

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Easement application for the installation of a new 18" drinking water pipeline.
Proposed Implementation Date:	Spring/Summer 2015
Proponent:	North Central Montana Regional Water Authority, (NCRMWA) C/O Kadrmas, Lee and Jackson, 2969 Airport Road, Suite 1B, Helena, MT 59624-1567
Location:	All, Section 36, T33N, R5W
County:	Glacier
Trust:	Common Schools (CS)

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

NCRMWA has requested to install a new 18" buried drinking water pipeline across one tract of state land. The proposed easement route is located along the South edge of the old Highway #2 ROW and along the West edge of the East Marias Road of Section 36, T33N, R5W. The new 18" buried drinking water pipeline will be part of the Shelby to Cut Bank portion of the Rocky Boy's/North Central Montana Regional Water Project. The table below lists the affected tract and acres.

Township	Range	Section	Drinking Water Pipeline Location	Acres Affected	Trust
33N	5W	36	NW4NW4, SW4NW4, SE4NW4, NE4SW4, NW4SE4, NE4SE4,	7.55	CS

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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- 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:**
Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.
 NCRMWA, C/O Kadrmas, Lee and Jackson -Proponent
 DNRC-Surface Owner
 Starry Range Inc.-Surface Lessee, Lease #2806
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- 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.
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- 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**
 Alternative A (No Action) – Deny NCRMWA, C/O Kadrmas, Lee and Jackson permission to install the new 18" buried drinking water pipeline.

 Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant NCRMWA, C/O Kadrmas, Lee and Jackson Inc permission to install the new 18" buried drinking water pipeline.

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.

Soils at the proposed project sites are silty in texture. The topography is gently rolling and the new 18" buried drinking water pipeline will be installed just off of the old Highway #2 ROW and existing county road in an agricultural and grazing land. The soils and slopes are generally suitable for the installation of the new 18" buried drinking water pipeline. Equipment will cause localized areas of soil compaction and will disturb the soil where the new 18" buried drinking water pipeline is installed. There is one steep coulee that will be crossed by the proposed water pipeline. Any erosion concerns will be mitigated by the placement of straw wattles to control any surface erosion. Reclamation requirements are to compact and level the disturbed soil in the proposed project area. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected as only minimal surface disturbance will be caused by the construction of the new 18" buried drinking water pipeline.

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.

There are two documented and/or recorded water rights associated with the tract. These water rights will not be impacted by the new 18" buried drink water pipeline. Other water quality and/or quantity issues will not be impacted by the proposed action.

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.

The proposed action will not impact the 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.

Vegetation will be minimally impacted as 6,579.00' or 1.25 miles of new 18" buried drinking water pipeline will be installed by the utilization of an excavator. The vegetation consists of agricultural land and native rangeland with a few areas of tame grass species. Noxious and annual weeds within the proposed construction areas are a concern, but this concern will be mitigated as the applicants are responsible for controlling weeds within the construction areas. Cumulative impacts on the vegetative resources are not expected as the proposed construction areas will be reclaimed and reseeded. The reseeding mixture will consist of a grass seed mixture of 35% Western Wheatgrass, 35% Slender Wheatgrass, 15% Bluebunch Wheatgrass, 10% Green Needlegrass, and 5% Lewis Blue Flax. If drilled the rate will be 8#/acre, but if broadcast seeded the rate will be 16#/acre.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted and there were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

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. However, this tract provides habitat for a variety of big game species (mule deer, whitetail deer, and pronghorn antelope), predators (coyote, fox, and badger), upland game birds (sharp tail grouse, Hungarian partridge), 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 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. Wildlife usage is expected to return to "normal" (pre-action usage) following the installation of the new overhead power distribution line. The proposed action will not have long-term negative effects on existing wildlife species and/or wildlife 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.

There are no threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern associated with the proposed project area. At this time, no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources have been identified within the proposed project area.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for T33N, R5W. There were four species of concern and zero potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey: Birds-Burrowing Owl, Ferruginous Hawk, Loggerhead Shrike, and Long-billed Curlew. This particular tract of agricultural land and native rangeland does not contain many, if any of these species. If any are present, they will be dispersed into the surrounding permanent cover and return to the project area once it is completed.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class 3 cultural resource inventory of the proposed project area was performed by Kadrmaz, Lee and Jackson. Two potential sites were identified on this specific tract of state owned land, one cairn which will be avoided and one historic trash dump which is listed as not eligible for historic significance. Also, a portion of the tract is currently being farmed, so no historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources would be present.

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.

Installation of new 18" buried drinking water pipeline will not affect the aesthetics of the land in any way as it will not be visible. It will lead to no erosion of the soil resources on the tract as the pipeline is located below the soil surface.

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 demand on environmental resources such as land, water, air, or energy will not be affected by the proposed action. The proposed action will not consume resources that are limited in the area. There are no other projects in the area that will affect the proposed 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.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tract listed on this EA.

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.

The proposed project will not change human safety in the area.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

The results of this project will add to the industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities or production in the area as it will provide a safe, consistent source of potable water.

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 action is of a large scale and will create various jobs during the construction process. Cumulative impacts are likely to occur as long-term employment will be created for jobs located in the maintenance and repair of the pipeline.

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 proposed action will add to the tax revenue.

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

Substantial traffic will be added to the existing roads during the construction process. This problem will be mitigated because when the construction is finished, the traffic will return to normal levels. There will be no excessive stress placed on the existing infrastructure of the area after the construction process is completed.

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.

The proposed action is in compliance with State and County laws. 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.

The proposed project area is adjacent to the old Highway #2 ROW and the East Marias Road located in agricultural and grazing land. The tract is legally accessible and the proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational and wilderness activities on this state tract.

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 proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

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 impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

The proposed action will not impact the cultural uniqueness or diversity 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 benefit the school trust in terms of the \$50.00 fee generated from the easement application. Under the DNRC Valuation Study Method the easement on the Common Schools trust land will affect 1.53 acres of grazing land X \$250.00 per acre equals \$382.50 and 6.02 acres of agricultural land X \$650.00 per acre equals \$3,913.00. Under the DNRC Valuation Study Method the total amount of \$4,295.50 of revenue will be generated from the future easement. The NCMRWA waiver valuation indicated a value of \$1,000.00 per acre of a total of \$7,550.00, which is higher than the DNRC Valuation. The NCMRWA waiver valuation will be used to determine fair market value of the easement. Cumulative impacts are not likely as the area is used for agriculture and grazing, and the new 18" buried drinking water pipeline will not affect the long-term viability of agriculture and grazing on this tract.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Tony Nickol	Date: April 20, 2015
	Title: Land Use Specialist, Conrad Unit, Central Land Office	

V. FINDINGS

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant NCMRWA, C/O Kadrmas, Lee and Jackson Inc permission to install the new 18" buried drinking water pipeline.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The applicant is applying for permission to cross about 1.25 miles of state land with a buried 18" water pipeline. This pipeline will provide a municipal water supply to the City of Cut Bank through the NCMRWA. Significant impacts are not anticipated as a result of the selected alternative. The pipeline will be buried in classified agricultural land adjacent and parallel to a county road. Identified archaeological features will be avoided. All disturbed areas will be reclaimed and returned to grazing and/or agricultural land after pipeline installation. The surface lessee's have been notified and actual damages have been settled.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

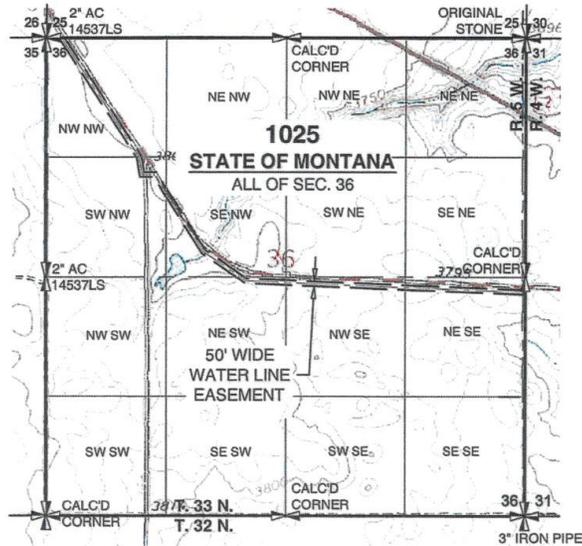
More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Erik Eneboe
	Title: Conrad Unit Manger, CLO, DNRC
Signature: 	Date: April 21, 2015

EXHIBIT B
WATERLINE EASEMENT DESCRIPTION

PARCEL NO. NCM-AUTHORITY-1025
LAND OWNER: STATE OF MONTANA



GLO RECORD			
SEC 36 1/4 SEC	REMAINDER AREA (AC)	SEC 36 1/4 SEC	EASEMENT AREA (AC)
NW NW	38.19±	NW NW	1.81±
SW NW	39.34±	SW NW	0.66±
SE NW	38.56±	SE NW	1.44±
NE SW	39.39±	NE SW	0.61±
NW SE	38.48±	NW SE	1.52±
NE SE	38.48±	NE SE	1.52±

OWNERSHIP DESCRIPTION: ALL
S. 36 TWP. 33N R. 5W
COUNTY: GLACIER STATE: MONTANA
TYPE: 50' WIDE WATERLINE EASEMENT
TOTAL L.F: 6,579 ± TOTAL AREA: 7.55 AC ±

- LEGEND**
- SECTION CORNER AS NOTED
 - 1/4 CORNER AS NOTED
 - P.O.B POINT OF BEGINNING
 - P.O.E POINT OF ENDING



Drawn By B. Lightner	Surveyed By J. Stefanik	Approved By M. Ries	Project No. 4611005	Date 10/16/2014
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