

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Road Easement Application
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	Summer of 2022
<b>Proponent:</b>	Cory Olson
<b>Location:</b>	T19N R2E Section 31 (Lot 3, NW4)
<b>County:</b>	Cascade

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Cory Olson has submitted an easement application to obtain legal access to private property. The portion of the easement located on Trust Land would include using this road for agricultural purposes. The road is partially graded and developed currently. The purpose of the easement would be to allow the proponent to drive across state land on the existing road to access the private property to the north. Please see attached maps.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

*Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.*

Jake Doggett, Department of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks Wildlife Biologist  
Patrick Rennie, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Archaeologist  
Montana Natural Heritage Program

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

No other governmental agencies with jurisdiction or additional permit requirements were identified during the scoping for this proposed project. The easement as proposed would involve only Montana Trust Land allocated to the Common Schools.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Alternative A:** No action alternative. The proposed project would not be approved.

**Alternative B:** Action Alternative: Allow the proponent to apply for the proposed easement to utilize the existing road for agricultural purposes.

### 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 following information was derived from Web Soil Survey for this section. The proposed easement would be located on two soil types: Tally fine sandy loam and Torex loamy sand. Both soil types are listed as "slight" for erosion risk on roads or trails. "Slight- indicates that little or no erosion is likely".

**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.*

This project would not have cumulative impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution. The Missouri River is the nearest body of water, which is approximately ¼ mile away from the location of the proposed easement on State Trust Land. There is one unnamed tributary/wetland area contributing to Missouri River, located approximately 1600 feet west of the proposed easement area, but no impacts 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.*

There may be some short-term dust from the machinery and vehicles traveling the proposed easement area, but no long term effects 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.*

Cover, quantity, and quality of vegetative communities should not be significantly affected by this easement due to the existence of the current roadway. The proposed easement would take place on the previously constructed roadway which is approximately 2,615 feet. Montana Natural Heritage Map view classifies the sites where the road is located as Human Land Use designated in Agriculture and Cultivated Crops. DNRC Land Use Specialist completed a site visit to this section on 5/13/22 and found the following species at the proposed easement location: Pubescent wheatgrass, alfalfa, and other introduced grass species.

**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.*

No cumulative impacts to terrestrial, avian, or aquatic life are anticipated from this proposed easement. FWP Biologist, Jake Doggett, stated the roadway itself would not cause any direct negative impacts to fish or wildlife.

**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.*

The Montana Natural Resource Information Service (NRIS) was queried for information regarding sensitive or endangered species located near the proposed easement area. There are no documented point observations of any species of concern within the easement area. The Great Blue Heron, Grizzly Bear, and Spiney Softshell Turtle have been observed in this general area and their habitat polygons overlap into Section 31.

**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 topographic setting and geology suggest a low to moderate likelihood of the presence of cultural or paleontologic resources, because the APE has been fully cultivated, and because road modification work is not proposed, assignment of an easement will have *No Effect to Antiquities*. No additional archaeological investigative work will be required or conducted in response to this proposed easement application.

A field inspection by DNRC Land Use Specialist Dylan Craft was completed on May 13th, 2022. No cultural resources were found near the proposed easement area.

**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.*

The proposed easement is in a rural part of Cascade County, approximately .25 miles east of Missouri River and .5 miles north of River Rd. The proposed easement is located on an existing road which is already being utilized for agricultural purposes. No changes to aesthetics would occur.

**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 demands for additional environmental resources are required for this project. No cumulative effects to environmental resources should result from this proposed easement.

**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 other studies, plans, or projects were identified during the scoping for this proposed easement.

**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.*

No health or safety risks are posed by the proposed easement.

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

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

If approved, this proposed easement is designed to allow access to agricultural property north of the state land.

**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 proposed easement will not create or eliminate permanent jobs in the area.

**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.*

No significant increase in tax revenues are expected as a result of this proposed easement.

**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 increased demand for government services are expected as a result of this proposed easement.

**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.*

No locally adopted environmental plans will be affected by this proposed easement.

**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.*

This proposed easement will not negatively alter recreational activities in the area.

**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 change in population will result from this proposed easement.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

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

No change in social structures and mores are expected as a result of this proposed easement.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

The proposed easement has no anticipated affects to 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 proposed easement on this tract of State Trust Lands would generates approximately \$8,250 in revenue for the Common Schools trust. This proposed easement would enable the proponent to utilize the private property to the north of the state lands.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Dylan Craft	<b>Date:</b> 6/14/2022
	<b>Title:</b> Land Use Specialist	

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**


**Alternative B:** Action Alternative: Allow the proponent to apply for the proposed easement to utilize the existing road for agricultural purposes.

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

Allow the proponent to apply for the proposed easement. No long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated from the implementation of this proposal.

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

EI       More Detailed EA       No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Heidi Crum	
	<b>Title:</b> Helena Unit Manager	
<b>Signature:</b>		<b>Date:</b> 6/16/22

Township 19 North, Range 2 East, Section 31

The location of the proposed easement is located on the eastern boundary (state lands shaded in blue) indicated by the grey dashed line.



Photo of existing roadway was taken at the northern fence line facing south.

