

# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Underground Power Line to New Cell Tower

Proposed Implementation Date: August 2015

Proponent: Big Flat Electric Cooperative, Inc., 333 South 7<sup>th</sup> Street East, Malta, MT 59538

Type and Purpose of Action: Big Flat Electric Cooperative, Inc. has submitted a Right of Way Easement Application for the purpose of obtaining a ROW easement for an underground power line. The proposed power line would tie into an already existing power line that is in the process of being converted from being authorized as an LUL to a ROW. The purpose of the new line is to service a cell tower that is planned to be constructed by Triangle Telecommunications on privately owned land. Big Flat Electric has submitted the \$50.00 application fee and would be required to compensate the School Trust for the 0.922 acre ROW easement if approved.

Location: Lot 1 and NE4NW4 of Sec. 19 of Twp. 33N, Rge. 31E.

County: Phillips

## I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

<p>1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.</p>	<p>The applicant contracted a licensed surveyor to assist with the completion of the ROW application.</p> <p>The Glasgow Unit Office of the DNRC has reviewed the ROW application and will be forwarding the application to the Helena Office for final review. The Helena Office will then decide whether or not to take the application to the Land Board for approval/denial.</p>
<p>2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Grant the Right of Way Easement to Big Flat Electric Cooperative, Inc.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Deny the Right of Way Easement to Big Flat Electric Cooperative, Inc.</p>

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS  N = Not Present or No Impact will occur. Y = Impacts may occur (explain below)
<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactable or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>Action: Soils would be temporarily disturbed during installation of the power line. No lasting impacts to the geology or soils are anticipated.</p> <p>No Action: No impacts to the geology or soil characteristics would occur.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>Action: No impacts to the water quality, quantity, and/or distribution of surface and ground water are anticipated.</p> <p>No Action: No impacts to the water quality, quantity, and/or distribution would occur.</p>

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	Action: No impacts to air quality are anticipated. No Action: No impacts to air quality would occur.
7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	Action: No impacts to the vegetation cover, quantity, and/or quality are anticipated. No Action: No impacts to the vegetation cover, quantity, and/or quality would occur.
8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	Action: No impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and habitats are anticipated. No Action: No impacts to terrestrial, avian, and/or aquatic life and habitats would occur.
9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?	Action: No impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources are anticipated. No Action: No impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources would occur.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	Glasgow Unit Office personnel is going to inspect the planned route for the proposed for historical and/or archeological sites the week of July 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2015. If sites are found and may be impacted by installation of the line. If sites are found, a new route would be required to ensure the historical and/or archeological sites remain intact.  Action: Since the project area will be inspected prior to installation of the power line, the project would have <i>No Effect</i> to <i>Antiquities</i> as defined under the Montana State Antiquities.  No Action: No impacts to the areas historical, archeological, and/or paleontological resources would occur.
11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	The proponent would likely mark the power line with above ground signs to ensure public safety.  Action: No significant impacts to the areas aesthetics would occur.  No Action: No impacts to the areas aesthetics would occur.
12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	Action: No impacts to the demands of environmental resources such as land, water, air, and/or energy resources are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to the demands of environmental resources such as land, water, air, and/or energy resources would occur.
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	Action: No impacts to studies, plans, and/or projects pertinent to this area are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to studies, plans, and/or projects would occur.

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

## III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	Action: No impacts to human health and/or safety risks are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to human health and/or safety risks would occur.
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	Action: No impacts to industrial, commercial, and/or agricultural activities are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to industrial, commercial, and/or agricultural activities are anticipated.
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	Action: No impacts to quantity and distribution of employment are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to quantity and distribution of employment would occur.
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	Action: No impacts to the state tax base and/or tax revenue are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to the state tax base and/or tax revenues would occur.
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	Action: No impacts to the level of demand for road use or government services are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to the level of demand for road use or government services would occur.
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	Action: No impacts to local environmental plans and goals are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to local environmental plans and goals would occur.
20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	Action: No impacts to the quality of recreational and wilderness activities are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to the quality of recreational and wilderness activities would occur.
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	Action: No impacts to the density and/or distribution of population and housing are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to the density and/or distribution of population and housing would occur.
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	Action: No impacts to the areas social structures, native/traditional lifestyles, or communities are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts social structures, native/traditional lifestyles, or communities would

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	occur.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	Action: No impacts to the areas cultural uniqueness and/or diversity are anticipated.  No Action: No impacts to the areas cultural uniqueness and/or diversity would occur.
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	The proposed power line would service a proposed cell tower located off of the State land. It is DNRC's assumption that Big Flat Electric Cooperative, Inc. would be able to secure a different power source if this ROW application were to be denied.  Action: DNRC already received the \$50.00 application fee which is paid whether the ROW is approved or denied. If the ROW is approved, the State Trust would receive an additional \$230.50 as compensation for the 0.922 acres located within the ROW.  No Action: No impacts to the social and economic circumstances would occur and the State trust would not receive additional revenue from the ROW easement.

EA Checklist Prepared By: s/Matthew Poole\s \_\_\_\_\_ Date: July 30, 2015  
Matthew Poole (Land Use Specialist)

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action Alternative
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	No significant impacts are anticipated.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:  <input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By: Clive Rooney \_\_\_\_\_ NELO Area Manager  
Name Title

s/Clive Rooney\s \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date: July 30, 2015