

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Project Name: | Thomas Lowry and Timothy Todd Fence Improvement |
| Proposed Implementation Date: | July 2019 |
| Proponent: | Thomas Lowry and Timothy Todd |
| Location: | 12N 24E 16 SW4 |
| County: | Fergus |
| Trust: | Common Schools |

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The purpose of this EA is to evaluate the environmental impacts of building a barbed wire fence on state trust lands.

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: Thomas Lowry and Timothy Todd
Surface Lessees: Thomas Lowry and Timothy Todd

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 build a barbed wire fence.

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

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.

This project will involve very minor surface disturbance. Posts will be pounded so no dirt will be exposed and the only other potential for erosion will be from the vehicle tracks. Because of this there will be very little potential for soil damage and none of the activities will effect soil moisture or quality.

| Summary by Rating Value | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--|
| Rating | Acres in AOI | Percent of AOI | |
| Slight | 26.4 | 86.9% | |
| Moderate | 4.0 | 13.1% | |
| Totals for Area of Interest | 30.4 | 100.0% | |

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.

This project will in no way affect water quality or distribution. There are water improvements as part of the whole ranch improvement but none of them are on state lands

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.

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 rare plants or cover types are present.

Plant Species of Concern (Switch to Animals report) Species List Last Updated 09/25/2018
 0 Species
 Filtered by the following criteria:
 Township = 012H024E (based on mapped Special Resources)

No long term cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

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 wildlife that use the area but they are already adapted to life around barbed wire fences and will not be adversely affected in a negative way.

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.

The Montana Natural Heritage Project Species of Concern Report showed that there are 7 animal species of concern in the project area. The black tail prairie dog would only temporarily be affected while construction was taking place and the off chance that a post got driven into their burrow would not be a major impact. All the other animals are birds that would just be temporarily displaced during construction and would likely have no lasting impacts. Flags should be placed on the top wire of the fence as a mitigation measure for sage grouse.

| Species of Concern | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------|---|-------------|------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------|---------------------|
| 7 Species | | | | | | | | | | |
| Filtered by the following criteria: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Township = 012N024E (based on mapped Species Occurrences) | | | | | | | | | | |
| MAMMALIA (MAMMALIA) | | | | | | | | | | |
| SCIENTIFIC NAME | COMMON NAME | FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) | FAMILY (COMMON) | GLOBAL RANK | STATE RANK | USFWS | USFS | BLM | FWP SWAP | HABITAT |
| <i>Cynomys ludovicianus</i> | Black-tailed Prairie Dog | Sciuridae | Squirrels | G4 | S3 | | Sensitive - Known on Forests (CG) | SENSITIVE | SCG3 | Grasslands |
| Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Big Horn, Blaine, Cascade, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, McCone, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Treasure Valley, Yellowstone. | | | | | | | | | | |
| State Rank Reason: Across much of eastern Montana this species occurs in areas with suitable soil and topography. However, sybaritic 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. | | | | | | | | | | |
| BIRDS (AVES) | | | | | | | | | | |
| SCIENTIFIC NAME | COMMON NAME | FAMILY (SCIENTIFIC) | FAMILY (COMMON) | GLOBAL RANK | STATE RANK | USFWS | USFS | BLM | FWP SWAP | HABITAT |
| <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> | Golden Eagle | Accipitridae | Hawks / Kites / Eagles | G5 | S1 | BGFLA; BHTA; BCC17 | | SENSITIVE | SCG3 | Grasslands |
| Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Mineral, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Rosebud, Powder River, Powell, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Rosebud, Rosebud, Sheridan, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Treasure Valley, Yellowstone. | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Ardea herodias</i> | Great Blue Heron | Ardeidae | Bitterns / Egrets / Herons / Night-Herons | G5 | S3 | BHTA | | SENSITIVE | SCG3 | Riparian forest |
| Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Mineral, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Rosebud, Powder River, Powell, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Rosebud, Rosebud, Sheridan, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Treasure Valley, Yellowstone. | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Buteo jergoni</i> | Ferruginous Hawk | Accipitridae | Hawks / Kites / Eagles | G4 | S1E | BHTA; BCC19; BCC17 | | SENSITIVE | SCG3 | Sagebrush grassland |
| Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Judith Basin, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Mineral, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Rosebud, Powder River, Powell, Prairie, Ravalli, Richland, Rosebud, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Teton, Treasure Valley, Yellowstone. | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Cathartes fuscescens</i> | Very | Trogonidae | Trogon | G5 | S1E | BHTA | | SENSITIVE | SCG3 | Riparian forest |
| Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Fallon, Fergus, Flathead, Glacier, Golden Valley, Granite, Hill, Jefferson, Lake, Lewis and Clark, Liberty, Lincoln, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Mineral, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Rosebud, Powder River, Powell, Ravalli, Richland, Rosebud, Rosebud, Silver Bow, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Yellowstone. | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i> | Greater Sage Grouse | Phasianidae | Upland Game Birds | G4G | S2 | | Sensitive - Known on Forests (B) | SENSITIVE | SCG2E | Sagebrush |
| Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Golden Valley, Hill, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Musselshell, Park, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Treasure Valley, Yellowstone. | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> | Loggerhead Shrike | Laniidae | Shrikes | G4 | S1E | BHTA; BCC19; BCC17 | | SENSITIVE | SCG3 | Shrubland |
| Species Occurrences verified in these Counties: Blaine, Big Horn, Blaine, Broadwater, Carbon, Carter, Cascade, Chouteau, Carter, Fallon, Fergus, Garfield, Granite, Golden Valley, Hill, Jefferson, Liberty, Madison, McCone, Meagher, Musselshell, Petroleum, Phillips, Powder River, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Rosebud, Sheridan, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Teton, Treasure Valley, Yellowstone. | | | | | | | | | | |

There are no plant species of concern in this project area.

| Plant Species of Concern | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 0 Species | | | | | | | | | | |
| Filtered by the following criteria: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Township = 012N024E (based on mapped Species Occurrences) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Species List Last Updated 09/25/2018 | | | | | | | | | | |

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 *Antiquities* have not been identified in the APE. 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.

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.

No direct or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated.

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 demands on limited resources are required for this project.

No direct or cumulative effects to environmental resources are anticipated.

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 projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed in this EA Checklist.

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.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Once the installation has been completed, there will be no health and safety concerns associated with this project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

This fence would allow better livestock management on state land and on the surrounding deeded land.

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 project will not create any new jobs. 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 barbed wire fence.

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:

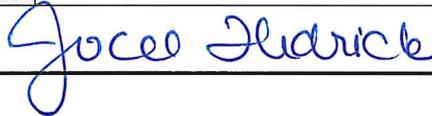
25 June 2019

**EA Checklist
Approved By:**

Name: Jocee Hedrick

Title: Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office

Signature:



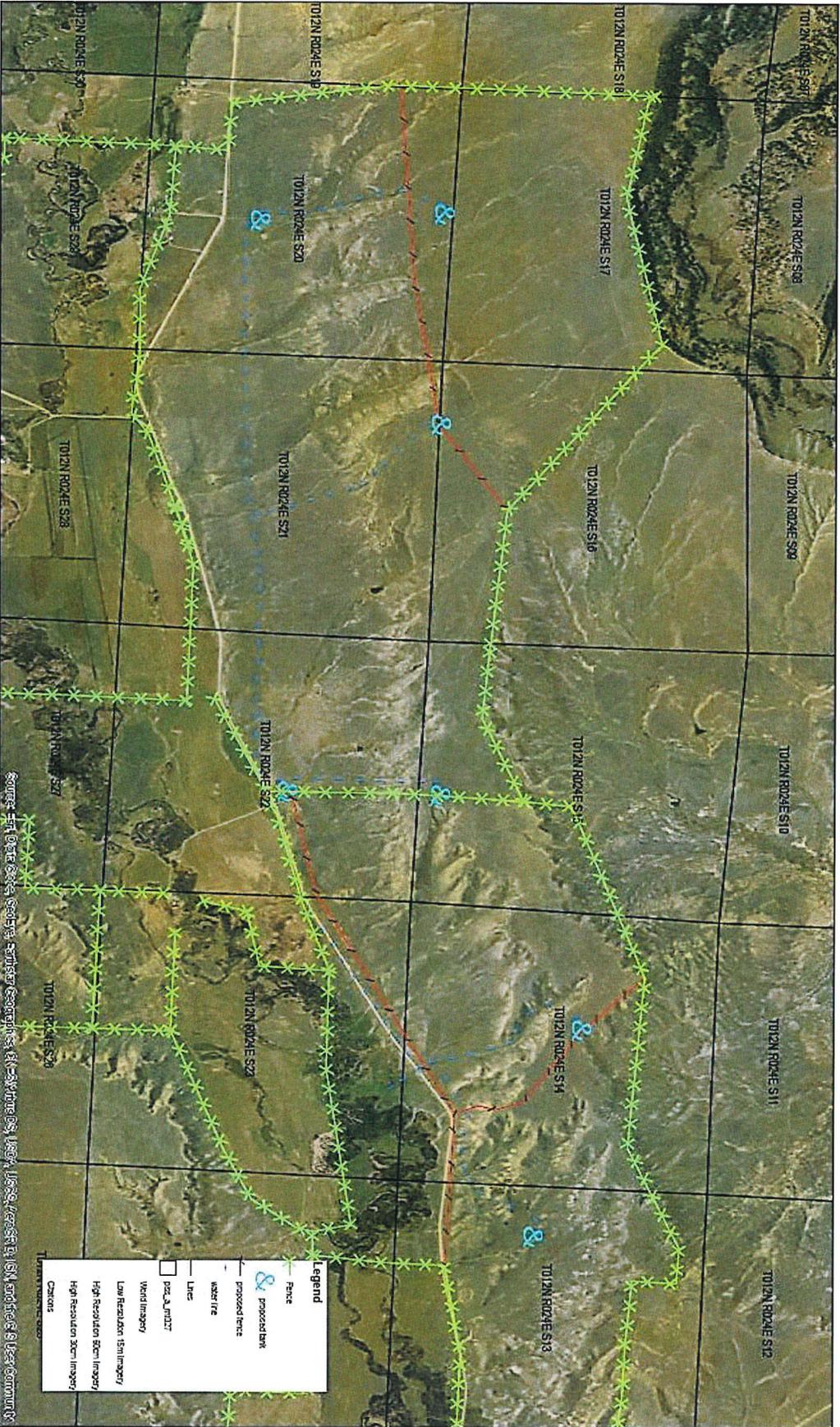
Date:

6/25/19

Customer(s): TIMOTHY G TODD

EQIP 2017 Plan Map

Date: 6/17/2019
Field Office: LEWISTOWN FIELD OFFICE
Agency: USDA-NRCS
Assisted By: MICHAEL LUCAS



Prepared with assistance from USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

