

**Conservation and Resource Development Division**

**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 unexpected expensive costs. A project will not be eligible for funding if it results in significant negative impact on the human environment.

The Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), Montana Code Annotated (MCA Title 75, Chapter 1) and associated Administrative Rules (ARM 36.2.523) 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. Grant applications are subject to a detailed review to ensure that DNRC complies with the statues that authorizes the grant programs as well as meets the intent of the MEPA.

***What Does This Mean for Applicants?***

* All applicants must complete the Environmental Checklist in its entirety.
* Public participation, or project scoping depends on the complexity of the proposed action and should include engagement from stakeholders, landowners, and the community. 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.
  + Letters of support must be included from any identified or interested stakeholders.
* Agency Comment Letters (to be submitted/attached within the application).

***How Will DNRC Use the Information Provided?***

The information provided within the Environmental Checklist will be subject to review by DNRC. If this review should result in the need to complete an Environmental Assessment, please be aware that DNRC will draft the Environmental Assessment (EA). The drafted EA decision will be posted for a public comment period of up to 30 days dependent on the level of public interest and the seriousness and complexity of the potential impact of the project.

**Instructions:**

Complete the Environmental Checklist on the following pages. 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.

The Environmental Checklist is not required for project activities that are exempt from MEPA:

* Administrative actions (*example: Conservation District Administrative Grants*).
* Minor repairs, operations, and maintenance of existing facilities *(example: RRGL Grant to upgrade water treatment plant SCADA system by replacing old system)*.
* Investigation, enforcement, and data collection activities *(example: Grant for a Preliminary Engineering Report, Technical Memo or Watershed Restoration Plan)*.
* Actions that are primarily social or economic in nature and that do not otherwise affect the human environment (*example: CD Education Mini-Grant to conduct outreach and education in a community*).

**Impact Yes No Unsure N/A**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Disturbance to Soils** – Is the project going to disturb previously undisturbed soils by digging, grading, or otherwise impacting the soil structure? |  |  |  |  |
| **Soils Management** – Does the project include erosion control best management practices? |  |  |  |  |
| **Air Quality** – Will fugitive dust, odors, or emissions be created by construction activities? |  |  |  |  |
| **Air Quality Management** – Does the project include dust control best management practices? |  |  |  |  |
| **Water Quality** – Does the project have the potential to discharge pollutants to surface water or groundwater? |  |  |  |  |
| **Water Quality Management** – Does the project include construction stormwater best management practices to control erosion and sedimentation of surface water? |  |  |  |  |
| **Water Quality Discharge** –Will the project result in a new discharge or relocate an existing discharge to ground or surface waters? |  |  |  |  |
| **Water Quality Discharge** – Will the project result in an increase above permit levels established for a facility under the Montana pollutant discharge elimination system or Montana groundwater pollution control system? |  |  |  |  |
| **Water Quantity** –Will this project change the quantity of water in surface or groundwater or change the distribution of water in surface or groundwater? |  |  |  |  |
| **Water Rights** – Are water rights or a change to water rights required as part of project activities? |  |  |  |  |
| **Floodplain** – Does this project take place within a floodplain or adjacent to a floodplain? |  |  |  |  |
| **Riparian Habitats** – Will project activities occur within riparian areas? |  |  |  |  |
| **Vegetation –** Does this project include significant vegetation removal and/or revegetation? |  |  |  |  |
| **Agricultural/Farmland Protection** – Are areas within the project boundary considered prime or important farm ground or forest lands? |  |  |  |  |
| **Sensitive Environmental Areas** –Are areas within the project boundary considered as unique environmental resources such as wetlands, unique recreation areas, wilderness, etc. |  |  |  |  |
| **Terrestrial Wildlife and Habitats** – Will project activities impact terrestrial wildlife and/or habitats? |  |  |  |  |
| **Endangered Species and Habitats** – Has the project applicant consulted with wildlife agencies (FWP, USFWS, DNRC Sage Grouse) to ensure threatened or endangered species and their critical habitats will not be impacted? |  |  |  |  |
| **Avian Wildlife and Habitats** –Is there nesting habitat within the project area? Keep in mind, bald eagles are protected by the Montana Bald Eagle Act. |  |  |  |  |
| **Aquatic Wildlife and Habitats** – Will the project activities impact aquatic wildlife and/or habitats? |  |  |  |  |
| **Agency Contact** – Has the project applicant consulted with wildlife agencies (FWP, USFWS) to ensure threatened or endangered species and their critical habitats will not be impacted? |  |  |  |  |
| **Nuisances** – Will there be noise, fumes, or glare associated with project implementation? |  |  |  |  |
| **Nuisance Mitigation** – Does the project include best management practices to reduce the impact of nuisances during the project activities? |  |  |  |  |
| **Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources** –Is the project occurring in an area with historic, cultural, or archeological significance? |  |  |  |  |
| **Required Historical Contact** – Has the State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) been contacted about this project? |  |  |  |  |
| **Demands on Environmental Resources** – Will the project result in increased demands on land, water, air, or energy? |  |  |  |  |
| **Infrastructure Growth** – Will the project result in a facility that will provide capacity to serve a population at least 30 percent greater than the existing population? |  |  |  |  |
| **Future Growth** – Is the project upgrading or extending infrastructure systems primarily for the purposes of future development? |  |  |  |  |
| **Planning** –Is the project specifically identified in a state, regional or locally adopted growth plan or environmental plan or goal? Examples include Community Improvement Plans, Growth Plans, Preliminary Engineering Reports, Watershed Restoration Plans,Conservation District Strategic Plans, etc. |  |  |  |  |
| **Public Involvement** – Is there is public controversy over the project’s potential effects on the quality of the human environment? |  |  |  |  |