impacts. The proposed action satisfies the trusts fiduciary mandate and ensures the long-term productivity of the land. An environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action.

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

EIS       More Detailed EA       No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Trevor Taylor
	<b>Title:</b> Petroleum Engineer, Minerals Management Bureau
<b>Signature:</b>	<i>Trevor Taylor</i>
	<b>Date:</b> 9-11-18

# DNRC exploration



Red polygons indicate possible exploration areas.