

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Rock Creek Cattle Spring Development
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	2026
<b>Proponent:</b>	Rock Creek Cattle Co.
<b>Location:</b>	T9N R10W Section 28
<b>County:</b>	Powell

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The surface lessee Rock Creek Cattle Co. has requested to develop an existing spring, and install a stock tank on the above mentioned tract to State Trust Land. This spring development project would provide a more reliable water source for livestock and wildlife on this section.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Lessee will file a DS-405 improvement form. Due to the small scope of the project no public comment was sought. DNRC Wildlife Biologist Garrett Schairer, Land Use Specialist Jordan Rice and Archeologist Patrick Rennie were consulted for project.

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

DNRC-Water Resources Division

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A: Allow construction of the water development on state land

Alternative B: No action

### 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.*

Alternative A: The soil type for the project area is a Shawmut Stony Loam with a moderate rating for soil compaction and soil erosion. Due to the small scope and footprint of the project minimal impact is expected.

Alternative B: No Impact

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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.*

Alternative A: Groundwater resources will be utilized for stock water purposes. This may have a small effect on available groundwater resources; any effect should be minimal in nature. No surface water resources should be affected by this project.

Alternative B: No Impact

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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.*

Alternative A: Pollutant and Particulate levels may be increased during the construction of the project; these levels should be minimal and return to normal levels after the completion of the project.

Alternative B: No Impact

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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.*

Alternative A: Some vegetation would be affected through this project. Dominant Species in the area are Bluebunch Wheatgrass, Rough Fescue, Prairie June Grass, Idaho Fescue, Western Wheatgrass and Juniper. Any effect to the vegetative community should be minimal in nature during the construction phase of the project. After completion the vegetative community should return to pre-development state.

Alternative B: No Impact

Mitigation for disturbed areas will be seeded with native grasses.

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**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.*

Alternative A: Construction of this project may disrupt wildlife activity in the area for a few days. Upon completion of the project the wildlife use and habitat should return to normal with the added benefit of a new water source.

Alternative B: No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A: A search of the Montana Natural Heritage website shows six sensitive species noted within the area of the project. The species are listed below.

Grizzly Bear  
Northern Hoary Bat  
Silver-haired Bat  
Golden Eagle  
Great Blue Heron  
Long-Billed Curlew

Proposed actions may cause slight shifts in use by listed species of concern; however, no key habitat components are known to exist in the AP project area and long-term use is not expected to appreciably change. If a sighting of any of the listed species of concern, (or evidence such as nest, dens etc....) occurs, operations may be halted, or not allowed, until further assessment could take place. There is a low risk of effects to listed species of concern with this action alternative.

Alternative B: No Impact

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**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

Alternative A: The DNRC archaeologist conducted a Class III cultural and paleontological resources inventory of the areas of potential effect (APE) on Montana trust land. Despite a detailed examination of the APE, no cultural or fossil resources were identified and no additional archaeological or paleontological investigative work is recommended. Authorization of the proposed stockwater development will have No Effect to Antiquities as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act. A formal report of findings has been prepared and is on file with the DNRC and the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer:

No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

Alternative B: No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A: During construction of the project noise levels may be increased slightly but this should only last for a few days and return to normal levels. The public may be able to see the stock tank from old stage road.

Alternative B: No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A: No Significant Impact

Alternative B: No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A: No Impact

Alternative B: No Impact

#### 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.

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#### 14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

Alternative A: No impact anticipated.

Alternative B: No Impact

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#### 15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

Alternative A: The development of the water source will add to positive agricultural activities and production in the area.

Alternative B: No Impact

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#### 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.*

Alternative A: No significant impact

Alternative B: No Impact

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#### 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.*

Alternative A: No Significant Impact

Alternative B: No Impact

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#### 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*

Alternative A: No Impact

Alternative B: No Impact

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#### 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.*

Alternative A: No Impact

Alternative B: No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A: No Significant Impact

Alternative B: No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A: No Impact

Alternative B: No Impact

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**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

Alternative A: No Impact

Alternative B: No Impact

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**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

Alternative A: No Impact

Alternative B: No Impact

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**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.*

Alternative A: No direct monetary return to the trust will be gained. The project will provide a reliable water source for livestock and wildlife in the area. This should aid in grazing distribution and benefit the resource.

Alternative B: No Impact

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> <i>Craig Hansen</i>	<b>Date:</b> 3/10/2026
	<b>Title:</b> Unit Manager	

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Alternative A

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

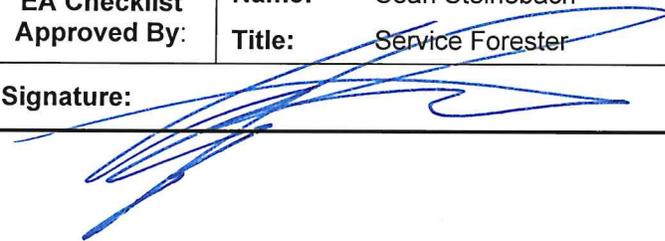
The granting of the requested stock water well development on this tract of state-owned trust lands for the purpose of improving grazing distribution and wildlife habitat should not result in nor cause significant environmental impacts. The proposed action satisfies the trusts fiduciary mandate and ensures the long-term productivity of the land. An environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

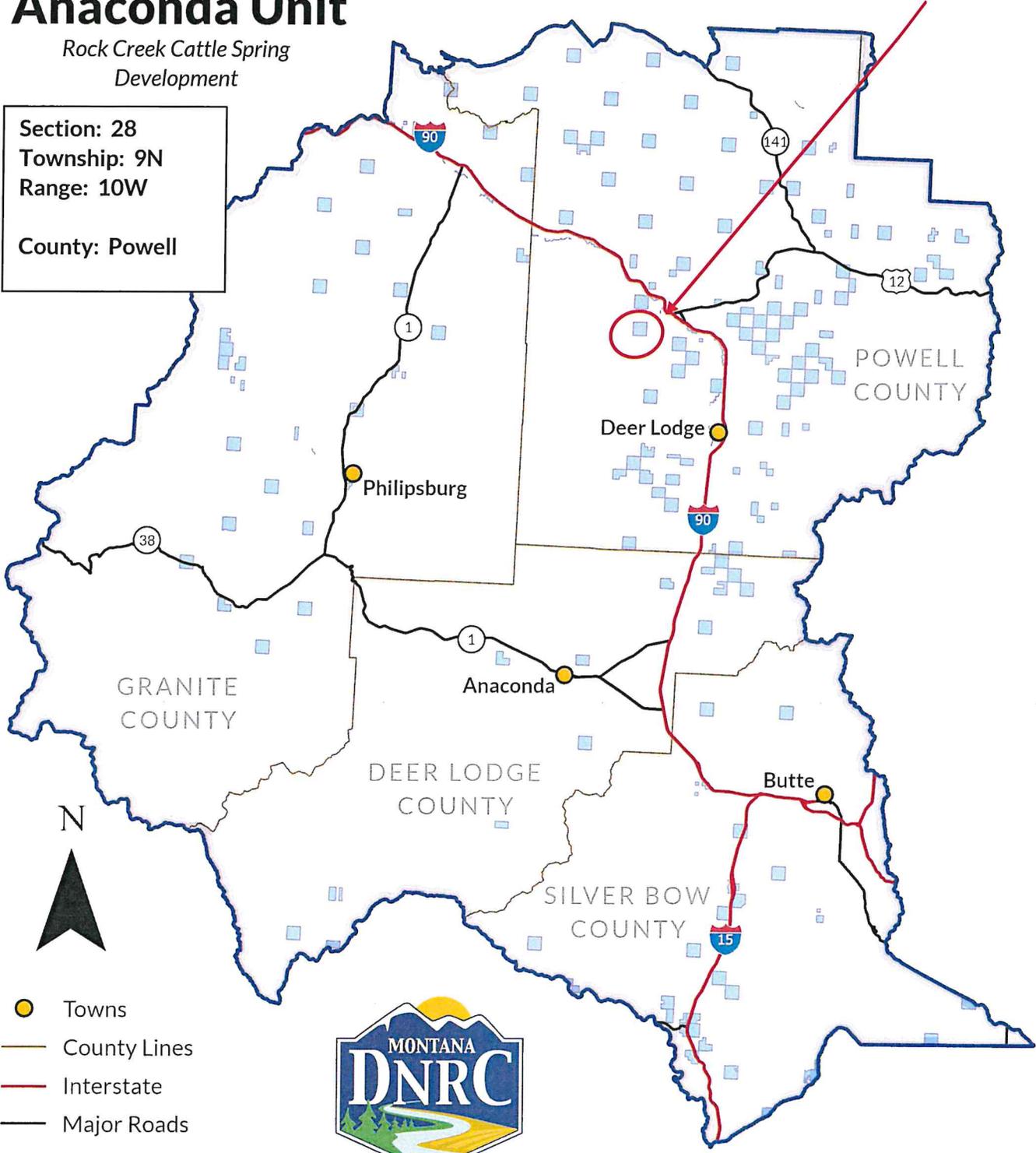
<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Sean Steinebach <b>Title:</b> Service Forester
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 3/10/2026

# State Trust Land Vicinity Map

## Anaconda Unit

Rock Creek Cattle Spring  
Development

Section: 28  
Township: 9N  
Range: 10W  
  
County: Powell



- Towns
- County Lines
- Interstate
- Major Roads
- Rivers & Lakes
- State Trust Land

