

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Hunter Johnson Wedding Ceremony LUL
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	June 25, 2021
<b>Proponent:</b>	Hunter Johnson
<b>Location:</b>	Section 16, Township 4 South, Range 5 West
<b>County:</b>	Madison County

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Hunter Johnson has applied to use an area of state land in NE1/4 NW1/4, Section 16, T4S R5W for a wedding ceremony in June 2021. The event will be a small ceremony of around 25 people. The ceremony will last an estimated 2 hours. Mr. Johnson has talked with the lessee of the state tract and the ceremony will not interfere with the lessee's operations.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: *Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.*

Lessee SRI River Properties

Because of the short duration of the ceremony, and little to no disturbance that will occur, no further scoping for this license was deemed necessary.

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

No other governmental agencies have jurisdiction over this use and no other permits are needed.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Action Alternative:** Grant Hunter Johnson a Land Use License to have a wedding ceremony on state land in June 2021.

**No Action Alternative:** Deny Hunter Johnson a Land Use License to hold a wedding ceremony on state land in June 2021.

### 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.*

**Action Alternative:** No impacts to soil quality, stability or erosion of soil will occur under this alternative. There are no rare or fragile soils located at the location of the wedding ceremony.

**No Action Alternative:** No impacts to soil quality stability or erosion of soils would occur under this alternative.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** The ceremony will take place near Wisconsin Creek a perennial stream that drains out of the Tobacco Root Mountains. The ceremony will not cause any disturbance to the creek and will not introduce pollutants or sediment to the stream. The ceremony will not cause any surface or groundwater disturbance to water resources.

**No Action Alternative:** This alternative would not cause any changes and thus no impacts to surface or groundwater resources.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** A wedding ceremony will not produce any air particulates and will not affect air quality standards,

**No Action Alternative:** Under this alternative there will be no impacts to air quality standards.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** The current vegetation is native bunch grasses and sage brush. An NRIS search didn't reveal any rare plants or cover types identified in this area. The native grass, sagebrush and cottonwood trees will not be changed due to the wedding ceremony. No long term or cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** No changes or impacts to vegetation would occur if this alternative is chosen.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** An NRIS search of this location didn't identify any threatened or endangered species occurring within the proposal area. The proposal is located near MT Highway 278 and has traffic from the town of Sheridan near the proposal. The area supports small mammals as well as deer and bird life. Due to the location of the highway, and housing developments this is not considered prime wildlife or bird habitat. No long term or cumulative impacts to wildlife habitat would occur due to this proposal.

**No Action Alternative:** Under this alternative no changes to terrestrial, avian, and aquatic life or habitats would occur.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** Although no threatened or endangered species or habitats are identified in the proposal location, the state section does have activity or has the potential for use by the following species: gray wolf, Brewer's sparrow, wolverine, and pygmy rabbit.

**Gray Wolf (Canus Lupus)** Wolves are distributed throughout Southwest Montana. The project would not have any measurable effect on wolf prey or wolves, thus direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are not anticipated.

**Brewer's Sparrow (Spizella breweri)** – Brewer's sparrow is a BLM sensitive species. Per Montana Natural Resource Information Service (NRIS), the species prefers nesting in sagebrush averaging 16 inches in height. The birds may use the area during certain times of the year. The proposed project would not significantly alter the current vegetative community and the proposal should not alter the vegetation permanently or lead to negative cumulative effects on Brewer's sparrow populations in this area.

**Wolverine (Gulo gulo)** – Wolverines are listed as sensitive by both the BLM and USFS. Per Montana Natural Resource Information Service (NRIS) wolverines have been seen within ½ mile of the proposed site. This proposal, however, has a small footprint and is located by an existing state highway and homesteads which are not considered prime wolverine habitat. Because of this no long term or cumulative impacts to wolverines are anticipated from this proposal.

**Pygmy Rabbit (Brachylagus idahoensis)** Pygmy Rabbits have been sited within ½ mile north of the proposed project area. The project would not affect the rabbit's habitat because no off-road use will occur. The overall impact to the species from this proposal would be minimal. Because of this no long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated.

**No Action Alternative:** If this alternative is chosen no changes to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources would occur.

#### **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 no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. Considering the nature of the Land Use License being requested, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed social gathering.

#### **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.*

Neither of the proposed alternatives will change the aesthetics of the area. No long term or cumulative effects would be anticipated from either of the proposed alternatives.

#### **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.*

**Action Alternative:** Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air, or energy will not be affected by this wedding ceremony. No long term or cumulative effects would be expected from this proposal.

**No Action Alternative:** no changes to demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy would occur under this alternative.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** No other environmental documents have been scoped or completed for this section of state land.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** No health or safety risks are posed by the granting of this license.

**No Action Alternative:** No health or safety concerns would occur if this alternative is selected.

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

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

**Action Alternative:** The granting of an LUL will not affect commercial and agricultural activities or production in the area. There will be no impacts to industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities and production from the issuing of the Land Use License.

**No Action Alternative:** There will be no impacts to industrial, commercial, and agricultural activities and production from choosing this alternative.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** The granting of this LUL will not affect the distribution of employment in or around Sheridan or the state of Montana.

**No Action Alternative:** No changes to quantity and distribution of employment would occur under the no action alternative.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** The granting of this LUL will not affect the local and or state tax base or revenues.

**No Action Alternative:** No changes to local and state tax base or revenue would occur under this alternative.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** No additional demand of government services is anticipated if this license is issued.

**No Action Alternative:** : No additional demand of government services would occur under the no action alternative.

**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 aren't any zoning regulations applicable in this area of Madison County.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** The granting of this proposed license will not affect recreational activities in the Sheridan area.

**No Action Alternative:** No changes to recreational activities would occur if this alternative is chosen.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** No additional housing or distribution of population is anticipated from issuing this license.

**No Action Alternative:** No changes to housing density or distribution would occur under this alternative.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

**Action Alternative:** The granting of this license will not alter the traditional lifestyle or communities in the Sheridan area.

**No Action Alternative:** Under this alternative no changes to social structures or mores would occur.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

**Action Alternative:** This alternative will not change the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the surrounding area.

**No Action Alternative:** No changes to cultural uniqueness and diversity would occur under the no action alternative.

**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.*

**Action Alternative:** The granting of this easement would generate \$200.00 for the Common Schools trust.

**No Action Alternative:** No revenue would be generated under the no action alternative.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Timothy Egan	<b>Date:</b> April 15, 2021
	<b>Title:</b> Unit Manger	

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**


**Action Alternative:** Grant Hunter Johnson a Land Use License to have a wedding ceremony on state land in June 2021.

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

As proposed, no significant detrimental impacts or cumulative effects from the implementation of the selected alternative to grant a Land Use License (LUL) to Hunter Johnson for a wedding ceremony are anticipated. The proposed action will authorize the use while compensating the school trust beneficiary.

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

EIS       More Detailed EA       No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Andy Burgoyne	
	<b>Title:</b> CLO Trust Land Program Manager	
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b> 4/19/2021



T4S R5W 16

