

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Crazy Mountain Cattle Co. Spring Development and Stock Water Pipeline System
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2024
Proponent:	Harv VanWagoner - Lessee of Lease #2109
Location:	Section 36, Township 1 North, Range 12 East
County:	Sweet Grass

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Harv VanWagoner is proposing the installation of a spring development with one stock tank down the coulee from the spring development in Section 36, Township 1 North, Range 12 East. (See attached map)

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Southern Land Office
Harv VanWagoner owner of Crazy Mountain Cattle Co., Lessee of State Lease #2109

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

The proponent/lessee will be required to notify the Montana 811 system at least 48 hours in advance of excavating at the site to ensure that all underground utilities have been properly located and marked.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – The DNRC does not grant permission to the Crazy Mountain Cattle Co. to install a spring development with one stock tank in the above-described tract.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – The DNRC does grant permission to the Crazy Mountain Cattle Co. to install a spring development with one stock tank in the above-described tract.

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.

The soils consist of clays to clay loams. The rating on web soil survey indicates that these soils can be somewhat limited to very limited to shallow excavation. Once construction is finished, the affected area will be reseeded with native grasses to reduce erosion. Various pipelines in the area show that with post installation reclamation, these soils are capable of handling such an action. Construction will only be completed during dry conditions to minimize damage to the immediate area.

These soils are described as being at slight to severe risk for hazardous soil rutting. This is typical for the soils in the area and any ruts will be filled in by the lessee and reseeded during the reclamation process.

No significant adverse impacts to the soils are anticipated.

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.

The installation of the spring development and associated stock tank will provide a more reliable water source for livestock and local wildlife, which will in turn better distribute grazing pressure in the immediate area.

No significant adverse impacts to water quality, quantity, or distribution are anticipated.

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.

Dirt work may generate some airborne dust. These activities will minimally affect air quality for a very limited amount of time.

No significant adverse impacts to air quality are anticipated

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.

Vegetation in the area of the proposed pipeline and fence installation consists of the following native and introduced species: Western Wheatgrass, Bluebunch Wheatgrass, Blue Grama, Carex Spp., Needle & Thread, Prairie June Grass, Sandberg Bluegrass, Cheatgrass, and various forbs.

The placement of the stock water tanks are planned to avoid unstable areas. Once construction is finished, the affected area will be reseeded with native grasses to reduce erosion. Various pipelines in the area show that with post installation reclamation, these soils are capable of handling such an action.

No significant adverse impacts to vegetation cover are anticipated.

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.

The Species of Concern Report from the Montana Natural Heritage Program indicated that Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Great Blue Heron, Eastern Red Bat and the Golden Eagle are Montana Species of Concern that have been observed within a mile of this section. Although these species have been observed nearby, there is no immediate concern of displacing or disturbing these species indefinitely. Local wildlife may be displaced during construction for a very short period. Once construction has finished, the area will be available for use by local wildlife once again. The proposed improvements, once installed, are not anticipated to significantly impact their habitat or movement throughout the tract.

The proposed pipeline will supply water to a new stock water tank on the adjacent deeded which will provide a new water source for livestock as well as the local wildlife.

No significant adverse impacts to terrestrial, avian, and aquatic life and habitats are anticipated.

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.

The Species of Concern Report from the Montana Natural Heritage Program indicated there were no endangered or threatened species occurrences within a mile of Section 36. The Species of Concern report indicated that Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Great Blue Heron, Eastern Red Bat and the Golden Eagle are Montana Species of Concern that have been observed within a mile of this section. Although these species have been observed nearby, there is no immediate concern of displacing or disturbing these species indefinitely. Local wildlife may be displaced during construction for a very short period, but once construction has finished, the area will be available for use by local wildlife once again.

The lessee plans to reclaim and reseed all disturbed areas with a native seed mix.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search results revealed that a few cultural resources have been identified outside the APE, and Class III level inventory work was conducted several years prior.

Proposed activities are expected to have *No Effect to Antiquities*. 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.

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.

Spring developments, stock water tanks, and stock water pipelines are commonplace in the area and the addition of this proposed pipeline should not impact the aesthetics of the local area significantly.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

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 demands on limited resources are required for this project. No adverse impacts are anticipated.

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 projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed on this EA.

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.

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

There are some human safety risks associated with operating equipment. The proponent and their employees accept these risks as acceptable occupational hazards.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

The project will not alter any current use patterns dealing with agricultural use. Livestock grazing would continue as before, with possible better distribution of grazing pressure due to the better availability of water.

No adverse impacts to agriculture activities are anticipated.

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 activity will not create, move, or eliminate any jobs. No new jobs will be created.

No adverse impacts to the employment market are anticipated.

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.

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

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

There will be no increases in traffic, no changes in traffic patterns, and no need for additional fire protection, or police services.

The proponent will be responsible for contacting the Montana 811 system at least 48 hours prior to starting construction on the pipeline so that underground utilities can be located and marked properly.

No adverse impacts to government services are anticipated.

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.

This project is located in General Sage Grouse habitat which will require the project manager to place ramps within their tank. This satisfies the exempt activities regulation for the construction of agricultural reservoirs under Attachment F., activity D under Executive Order no. 12-2015.

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.

No adverse impacts to the recreational value are anticipated.

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.

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments.

No adverse impacts to population or housing are anticipated.

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 proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:


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

The proposed project will have no effect on any unique quality of the area.

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 spring development and stock tanks would be considered an improvement owned by Mr. VanWagoner on his Grazing Lease #2109.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jack Bernhardt
	Title: Southern Land Office Land Use Specialist
Signature: 	Date: 05/30/24

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the Proposed Alternative B and recommend the DNRC does grant permission to the Crazy Mountain Cattle Co. to install a spring development with two stock tanks in the above-described tract.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:


I have evaluated the potential environmental effects and have determined that no significant adverse environmental impacts will result from the proposed activity.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Joe Holzwarth
	Title: Southern Land Office Area Manager
Signature: 	Date: 5/30/24