

MEPA Overview and Preparing DNRC's Environmental Checklist

Demi Blythe – MEPA Coordinator for DNRC
Conservation and Resource Development Division
(CARDD)

March 16th, 2022



Goals of this Tutorial



WHY & HOW



STEP-BY-STEP
INSTRUCTIONS



SUMMARY



RESOURCES

Why? How?



Why is this Necessary?

DNRC is required compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) per state law and associated DNRC Administrative Rules (*MCA Title 75, Chapter 1; ARM 36.2.523*).

LAWS II MCA Contents Search Help Part Contents < Previous Section Next Section >

MCA Contents / TITLE 75 / CHAPTER 1 / Part 1 / 75-1-102 Intent -- purpo...

Montana Code Annotated 2019

TITLE 75. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
CHAPTER 1. ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY AND PROTECTION GENERALLY
Part 1. General Provisions

Intent -- Purpose

75-1-102. Intent -- purpose. (1) The legislature, mindful of its constitutional obligations under Article II, section 3, and Article IX of the Montana constitution, has enacted the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The Montana Environmental Policy Act is procedural, and it is the legislature's intent that the requirements of parts 1 through 3 of this chapter provide for the adequate review of state actions in order to ensure that:

- (a) environmental attributes are fully considered by the legislature in enacting laws to fulfill constitutional obligations; and
- (b) the public is informed of the anticipated impacts in Montana of potential state actions.

(2) The purpose of parts 1 through 3 of this chapter is to declare a state policy that will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between humans and their environment, to protect the right to use and enjoy private property free of undue government regulation, to promote efforts that will prevent, mitigate, or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of humans, to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the state, and to establish an environmental quality council.

(3) (a) The purpose of requiring an environmental assessment and an environmental impact statement under part 2 of this chapter is to assist the legislature in determining whether laws are adequate to address impacts to Montana's environment and to inform the public and public officials of potential impacts resulting from decisions made by state agencies.

(b) Except to the extent that an applicant agrees to the incorporation of measures in a permit pursuant to **75-1-201(4)(b)**, it is not the purpose of parts 1 through 3 of this chapter to provide for regulatory authority, beyond authority explicitly provided for in existing statute, to a state agency.

History: En. Sec. 2, Ch. 238, L. 1971; R.C.M. 1947, 69-6502; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 352, L. 1995; amd. Sec. 5, Ch. 361, L. 2003; amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 396, L. 2011; amd. Sec. 35, Ch. 55, L. 2015.

Why is this Necessary?

DNRC requires compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act

"says that Montana should continue to be a wonderful place to live and that development of its resources should be done in such a manner that quality of life will be assured to those who follow".

(c) The purpose of requiring an environmental assessment and an environmental impact statement under part 2 of this chapter is to assist the legislature in determining whether laws are adequate to address impacts to Montana's environment and to inform the public and public officials of potential impacts resulting from decisions made by state agencies.

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Why is this Necessary?

MEPA requires state agencies to prepare a detailed statement on any project, program, or activity directly undertaken by the agency; a project **or activity supported through a contract, grant, subsidy, loan or other form of funding assistance from the agency;** and a project or activity involving the issuance of a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use or permission by the agency (MCA Title 75, Chapter 1).

How?

- Helps a State agency determine level of environmental impacts for a given project
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**- All projects with
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- **All projects with environmental impacts are subject to MEPA review**

- A MEPA decision must be finalized by the DNRC before activities triggering environmental impacts start.

- Projects cannot go to construction without the final decision notice.

How Does DNRC Use the Information?

Four Main Decision Memos DNRC Implements:



NO MEPA NEEDED – ACTIONS
OF A SPECIAL NATURE &
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS



EMERGENCIES



ADOPTION – OTHER
REGULATORY AGENCIES



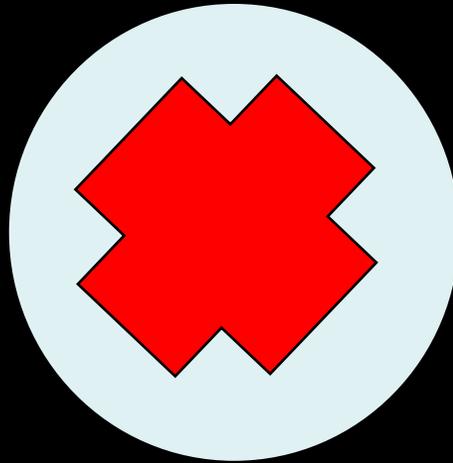
ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT

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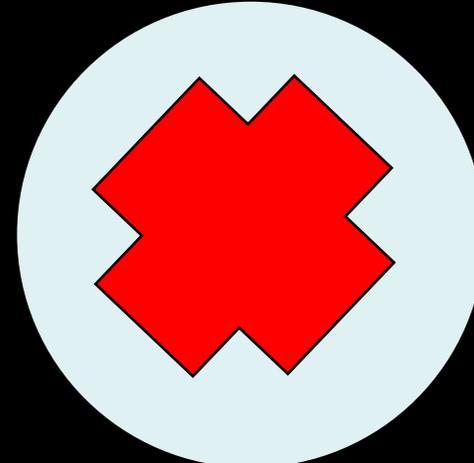
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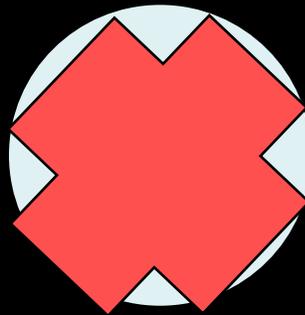
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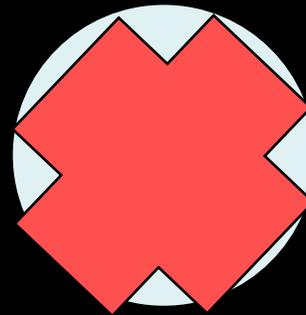
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ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT



'No MEPA Needed'

Categorical Exclusion

Categorical Exclusion (Cat Ex/CE): a class of actions that an agency has determined, after sufficient legal review, do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and for which, therefore, neither an environmental assessment nor an environmental impact statement is normally required.



'No MEPA Needed'

**Categorical
Exclusion**

**Use the Information Provided in
the Environmental Checklist to
Help Determine if a CATEX is
Applicable!!**

Environmental Assessments (EA)



AND CONSERVATION

GREG GIANFORTE, GOVERNOR | 1539 ELEVENTH AVENUE

STATE OF MONTANA

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE: (406) 444-2074 | PO BOX 201601
FAX: (406) 444-2654 | HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

TEMPLATE
DRAFT - OR - DECISION NOTICE
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	
Proposed Implementation Date:	
Proponent:	
Location:	
County:	

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

A proposed action is a proposal by an agency to authorize, recommend, or implement an action to serve an identified need or solve a recognized problem. An adequate description of the proposed action includes a description of: who is proposing the action; what action, specifically, is being proposed; where the action will occur; how the agency proposes to implement the proposed action; when the action will begin; the duration of the action; and why the agency is considering the proposed action.

The purpose and need include five general elements:

1. a description of the proposed action:
 - a. Who?
 - b. What?
 - c. Where? (including maps and graphs)
 - d. When? and
 - e. Why? an explanation of the benefits and purpose of the proposed action;
2. an explanation of the decision(s) that must be made regarding the proposed action;

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:**
Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.
3. an acknowledgment and explanation of the concerns and issues generated through public and agency comment:
 - a. Scoping is used to identify potentially significant issues that will need to be analyzed in depth and non-significant issues, which will likely be addressed only briefly in your MEPA document.
 - b. Response to comments.

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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.

The affected environment describes those aspects of the existing environment that are relevant to the identified issues. The description of the affected environment should be concise but thorough. The description should emphasize those aspects of the human environment that are relevant to each identified issue. The description of the affected environment serves three purposes: (1) it provides a baseline from which to analyze and compare alternatives and their impacts; (2) it ensures that the agency has a clear understanding of the human environment that would be impacted by the proposed action; and (3) it provides the public with a frame of reference in which to evaluate the agency's alternatives, including the proposed action.

Public Comment

How Will DNRC Use the Information Provided?

The information provided within the Environmental Checklist will be subject to a MEPA review by DNRC. If this review should result in an Environmental Assessment, please be aware that DNRC will draft the Environmental Assessment. The drafted Environmental Assessment decision will be posted for a public comment period of either two weeks or 30 days dependent on the level of environmental impact. Please note this public comment period does not suffice for the public participation component mentioned above. The MEPA document will then require a final decision by DNRC before funds are awarded.

Public Comment

← → ↻ ⚠ Not secure | dnrc.mt.gov/public-interest/public-notice

Index — Montana... | sabhrs.mt.gov | Montana's Official... | Login - Montana | Office 365 Login |... | Great Falls, MT | TITLE 75. ENVIRON... | 36.2.501 : POLICY S...

MONTANA.GOV OFFICIAL STATE WEBSITE

SERVICES AGENCIES LOGIN SEARCH MONTANA.GOV

The Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

DNRC Headquarters
1539 Eleventh Ave. Helena, MT 59601
Questions? Email us

Home Index Divisions Grants and Loans Licenses and Permits **Public Information** Land Board Flood and Fire Contact DNRC

Public Information

Publications

Environmental Documents

Meetings and Events

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Public Notices

2021 Notices

Public Information Requests

Podcasts

Public Notices ←

Administrative Rules

Pursuant to statute, DNRC maintains a list of "interested persons" who are notified when the department proposes to amend or adopt its administrative rules. If you would like you or your organization to be on this list, please contact dnrc_publicinfo@mt.gov (attention ARM Rules Coordinator). *Please provide your name, e-mail address, physical address, and the topics you wish to be notified of:* conservation districts and resource development, forestry, oil and gas conservation, trust land management, and/or water resources, or designate All DNRC Rulemaking.

- [Administrative Rules of Montana Web site](#)
- [Montana DNRC Administrative Rules](#)

MAR 36-22-212 (Proposed Adoption of New Rule I relating to the Categorical Exclusion of the State Revolving Fund Grant Issuance Under the Montana Environmental Policy Act)

[Notice of Public Hearing on Proposed Adoption](#)

[Notice of Adoption of New Rule relating to Categorical Exclusion of the State Revolving Fund Grant Issuance Under the Montana Environmental Policy Act](#)

How Do I?

[Submit an information request](#)

Find a publication or press release

Find a public meeting

Get wildfire updates

Get information on water rights

Find oil and gas data

Resources

[Public Notices](#)

[State Land Board](#)

[DNRC regional offices](#)

When is a Checklist NOT Needed?

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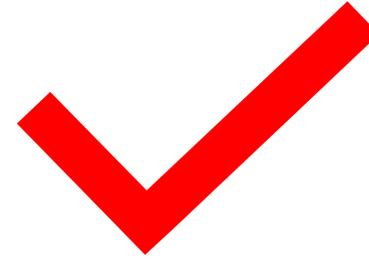
It is also important to note for projects with no environmental impacts, or those that do not lead directly to construction or any other sort of environmental degradation, will not be subject to an environmental assessment and the checklist/public participation does not need to be completed. Examples of these sorts of activities include, but are not limited to, development of a PER (professional engineering report), planning, and education/informational outreach. Please let us know if there are additional questions on what other projects may fall under this category.

Step-by-Step Instructions



Environmental Checklist

Environmental Checklist Instructions



Purpose of This Document:

All applicants must consider the potential environmental impacts of their projects. Consideration of these impacts on the location, design, or construction actions may help avoid expensive costs. A project will not be eligible for funding if it results in significant environmental degradation.

DNRC requires compliance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) per state law and associated DNRC Administrative Rules (ARM 36.2.523). MEPA requires state agencies to prepare a detailed statement on any project, program, or activity directly undertaken by the agency; a project or activity supported through a contract, grant, subsidy, loan, or other form of funding assistance from the agency; and a project or activity involving the issuance of a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use or permission by the agency (MCA Title 75, Chapter 1). Thus, all project applications will be subject to MEPA review.

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What Does This Mean for Applicants?

- All applicants must complete the Environmental Checklist in its entirety and provide sufficient documentation on public participation.
- Public participation, or scoping, of the project must include stakeholder, landowner, and community engagement. These efforts can be in the form of documented public meetings (e.g., meeting minutes, pdf presentations) or letters of support.
 - The public meeting must be properly noticed (advertised) and the public must be provided with an opportunity at the meeting to comment on the project.
 - Minutes of the meeting should reflect what was discussed about the project, including all comments received from the public.
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- Please submit these items with your application.

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Complete the Environmental Checklist on the following pages after the instructions below. DNRC retains the ultimate decision-making authority on all MEPA decisions. If DNRC determines this section to be incomplete, additional information will be required before consideration for funding.

Example			
Impact Code	Impact Type	Permits/ Mitigation Required?	Explanation of Impact to Resource
1. Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints (example: soil slump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)			
<input type="checkbox"/> No Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficial <input type="checkbox"/> Adverse	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect <input type="checkbox"/> Cumulative	<input type="checkbox"/> Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Mitigation <input type="checkbox"/> NA	<i>Current Conditions:</i> <i>Preferred Alternative Environmental Narrative:</i>

- 1. Impact Code:** In the first column, identify the impact that the preferred alternative will have on each resource (e.g. 1. Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints) in the project area. Select from the following impact codes:

- No Impact: No impact to the resource is anticipated or this is not applicable to this project.
- Beneficial: Potentially beneficial impact to the resource.
- Adverse: Potentially adverse impact to the resource.

Please note that a resource may have more than one impact. Identify all possible impacts to the resource in the space provided. For example, the preferred alternative may have a short-term direct negative impact and a long-term direct and indirect positive impact on the resource. Check all boxes that apply and use the space provided in the final column "Explanation of Impact to Resource" to explain.

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- *Direct impacts:* Occur at the same time and place as the proposed project.
 - *Indirect or secondary impacts:* Occur at a different location or later time than the proposed project.
 - *Cumulative impacts:* Collective impacts on the environment when considered in conjunction with other past, present, and future actions related to the proposed project. Cumulative impact analysis includes a review of all state and nonstate activities that have occurred, are occurring, or may occur that have impacted or may impact the same resource as the proposed project.

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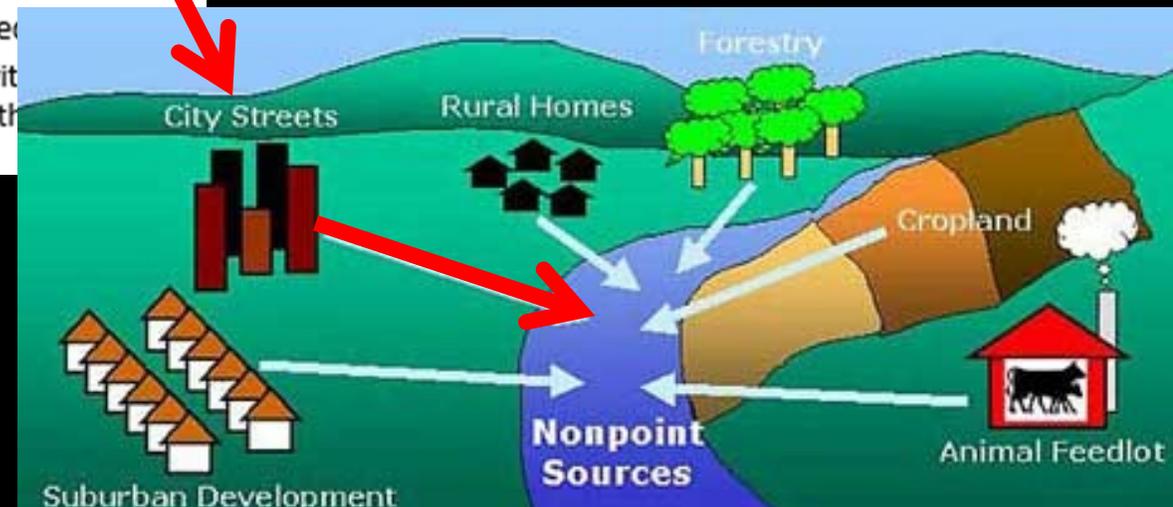


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- Direct impacts: Occur at the same time and place as the proposed project.
- Indirect or secondary impacts: Occur at a different location or later time than the proposed project.
- Cumulative impacts: Collective impacts on the environment when considered in conjunction with other past, present, and future actions related to the proposed project. Cumulative impact analysis includes a review of all state and nonstate activities that have occurred, are occurring, or may occur that have impacted or may impact the same resource as the proposed project.



Environmental Checklist

			Example
Impact Code	Impact Type	Permits/ Mitigation Required?	Explanation of Impact to Resource
1. Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints (example: soil slump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)			
<input type="checkbox"/> No Impact <input type="checkbox"/> Beneficial <input type="checkbox"/> Adverse	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct <input type="checkbox"/> Indirect <input type="checkbox"/> Cumulative	<input type="checkbox"/> Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Mitigation <input type="checkbox"/> NA	<i>Current Conditions:</i> <i>Preferred Alternative Environmental Narrative:</i>

3. **Permits/Mitigation Required:** In the third column, please select if a permit and/or mitigation is required for the project (e.g., 310, USACE Section 404 Nationwide).
- Please make sure to include which permits (if any) are required for the particular resource and what mitigation techniques will be used if impacts are to occur.

Environmental Checklist

Example			
Impact Code	Impact Type	Permits/ Mitigation Required?	Explanation of Impact to Resource
1. Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints (example: soil slump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)			
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- 3. Permits/Mitigation Required:** In the third column, please select if a permit and/or mitigation is required for the project (e.g., 310, USACE Section 404 Nationwide).
- Please make sure to include which permits (if any) are required for the particular resource and what mitigation techniques will be used if impacts are to occur.

If Applicable – Some Items to Consider → PERMITS/EASEMENTS

- Proof of Water Right
- DEQ-Specific Permits (i.e., MPDES, 318 Authorization – complete list found here: <https://deq.mt.gov/Permitting>)
- DOT Encroachment Permits ([Utilities Permitting Administration System \(UPAS\) | Montana Department of Transportation \(MDT\) \(mt.gov\)](#))
- Floodplain (FEMA) permit/consultation (complete list of Floodplain Administrators found here: [Contacts — Montana DNRC \(mt.gov\)](#))
- Wetlands – Nationwide Section 404/consultation of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

If Applicable – Some Items to Consider → Consultations/Comments

- Easements
- Endangered and/or Sensitive Species Consultation (i.e., comments from Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)
- Historic or Archaeological Resources (i.e., Montana State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO))

Environmental Checklist

Impact Code	Impact Type	Permits/ Mitigation Required?	Example
			Explanation of Impact to Resource
1. Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geological Constraints (example: soil slump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)			
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4. Explanation of Impact to Resource: In the final column, use the space provided on the Environmental Checklist to summarize the following information:
- **Current Conditions**
 - Describe the current environmental resources of the affected area including the impact of no action. Your description of the current natural resources will provide a baseline to compare all alternatives and their associated environmental impacts.
 - **Preferred Alternative Environmental Narrative:**
 - Describe the impact of the preferred alternative or *indicate why there is no impact* from the project.
 - Identify any reasonable cumulative impacts that may result from implementing the preferred alternative. Cumulative impacts are the collective impacts on the

Environmental Checklist

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Impact Code	Impact Type	Permits/ Mitigation Required?	Explanation of Impact to Resource
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4. Explanation of Impact to Resource: In the final column, use the space provided on the Environmental Checklist to summarize the following information:

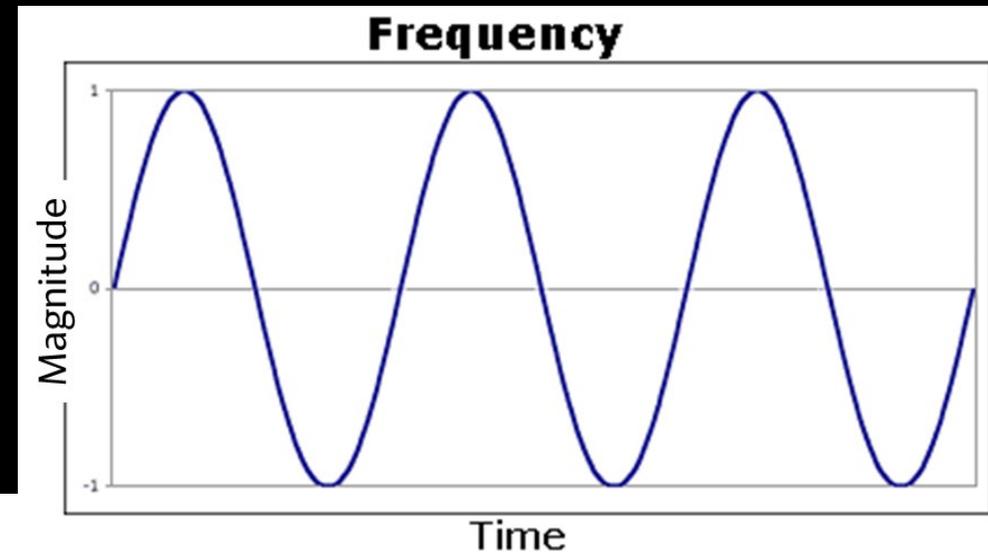
- **Current Conditions**

- Identify any reasonable cumulative impacts that may result from implementing the preferred alternative. Cumulative impacts are the collective impacts on the environment when considered in conjunction with other past, present, and future actions related to the proposed project.
- If a potentially adverse impact is identified for the preferred alternative, the applicant must provide the following:
 - An analysis of the severity, duration, extent, and frequency of the impact. Please specify and describe the following:
 - Severity: negligible, minor, or major.
 - Duration: short-term or long-term.
 - Extent: local, regional, or statewide.
 - Frequency: non-recurring or recurring.
 - An explanation of short- and/or long-term measures to mitigate the impact with a discussion on the effects of those mitigative measures on the proposed project.
- Identify any required permits.

Environmental Checklist

Example			
Impact Code	Impact Type	Permits/ Mitigation Required?	Explanation of Impact to Resource
1. Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints (example: soil slump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)			
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- Identify any required permits.



1. Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints (example: soil lump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)

- No Impact
- Beneficial
- Adverse
- Direct
- Indirect
- Cumulative

Current Conditions:
Land type descriptions are taken from soil survey on the Helena NF and MT NRCS (<http://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/>) 2001. The landtype primarily affected by the project activities is landtype 100, which consists of boroll soils occurring in floodplains and low terraces. Streambank protection and sediment stabilization are important management concerns on this landtype. Stream alterations within the project area from past agricultural practices have led to simplification of the channel and loss of floodplain connectivity. Grazing and anthropogenic impacts are evident with non-native grasses-smooth brome-a large component of the plant community. This area has not been grazed in over 60 years, however past agricultural practices are still evident on the landscape. No other projects are proposed within this action area.

Preferred Alternative Environmental Narrative:
Proposed actions such as the reconstruction of 0.7 miles of channel and approximately six acres of floodplain and wetland construction would improve stream and riparian condition by adding sinuosity and diversity and expanding the riparian corridor. These actions provide direct and indirect soil benefits with the immediate expansion of wetland areas and floodplain expansion. Adverse short-term soil disturbance arising from this project is expected to occur during a relatively short period 5-10 years with an overall result of soil improvements or an expansion and extent of riparian habitat. This will be at the expense of a relatively small area of riparian disturbance, which, will experience conversion to riparian habitat over time with the influence of newly established hydrophytic vegetation. Other direct adverse impacts include compaction, displacement and rutting of soils on access roads with heavy equipment. Soil effects would be localized to the areas affected with construction from September-November. To mitigate impacts design features and and erosion control measures will be implemented, reference full soils report (Torres, USFS 2019). Soils in areas that have been impacted by project implementation will be decompacted/seeded and/or revegetated. All temporary roads will be obliterated after use. Protecting or stockpiling topsoil and reused to improve soil recovery and revegetation. Mulching riparian areas with native slash, duff material is important to maintain soil microbiota and reestablish soil cover. Areas of bare soil exposed over the winter should be put into "storage" by the installation of erosion control measures such as broadleaved application or erosion control fabric.

Example – Beaver Creek Restoration Project

https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm

USDA United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Web Soil Survey

Home About Soils Help Contact Us

You are here: Web Soil Survey Home

The simple yet powerful way to access and use soil data.

START WSS

Welcome to Web Soil Survey (WSS)

Web Soil Survey (WSS) provides soil data and information produced by the National Cooperative Soil Survey. It is operated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and provides access to the largest natural resource information system in the world. NRCS has soil maps and data available online for more than 95 percent of the nation's counties and anticipates having 100 percent in the near future. The site is updated and maintained online as the single authoritative source of soil survey information.

I Want To...

- Start Web Soil Survey (WSS)
- Know Web Soil Survey Requirements
- Know Web Soil Survey operation hours
- Find what areas of the U.S. have soil data
- Find information by topic
- Know how to hyperlink from other documents to Web Soil Survey
- Know the SSURGO data structure

1. Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints (example: soil lump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)

- No Impact
- Beneficial
- Adverse
- Direct
- Indirect
- Cumulative

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Preferred Alternative Environmental Narrative:
Proposed actions such as the reconstruction of 0.7 approximately six acres of floodplain and wetland improve stream and riparian conditions by adding diversity and expanding the riparian corridor. These direct and indirect soil benefits with the immediate wetland areas and floodplain expansion. Adverse disturbance arising from this project is expected to relatively short period 5-10 years with an overall soil improvements or an expansion and extent of. This will be at the expense of a relatively small area disturbance, which, will experience conversion to over time with the influence of newly established vegetation. Other direct adverse impacts include displacement and rutting of soils on access roads by heavy equipment. Soil effects would be localized to with construction from September-November. To impacts design features and and erosion control in place, reference full soils report (Torres, USFS 2015 areas that have been impacted by project implementation decompacted/seeded and/or revegetated. All temporary will be obliterated after use. Protecting or stockpiled reused to improve soil recovery and revegetation. Areas with native slash, duff material is important microbiota and reestablish soil cover. Areas of bare exposed over the winter should be put into "storage installation of erosion control measures such as brush application or erosion control fabric.

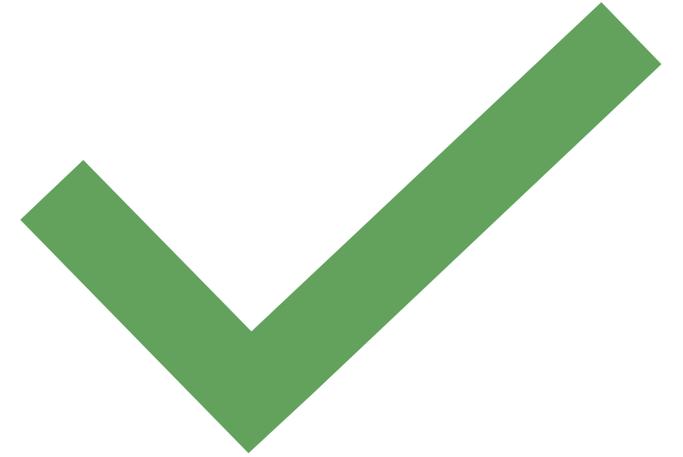
Example – Beaver Creek Restoration Project

The screenshot shows the USDA Web Soil Survey website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Contact Us', 'Subscribe', 'Archived Soil Surveys', 'Soil Survey Status', 'Glossary', 'Preferences', 'Link', 'Logout', and 'Help'. Below this is a search bar and a 'Link Navigation' menu with options like 'Address', 'State and County', 'Soil Survey Area', 'Latitude and Longitude or Current Location', 'PLSS (Section, Township, Range)', 'Bureau of Land Management', 'Department of Defense', 'Forest Service', 'National Park Service', and 'Hydrologic Unit'. The main content area is titled 'Area of Interest Interactive Map' and features a satellite map of a region in Montana. The map shows a network of roads, including highways like I-15 and I-94, and a red line indicating the project area. The map includes a legend, navigation tools, and a scale indicator.

Example – Beaver Creek Restoration Project

1. Soil Suitability, Topographic and/or Geologic Constraints (example: soil lump, steep slopes, subsidence, seismic activity)		
<input type="checkbox"/> No Impact <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beneficial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adverse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Direct <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indirect <input type="checkbox"/> Cumulative	<p>Current Conditions: <i>Land type descriptions are taken from soil survey on the Helena NF and MT NRCS (http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/) 2001. The landtype primarily affected by the project activities is landtype 100, which consists of boroll soils occurring in floodplains and low terraces. Streambank protection and sediment stabilization are important management concerns on this landtype. Stream alterations within the project area from past agricultural practices have led to simplification of the channel and loss of floodplain connectivity. Grazing and anthropogenic impacts are evident with non-native grasses-smooth brome-a large component of the plant community. This area has not been grazed in over 60 years, however past agricultural practices are still evident on the landscape. No other projects are proposed within this action area.</i></p> <p>Preferred Alternative Environmental Narrative: <i>Proposed actions such as the reconstruction of 0.7 miles of channel and approximately six acres of floodplain and wetland consturction would improve stream and riparian condition by adding sinuosity and channel diversity and expanding the riparian corridor. These actions would have direct and indirect soil benefits with the immediate expansion of wetland areas and floodplain expansion. Adverse short-term soil disturbance arising from this project is expected to recover within a relatively short period 5-10 years with an overall result being long-term soil improvements or an expansion and extent of riparian/wetland soils. This will be at the expense of a relatively small are of upland soil disturbance, which, will experience conversion to riparian/wetland soils over time with the influence of newly established hydrology and vegetation. Other direct adverse impacts include compaction, displacement and rutting of soils on access roads with mobilization of heavy equipment. Soil effects would be localized to the project area with construction from September-November. To mitigate these impacts design features and and erosion control measures will be in place, reference full soils report (Torres, USFS 2019). Specifically, any areas that have been impacted by project implementation will be decompacted/seeded and/or revegetated. All temporary access routes will be obliterated after use. Protecting or stockpiling topsoil, should be reused to improve soil recovery and revegetation. Mulching disturbed areas with native slash, duff material is important to inoculate soil microbiota and reestablish soil cover. Areas of bare soil that will be exposed over the winter should be put into "storage" with the installation of erosion control measures such as broadcast seed/mulch application or erosion control fabric.</i></p>

Summary



**We're Here to
Help!**

- Please fill out the checklist as complete as possible

**We're Here to
Help!**

- Please fill out the checklist as complete as possible
- **If applicable, please contact necessary agencies with specialized experience**

We're Here to Help!

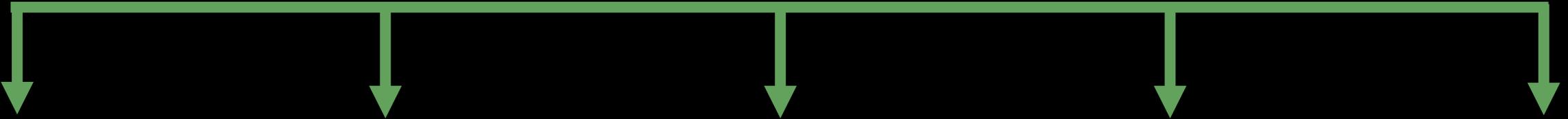
- Please fill out the checklist as complete as possible
- If applicable, please contact necessary agencies with specialized experience
- **We can help you fill out a checklist!**

**We're Here to
Help!**

- Please fill out the checklist as complete as possible
- If applicable, please contact necessary agencies with specialized experience
- We can help you fill out a checklist!
- **Timelines so YOU are aware of what is happening on our end after we receive Checklist**

Environmental Checklist and DNRC MEPA Decision Notice - Timeline

1)

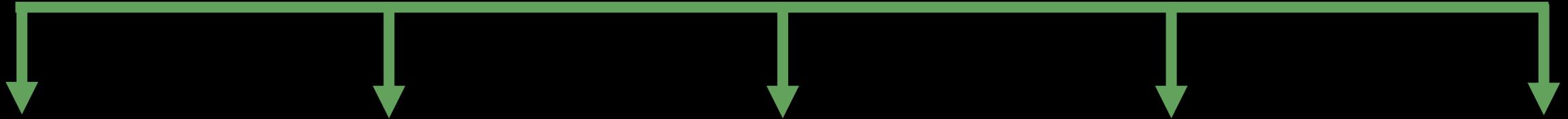


Applicant
submits
checklist –
either with
application or
after approval
but prior to
contracting

Environmental Checklist and DNRC MEPA Decision Notice - Timeline

1)

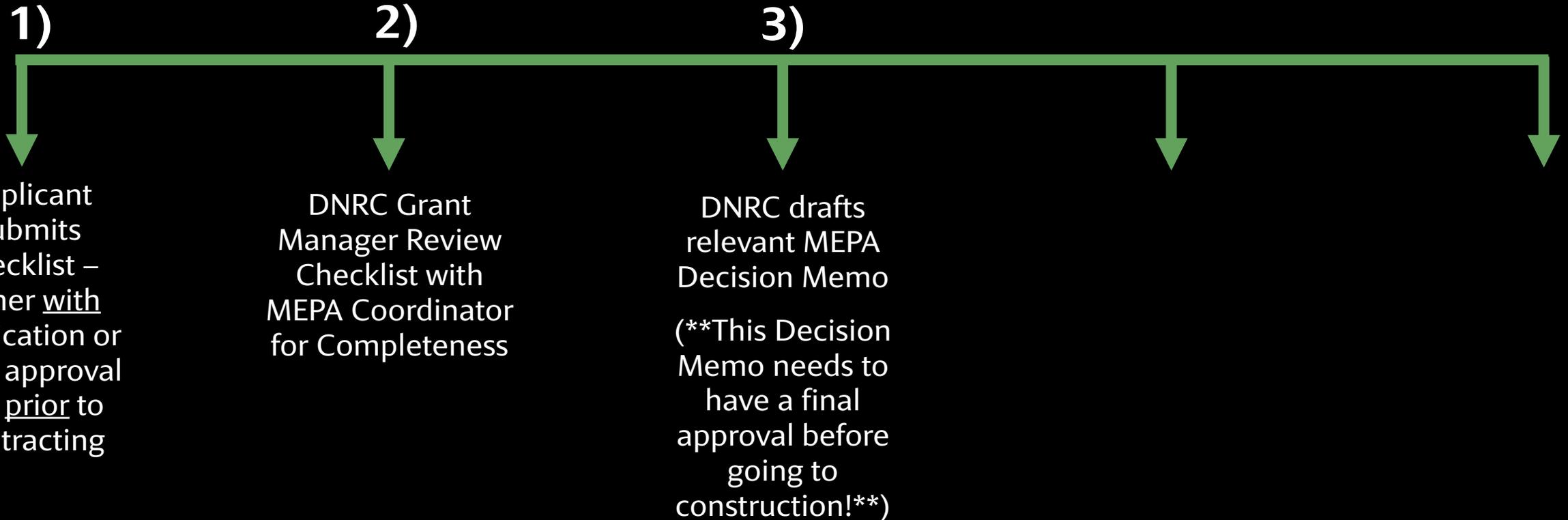
2)



Applicant submits checklist – either with application or after approval but prior to contracting

DNRC Grant Manager Review Checklist with MEPA Coordinator for Completeness

Environmental Checklist and DNRC MEPA Decision Notice - Timeline



Environmental Checklist and DNRC MEPA Decision Notice - Timeline



NO MEPA NEEDED – ACTIONS
OF A SPECIAL NATURE &
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS



EMERGENCIES



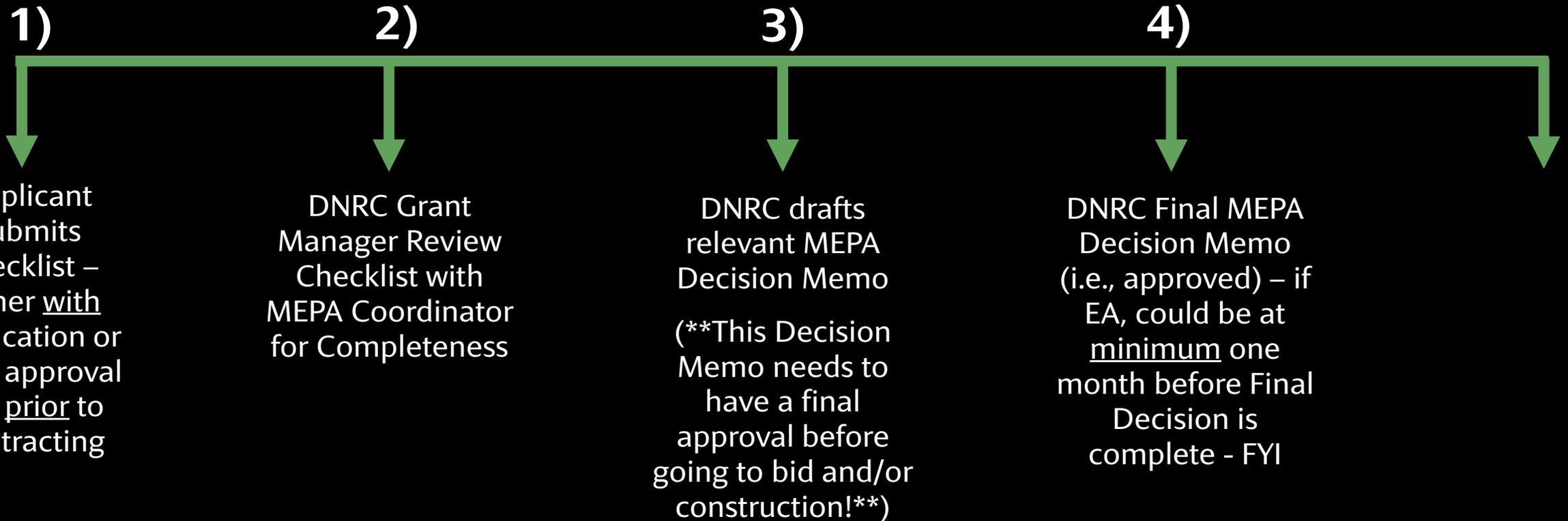
ADOPTION – OTHER
REGULATORY AGENCIES



ENVIRONMENTAL
ASSESSMENT

going to bid and/or
construction!**)

Environmental Checklist and DNRC MEPA Decision Notice - Timeline



Environmental Checklist and DNRC MEPA Decision Notice - Timeline

Me: sleeping at 7am

Construction workers:



1)

2)

3)

5)

Applicant submits checklist – either with application or after approval but prior to contracting

DNRC Grant Manager Review Checklist with MEPA Coordinator for Completeness

DNRC drafts relevant MEPA Decision Memo (**This Decision Memo needs to have a final approval before going to bid and/or construction!**)

DNRC Final MEPA Decision Memo (i.e., approved) – if EA, could be at minimum one month before Final Decision is complete - FYI

Project is ready for construction!

Environmental Checklist and DNRC MEPA Decision Notice - Timeline



It is also important to note for projects with no environmental impacts, or those that do not lead directly to construction or any other sort of environmental degradation, will not be subject to an environmental assessment and the checklist/public participation does not need to be completed. Examples of these sorts of activities include, but are not limited to, development of a PER (professional engineering report), planning, and education/informational outreach. Please let us know if there are additional questions on what other projects may fall under this category.

either with
application or
after approval
but prior to
contracting

checklist with
MEPA Coordinator
for Completeness

Decision Memo
(**This Decision
Memo needs to
have a final
approval before
going to bid and/or
construction!**)

(i.e., approved) - if
EA, could be at
minimum one
month before Final
Decision is
complete - FYI

Resources



List of Resources After Checklist

For any questions, please contact DNRC Grant Manager listed on grant application and/or agreement.

Below is a list of electronic resources available for data gathering to aid in the development of the Environmental Checklist:

Abandoned Mines (DEQ): <https://deq.mt.gov/Land/abandonedmines/bluebook>

Agricultural Statistics (USDA): [USDA - National Agricultural Statistics Service - Data and Statistics](https://www.nass.usda.gov/Data_Statistics/)

Air Quality

- Nonattainment Areas: [Plan and Rule Development | Montana DEQ \(mt.gov\)](#)
- Opening Burning Guidelines: [Open Burning | Montana DEQ \(mt.gov\)](#)

Army Corps of Engineers: <http://www.usace.army.mil/Home.aspx>

Bureau of Business and Economic Research, UM: <http://www.bber.umt.edu/>

Cadastral (for property ownership info): <http://svc.mt.gov/msl/mtcadastral>

Census Information, MT Dept. of Commerce: <http://ceic.mt.gov>

Conservation Districts, MT: <http://macdnet.org/>

Cultural Records

- Montana Historical Society: <http://mhs.mt.gov/shpo/culturalrecords.asp>

DEQ data search tools: [Montana DEQ's GIS Portal \(mt.gov\)](#)

- Including Clean Water Act Info Center, Hazardous Waste Handlers, Petroleum Release Fund Claims, Unpermitted Releases, Underground Storage Tanks, Source Water Protection

EPA Enforcement and Compliance History Online <http://echo.epa.gov/>

Farmland Classification: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/WebSoilSurvey.aspx>

Fish (Also See Wildlife)

- Montana Fisheries Information System: [Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks GIS Data \(arcgis.com\)](#)
- Aquatic Invasive Species: [Montana FWP AIS Surveys Dashboard 2021 \(arcgis.com\)](#)

Floodplain Maps, FEMA: <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>

Geographic Information, Natural Resources Information System: <http://nr.is.mt.gov/gis>

Geologic Information - [MBMG - Publications - Download Geologic Maps \(mtech.edu\)](#)

EXAMPLE DOCUMENTS

Please visit - [Resources and Training — Montana DNRC \(mt.gov\)](#) – here, you will find the following:

- Beaver Creek Environmental Checklist Example
- Example Environmental Assessment (to see how we use information provided in Checklist)
- Training Video – Steps Through Each ‘Resource’

Questions?

Thank you!

Demi Blythe

406-444-6619

Demitra.Blythe@mt.gov

