

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Wickens Construction, Inc.
Proposed Implementation Date:	2018
Proponent:	Wickens Construction, Inc.
Location:	Surface and Minerals- T32N-R11E-Sec 15 (SW1/4) & Sec 16 (SE1/4) on either side of Highway 448 and adjacent to the highway right-of-way.
County:	Hill

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Wickens Construction, Inc. (Henceforth referred to as the proponent) has requested to conduct excavation of borrow material test holes and possibly remove small volumes of material from 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 in depth and backfill the holes once they have been evaluated. Should material be found that is suitable for the road reconstruction, small amounts of material may be stockpiled to be used on the road. The proposed test pits/borrow area would be in an area directly adjacent to the road reconstruction project, therefore making the location desirable for sourcing borrow material.

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 Small Volume Permit to the DNRC to explore for, and utilize small volumes of borrow material for the local road reconstruction project. The Northeastern Land Office (NELO) and Minerals Management Bureau staff have conducted a field review on the project on September 11, 2018. The proponent has been in touch with the DNRC to discuss potential impacts.

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 and remove a small volume of borrow material from 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 located in the English Coulee drainage bottom, Claggett Shale outcrops in the immediate mid benches rising up from the drainage bottom, and the Judith River sandstone, shale, mudstone, and siltstones surrounding of the site.

Overlying soils in the vicinity are widely varied. Prospects for borrow material would likely be located within the Havre-Harlake clay loams or the Cozburg-Chinook fine sandy loams. Most other soils in the immediate area of the proposed road reconstruction have properties or limitations that warrant the material undesirable for road fill material.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

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- Test hole sites are proposed to be located up-slope from both English Coulee and Sage Creek. The possibility exists of encountering shallow groundwater while digging test pits in the vicinity of existing perennial waterways. Excavation of test pits will take a very short amount of time before the pits are immediately backfilled. A small volume of borrow material may be stockpiled to be used in the immediate future. Due to the short duration in which soil piles will exist, there would be little risk of soils running off into the nearby waterways and causing an exceedance of water quality standards.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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

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- There is no evidence of rare plants or cover types in the scope of the project. The vegetation at this site is normal for what is 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.

Alternative B- No Impacts expected

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. The scale and length of the project should not be enough to permanently disrupt the wildlife species. Species in the area include whitetail and mule deer, antelope, raptors and other birds, various rodents, rabbits, reptiles and others.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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 were noted within or near the general project area.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

Alternative A- A Class III cultural and paleontological resources inventory was conducted of much of the area of potential effect on state land in 2014. Despite a detailed examination, no cultural or fossil resources were identified in the easement corridor. No additional archaeological or paleontological investigative work is recommended. The proposed project will have *No Effect to Antiquities* as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act. A formal report of findings is on file with the DNRC and the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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

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

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

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

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

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 and stockpiling a small volume of borrow material to be used at a later time and would have minimal effects on industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities.

Alternative B- No Impacts Expected

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

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

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

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

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

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

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Alternative A- No Impacts Expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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 some royalties from the small amount of borrow material taken from the site and provide for the potential of additional future development of borrow material resources and royalty income.

Alternative B- No Impact

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Bryan Allison	Date: August 2018
	Title: Mineral Resource Specialist	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative A

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The granting of the requested borrow material test pits and small volume permit 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

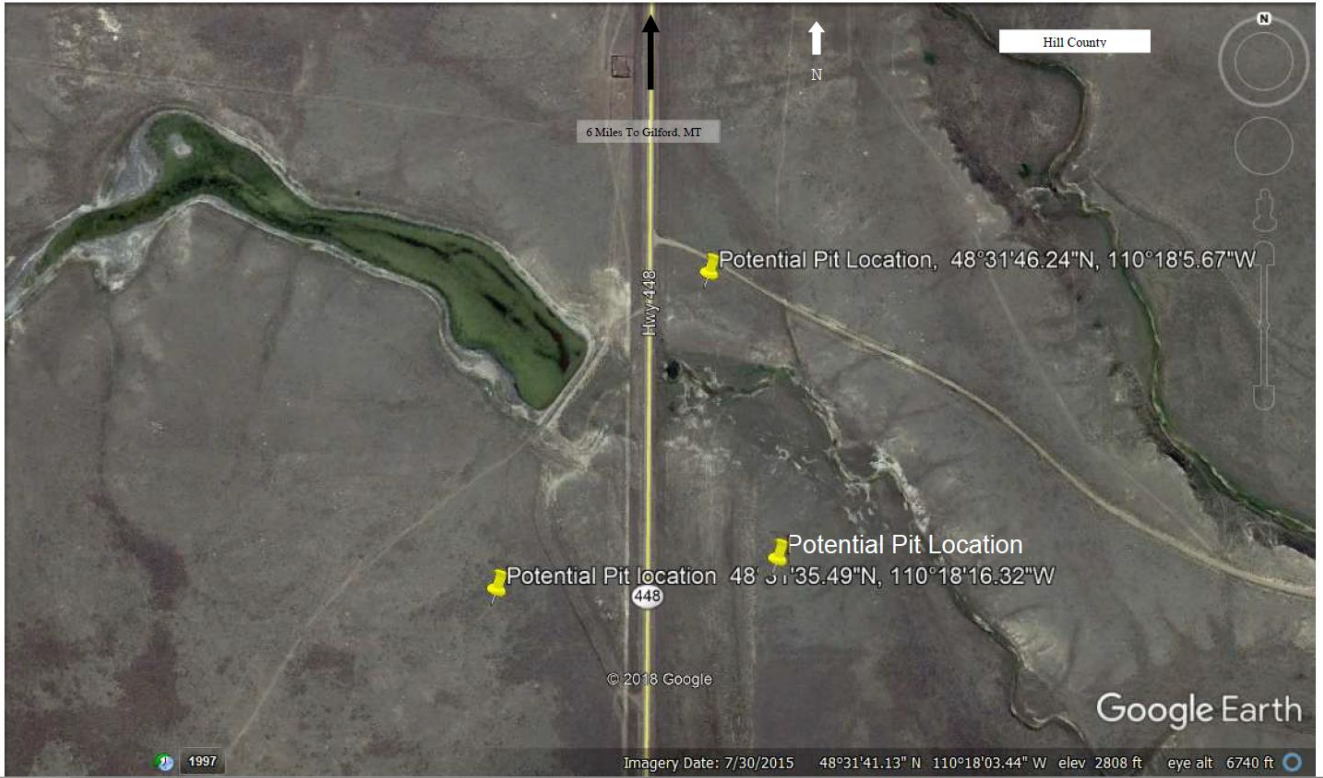
27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Monte Mason Title: Bureau Chief, Minerals Management Bureau
Signature: <i>Monte G Mason</i>	Date: 9/12/2018



	Operator Name: Wickens Construction Inc.	SITE MAP	Permit Area:
	Site Name: DNRC	Draft Date: 9/6/18	Legal Description: