CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Mark Fix Stock Water Well
Proposed Implementation Date:	2023
Proponent:	Mark Fix
Location:	T5N-R47E-Sec 16
County:	Custer County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Mark Fix, heretofore referred to as proponent, has requested of the DNRC Eastern Land Office permission to construct a well and stock tank on state owned tract T5N-R47E-Sec 16

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 proponent has requested that the DNRC allow the drilling of a stock water well and placement of a stock water tank. DNRC staff has evaluated this site, and due to the small scope and nature of this request, no public comment was sought. The Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program was not consulted as this activity is exempt under EO 10-2014 and EO 12-2015. If approved the proponent will submit a DS-405 improvement form as well as the drillers log for filing of the water right.

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

DNRC-Water Rights Division

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A- Grant request for the project.

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- Disturbance of the soil will occur through the drilling of the well and placement of the tanks, but effects should be minimal. There should be no lasting adverse effects to the soil quality, stability or moisture. The soil structures are not fragile or unstable; soils are silty/sandy loam type.

Alternative B-No Impact

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 would be utilized for stock watering purposes. Effects to groundwater quantity should be minimal. No effect to water quality is expected.

Alternative B- No Impact

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- Pollutants and Particulates may be increased during the construction of the project. After the completion of the project pollutant and particulate levels should return to normal preconstruction levels. Increase in pollutants during construction should be almost negligible.

Alternative B- No Impact

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- Where the construction takes place there may be disturbance to the vegetation cover. Potential disruption to the vegetative community within the area of construction could be expected. Current plant species which occupy the construction area include: Western Wheatgrass (Agropyron Smithii), Green Needlegrass (Stipa Viridula), Needle and Thread (Stipa comata), Prairie Junegrass (Koleria pyramidata), Blue Grama (Bouteloua gracilis), The disturbance of these plant species should be minimal, and the area should revegetate naturally within two years.

Alternative B- No Impact

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- There should be very minimal effect on any animal habitats within the boundaries of the project construction area. Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed during the construction of the project. After completion of the project wildlife usage should return to pre-construction levels. Wildlife should benefit from the increased water source.

Alternative B- No Impact

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 Database showed the following species of concern in the general project area:

Black-tailed Prairie Dog(Cynomys ludovicianus)
Ferruginous Hawk(Buteo regalis)
Golden Eagle(Aquila chrysaetos)
Greater Sage-Grouse(Centrocercus urophasianus)
Great Plains Toad(Anaxyrus cognatus)

While these species may be present in the general project area, no significant direct impacts to this species or its habitat are expected as a result of this project. This project is located within designated Greater Sage Grouse General Habitat but is an exempt activity under EO 10-2014 and EO 12-2015.

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- No historical or archeological sites were noted within the proposed lease area upon field inspection and a review of the TLMS database. 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 revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. Because little ground disturbance is expected with the proposed project and because the local geology is not likely to produce caves, rock shelters, or sources of tool stone, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted. 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-No impacts expected
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- Use of groundwater resources for stock water purposes is expected. Cumulative effects to ground water resources should be minimal.

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.

None

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.

Alternative A- There may be risks to human health and safety in the construction of the project, but this should be done by experienced operators. Safety concerns should be minimized with proper safety protocol employed by the workers.

Alternative B- No impact

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

Alternative A- It should have a positive effect on Agricultural Activities and Production in the area.

Alternative B- No Impact

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 impacts expected.

Alternative B- No Impact

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 Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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 expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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 Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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 Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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 Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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- This development of water in this pasture should financially benefit the trust indirectly. Development of water on this tract will allow the trust to benefit through increased grazing rental.

Alternative B- No Impact

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Aaron Kneeland	Date: 7-12-2023
	Title: Land Use Specialist	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative A

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The granting of the requested action on state owned trust lands for the proposed Fix stock water project should not result in nor cause significant environmental impacts. The predicted impacts will be adequately mitigated through the construction and reclamation plans. The proposed action helps ensure 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	[X]	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Scott Aye	
	Title: ELO Land Program Manager	
Signature: /s/ Scott Aye		Date: 7-12-2023