

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	FTTP upgrade at Loma, Mt.
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	August 15, 2015
<b>Proponent:</b>	Triangle Communications—2121 US HWY 2 NW, P.O. Box 1140, Havre, Mt. 59501
<b>Location:</b>	N1/2N1/2, E1/2E1/2, Sec. 16, T26N, R9E...S1/2SW1/4, SW1/4SE1/4, Sec. 8, T24N, R11E...Lot 2, SE1/4NW1/4, Sec. 7, T24N, R11E...S1/2S1/2, NW1/4SE1/4, SW1/4 NE1/4 Sec. 12, T24N, R11E...S1/2SE1/4, Sec. 11, T24N, R11E...SE1/4SE1/4, Sec. 17, T24N, R12E...W1/2SW1/4, Sec. 21, T25N, R11E...Lot1, NE1/4NW1/4, Sec. 19 T25N, R11E...W1/2W1/2, SE1/4SW1/4, Sec. 17, T25N, R11E...W1/2W1/2, Sec. 8, T25N, R11E...W1/2W1/2, Sec. 3, T25N, R11E...S1/2S1/2, Sec. 4, T25N, R11E... N1/2NW1/4, SE1/4NW1/4, Sec. 20, T24N, R11E...NW1/4NW1/4, Sec. 16, T24N, R11E. S!/2SW1/4, Sec. 9, T24N, R11E...Lot 9 & Lot 10, Sec. 12, T25N, R9E...Lot 8 & Lot 9, Sec. 18, T25N, R10E.
<b>County:</b>	Chouteau

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

To place an underground telecommunications cable through a new R/W corridor. A total of 30.263 acres will be included within the easements. Of that: 24.557 are next to or through agricultural lands, 5.40 acres of grazing lands and .306 acres are Marias & Missouri River bed lands.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Mt. DNRC-Lewistown Unit Office, Triangle Communications-Havre Office, Jason Castillon, Right-Of-Way Agent. Individual Lessees of State Lands affected.

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

None.

**3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

The alternative to provide easements for the 17 applications submitted. –Alternative A  
The No Action alternative-Alternative B.

### 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.*

Most soils are silty in nature with some shallow clays. There are no unusual geologic features present. The easement site areas are all along existing roads within many existing R/W's. The soils have been disturbed during road construction. There are no foreseeable cumulative effects anticipated from this project.

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**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 no water bodies nearby most of the project. On two tracts the Marias & Missouri Rivers are crossed and the R/W area is the river bed. Water degradation should not happen with this cable laying project if normal proper procedures are followed. The telecommunications cable will be directionally drilled under the rivers. No cumulative effects are anticipated.

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**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.*

Pollutants or particulates will not be produced.  
No cumulative effects are expected.

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**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.*

There are no rare plants or cover types present. The cable laying process will do minimal disturbance to the vegetative communities. No cumulative effects are expected.

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**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.*

There are no sensitive habitats present. The local wildlife should not be affected. There should not be any cumulative negative effects from this construction project.

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**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.*

At this time, no known unique, fragile or limited environmental resources have been identified within the proposed project area. A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program identified several species of birds on the Species of Special Concern Report: Brewer's Sparrow, Long-Billed Curlew, Greater sage-Grouse, Chestnut-collared Longspur Sparrow, McCown's Longspur Sparrow, Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Golden Eagle, Sprague's Pipet and the Grasshopper Sparrow. The Greater Short-Horned Lizard, the Black-Tailed Prairie Dog and the Merriam's Shrew were the animals listed for Chouteau County.

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**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

There are no historical cultural or paleontological resources present. A file review was conducted from surface lease appraisals. On Sec. 12, T25N, R9E there are some TeePee Rings ½ mile east of the project site. Remember this is located on pre-disturbed areas of county road R/W's.

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**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.*

Aesthetics will not be affected by this project once construction is completed.

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**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.*

This project will not require any limited resources. No cumulative effects are anticipated.

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**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 for projects in this area that I am aware of.

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<b>IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i></li><li>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i></li><li>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i></li></ul>

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**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

Human health and safety will not be negatively affected.

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

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

This project once completed will increase communications in the area, thus improving industrial, commercial and agricultural activities.

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**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.*

No new jobs will be created because of this project.

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**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.*

There will be no tax changes due to this project. No cumulative effects are expected.

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**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*

There will not be any increase in demand for services or changes to traffic patterns once the construction phase is completed.

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**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 will be no change to environmental plans or goals within the project area.

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**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.*

There are no wildernesses or recreational areas nearby. There will be no cumulative effects due to this cable laying process.

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**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.*

There will be no population changes or additional housing required due to this project.

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**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

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

There should be no disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities. No cumulative effects are anticipated.

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**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

This project will not affect any unique quality of the area.

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**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.*

None.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Barny D. Smith
	<b>Date</b> July 14, 2015
	<b>Signature</b>  /S/ Barny D. Smith

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Alternative A—To process easements for the project.

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

No significant impacts are expected with this telecommunications cable project. Minimal ground disturbance will take place. No rare cover types or vegetation will be destroyed.

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

EIS                     
 More Detailed EA                     
 No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Clive Rooney
	<b>Title:</b> Area Manager, NELO-DNRC
<b>Signature</b>	/S/ Clive Rooney
<b>Date</b>	July 14, 2015