CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Drugge Dam Maintenance and Pit Reservoir Construction / Fence Construction
Proposed Implementation Date:	August - November 2026
Proponent:	Lenard Drugge
Location:	33N 21E Section 16
County:	Blaine
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

This action would authorize the maintenance of an existing dam on the SE ¼ NW 1/4, construction of a new pit reservoir on the SE ¼ SE ¼ on an unnamed intermittent tributary of the Milk River, and the construction of boundary fence on Montana State Trust Lands, including all associated construction, maintenance, and use activities.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Northeastern Land Office (NELO) & Lewistown Unit Office
Proponent: Lenard Drugge
Surface Lessees: Lennard Drugge
Other: Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team (MSGOT)

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

The DNRC and its Northeastern Land Office (NELO) have jurisdiction over the proposed project.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all necessary permits for the proposed project and settling all surface damage with the surface lessees.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant permission for the maintenance of an existing dam on the SE ¼ NW 1/4, construction of a new pit reservoir on the SE ¼ SE ¼ on an unnamed intermittent tributary of the Milk River, and the construction of boundary fence on Montana State Trust Lands.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – The Department would grant permission for the maintenance of an existing dam on the SE ¼ NW 1/4, construction of a new pit reservoir on the SE ¼ SE ¼ on an unnamed intermittent tributary of the Milk River, and the construction of boundary fence on Montana State Trust Lands.

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 in the project area are classified as having a severe hazard for rutting and having slight to moderate hazard for erosion from off road use. Rutting risk is primarily associated with the use of heavy equipment under wet conditions. To minimize impacts, all construction activities will be scheduled during dry periods when soils are least susceptible to compaction and rutting, and equipment traffic will be confined to designated work areas.

Soils show as being mostly well suited to fencing, somewhat limited for the construction of embankments, dikes, and levees and for shallow excavations. Proper construction and technique will need to be used, and construction will be limited to when the intermittent tributary is dry to avoid further erosion and soil disturbance. With these mitigation measures in place, no significant adverse effects to 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.

This project will improve the distribution of stock water in a dry area primarily used for cattle grazing. Additional water will be made available for use on State Trust Lands, improving livestock distribution, as there is currently only one source of water on the section. This will likely improve grazing management in tandem with the additional fencing. No significant impacts to local or regional water resources 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.

No significant impacts to air quality are anticipated from this project.

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 project will result in minor disturbance to approximately 0.5 acres of vegetation. Disturbed areas will be monitored for invasive and noxious species. No rare plants or unique cover types are present within the project area. Therefore, no significant impacts to vegetation 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 project area supports a variety of wildlife, including resident and migratory species associated with grasslands, sagebrush, wetlands, riparian areas, and forested habitats. Key species observed or known to occur in the area include greater sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), burrowing mammals such as black-tailed prairie dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*), and a range of migratory songbirds, raptors, and bat species. Additional water and habitat will be made available to wildlife through the construction of the pit reservoir.

Potential habitat disturbance will be minimized by restricting construction to dry periods, limiting equipment to designated work areas, and monitoring for invasive species. No significant long-term impacts to terrestrial, avian, or aquatic 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.

Several species of concern are present in the project area, including sage-grouse, other migratory and resident species dependent on sagebrush, grassland, riparian, and forested habitats. Mitigation measures, including timing construction after July 15, minimizing soil disturbance, and restoring native vegetation, are expected to prevent significant impacts.

A complete species list, including habitat and distribution data, is provided in Appendix B. Temporary displacement of wildlife may occur during construction, but no significant long-term impacts to unique, endangered, or sensitive species are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class I (literature review) level assessment was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the Area of Potential Effect (APE). This review included inspection of project maps, the DNRC sites/sites leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I assessment revealed that no antiquities have been identified within the APE. No additional archaeological investigations are planned in association with this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are discovered during project activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of the resources can be conducted.

No significant effects on historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources are anticipated.

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.

No significant impacts on visual or aesthetic qualities 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 limited environmental resources are expected to be significantly impacted by this project. Additionally, the project will not contribute to any significant cumulative demands on environmental resources.

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 currently being considered on the tracts identified in this EA Checklist.

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.

During construction, equipment operation may pose temporary hazards. The proponent will be responsible for implementing mitigation measures. No ongoing hazards are anticipated following construction.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The project will not alter existing industrial, agricultural, or commercial activities in the area.

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 project will not create or eliminate jobs. No significant effects on 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.

The project will not have direct or cumulative effects on tax revenues.

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 project will not result in significant increases in traffic or demand for government services such as schools, fire, or police protection.

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.

The proponent will need to contact the BLM for proper guidance in construction of the fence on the boundary line. There are no other zoning regulations or agency management plans that would affect this project.

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.

The project will not significantly affect access to, or the quality of, recreation and wilderness 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

The project will not affect population density or housing demand.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

The project will not significantly affect native, traditional, or community lifestyles.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The project will not significantly affect cultural uniqueness 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.

These improvements will improve water availability and distribution, as well as grazing management, on state trust lands. No significant cumulative economic or social effects are anticipated.

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (Proposed Action): The Department will grant permission for the maintenance of an existing dam on the SE ¼ NW ¼, construction of a new pit reservoir on the SE ¼ SE ¼ on an unnamed intermittent tributary of the Milk River, and the construction of boundary fence on Montana State Trust Lands.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

After evaluating potential environmental effects, it is determined that the project will not result in significant impacts to the environment.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	X	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Seth Oetken
	Title:	Land Use Specialist.
Signature:		**Date:** 6/29/26

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Josh Stoychoff
	Title:	Lewistown Unit Manager
Signature:		**Date:** 6/29/26

Appendix A: Soil Ratings

Table — Soil Rutting Hazard — Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Severe	646.1	100.0%
Totals for Area of Interest	**646.1**	**100.0%**

Table — Fencing — Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Well suited	626.8	97.0%
Poorly suited	19.3	3.0%
Totals for Area of Interest	**646.1**	**100.0%**

Table — Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail) — Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Slight	482.8	74.7%
Moderate	163.4	25.3%
Totals for Area of Interest	**646.1**	**100.0%**

Table — Embankments, Dikes, and Levees — Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

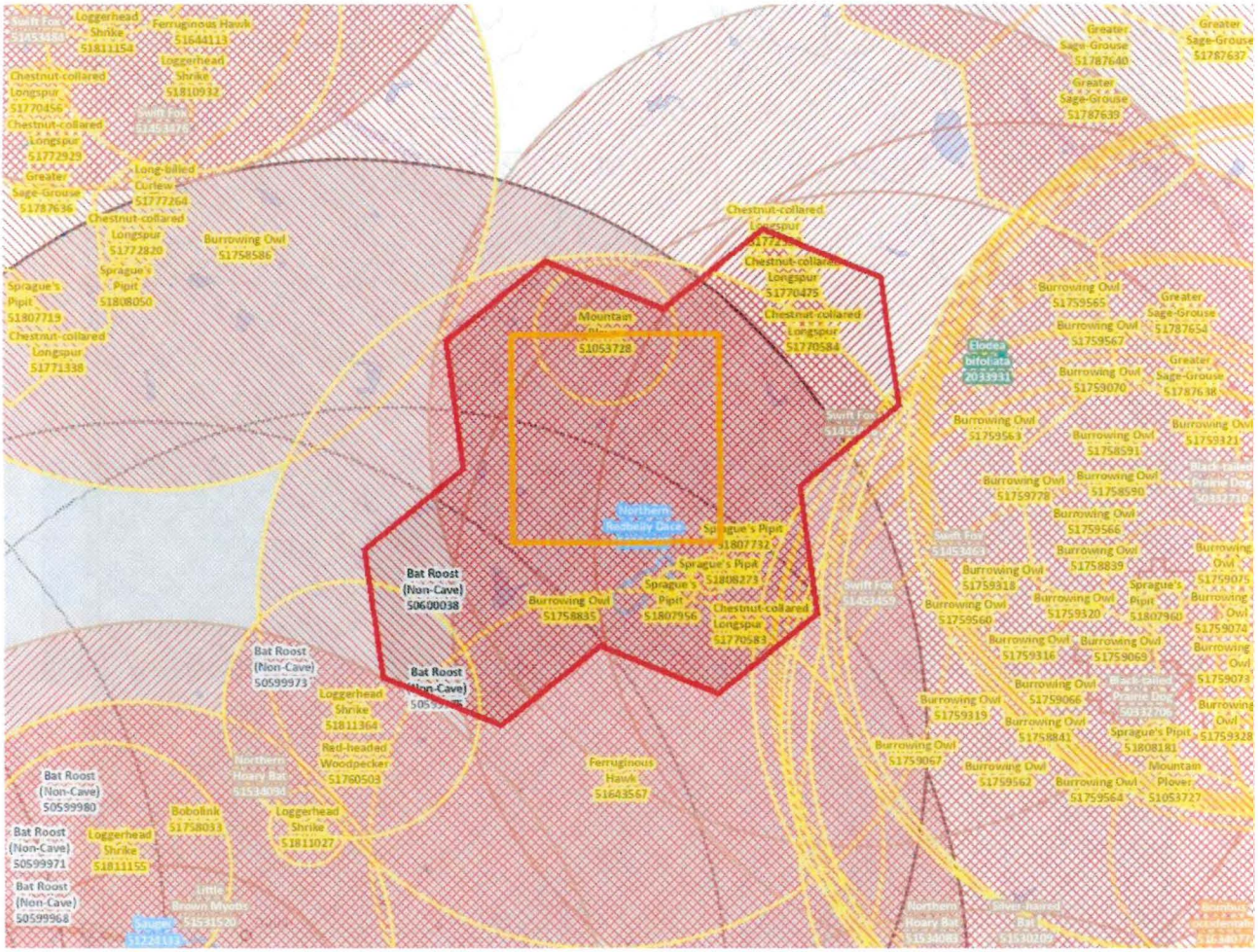
Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Somewhat limited	613.8	95.0%
Very limited	32.3	5.0%
Totals for Area of Interest	**646.1**	**100.0%**

Table — Shallow Excavations — Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Somewhat limited	482.8	74.7%
Very limited	163.4	25.3%
Totals for Area of Interest	**646.1**	**100.0%**

Appendix B: Species of Concern



Sort Or	Field Guide ELCODE	Species Gro	Common Name	Scientific Name
1	Field Guid AMAFB06010	Mammals	Black-tailed Prairie Dog	Cynomys ludovicianus
1	Field Guid AMACC01010	Mammals	Little Brown Myotis	Myotis lucifugus
1	Field Guid AMACC05032	Mammals	Northern Hoary Bat	Lasiurus cinereus
1	Field Guid AMACC02010	Mammals	Silver-haired Bat	Lasionycteris noctivagans
1	Field Guid AMAJA03030	Mammals	Swift Fox	Vulpes velox
2	Field Guid ABPBXA9010	Birds	Bobolink	Dolichonyx oryzivorus
2	Field Guid ABNSB10010	Birds	Burrowing Owl	Athene cunicularia
2	Field Guid ABPBXA6040	Birds	Chestnut-collared Longsp	Calcarius ornatus
2	Field Guid ABNKC19120	Birds	Ferruginous Hawk	Buteo regalis
2	Field Guid ABNLC12010	Birds	Greater Sage-Grouse	Centrocercus urophasianus
2	Field Guid ABPBR01030	Birds	Loggerhead Shrike	Lanius ludovicianus
2	Field Guid ABNNF07070	Birds	Long-billed Curlew	Numenius americanus
2	Field Guid ABNNB03100	Birds	Mountain Plover	Anarhynchus montanus
2	Field Guid ABNYF04040	Birds	Red-headed Woodpecker	Melanerpes erythrocephalu
2	Field Guid ABPBM02060	Birds	Sprague's Pipit	Anthus spragueii
2	Field Guid ABPBXA6010	Birds	Thick-billed Longspur	Rhynchophanes mccownii
5	Field Guid AFCQC02240	Fish	Iowa Darter	Etheostoma exile
5	Field Guid AFCJB54020	Fish	Northern Pearl Dace	Margariscus nachtriebi
5	Field Guid AFCJB31020	Fish	Northern Redbelly Dace	Chrosomus eos
5	Field Guid AFCQC05010	Fish	Sauger	Sander canadensis
6	Field Guid IIHYM24252	Invertebra	Western Bumble Bee	Bombus occidentalis
7	Field Guid PMHYD03010	Vascular P	Long-sheath Waterweed	Elodea bifoliata

Agreement Tract 6015, SESE Quarter

Legend

- Township
- Section
- Quarter Sections

N

Scale: 1:2,500

0 0.05 0.1 Miles

Map created 5/21/2026
Map for reference only