CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Easement application for the installation of a buried utility easement.
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2015
Proponent:	Duane Vick, 871 24th Lane NE, Power, MT 59468
Location:	See below list of tracts.
County:	Teton
Trust:	Common Schools (CS)

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Duane Vick has requested to install a buried utility easement to install power and telephone lines across two tracts of state land. The proposed easement route is located through two state land tracts in Sections 22 & 23, T23N, R2E. The power line will be installed 36" deep and the telephone line will be installed 24" deep using a static plow.

Township	Range	Section	Fiber Optic Cable Location	Acres Affected	Trust
23N	2E	22	N2NE4	1.58	CS
23N	2E	23	S2NW4	0.99	CS
TOTALS				2.57	CS

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Duane Vick-Proponent
DNRC-Surface Owner
Scattered Acres Farms Inc., C/O Duane Vick-Surface Lessee, Lease #5644

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.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Deny Duane Vick the requested buried utility easement to install power and telephone lines across two tracts of state land.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant Duane Vick the requested buried utility easement to install power and telephone lines across two tracts of state land.

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 to clayey in texture. The topography is gently rolling and the utility easement will follow a new corridor. The soils and slopes are generally suitable for the installation of the buried utility easement. Equipment will cause localized areas of soil compaction and will disturb the soil were the buried utility easement is being placed. Reclamation requirements are to compact and level the plow scar created in the installation of the buried fiber optic cable. Then seed the impacted area as required with the existing grass types and seeding rates that are listed in item 7 of this assessment. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected as the use of a static plow will minimize the surface disturbance caused by the construction 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 documented and/or recorded water rights associated with the proposed project area. Other water quality and/or quantity issues will not be impacted by the proposed action.

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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.

The proposed action will not impact the air quality.

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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.

Vegetation will be minimally impacted as 1.06 miles of buried power and telephone lines will be installed by the utilization of a static plow. The vegetation consists of primarily native rangeland 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 for T23N, R2E: 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, these tracts provide habitat for a variety of big game species (mule deer, whitetail deer, pronghorn antelope), predators (coyote, fox, 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 buried utility easement. 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 T23N, R2E: There were six species of concern and zero potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey: Birds-Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing Owl, Chestnut-collared Longspur, American Bittern, and Mountain Plover. Mammals-Hoary Bat. These particular tracts of native rangeland do 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.

The proposed project areas are located on native rangeland. A cultural resources inventory was performed on May 13, 2015 and no cultural resources were found within the project area. It is therefore assumed that no cultural resources will not be impacted by this proposed project.

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 the buried utility easement 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 tracts as the line 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 not affect the industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities or production in the area.

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.

This project will not create any new jobs, as the project will be completed in house by the proponent.

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

This project is of a small scale and being funded by Duane Vick. There will be no excessive stress placed of the existing infrastructure of the area.

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.

This proposed project areas are just north of 8th Road NE which generally has low recreational value. The tracts are legally accessible and the proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational and wilderness activities on these state tracts.

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 each of the 2 easement applications for a total of $100.00. The easement on the Common Schools trust land will affect 2.57 acres X $300.00 per acre equals $771.00 of revenue generated from the future easements. Cumulative impacts are not likely as the area is used for grazing and the buried utility easement will not affect the long-term viability of grazing on these tracts.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:** Tony Nickol	**Date:** July 14, 2015
	Title: Land Use Specialist, Conrad Unit, Central Land Office	

V. FINDINGS

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant Duane Vick the requested buried utility easement to install power and telephone lines across two tracts of state land.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Granting the requested right of way easement for the buried electrical power line will not result in significant environmental impacts. The limited environmental impacts have been identified and mitigation measures addressed in the EA checklist. Any impacts will be adequately mitigated through the construction and reclamation plans. An environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action.

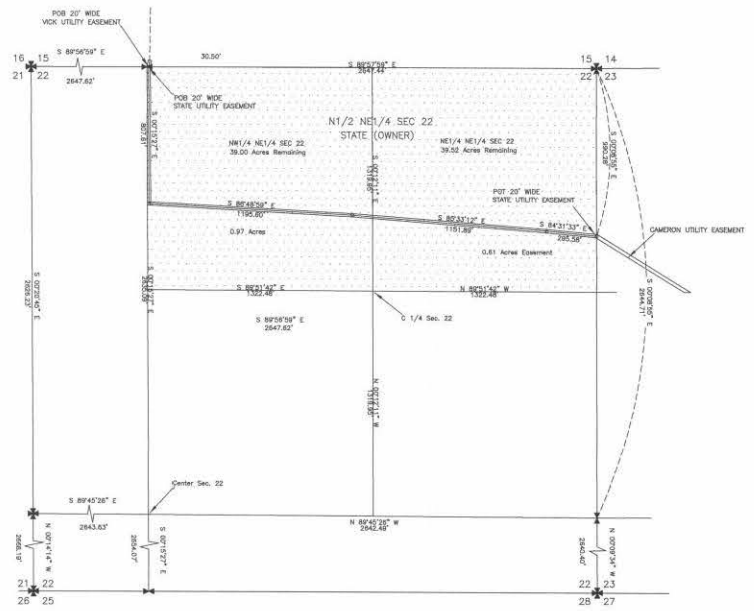
27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	X	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Erik Eneboe
	Title:	Conrad Unit Manger, CLO, DNRC
Signature: 	**Date**:	July 16, 2015

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY

LOCATED IN THE N1/2 NE1/4 OF SEC. 22, T23N–R2E
P.M.M.; TETON COUNTY
FOR: STATE OF MONTANA & DUANE J. AND DARREN J. VICK



DESCRIPTION OF 20' WIDE EASEMENT

Commencing at the North 1/4 Cor. of Sec. 22
thence S 89°56'59" E a distance of 10.00'
to the Point of Beginning
thence S 00°15'27" E a distance of 807.61';
thence S 89°48'59" E a distance of 1195.60';
thence S 80°33'13" E a distance of 1151.89';
thence S 84°31'33" E a distance of 295.58';
to the Point of Terminus

SURVEYORS CERTIFICATE

State of Montana
County of Pondera } ss

Thomas L. Russett, being duly sworn says: That he is a Registered Land Surveyor who made the survey of the right of way shown hereon; that the survey was correctly and accurately made; that the tracing or plat thereof is true and accurate and that it correctly shows the quantity of land required for the right of way in each forty-acre tract or government lot and also the amount of land remaining in each portion of such forty-acre tract or government lot.

Thomas L. Russett
Registered Land Surveyor
Montana Registration #8238 LS

MONTANA THOMAS L. RUSSETT 8238 S REGISTERED LAND SURVEYOR

BASIS OF BEARING PER GPS OBSERVATION

LEGEND

- FOUND QUARTER CORNER
- FOUND PROPERTY CORNER
- SET PROPERTY CORNER

NOTE: ALL SET CORNERS ARE 5/8"x 24" REBAR W/CAP MARKED 8238 PLS

NO SCALE

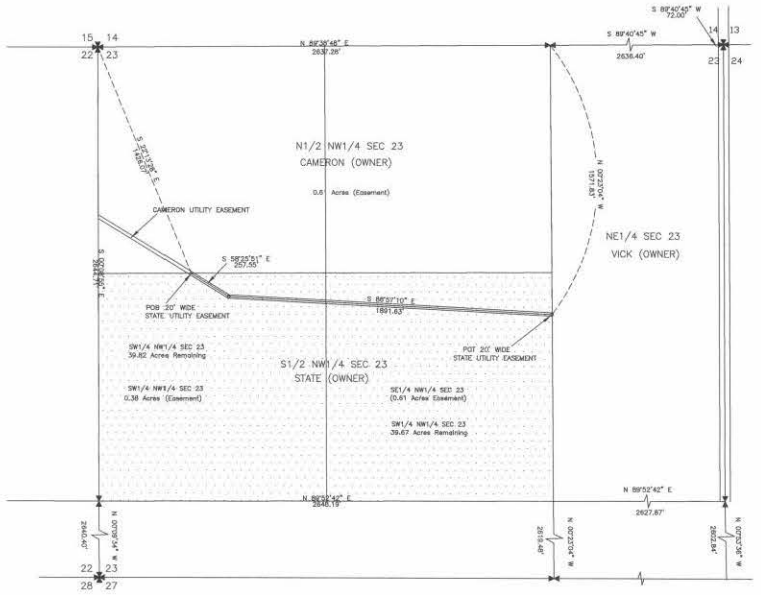
Sec. 22
T 23 N
R 2 E

TRIANGLE ENGINEERING

FIELD WORK DONE: MAY 2015
BY: T. RUSSETT
DRAWN: MAY 2015
BY: R. KNOBEL
SHEET: 1OF 1
PROJECT: MT STATE & VICK

CERTIFICATE OF SURVEY

LOCATED IN THE S1/2 NW1/4 OF SEC. 23, T23N–R2E
P.M.M.; TETON COUNTY
FOR: STATE OF MONTANA & DUANE J. AND DARREN J. VICK



DESCRIPTION OF 20' WIDE EASEMENT

Commencing at the NW Sec. Cor. of Sec. 23 thence S 25°13'28" E a distance of 1426.07' to the Point of Beginning thence S 58°25'51" E a distance of 257.55', thence S 89°51'10" E a distance of 1891.63', which is the Point of Terminus.

SURVEYORS CERTIFICATE

State of Montana } ss
County of Pondera }

Thomas L. Russett, being duly sworn says: That he is a Registered Land Surveyor who made the survey of the right of way shown hereon; that the survey was correctly and accurately made; that the tracing or plat thereof is true and accurate and that it correctly shows the quantity of land required for the right of way in each forty-acre tract or government lot and also the amount of land remaining in each portion of such forty-acre tract or government lot.

Thomas L. Russett
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MONTANA
THOMAS L.
RUSSETT
8238 S
LAND SURVEYOR

LEGEND

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- • FOUND PROPERTY CORNER
- ◦ SET PROPERTY CORNER

NOTE: ALL SET CORNERS ARE 5/8"x 24" REBAR W/CAP MARKED 8238 PLS

NO SCALE

Sec. 23
T 23 N
R 2 E

BASIS OF BEARING PER GPS OBSERVATION

TRIANGLE ENGINEERING

FIELD WORK DONE: MAY 2015
BY: T. RUSSETT
DRAWN: MAY 2015
BY: B. KNOBEL
SHEET: 1OF 1
PROJECT: MT STATE & VICK