CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Midway Ranch Cistern
Proposed Implementation Date:	Spring 2019
Proponent:	Midway Ranch
Location:	T 26N R 14E S16
County:	Chouteau
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The purpose of this land use license would be to allow Midway Ranch Inc to install a stock water cistern connected to an existing water line. The cistern would allow the storage of stock water to use throughout the year.

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 Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Northeastern Land Office (NELO)
Proponent: Midway Ranch
Surface Lessees: Midway Ranch

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

The DNRC, and NELO have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all required permits for the proposed project. The proponent is responsible for settling all surface damages with the surface lessees.

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant permission to install a cistern.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission to install a cistern.

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.

Tables – Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail) – Summary By Map Unit

Summary by Map Unit — Chouteau County Area, Montana (MT615)

Summary by Map Unit — Chouteau County Area, Montana (MT615)

Map unit symbol	Map unit name	Rating	Component name (percent)	Rating reasons (numeric values)	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
22F	Hillon loam, 15 to 60 percent slopes	Severe	Hillon (80%)	Slope/erodibility (0.75)	102.1	20.0%
			Cabbart (2%)	Slope/erodibility (0.75)		
			Yawdim (1%)	Slope/erodibility (0.75)		
28	Nishon clay loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	Slight	Nishon (90%)		5.6	1.1%
			Soils with clay surface layers (3%)			
37B	Evanston loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes	Slight	Evanston (85%)		12.0	2.4%
			Ethridge (3%)			
			Yamacall, calcareous (3%)			
			Degrand (3%)			
			Evanston (2%)			
			Chinook (2%)			
			Marmarth (2%)			
224E	Hillon-Joplin loams, 8 to 25 percent slopes	Moderate	Hillon (55%)	Slope/erodibility (0.50)	222.9	43.7%
			Joplin (30%)	Slope/erodibility (0.50)		
			Cabbart (1%)	Slope/erodibility (0.50)		
421C	Joplin-Hillon loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Joplin (50%)		30.7	6.0%
			Hillon (40%)			
			Evanston (4%)			
			Hillon, gravelly surface (2%)			
			Fortbenton (2%)			
			Delpoint (1%)			
			Nishon (1%)			
503C	Telstad-Joplin loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes	Slight	Telstad (45%)		136.4	26.8%
			Joplin (40%)			
			Hillon (6%)			
			Fortbenton (3%)			
			Ferd (2%)			
			Nishon (2%)			
			Marmarth (1%)			
			Elloam (1%)			
Totals for Area of Interest					509.7	100.0%

This tract contains approximately 100 acres of soils that are classified as severe for off-road soil erosion. Because of the small disturbance area and the temporary nature of this project no major erosion is anticipated. Since the disturbance and equipment will be concentrated in one area there should be very little affect other than equipment tracks.

No cumulative effects to geology and soil quality, stability and moisture are anticipated.

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.

The only surface water that could be affected would be a small reservoir in the southeast corner of the tract. Since there would be no contaminants other than possible sediments this should not alter the water available for stock.

This project would allow more effective distribution of water for livestock on this state tract. It is using an existing water line and will simply be used to regulate water year round.

No cumulative effects to the water resources are anticipated.

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.

The air quality in the area will not be affected.

No cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated.

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.

This project will only disturb a very small amount of ground that should revegetate quickly.

If re-seeding is necessary the proponent will acquire certified, weed free seed and refer to the Plant Materials Tech Note No. MT-46 (Rev. 4) dated September 2013 for seeding rates.

No noxious weeds previously recorded on any tracts but some invasive weeds are present and will need controlled.

No rare plants or cover types are present.
No long term cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/mt/plantsanimals/?cid=nrcs144p2_05773

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.

The area is not considered critical wildlife habitat. There is a prairie dog town in the area but no effects to the population are anticipated. This project will effect a very small area and should have no impact.

No cumulative effects are anticipated.

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.

MAMMALS (MAMMALIA) — TERRESTRIAL ELEMENT — 4 SPECIES

SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT
Cynomys ludovicianus Black-tailed Prairie Dog	*Sciuridae* Squirrels	G4	S3		Sensitive - Known on Forests (CG)	SENSITIVE	SGCN3	15%	71%	Grasslands
	Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Yellowstone **State Rank Reason:** Across much of eastern Montana this species occurs in areas with suitable soil and topography; however sylvatic plague has caused the species to decline and has affected colony size and dynamics. Ongoing threats from disease and persecution due to perceived competition with grazing make long-term status of this species uncertain.									
Euderma maculatum Spotted Bat	*Vespertilionidae* Bats	G4	S3		Sensitive - Known on Forests (BD, CG)	SENSITIVE	SGCN3, SGIN	5%	27%	Cliffs with rock crevices
	Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Dawson, Fergus, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Madison, Musselshell, Phillips, Powder River, Richland, Rosebud, Silver Bow, Treasure, Yellowstone **State Rank Reason:** Little is known about this species in Montana. Although widely distributed, the species is quite rare in almost all of its range. Little is known about trends in abundance or occupancy, or life history.									
Lasiurus cinereus Hoary Bat	*Vespertilionidae* Bats	G3G4	S3				SGCN3	2%	100%	Riparian and forest
	Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Gallatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, Mccone, Meagher, Mineral, Missoula, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Powell, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sanders, Sheridan, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux, Yellowstone									
Myotis lucifugus Little Brown *Myotis*	*Vespertilionidae* Bats	G3	S3				SGCN3	3%	100%	Generalist
	Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Gallatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Lincoln, Madison, Mccone, Meagher, Mineral, Missoula, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Powell, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sanders, Sheridan, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux, Yellowstone **State Rank Reason:** Species is common and widespread, but under significant threat of catastrophic declines due to White-Nose Syndrome, a fungal disease responsible for the collapse of populations of this species in the eastern US.									

SCIENTIFIC NAME COMMON NAME TAXA SORT	FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) FAMILY (COMMON)	GLOBAL RANK	STATE RANK	USFWS	USFS	BLM	FWP SWAP	% OF GLOBAL BREEDING RANGE IN MT	% OF MT THAT IS BREEDING RANGE	HABITAT
Anthus spragueii Sprague's Pipit	*Motacillidae* Pipits	G3G4	S3B	MBTA: BCC11; BCC17		SENSITIVE	SGCN3	18%	67%	Grasslands
	Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Gallatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Madison, Mccone, Meagher, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux **State Rank Reason:** Although population trends in Montana appear to be relatively stable in recent years, populations have been in decline over the long run and the species faces threats from covertype conversion, overgrazing, exotic plant invasions, altered fire regimes, and mowing prior to fledging of young.									
Athene cunicularia Burrowing Owl	*Strigidae* Owls	G4	S3B	MBTA; BCC17	Sensitive - Known on Forests (CG) Sensitive - Suspected on Forests (HLC)	SENSITIVE	SGCN3	2%	82%	Grasslands
	Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Gallatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Madison, Mccone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Prairie, Ravalli, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Yellowstone **State Rank Reason:** Species has a negative short-term population trend.									
Centronyx bairdii Baird's Sparrow	*Passerellidae* New World Sparrows	G4	S3B	MBTA: BCC11; BCC17		SENSITIVE	SGCN3	27%	67%	Grasslands
	Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Fallon, Fergus, Glacier, Hill, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Mccone, Meagher, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux, Yellowstone **State Rank Reason:** Montana populations were declining until recently and the species is declining in most of the surrounding states and provinces.									
Numenius americanus Long-billed Curlew	*Scolopacidae* Sandpipers	G5	S3B	MBTA: BCC10; BCC11; BCC17		SENSITIVE	SGCN3	19%	100%	Grasslands
	Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Custer, Daniels, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Gallatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Madison, Mccone, Meagher, Missoula, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Powell, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sanders, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux, Yellowstone									
Spizella breweri Brewer's Sparrow	*Passerellidae* New World Sparrows	G5	S3B	MBTA: BCC10; BCC17		SENSITIVE	SGCN3	12%	100%	Sagebrush
	Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Beaverhead, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Chouteau, Custer, Dawson, Deer Lodge, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Gallatin, Garfield, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, Mccone, Meagher, Missoula, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Pondera, Powder River, Powell, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Roosevelt, Rosebud, Sanders, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Toole, Treasure, Valley, Wheatland, Wibaux, Yellowstone **State Rank Reason:** Species faces threats from loss of sagebrush habitats it is dependent on as a result of habitat conversion for agriculture and increased frequency of fire as a result of weed encroachment and drought.									

Black tailed prairie dogs, and burrowing owls may be affected due to the digging nature of this project. The area will be small though with little changing above ground permanently.

No species of concern or endangered plants species are known to occur in this area.

Temporary displacement may occur No population effect is anticipated.

There are no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources on this site.

No cumulative effects to habitat are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

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 stone circles have been observed in the SE1/4 of the se section, but not necessarily in the project APE. NELO staff will inspect the cistern installation site before any ground disturbance occurs to ensure that cultural stone features will not be impacted.

No effects on historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources anticipated.

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.

There will be four feet of a plastic tank above the ground with a fence around it. Due to the nature of the land, equipment associated with livestock production is expected. Some of the cistern may be seen above ground from the highway.

No direct or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated.

The project will not create any new jobs. These positions are already held by employees of the proponent. No cumulative effects to the employment market are anticipated.

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.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

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

There will not be any increases in traffic or traffic patterns if this project is approved.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on government services.

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.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting this project.

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.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on recreation or 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 proposed project does not include any changes to housing or developments. Population and housing will not be affected.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

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

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

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

The proposed project will have no effect on any unique quality of the area.

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.

The proposed project will not have any cumulative economic or social effect.

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant permission to build a cistern.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined that no negative long-term environmental impacts will result from the proposed activity.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	XXX	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Dustin Lenz
	Title:	Land Use Specialist
Signature:		**Date**: 24 January 2019

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Clive Rooney
	Title:	Area Manager, Northeastern Land Office
Signature:		**Date**: 1/24/19