

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	MVGR Land, LLC Restoration Project
Proposed Implementation Date:	June 2022 – November 2022
Proponent:	MVGR
Location:	Section 13, & 24 Township 12 South – Range 10 West
County:	Beaverhead County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Proponent proposes to restore and enhance an unnamed spring creek that flows into the Red Rock River. Most of the project will occur on deeded property approximately 14,569 feet of the stream is on private land with approximately 1,931 feet of the stream on state land in Sections 13 & 24, T12S – R 10W near Kidd, MT. Work will include bank stabilization, restoring meanders, removing silted flats, placing gravel for spawning and rearing beds. The stream restoration work on state land was authorized through a Letter of Authorization # 1479 and has been concluded. All permits for the stream restoration work were secured including permits from the Beaverhead Conservation District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality.

This Environmental Assessment is to assess the impacts of using an existing road on state land in Sections 13 & 24, T12S R10W to import and export materials (gravel and silt) to and from the stream restoration project on private land and more easily access the private reaches of the stream. The proponent has applied for a Land Use License for the use of the road to complete the stream restoration project. Use of the road by the proponent has already occurred prior to receiving the application.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Matt Jaeger, DFWP Fisheries Biologist
Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archeologist
Wallace Condon
NRIS

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

Beaverhead Conservation District, 310 permit
Army Corps of Engineers
Montana DEQ

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

- A. **Action Alternative**, Allow access and use of the existing road on state land to import and export materials to and from the stream restoration project.
- B. **No Action Alternative**, Deny access and use of the existing road on state land to import and export materials to and from the stream restoration project.

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.

USDA – NRCS soil surveys are not available for these tracts. Most of the tracts are on a bench between the I-15 Freeway and a no name spring creek that flows into the Red Rock River near Kidd, MT. Observation of materials near the state land that had been excavated for the construction of a nearby pond on private land included gravel, gravely loams, silty loams with layers of clay.

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.

Project is designed to improve water quality for fish and wildlife benefit, especially fish spawning and rearing habitat. No long-term degradation or cumulative effects to water quality are expected if this project is allowed to occur. The project should improve water quality issues and fisheries habitat to the no name stream and the Red Rock River over the long term.

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.

This project is not anticipated to have any long term or cumulative impacts to air quality or produce any significant air quality problems.

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.

Vegetative cover on these tracts is mostly native rangeland. Species composition is dominated by grasses which include Blue Bunch Wheat grass, winter fat, thread leaf sedge, needle and thread grass. Sub-dominate species include various forbs and shrubs. The vegetation near the no name creek is abandoned irrigated hay ground (Sec 13 lease # 9467, and Sec 24 lease # 9468). Introduced species near the creek include smooth brome and Kentucky blue grass, and the natives include tall marsh grass, muhley, beaked sedge and other sedges.

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. These tracts however along with the adjacent private lands provide habitat for a variety of animal species (deer, elk, waterfowl, songbirds, muskrats, and ground squirrels), predators (coyote, fox & badger), other non-game mammals, raptors, and various songbirds. The proposal does not include any land use change which would yield changes to the wildlife habitat. The area supports many waterfowl, and this proposal should not affect this habitat. The proposed action will not impact wildlife forage, cover, or traveling corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover so no long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated if the action alternative is chosen. The

proposal will cause some short-term disruption and displace wildlife use for the duration of the proposal, June through November.

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.

No specific on-site observations of Threatened or Endangered species have been recorded and no important habitat for endangered species has been identified on the state lands. A search of Natural Heritage data through NRIS was conducted and Greater Sage Grouse and Gray wolf, Bald Eagle, Black Tailed Jack Rabbit and Ferruginous Hawk may use these tracts of ground however the restoration work will be of short duration.

The proposal does not include any activities which would alter any long-term habitat, so no long term or cumulative effects are expected if the action alternative is chosen.

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 results revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE.

Because the project is restricted to an existing road with no improvement work proposed, there will be *No Effect to Antiquities*. No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed authorization. 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.

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.

These tracts are in a foothill agricultural area and do not provide any unique scenic qualities that's not provided by adjacent private land. The proposal does not include any long term on-the-ground activities, so there would be no change to the aesthetics in either alternative. The proposal is next to the I-15 interstate highway near Kidd, MT. and can be seen from the interstate.

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.

The action alternative may enhance fish spawning and rearing habitat in the no name creek and should help decrease the amount of sediment that enters Red Rock River. The road will be grass seeded upon completion of the project

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.

No known other environmental documents are currently being considered on these tracts 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.

There aren't any human health or safety issues identified by implementing this project.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

As proposed the project will not alter or change the commercial and agricultural production on the state tracts.

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 proposal will not alter the quantity and distribution of employment in and around Dillon and Lima, MT.

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 proposal will have no effects on the local or state tax base and revenues generated.

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.

No long-term or cumulative effects for the demand of government services are anticipated from this proposal.

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 local government zoning or management plans in place in this area of Beaverhead County that I am currently aware of.

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.

The only access to these state parcels of land is from the I-15 interstate; otherwise, they are land locked by private property. The proposal will not affect any wilderness or recreational activities or values.

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.

No known effects will occur to density and distribution of population or housing if allowed to be implemented under the action alternative.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There will be no effects to social structures and mores.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

There will be no long-term effects to the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the surrounding area under the 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.

The proposal will generate a \$300 land use license fee for the trust and enhance the Kidd stream that runs through the state land.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Timothy Egan	Date: 7/20/2022
	Title: Dillon Unit Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:


Action Alternative, Allow access and use of the existing road on state land to import and export materials to and from the stream restoration project.

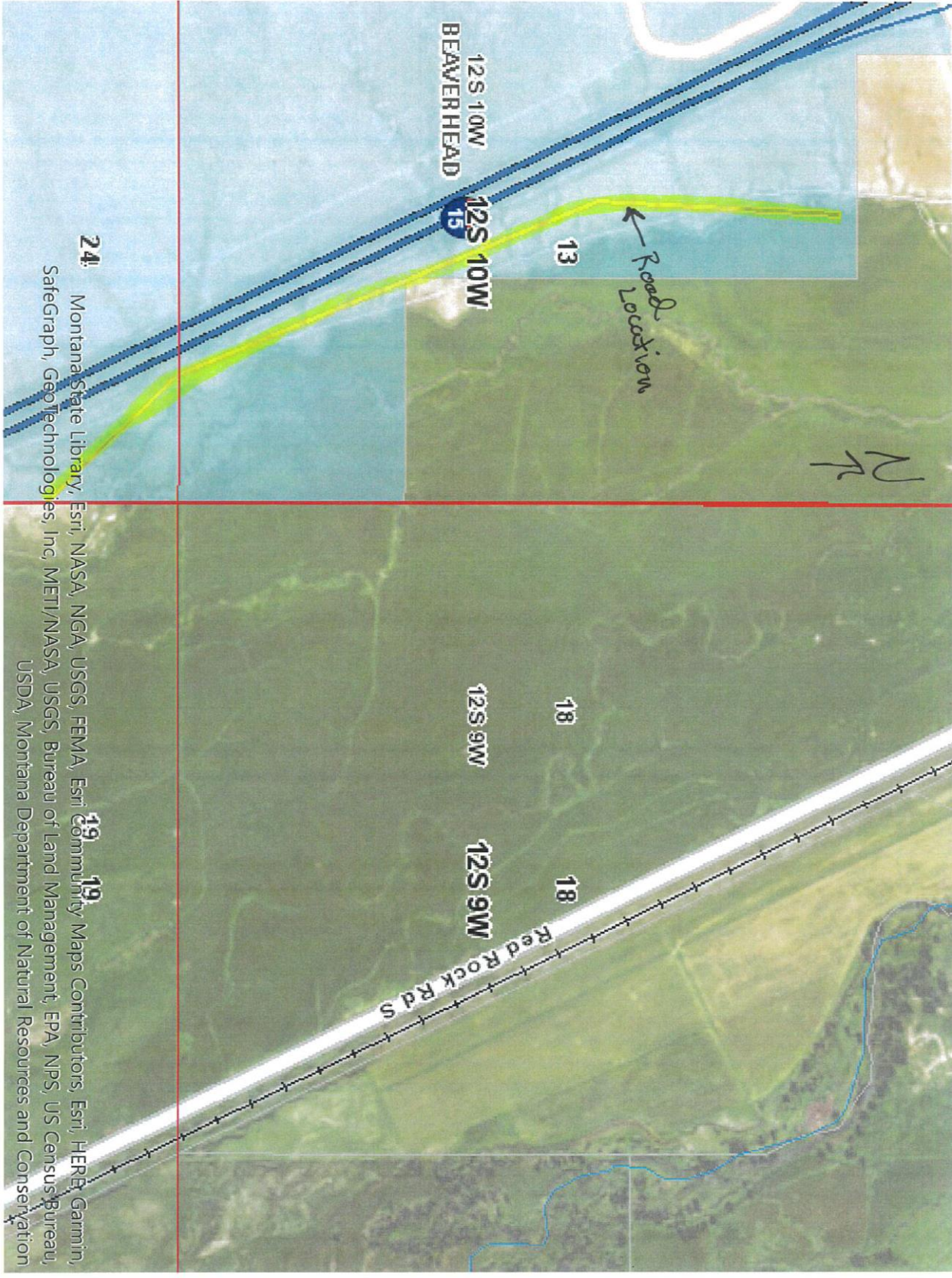
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Significant impacts are not anticipated as a result of the proposed activity on state land. The portion of the project on state land is a small percentage of the overall project and the hauling of gravel over an existing road will not substantially impact the surrounding land. The proposal is designed to improve fisheries habitat and will be conducted under conditions and requirements after review by stream regulatory agencies (Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and Conservation District. Permits were acquired prior to issuance of the license and conditions of the permits must be adhered to.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Andy Burgoyne
	Title: Trust Lands Manager, Central Land Office
Signature: 	Date: July 21, 2022



24.

Montana State Library, Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Esri Community Maps Contributors, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

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