## I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Northern Telephone Cooperative, Inc. (NTC) proposes to install a buried fiber optic cable located on state land, referred to herein as the “Project”. The proposed easement route is located parallel to Railroad Avenue South in the W2W2 of Section 29, T36N, R2W, and E2E2 of Section 30, T36N, R2W, and parallel to Swayze Road West in the S2S2 of Section 36, T36N, R3W. The Project will result in approximately 4.88 acres of soil disturbance. See Exhibit A, Easement Survey Maps, and Exhibit B, Project Location Map. Installation of the fiber optic cable will provide access to high-speed internet for rural Montana residents.

## 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 Project is located on state-owned land and NTC is the proponent. Agencies involved in the permitting process include the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, (DNRC) – Trust Land Management Division – Real Estate Bureau.

   Surface Lessees:
   - W2W2, Section 29, T36N, R2W – Lease No. 10707 – Lisa Kearns
   - E2E2, Section 30, T36N, R2W – Lease No. 5844 – Simmes Ranch Inc.
   - S2S2, Section 36, T36N, R3W – Lease No. 7712 – Simmes Ranch Inc.

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

   DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this Project. The Project will be permitted under a Right – Of – Way Easement for Utilities Over, Under, Along, or Across State-Owned Lands.

3. **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

   Alternative A (No Action) – Deny NTC the requested easement and permission to install the buried fiber optic cable.

   Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant NTC the requested easement and permission to install the buried fiber optic cable.
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.

Soil Properties:
There are five types of soils found within the Project footprint.

**W2W of Section 29 & E2E of Section 30, T36N, R2W:**

(30B) Marvan silty clay, 0 to 4 percent slopes
These soils consist of very deep (more than 80 inches), well-drained soils. These soils are found within lake plains. Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches is about 6.9 inches; the mean annual precipitation for the region is 10 to 14 inches (Soil Survey of Toole County, Montana Part I, 2002).

(48B) Vanda silty clay, 0 to 4 percent slopes
These soils consist of very deep (more than 80 inches), well-drained soils. These soils are found within alluvial fans. Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches is about 6.0 inches; mean annual precipitation for the region is 10 to 14 inches (Soil Survey of Toole County, Montana Part I, 2002).

**S2S2 of Section 36, T36N, R3W:**

(85B) Benz clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes
These soils consist of very deep (more than 80 inches), well-drained soils. These soils are found within alluvial fans. Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches is about 6.8 inches; the mean annual precipitation for the region is 10 to 14 inches (Soil Survey of Toole County, Montana Part I, 2002).

(421D) Hillon-Joplin loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes
These soils consist of very deep (more than 80 inches), well-drained soils. These soils are found within moraines. Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches is about 8.8 inches (Hillon) and about 9.8 inches (Joplin); the mean annual precipitation for the region is 10 to 14 inches (Soil Survey of Toole County, Montana Part I, 2002).

(561B) Scobey-Kevin clay loams, 0 to 4 percent slopes
These soils consist of very deep (more than 80 inches), well-drained soils. These soils are found within alluvial flats. Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches is about 9.8 inches (Scobey) and about 10.0 inches (Kevin); the mean annual precipitation for the region is 10 to 14 inches (Soil Survey of Toole County, Montana Part I, 2002).

Soil Stability:

**K – Factor:**
Soils identified within the Project footprint have a Soil Erodibility (K) Factor of 0.24 to 0.32, see Table 1 below for additional information (Soil Survey of Toole County, Montana Part I, 2002). The K Factor range is 0.02 to 0.69 (0.69 being the most susceptible to sheet and rill erosion by water.) The K Factor is low to moderate for the Project site which indicates a low to moderate susceptibility to erosion by water.
Table 1 – K – Factor Rating by Soil Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30B Marvan silty clay, 0 to 4 percent slopes</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48B Vanda silty clay, 0 to 4 percent slopes</td>
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<tr>
<td>85B Benz clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>421D Hillon-Joplin loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>561B Scobey-Kevin clay loams, 0 to 4 percent slopes</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wind Erodibility Group:
Soils identified within the Project footprint have a Wind Erodibility Group (WEG) of 4 – 6, see Table 2 below for additional information (Soil Survey of Toole County, Montana Part I, 2002). The WEG range is 1 – 8 (1 being the most susceptible to wind erosion and 8 being the least susceptible). The WEG is low to moderate for the Project site which indicates a low to moderate susceptibility to erosion by wind.

Table 2 – WEG Rating by Soil Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48B Vanda silty clay, 0 to 4 percent slopes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85B Benz clay loam, 0 to 4 percent slopes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>421D Hillon-Joplin loams, 4 to 15 percent slopes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>561B Scobey-Kevin clay loams, 0 to 4 percent slopes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suitabilities and Limitations for Use:

Shallow Excavations:
Soils identified within the Project footprint were identified as “somewhat limited” (Soil Survey of Toole County, Montana Part I, 2002). “Somewhat limited” indicates the soils have features that are moderately favorable for shallow excavations. NRCS indicates that “the limitations can be overcome or minimized by special planning, design, or installation” (2002).

BMPs:
Buried placement of the fiber optic cable will be through the use of trenching and/or horizontal directional drilling of a vacant duct(s). The process involves the placement of the duct to a depth of 36” to 42” through a temporary surface opening of approximately 6” in width. This opening is closed and repaired immediately behind the plow following insertion of the duct. All construction will be completed per Rural Utilities Service (RUS) procedures and utilizing RUS plans and specifications. As part of the stipulations under the granted easement, the DNRC will require NTC to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office.

Determination:
Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Effect. The Project has the potential to impact soils, however, given its low to moderate susceptibility to erosion, suitability for shallow excavations, and the implementation of the BMP’s described above, the Project is not expected to have negative cumulative effects on soil.

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.

Surface or Groundwater Resources:
Dutch Coulee is located approximately 0.80 mile west of Section 29 & Section 30 of T36N, R2W and flows from
the north to the southeast. There are two reservoirs fed by the Unnamed Tributary of Gopher Coulee located
north of the Project footprint in Section 36 of T36N, R2W permitted under water rights 41P 112445 00 and 41P
112446 00 For additional information see http://wrqs.dnrc.mt.gov/default.aspx.

**BMPs:**
Buried placement of the fiber optic cable will be through the use of trenching and/or horizontal directional drilling
of a vacant duct(s). The process involves the placement of the duct to a depth of 36” to 42” through a temporary
surface opening of approximately 6” in width. This opening is closed and repaired immediately behind the plow
following insertion of the duct. All construction will be completed per Rural Utilities Service (RUS) procedures and
utilizing RUS plans and specifications. As part of the stipulations under the granted easement, the DNRC will
require NTC to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office.

**Determination:**
Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Effect. It is unlikely that the Project will have an impact on Dutch Coulee or the
Unnamed Tributary of Gopher Coulee through stormwater runoff of disturbed soils given the distances and
change in elevation, coupled with the BMPs. Therefore, the Project is not expected to have negative cumulative
effects on water quality.

**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.*

**Air Quality:**
There are no Nonattainment areas located on or near the Project, per the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Nonattainment area maps (NEPAassist, 2022). The proposed activities will not result in any new air emissions.

**Determination:**
No Effect. It is not anticipated that the Project would result in negative cumulative effects on air quality.

**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 Community:**
Vegetation around the Project site consists of native rangeland and contains Western Wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum
smithii*), Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), Sandberg Bluegrass (*Poa secunda sandbergii*), Prairie Junegrass
(*Koeleria macrantha*), Threadleaf Sedge (*Carex filifolia*), Needle and Thread (*Hesperostipa comata*), Inland
Saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), Fringed Sagewort (*Artemisia frigida*), Silver Sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*), Nuttall
Saltbrush (*Atriplex nuttallii*), Greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*), and various forbs. Noxious weeds were not
identified within the Project footprint. The Natural Heritage Program database did not indicate any plant species of
concern within T36N, R2W or T36N, R3W.

**BMPs:**
As part of the stipulations under the granted easement, the DNRC will require NTC to replace topsoil, re-seed
with a native seed mix, and monitor for noxious weeds. The recommended re-seeding mix shall consist of 35%
Western Wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*), 35% Slender Wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*), 15% Bluebunch
Wheatgrass (*Pseudoroegeneria spicata*), 10% Green Needlegrass (*Nassella viridula*), and 5% Lewis Blue Flax
(*Linum lewisii*) or Purple Prairie Clover (*Dalea purpurea*). The mix shall be Certified Noxious Weed Seed Free,
drilled at a seeding rate of 8 lbs/acre Pure Live Seed (PLS), if broadcast seeding, poundage shall be doubled and
harrowed, and seeding shall occur either in the fall (after September 15) or early spring (before May 1).

**Determination:**
Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Effect. Project activities will result in a temporary disturbance of the vegetative
community within the Project footprint. The BMPs proposed above will mitigate any long-term adverse effects and
therefore negative cumulative effects on vegetative resources are not expected.
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.

Habitat:
The Project site is not considered Critical Habitat per the EPA. The surrounding area provides habitat for a variety of big game species, predators, upland game birds, other non-game mammals, birds of prey, and various songbirds.

BMPs:
All construction will be completed per RUS procedures and utilizing RUS plans and specifications. As part of the stipulations under the granted easement, the DNRC will require NTC to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office.

Determination:
Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Effect. The Project has the potential to impact wildlife temporarily through the operation of heavy equipment during actual construction days. However, the Project will not impact wildlife forage, cover, or travel corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover. Wildlife usage is expected to return to “normal” (pre-action usage) following the installation of the buried fiber optic cable. Overall, the Project is not expected to have negative cumulative effects on wildlife or habitat.

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 of Concern/Threatened/Endangered:
Federally listed mammal species that occur in Montana include Black-footed Ferret (Mustela nigripes), Canada Lynx (Lynx canadensis), Grizzly Bear (Ursus arctos horribilis), and Northern Long-eared Bat (Myotis septentrionalis). Federally listed avian species that occur in Montana include Piping Plover (Charadrius melodus), Red Knot (Calidris canutus rufa), Whooping Crane (Grus americana), and Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Coccyzus americanus). For additional information and additional species (fish, plants, & insects) see https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/species-listings-by-state?stateAbbrev=MT&stateName=Montana&statusCategory=Listed

The National Heritage Program database identifies the Hoary Bat (Lasiurus cinereus), Little Brown Myotis (Myotis lucifugus), Golden Eagle (Aquila chrysaetos), Burrowing Owl (Athene cunicularia), Ferruginous Hawk (Buteo regalis), Chestnut-collared Longspur (Calcarius ornatus), Baird’s Sparrow (Centronyx bairdii), Long-billed Curlew (Numenius americanus), Thick-billed Longspur (Rhynchophanes mccownii), Brewer’s Sparrow (Spizella breweri), Sprague’s Pipit (Anthus spragueii), and Loggerhead Shrike (Lanius ludovicianus) as a species of concern within T36N, R2W and T36N, R3W.

Wetlands:
The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) identifies a Freshwater Emergent Wetland habitat with a classification code of PEM1A approximately 430 feet east of the Project footprint in Section 29 of T36N, R2W. There are also Freshwater Ponds (oil and gas catch pits) with a classification code of PUBHx approximately 200 feet north of the Project footprint in Section 36 of T36N, R3W; for a complete description of wetland classification codes, go to https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/Mapper.html.

BMPs:
All construction will be completed per RUS procedures and utilizing RUS plans and specifications. As part of the stipulations under the granted easement, the DNRC will require NRC to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office.

Determination:
Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Effect. The Project has the potential to impact wildlife temporarily through the operation of heavy equipment during actual construction days. However, the Project will not impact wildlife forage, cover, or travel corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover. Wildlife usage is expected to return to “normal” (pre-action usage) following the installation of the buried fiber optic cable. The Project also has the potential to impact wetlands through stormwater runoff of disturbed soils, however given the BMPs, the Project is not expected to have negative cumulative effects on wildlife or habitat.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

Historical and Archeological Sites:
DNRC staff inspected 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. It also entailed a pedestrian inventory of the proposed cable route. No cultural or paleontological resources are present in the APE, so project related developments are expected to have No Effect to Antiquities. If, however, 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.

Visual and Noise:
The Project is located approximately 1.50 miles south of Sunburst, Montana (population 392) and approximately 5.20 miles north of Kevin, Montana (population 130) and adjacent to Railroad Avenue South (Section 29 of T36N, R2W) and Swayze Road West (Section 36 of T36N, R3W).

BMPs:
All construction will be completed per RUS procedures and utilizing RUS plans and specifications. As part of the stipulations under the granted easement, the DNRC will require NTC to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office.

Determination:
Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Effect. The Project has the potential to have visual and noise impacts to the public who utilize Railroad Avenue South and Swayze Road West. However, given the short duration of the Project, all Project materials will be buried, and reclamation is required, it is not expected to have cumulative impacts on aesthetics.

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 on environmental resources.

No Effect. The Project does not propose the use of limited natural resources and is not expected to have cumulative impacts 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.

Surrounding land is owned by the state with a surface use of grazing under State Lease No. 10707 (Section 29 of T36N, R2W) No. 5844 (Section 30 of T36N, R2W), and No. 7712 (Section 36 of T36N, R3W). Any future development in the area will likely be restricted to utility or mineral development, with minimal impacts to the surface. Future development of projects are not expected to have negative cumulative effects.
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.

Human Health and Safety:
Personnel involved with the Project activities include NTC personnel, where health and safety risks consist of the normal day–to–day operations of managing the installation and maintenance of underground fiber optic cables.

Determination:
No Effect. Any risk to human health and safety will be restricted to NTC personnel during the normal day–to–day operations of managing the installation and maintenance of underground fiber optic cables and it is assumed NTC will abide by all Occupational Safety and Health Administration laws.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Land Use:
The current land use on which the fiber optic cable will be installed in Section 29 of T36N, R2W consists of 152 grazing acres and 8 unsuitable acres (Railroad Avenue South and the BNSF railroad). The current land use on which the fiber optic will be installed in Section 30 of T36N, R2W consists of 200 grazing acres. The current land use on which the fiber optic cable will be installed in Section 36 of T36N, R3W consists of 640 grazing acres.

Production:
The Project will benefit the Common School Trust in terms of a one-time easement fee of $2,050.40. The Project will not impede the existing production of State Leases No. 10707, 5844, and 7712.

BMPs:
All construction will be completed per RUS procedures and utilizing RUS plans and specifications. As part of the stipulations under the granted easement, the DNRC will require NTC to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office.

Determination:
Effect, Beneficial Effect. The Project is expected to increase production through a one-time incumbrance fee to the Capitol Buildings and Common Schools trusts. The Project is not expected to have negative cumulative effects on future land use activities.

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.

Determination:
No Effect. The Project would not result in any new jobs nor eliminate any, therefore negative cumulative effects to the employment market are not expected.

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.

Revenues:
See Section 15 above.

Determination:
Effect, Beneficial Effect. The Project is expected to increase production through a one-time incumbrance fee to the Capitol Buildings and Common Schools trusts. The Project is not expected to have negative cumulative effects on taxes and/or revenues.
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

Demand for Government Services:
The Project is accessed by Railroad Avenue South (Section 29 of T36N, R2W) and Swayze Road West (Section 36 of T36N, R2W. Additional government services (e.g. fire protection, police, schools, etc.) are not required for underground fiber optic cable installation and maintenance. This Project is of a small scale and being funded by NTC. There will be no excessive stress placed on the existing infrastructure of the area.

Determination:
No Effect. Future Project activities are not expected to impact traffic, increase demand for government services, or place excessive stress on the existing infrastructure of the area. Therefore, the Project is not expected to have negative 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.

Determination:
No Effect. The Project is in compliance with State and County laws. The Project will be granted under an easement issued by the DNRC. No other management plans are in effect for the area.

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.

Legal Access and Recreation Opportunities:
The Project is located on legally accessible land via Railroad Avenue South (Section 29 of T36N, R2W) and Swayze Road West (Section 36 of T36N, R3W). Recreation potential consists of hunting.

Determination:
No Effect. The Project will not result in any new permanent impacts to the surface of the land, impact access, or recreational opportunities. The Project is not expected to have negative cumulative effects on recreational and 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

Determination:
No Effect. The Project will not require additional housing and is not expected to have negative cumulative effects on population and housing.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
   Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Social Structures:
The Project is located approximately 9.00 miles southeast of the Rim Rock Hutterite Colony; approximately 12.30 miles east of the Glacier Hutterite Colony, and approximately 20 miles east of the Blackfeet Nation. No archeological sites were identified within the Project footprint.

Determination:
No Effect. The Project is consistent with the surrounding land use, therefore, negative cumulative effects on native or traditional lifestyles or communities are not expected.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

Determination:
No Effect. The Project will not result in any new activities to occur in the area and therefore it is not expected to have negative cumulative effects on the 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 Project will benefit the Capitol Buildings and Common School trusts in terms of a one-time easement fee of $2,050.40. The Project will not impede the existing production of State Leases No. 10707, 5844, and 7712.

Any future development in the area will likely be restricted to utility or mineral development, with minimal impacts to the surface. Future development of projects is not expected to have negative cumulative effects.

The Project will provide an upgrade to NTC’s current facilities and services to the Sunburst Exchange serving area in and around Sunburst, Montana. These improvements will offer state – of – the – art telecommunications toll and distribution facilities, as well as future growth capabilities, which will benefit the rural residents of northwestern Toole County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EA Checklist Prepared By:</th>
<th>Name: Michaela Hanson</th>
<th>Date: 7/20/2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title: Land Use Specialist, Conrad Unit, Central Land Office</td>
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V. FINDINGS

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – NTC the requested easement and permission to install the buried fiber optic cable.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:
No significant impacts are expected. A temporary disturbance will occur as a result of Project activities, but it has been determined the effects will not be cumulative or significantly adverse. Granting of the easement for installation of the underground fiber optic cable will benefit rural residents in northwestern Toole County.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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EA Checklist Approved By:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Erik Eneboe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Conrad Unit Manager, CLO, DNRC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signature: [Signature]

Date: July 25, 2022
Exhibit A
Easement Survey Maps
DESCRIPTION

A RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR AN UNDERGROUND TELECOMMUNICATION CABLE EXTENDING TWENTY (20.0) FEET IN WIDTH WITH TEN (10.0) FEET ON EACH SIDE OF A CENTERLINE ALL WITHIN THE S/1/4 NW/1/4 AND THE W/1/2 SW/1/2 OF SECTION 29, TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST OF THE PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 29, TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST, THEN S/1/4 E/2 AT A DISTANCE OF 2537.23 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE AND WEST BOUNDARY OF THE S/1/4 NW/1/4 OF S/AID SECTION 29, TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST; THEN S/1/4 E/2 AT A DISTANCE OF 1561.11 FEET THENCE S/1/2 E/2 AT A DISTANCE OF 145.86 FEET; THEN S/1/4 S/1/2 E/2 AT A DISTANCE OF 174.76 FEET; THEN S/1/2 S/1/2 E/2 AT A DISTANCE OF 150.91 FEET; THEN S/1/2 S/1/2 E/2 AT A DISTANCE OF 991.92 FEET TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 29, TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST.

CONTAINED WITHIN THE ABOVE DESCRIBED NEW CONSTRUCTION RIGHT-OF-WAY IS 0.938 ACRES MORE OR LESS.

EXHIBIT of RIGHT-OF-WAY on STATE LAND
Sec. 29, T 36 N, R 2 W, P.M.M.
TOOLE CO.

NORTHERN TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, INC.
SUNBURST, MONTANA
DESCRIPTION

A RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR AN UNDERGROUND TELECOMMUNICATION CABLE EXTENDING TWENTY (20) FEET IN WIDTH WITH TEN (10.0) FEET ON EACH SIDE OF A CENTERLINE ALONG THE D/E 1/4 NE/4 1/2 OF SECTION 30, TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST OF THE PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:


CONTAINED WITHIN THE ABOVE DESCRIBED NEW CONSTRUCTION RIGHT-OF-WAY IS 1.498 ACRES MORE OR LESS.

EXHIBIT of RIGHT-OF-WAY on STATE LAND
Sec. 30, T 36 N, R 2 W, P.M.M.
TOOLE CO.

NORTHERN TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE, INC.
SUNBURST, MONTANA
A RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR AN UNDERGROUND TELECOMMUNICATION CABLE EXTENDING TWENTY (20.0) FEET IN WIDTH WITH TEN (10.0) FEET ON EACH SIDE OF A CENTERLINE ALL WITHIN THE 31/2 31/2 OF SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH, RANGE 3 WEST OF THE PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMEING AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 20, TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST, THENCE SOUTH 19°27'00" WEST A DISTANCE OF 16687.00 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE AND EAST BOUNDARY OF THE SE1/4 SE1/4 OF S4; SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH, RANGE 3 WEST, THENCE ON ALONG THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE AND NORTH LINE OF NORTH 88°16'27" WEST A DISTANCE OF 5280.03 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE AND WEST BOUNDARY OF THE SW1/4 SW1/4 OF S4; SECTION 36, THENCE NORTH 34°54'30" EAST A DISTANCE OF 18878.27 FEET TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SECTION 20, TOWNSHIP 36 NORTH, RANGE 2 WEST.

CONTAINED WITHIN THE ABOVE DESCRIBED NEW CONSTRUCTION RIGHT-OF-WAY IS 2.424 ACRES MORE OR LESS.
Exhibit B
Project Location Map
Exhibit A
Project Location Map