

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Rocky Mountain Contractors Temporary Construction Area Land Use License
Proposed Implementation Date:	May 2015
Proponent:	Rocky Mountain Contractors
Location:	Generally located in the SW¼NW¼ of Section 16, Township 6 South, Range 18 East (Common Schools Trust)
County:	Carbon County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Proponent has applied to the DNRC Southern Land Office (SLO) for a Land Use License to permit the use of a 1± acre area at the southwest corner of Luther-Roscoe Road and East Rosebud Road for a temporary construction staging and storage area. This area is generally located in the SW¼NW¼ of Section 16, Township 6 South, Range 18 East in Carbon County.

Rocky Mountain Contractors is requesting to park vehicles and store construction equipment and materials on the site for use in a NorthWestern Energy cable replacement project that is taking place in the general area, with work currently on-going up the East Rosebud.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

No formal public scoping was performed by the Southern Land Office (SLO) for the proposed project. The state grazing lessee, Branger Ranch, was contacted by the Proponent and has signed a Settlement of Damages form.

The site was inspected on 7 May 2015 by Jocee Hedrick, SLO Land Use Specialist and Jeff Bollman, SLO Land Use Planner.

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

None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Alternative: Approve the issuance of a Land Use License to allow the use of a temporary construction staging and storage area on 1± acre portion of State Trust land generally located in the SW¼NW¼ of Section 16-T6S-R18E in Carbon County.

No Action Alternative: Deny the request by Rocky Mountain Contractors to place a temporary construction staging and storage area on state Trust 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.

No earthwork is proposed with the project, the equipment and materials will be placed on the existing vegetation. No significant adverse impacts to geology and soils are expected by implementing the proposed alternative.

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.

East Rosebud Creek is located approximately 350' west of the proposed temporary storage/staging area. Due to the distance of the proposed storage area from the creek and the nature of the request, no significant adverse impacts to water quality or quantity are expected by implementing the proposed alternative.

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 would be some airborne particulates from increased traffic on the existing gravel roads from both dust and emissions from vehicle travel and equipment usage on the project. Due to the relatively short duration of the project (one month), no significant adverse impacts are expected by implementing the proposed alternative.

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.

The temporary storage area would be located on the existing vegetation and no earthwork is proposed. The parking of vehicles, equipment and materials will have some short term impacts to the vegetation and a lessee settlement has been signed by the state grazing lessee. The License will require the proponent to reclaim and/or reseed any impacted areas. No significant long term adverse impacts to vegetation cover, quantity or quality are expected by implementing the proposed alternative.

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.

A variety of big game (deer, elk, moose, mountain lion and bears), small mammals, raptors, and songbirds use this area. Due to the time of year (May and June) and relatively short duration of the use (one month), no significant impacts to terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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.

A proposed project area search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database identified five vertebrate animals that are listed as a species of concern or threatened species: Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Grizzly Bear and Wolverine. None of these species has been observed on the section or are known to occupy it, although they may traverse the section. This parcel is also located outside of identified sage grouse

habitat. No significant adverse impacts to unique, endangered or fragile species are expected by implementing the proposed alternative.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

There are no cultural resources known to exist within the proposed project area. Additionally, when SLO staff visited the site in May, a visual survey of the proposed project area was conducted and no cultural features were noted in the proposed project area. No significant adverse impacts to historical and archaeological sites are expected by implementing the proposed alternative.

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 project activities would be restricted to a 1± acre area that is at the southwest corner of Luther-Roscoe Road and East Rosebud Road. There are some houses north, west and south of the Trust land, but not immediately near the proposed project area. The storage area will be in use for approximately one month. No significant adverse impacts to aesthetics are expected by implementing the proposed alternative.

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 significant adverse impacts to environmental resources of land, water, air or energy are expected as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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 known state or federal environmental reviews taking place on the subject state Trust land.

<p style="text-align: center;">IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>

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

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No significant adverse impacts to human health and safety are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

No significant adverse impacts to industrial, commercial and agricultural activities and production are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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 not expected to have a significant impact on the quantity and distribution of employment.

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 and the nature of the activity is not expected to have a significant positive or negative impact to the local or state tax base.

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

The implementation of the proposed alternative is not expected to generate a significant increase in the demand for services provided by Carbon County.

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.

Implementation of the proposed alternative will not conflict with any locally adopted plans.

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.

Persons possessing a valid state lands recreational use license may conduct recreational activities on the subject Trust land and it does have legal public access from Luther-Roscoe Road and East Rosebud Road. The portion of Trust land where the project is located is not likely to get much recreational use due to its proximity to the two county roads. Additionally, the project is proposed to occupy the Trust land for one month, essentially mid-May to mid-June. The proposed project is not expected to have a significant adverse impact on access and quality of recreational activities.

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 significant adverse impacts to density and distribution of population and housing are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

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 proposed alternative.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

The proposed alternative would not directly impact cultural uniqueness or diversity.

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 alternative to issue a Land Use License for road use would provide a \$25 application fee and a one-time payment of \$500 to the Common Schools Trust.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jeff Bollman	Date: 8 May 2015
	Title: Southern Land Office Area Planner	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

After reviewing the Environmental Assessment, the proposed alternative has been selected and it is recommended that a Land Use License be issued to permit a 1± acre temporary construction staging and storage area generally located at the southwest corner of Luther-Roscoe Road. The proposed alternative can be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the long-term sustainable natural resource management of the area while also generating revenue for the common school trust.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The potential for significant impacts from the proposed action is minimal based on the type of action proposed, a temporary construction staging and storage area in which no earthwork is planned. All identified potential impacts will be avoided or minimized by utilizing the mitigations listed below and no significant impacts are expected to occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

The mitigation measures that will be required by the issuance of the Land Use License include:

1. Vehicle and equipment storage is only allowed in the area permitted, as shown on attached Exhibit A.
2. The storage area will only be used in dry or frozen conditions to avoid resource damage.
3. The Licensee shall be responsible for restoring any damage to the land after the use of the staging area is completed.
4. The Licensee shall be responsible for controlling any noxious weeds introduced by Licensee's activity on state Trust land and shall prevent or eradicate the spread of those noxious weeds onto land adjoining the subject section.
5. The Licensee will be required to monitor and control weeds during the License period and for two years after termination of License.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Matthew Wolcott
	Title: Southern Land Office Area Manager
Signature: /s/ Matthew Wolcott	Date: May 11, 2015

LUL #6237 - Rocky Mountain Contractors

