CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Heble Private Driveway Easement
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2019
Proponent:	Damon & Jessie Heble
Location:	Section 36, Township 21 North, Range 16 East (Common Schools)
County:	Fergus

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Damon & Jessie Heble are applying for a 30' easement in Fergus County for the approval of an existing two-track ranch road to be converted to a private driveway easement. If approved, the Heble's plan to improve the existing road by grading and graveling the road.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

No formal public scoping was performed by DNRC for this proposed project. A Settlement of Damages form was obtained from the grazing lessee.

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

None.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Alternative: Approve the request to issue a 30' private driveway easement to Damon & Jessie Heble for the purpose of improving an existing two-track ranch road.

No Action Alternative: Deny the request to issue a 30' private driveway easement to Damon & Jessie Heble for the purpose of improving an existing two-track ranch road.

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 private driveway easement would widen and improve the drivability of the existing two-track ranch road. If warranted to prevent erosion, water bars will be installed to extend the life of the private driveway.

The soils in the easement area are comprised of gravelly clay loam soils. The NRCS Soil Survey does indicate that there are some limitations in the soils for shallow excavations and they include such potential issues as dusty tendencies. However, these issues are not expected to significantly impact the proposed action.

No significant adverse impacts to geology and soil quality, stability and moisture are expected from implementing the proposed action.

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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.

The proposed easement locations do not cross any streams or bodies of water.

No significant adverse impacts to water quality, quantity or distribution are expected from implementing the proposed action.

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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.

There may be short-term isolated impacts from the equipment exhaust that is used to improve the existing road.

No significant impact to air quality is expected from implementation of the proposed action.

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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.

The proposed improvement of the existing ranch road will widen and improve the drivability of the road with the addition of gravel and grading. Because the road already exists, the area for the proposed private driveway has already been disturbed. The approval of the proposed private driveway easement would remove a small amount of vegetation that now exists on the existing 2-track ranch road.

No long term, significant adverse impacts to vegetative cover, quantity or quality are anticipated as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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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.

No significant impacts to terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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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.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database was completed, and no species of concern were identified in the area of potential effect. Due to the nature of the proposed action, the improvement of an existing two-track road, it is not anticipated that this action will have any significant adverse impacts to local wildlife species that may traverse this tract.

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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,

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 the area of potential effect on state land is an existing road, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. 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.

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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.

The proposed action would result in the improvement of an existing two-track ranch road. The improved road would be wider than the original two-track but is not anticipated to significantly impact aesthetics.

No significant adverse impact to aesthetics is expected as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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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.

No significant adverse impacts to environmental resources of land, water, air or energy are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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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.

There are no other known studies or future government actions planned for this Trust parcel.

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.*

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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:
Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No significant adverse impacts to human health and safety are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

A signed Lessee Settlement form was included in the proposed easement application materials.

No significant adverse impacts to industrial, commercial and agricultural activities and production are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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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.

The proposed action will not have a significant impact on the quantity and distribution of employment.

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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.

The proposed action will not have an adverse impact on tax revenue.

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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

The implementation of the proposed alternative will not generate any additional demands on governmental services.

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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.

Implementation of the proposed alternative will not conflict with any locally adopted plans.

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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.

Section 36 has public access via a mile and a half of BLM land to the northwest.

The improvement of the existing two-track road is expected to occur in the fall of 2019 and may be within rifle and archery hunting seasons. Impacts associated with the improvement of the road should be minimal considering the proposed easement runs through a very small portion of the NW4NW4NW4 of Section 36.

The implementation of the proposed alternative is not expected to have an adverse impact on the ability of recreational use of these Trust lands.

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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.

The proponent plans to use the proposed private driveway to access their deeded land to the north with the intention of building a home on that land. No other housing projects on their deeded land a planned at this time.

No adverse impacts to density and distribution of population and housing would occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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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 proposed alternative.

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

The proposed alternative will not have a significant adverse impact on cultural uniqueness or diversity.

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 State will benefit by getting a total one-time fee of $238.00 from the Heble's for the purchase of the easement. The Common Schools Trust will be the beneficiary of this payment.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:** Jocee Hedrick	**Date:** 7/23/19	
	Title: Lewistown Unit Manager, NELO		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The proposed alternative has been selected and it is recommended that a permanent 30' private driveway easement be granted to Damon and Jessie Heble for the purpose of improving an existing two-track ranch road in the NW4NW4NW4 of Section 36, Township 21 North, Range 16 East.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The potential environmental effects have been evaluated and it has been determined that no significant adverse environmental impacts will result from the proposed activity.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

[ ] EIS [ ] More Detailed EA [XXX] No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:** Clive Rooney	
	Title: Area Manager, Northeastern Land Office	
Signature:		**Date:** 7/23/19