

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Scout Energy Pipeline Project 2020
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2020
Proponent:	Scout Energy Group II, LP
Location:	T6N-R60E-Sec 36 W2NW4
County:	Fallon

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Scout Energy Group has requested a right of way easement and Land Use License across the parcel of state trust land mentioned above. This easement is requested for a three-inch natural gas gathering pipeline to connect wells #491 and #2142. This project would encompass a strip of land approximately 30 feet wide and 1180.3 or 71.53 rods long. This easement will encompass approximately 1.3848 acres of state trust land. The Land Use License is for an additional 10 feet on either side of the easement for a temporary work space during construction of the line.

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 completed the proper applications, and survey operations to implement the right of way easement for the proposed gas line.

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

None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A- Grant an easement to Scout Energy Group for a gas gathering pipeline
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- Soils are a complex of clay and dense clay. Soils are moderately erosive in nature. Proper reclamation techniques should limit any threat of sheet or rill erosion.

Alternative B- No Impact.

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- No Significant Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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- Pollutants and Particulates may be increased during the construction of the project. After the completion of the project pollutant and particulate levels should return to normal.

Alternative B- No Impact

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 will be disruption to some of the vegetation currently growing at the site. Dominant species on this site include Western Wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*), Green Needlegrass (*Stipa viridula*) Prairie Junegrass (*Koeleria pyramidata*), Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), Inland Saltgrass (*Distichlis stricta*) Sandberg Bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), Big Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), Silver Sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*), Fringed Sagewort (*Artemisia frigida*), Broom Snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), and Japanese Brome (*Bromus japonicus*). After the reclamation has taken place and any other required erosion control structures have been placed, the site will be seeded back to native grass species to be designed by the Eastern Land Office field staff.

Alternative B- No Impact

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. This disturbance would be for a minimal time frame during the construction phase of the project.

Alternative B- No Impact

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 showed the following species of concern in the general project area

- Brewer's Sparrow**(*Spizella breweri*)
- Chestnut-collared Longspur**(*Calcarius ornatus*)
- Great Blue Heron**(*Ardea herodias*)
- Greater Sage-Grouse**(*Centrocercus urophasianus*)
- Red-headed Woodpecker**(*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*)
- Loggerhead Shrike**(*Lanius ludovicianus*)
- Sharp-tailed Grouse**(*Tympanuchus phasianellus*)

While the above listed species have been identified as having been found within the tract, there should be minimal impact from this project due to the location, scale, and nature of the project. This project is located within Greater Sage Grouse General Habitat. The proponent has submitted the project to the Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program and has received a consultation letter from the program for Project No. 3973. The project area is outside of the NSO area. Timing restrictions and reclamation recommendations from the Sage Grouse Program as set forth by EO-10-2014 and EO-12-2015 will be followed.

Alternative B- No Impact

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

Alternative A- A site visit by DNRC staff and a search on TLMS identified some lithic scatter on this tract, but not in the project area. 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. Due to the small scope and location, no significant impacts should occur, therefore 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.

Alternative B- No Impact

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- This will temporarily change the appearance of the landscape during the construction phase. Noise levels will be increased during the project but will return to normal after the completion. Once reclamation is complete the site should blend with the surrounding landscapes.

Alternative B- No Impact

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 significant impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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

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- There may be potential safety risks for laborers but the potential risk is minimized with proper safety efforts and trained employees.

Alternative B- No Impact

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

Alternative A- It should have a positive effect on Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Activities and Production.

Alternative B- No Impact

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 has the potential to create jobs with further development possibilities.

Alternative B- No Impact

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- Potential tax revenue is currently unknown at this time.

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- Traffic may be increased during the construction phase of the project. This is a remote area so no assistance should be needed. Traffic increases would consist of oilfield construction, servicing and monitoring personnel and vehicles. There should be no need for additional government services.

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

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- Recreational opportunities should stay mostly unchanged. Disturbance should only last for a short period of time will the pipeline is under construction.

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 Significant Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Alternative A- No Significant Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Alternative A- No Significant Impact

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- Allowing this project would generate revenue for the school trust through the purchase of an easement. The easement price would be set at \$30.00 per rod for a total price of \$2,145.90. The application for and fee associated with the Land Use License will generate \$296.00.

Alternative B- No Impact

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Aaron Kneeland	Date: 7-27-2020
	Title: Land Use Specialist	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative A

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The proposed pipeline easement and construction of should not result in nor cause significant environmental impacts. The predicted environmental impacts should be adequately mitigated through the Eastern Land Office general as well as site specific project stipulations and surface rules. For these reasons an environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action. The lessee of record has been contacted and a State Lands DS-457 has been signed. The proposed easement would satisfy the trust fiduciary mandate and provide increased natural gas transportation in the area which may benefit mineral development on State Trust Land in the area.

V. FINDING

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Scott Aye
	Title: Eastern Land Office, Land Program Manager
Signature: /S/ Scott Aye	Date: 7-27-2020