

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Judith Gap Air Force Water Well
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	1 August 2020
<b>Proponent:</b>	United States Air Force (Malstrom AFB)
<b>Location:</b>	11N 15E 20
<b>County:</b>	Fergus
<b>Trust:</b>	Common Schools

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The purpose of this EA to assess the environmental impacts of allowing the air force to use a 2.5 acre area next to one of their Missile alert facilities as a staging area while they drill a new water well.

### 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) & Lewistown Unit Office  
Proponent: United States Air Force (Malstrom AFB)  
Surface Lessees: E L Peterson 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 necessary permits for the proposed project and settling all surface damages with the surface lessees.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Alternative A (No Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant a license to use 2.5 acres of trust lands as a well drilling staging area.

**Alternative B (the Proposed Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department does grant a license to use 2.5 acres of trust lands as a well drilling staging area.

### 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 area that would be affected by this license is rated at slight for off road erosion hazard but rates very poorly on both soil rutting hazard and soil compaction resistance. Because of this the proponent will be required only to work in dry conditions

Table – Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail) – Summary by Rating Value				
Summary by Rating Value		Summary by Rating Value		
	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI	
Slight		24.4	100.0%	
<b>Totals for Area of Interest</b>		<b>24.4</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Table – Soil Compaction Resistance – Summary by Rating Value				
Summary by Rating Value		Summary by Rating Value		
	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI	
Low resistance		24.4	100.0%	
<b>Totals for Area of Interest</b>		<b>24.4</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

Table – Soil Rutting Hazard – Summary by Rating Value				
Summary by Rating Value		Summary by Rating Value		
	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI	
Severe		24.4	100.0%	
<b>Totals for Area of Interest</b>		<b>24.4</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

No significant cumulative impacts to geology or 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 area would only be used as parking so no groundwater is likely to be disturbed. Surface water is also not likely to be disturbed because the site is 40 feet in elevation above the nearest drainage.

No significant impacts to local or regional 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.*

Temporary affects to air quality may include equipment exhaust and dust from equipment moving around but the project is short in duration so there will not likely be long term air quality affects

No significant impacts 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.*

A small area of vegetation would be trampled but not torn up, as a result there will not likely be any changes to the vegetation of the site.

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. No significant impacts 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.*

This site is already poor habitat for wildlife due to its proximity to the missile alert facility and the highway. Because of its location no further degradation of wildlife habitat is expected.

No significant impacts to terrestrial, avian, or aquatic habitats 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.*

Species	Agency Status	Definition Criteria
<b>F - Northern Redbelly Dace</b> ( <i>Chrosomus aedei</i> ) SOC Native Species Global Rank: G5 State Rank: S3	USFWS USF3 DLM FWP SWAP: SGCH3	Definition Criteria (Last Updated: Mar 30, 2018) Stream reaches and standing water bodies where the species presence has been confirmed through direct capture or where they are believed to be present based on the professional judgement of a fisheries biologist due to confirmed presence in adjacent areas. In order to reflect the importance of adjacent terrestrial habitats to survival, stream reaches are buffered 100 meters, standing water bodies greater than 1 acre are buffered 50 meters, and standing water bodies less than 1 acre are buffered 20 meters into the terrestrial habitat based on PACRISH (PACSH R) riparian Conservation Area standards.
<b>B - Ferruginous Hawk</b> ( <i>Buteo regalis</i> ) SOC Native Species Global Rank: G4 State Rank: S2B	USFWS: MBTA, BCC19, BCC17 USF3 DLM: SENSITIVE FWP SWAP: SGCH3 PIF: 2	Definition Criteria (Last Updated: Jan 09, 2020) Confirmed nesting area buffered by a minimum distance of 2,000 meters in order to encompass the average home range size reported for the species and otherwise buffered by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 10,000 meters.
<b>B - Burrowing Owl</b> ( <i>Athene cunicularia</i> ) SOC Native Species Global Rank: G4 State Rank: S2B	USFWS: MBTA, BCC17 USF3: Sensitive - Known on Forests (CO) Sensitive - Suspected on Forests (HLC) DLM: SENSITIVE FWP SWAP: SGCH3 PIF: 1	Definition Criteria (Last Updated: Jan 03, 2020) Confirmed breeding area based on the presence of a nest, chick, or territorial adult during the breeding season. Direct observation of a bird or birds or on a prairie dog town is indirect but sufficient evidence of breeding (3). Point observation location is buffered by a minimum distance of 2,000 meters in order to encompass the maximum foraging distance reported for breeding adults and otherwise is buffered by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 10,000 meters.

No significant impacts to unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources are anticipated, though temporary displacement of local wildlife may occur during the project.

## 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 significant 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.*

Aesthetic effects will likely be minor and short term. There will be some equipment parked for a short period and then the vegetation may look trampled for a year or two but then the visual effects should be corrected.

No significant impacts on the aesthetics of the area 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 limited environmental resources will be significantly impacted because of this project. This project will also not add any significant cumulative demands on environmental resources.

**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.*

There will be some risks associated with the drilling of the well and moving of equipment but it will be the responsibility of the proponent and their contractor to mitigate these risks. After drilling is complete there will be no additional risk to human health or safety.

**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

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

This project will not add to or deter from other industrial, agricultural, or commercial activities in the area.

**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 or eliminate any jobs, so no significant 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 significant increases in traffic, school attendance, or need for fire and police protection if this project is approved.

**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 significant direct or cumulative effects on access to or quality of recreation and wilderness activities because of this project.

**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.

**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 significantly 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 significant impact on any culturally 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.*

This project will produce a fee of \$200 for the school trust.

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

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

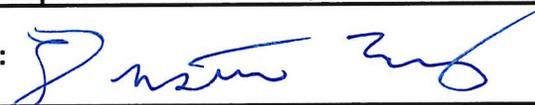
**Alternative B (the Proposed Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department does grant a license to use 2.5 acres of trust lands as a well drilling staging area.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined no significant impact to the environment because of this project.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS       More Detailed EA       No Further Analysis

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<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 8 June 2020

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Jocee Hedrick <b>Title:</b> Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 6/8/2020

