

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	HAUER & HENNEN LAND & CATTLE LLC, NRCS Fence Replacement project.
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2026
Proponent:	Scott Hauer
Location:	T22N R20E Sec. 10 – NE4NE4, SE4NE4, SW4NE4
County:	Fergus
Trust:	Commons Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Scott Hauer of H & H Land and Cattle is working with NRCS's RCPP Program to replace existing fence to meet wildlife friendly specifications. This project located at T22N R20E Sec. 10 – NE4NE4, SE4NE4 and SW4NE4 will cross State lease 4656 and 10451. Both of which are held by H & H Land and Cattle. This project was originally planned as revamp of the existing fence. Where the fence would remain on its original line and wires and broken posts would be replaced. However, a modification has been requested to update the fence route to a straight line from the NE corner of section 10 to the SW corner of the SW4NE4. This amendment will shorten the overall length of the fence, requiring less overall material. It will also improve efficiency during installation and benefit livestock handling practices.

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: Scott Hauer
Surface Lessees: HAUER & HENNEN LAND & CATTLE LLC
Other: Patrick Rennie (DNRC Archaeologist), Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team (MSGOT)

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

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) has jurisdiction over this proposed project. The project will be administered by the Lewistown Unit of the DNRC Northeastern Land Office.

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

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant LTS Telecommunication Services (USA) Inc. the request Utility Right of Way Easement.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department approves Scot Hauer's request to modify the location of the existing fence that is a part of his NRCS project.

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.

See appendix A for additional soil information.

All soils in the project area are rated as very limited for fencing with post depth up to 24 inches. This is based off the ease of setting posts in the soil, the ease of maintaining the wire tension, and the estimated replacement and maintenance costs. For soils in the project areas the clay component, shrink- swell potential and salinity which will corrode steel posts are the major factors contributing to the very limited rating.

The most limiting soil characteristic in the project area is rutting hazard. Soils are rated as severe for rutting hazards, when exposed to equipment operation. This is due to all soils having weak soil structure. To mitigate this hazard, operations will be restricted to dry periods when the soil is most stable.

The final key soil characteristic to monitor is off trail erosion hazards. This assessment of soil characteristics looks at potential soil loss by sheet and rill erosion, following a disturbance. Soil in the project area are rated as slight to moderate for potential soil erosion. The key difference for soils rated as moderate is slope which increases the rainfall erosivity potential. To mitigate potential impacts, operations are to be limited periods of favorable dry weather, and re-seed disturbed areas if necessary.

No significant cumulative impacts to geology or soil quality, stability, and moisture 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.

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.

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.

If re-seeding is necessary the proponent will acquire certified, weed free seed and refer to the Plant Materials Tech Note No. MT-46 (Rev. 4) dated September 2013 for seeding rates.

No rare plants or cover types are present. 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.

No significant 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.

See Appendix B for Species of Concern maps.

The primary species of concern across all three project locations is the Greater Sage-Grouse. Consultation through the Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program was completed and they outlined mitigation and recommendations to limit disturbance of the species.

Additional species of concern identified in the area are 4 species of bats which should not be impacted by the construction of the fence.

No significant impacts to unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources are anticipated, though temporary displacement of local wildlife may occur during the project.

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 no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE.

Because the proposed fencing project has an extremely low likelihood of significantly impacting cultural or palaeontologic resources, the proposed will 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, they should be reported to the DNRC archaeologist.

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 the aesthetics of the area 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 will be significantly impacted because of this project. This project will also not add any significant cumulative demands to 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 being considered on the tracts listed 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.

The main risk to human health and safety would be during the construction of the project. It would be the responsibility of the proponent to mitigate any risks during construction.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

This project will not add to or deter from other industrial or commercial activities in the area. It will improve agricultural activities through increased efficiency

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 any jobs, no significant effects 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 not be any significant increases in traffic, school attendance, or need for fire and police protection if this project is approved.

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.

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting 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.

There will be no significant direct or cumulative effects on access to or quality of recreation and wilderness activities because of this project.

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 proposed project does not include any changes to housing or developments.

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 significantly 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 significant impact on any culturally 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 project will not have any significant cumulative economic or social effect.

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department approves Scot Hauer's request to modify the location of the proposed fence that is a part of his NRCS project.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined no significant impact to the environment because of this project.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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EIS

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More Detailed EA

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No Further Analysis

**EA Checklist
Prepared By:**

Name: Cole Stumpf

Title: Land Use Specialist

Signature:



Date:

6 Oct. 2026

**EA Checklist
Approved By:**

Name: Josh Stoychoff

Title: Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office

Signature:

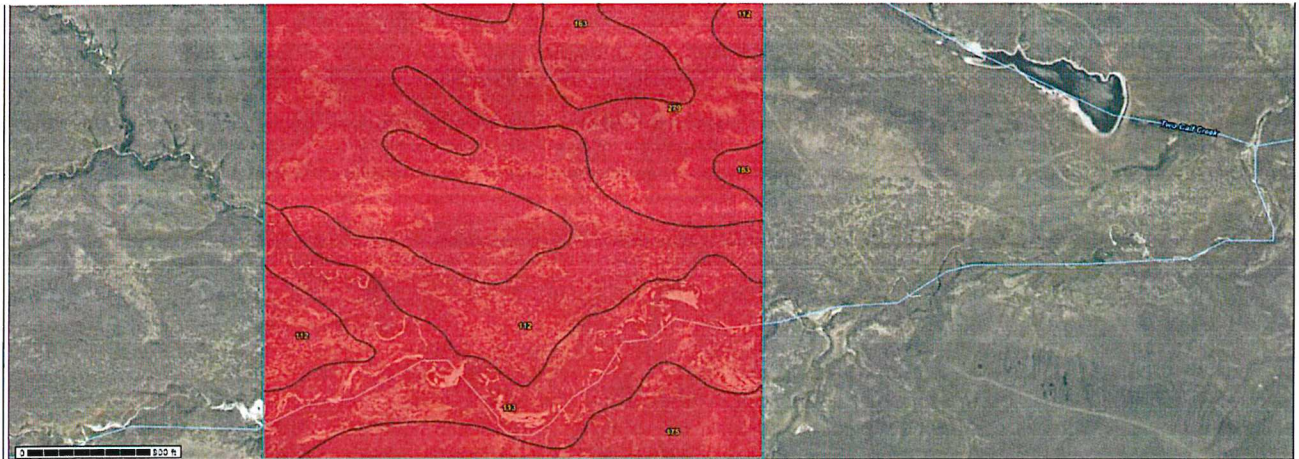


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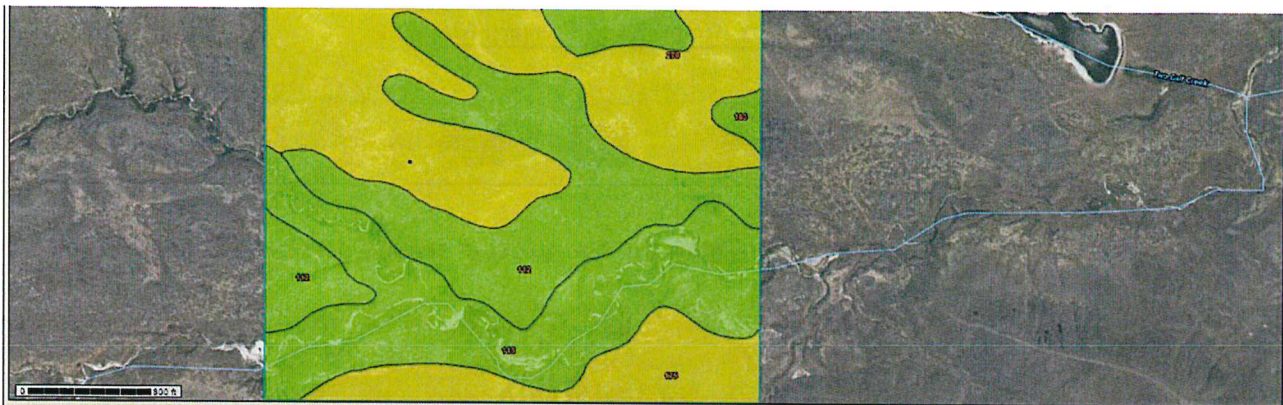
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Appendix A: Soils Data

Table — Fencing, Post Depth 24 Inches or Less — Summary by Rating Value			
Summary by Rating Value			
Summary by Rating Value	Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Very limited		238.6	100.0%
Null or Not Rated		0.0	0.0%
Totals for Area of Interest		238.6	100.0%
Description — Fencing, Post Depth 24 Inches or Less			
GRL - Grazing Lands Fencing is the construction and maintenance of barriers for the management of animals and people. Metal or wooden posts are used when the fences are built. This interpretation is applicable where the posts are set to a depth of 24 inches or less in the soil and strands of wire are suspended between the posts. Ratings are based on the ease of setting posts in the soil, the ease of maintaining the wire tension, and the estimated replacement and maintenance costs. Excavations for wooden posts are made by power augers or are hand dug. Metal posts are driven into the soil. Depth to bedrock or a cemented pan and the content of large and small stones influence the excavation of postholes and the driving of posts. Flooding and the depth to a seasonal high water table may restrict the season of construction. Flooding also increases maintenance and replacement costs. High water tables increase maintenance costs and require deeper post settings. In areas of soils that have a high shrink-swell potential, deep post settings or rock jacks are needed to maintain vertical post alignment. Setting the posts in permanently frozen soil may result in loss of the insulation qualities of the soil and in thermokarst topography. In areas of sandy soils, aligning the posts and maintaining the desired wire tension commonly are difficult because of low soil strength. Soil blowing causes maintenance problems. Frost action results in frost heaving of the posts. Steep slopes restrict the use of power augers and the delivery of supplies. On steep slopes, surface creep during wet periods increases maintenance costs. Soil reaction and salinity affect the type of post selected and increase maintenance costs. The ratings are both verbal and numerical. Rating class terms indicate the extent to which the soils are limited by all of the soil features that affect the specified use. "Not limited" indicates that the soil has features that are very favorable for the specified use. Good performance and very low maintenance can be expected. "Limited" indicates that the soil has features that are moderately favorable for the specified use. The limitations can be overcome or minimized by special planning, design, or installation. Fair performance and moderate maintenance can be expected. "Very limited" indicates that the soil has one or more features that are unfavorable for the specified use. The limitations generally cannot be overcome without major soil reclamation, special design, or expensive installation procedures. Poor performance and high maintenance can be expected. Numerical ratings indicate the severity of individual limitations. The ratings are shown as decimal fractions ranging from 0.01 to 1.00. They indicate gradations between the point at which a soil feature has the greatest negative impact on the use (1.00) and the point at which the soil feature is not a limitation (0.00). The map unit components listed for each map unit in the accompanying Summary by Map Unit table in Web Soil Survey or the Aggregation Report in Soil Data Viewer are determined by the aggregation method chosen. An aggregated rating class is shown for each map unit. The components listed for each map unit are only those that have the same rating class as listed for the map unit. The percent composition of each component in a particular map unit is presented to help the user better understand the percentage of each map unit that has the rating presented. Other components with different ratings may be present in each map unit. The ratings for all components, regardless of the map unit aggregated rating, can be viewed by generating the equivalent report from the Soil Reports tab in Web Soil Survey or from the Soil Data Mart site. Onsite investigation may be needed to validate these interpretations and to confirm the identity of the soil on a given site.			



Tables — Soil Rutting Hazard — Summary By Map Unit
Table — Soil Rutting Hazard — Summary by Rating Value
Description — Soil Rutting Hazard
FOR - Forestry The ratings in this interpretation indicate the hazard of surface rut formation through the operation of forestland equipment. Soil displacement and puddling (soil deformation and compaction) may occur simultaneously with rutting. Ratings are based on depth to a water table, rock fragments on or below the surface, the Unified classification of the soil, depth to a restrictive layer, and slope. The hazard is described as slight, moderate, or severe. A rating of "slight" indicates that the soil is subject to little or no rutting. "Moderate" indicates that rutting is likely. "Severe" indicates that ruts form readily. Numerical ratings indicate the severity of individual limitations. The ratings are shown as decimal fractions ranging from 0.01 to 1.00. They indicate gradations between the point at which a soil feature has the greatest negative impact on the specified aspect of forestland management (1.00) and the point at which the soil feature is not a limitation (0.00). The map unit components listed for each map unit in the accompanying Summary by Map Unit table in Web Soil Survey or the Aggregation Report in Soil Data Viewer are determined by the aggregation method chosen. An aggregated rating class is shown for each map unit. The components listed for each map unit are only those that have the same rating class as listed for the map unit. The percent composition of each component in a particular map unit is presented to help the user better understand the percentage of each map unit that has the rating presented. Other components with different ratings may be present in each map unit. The ratings for all components, regardless of the map unit aggregated rating, can be viewed by generating the equivalent report from the Soil Reports tab in Web Soil Survey or from the Soil Data Mart site. Onsite investigation may be needed to validate these interpretations and to confirm the identity of the soil on a given site.



Warning: Soil Ratings Map may not be valid at this scale.

Tables — Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail) — Summary By Map Unit

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

Description — Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail)

The ratings in this Interpretation indicate the hazard of soil loss from off-road and off-trail areas after disturbance activities that expose the soil surface. The ratings are based on slope, soil erosion factor K, and an index of rainfall erosivity (R). The soil loss is caused by sheet or rill erosion in off-road or off-trail areas where 50 to 75 percent of the surface has been exposed by logging, grazing, mining, or other kinds of disturbance.

The ratings are both verbal and numerical. The hazard is described as "slight," "moderate," "severe," or "very severe." A rating of "slight" indicates that erosion is unlikely under ordinary climatic conditions; "moderate" indicates that some erosion is likely and that erosion-control measures may be needed; "severe" indicates that erosion is very likely and that erosion-control measures, including revegetation of bare areas, are advised; and "very severe" indicates that significant erosion is expected, loss of soil productivity and off-site damage are likely, and erosion-control measures are costly and generally impractical.

Numerical ratings indicate the severity of individual limitations. The ratings are shown as decimal fractions ranging from 0.01 to 1.00. They indicate gradations between the point at which a soil feature has the greatest negative impact on the specified aspect of forestland management (1.00) and the point at which the soil feature is not a limitation (0.00).

The map unit components listed for each map unit in the accompanying Summary by Map Unit table in Web Soil Survey or the Aggregation Report in Soil Data Viewer are determined by the aggregation method chosen. An aggregated rating class is shown for each map unit. The components listed for each map unit are only those that have the same rating class as listed for the map unit. The percent composition of each component in a particular map unit is presented to help the user better understand the percentage of each map unit that has the rating presented.

Other components with different ratings may be present in each map unit. The ratings for all components, regardless of the map unit aggregated rating, can be viewed by generating the equivalent report from the Soil Reports tab in Web Soil Survey or from the Soil Data Mart site. Onsite investigation may be needed to validate these interpretations and to confirm the identity of the soil on a given site.

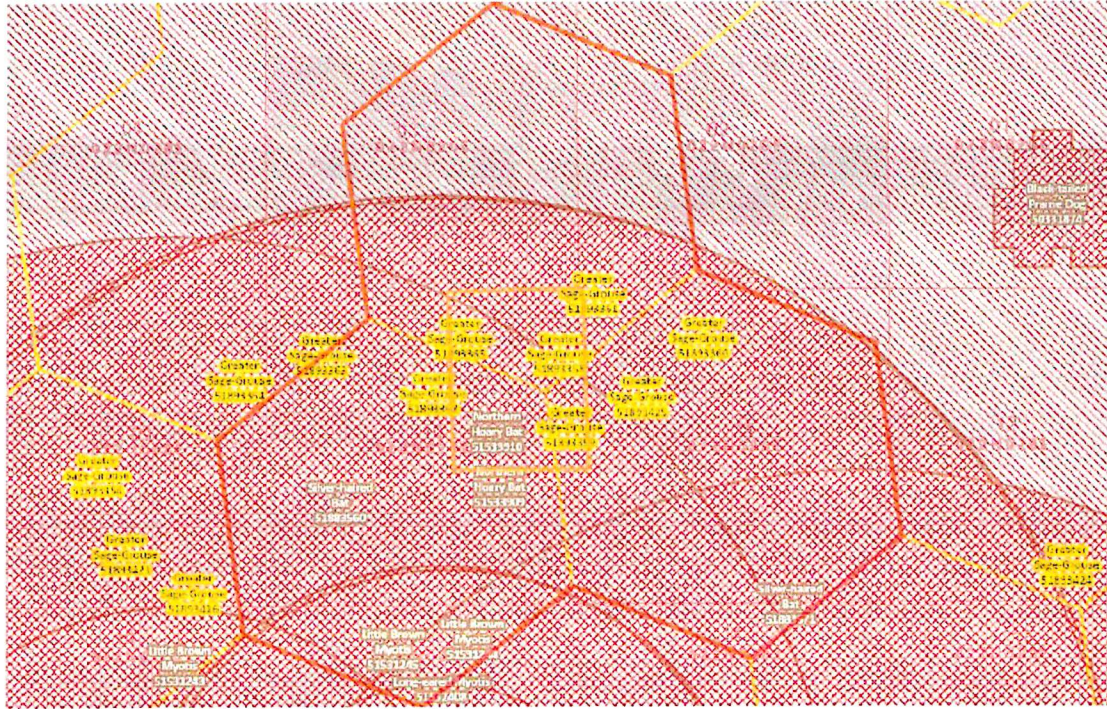
Appendix B: Species of Concern Maps

Native Species

Summarized by: (Custom Area of Interest)

Filtered by:

Native Species reports are filtered for Species with MT Status = Species of Concern, Special Status, Important Animal Habitat, Species of Potential Concern



Species Occurrences

Spec	Reps	# SO	# Obs	Predicted Model	Range
B - Greater Sage-Grouse (<i>Centrocercus urophasianus</i>)	SO	12			
View in MONTANA FIELD GUIDE™ View Predicted Models View Range Maps USFS: Sensitive - Known in Forests (BD) BLM: SENSITIVE FWP SWAP: SGCN FIF: 1 Species of Concern - Native Species Global: G3 State: S2 Species of Conservation Concern in Forests (CG)					
Delineation Criteria: Confirmed breeding area based on the presence of a nest, chicks, juveniles, or adults on a lek. Point observations are mapped in the center of a one-square mile hexagon to protect the exact locations of leks. The outer edges of this hexagon are then buffered by a distance of 6,400 meters in order to encompass a body of research indicating that females typically nest within this distance of a lek and that lek numbers are negatively impacted by fossil fuel drilling activities within this distance of a lek. If the locational uncertainty associated with the observation is greater than 5,000 meters, the observation is not valid for creation of a species occurrence. All of the one-square mile hexagons intersecting this buffered area are presented as the Species Occurrence record. (Last Updated: Jul 25, 2026) Predicted Models: 100% Moderate (inductive), 0% Low (inductive)					
M - Little Brown Myotis (<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>)	SO	3			
View in MONTANA FIELD GUIDE™ View Predicted Models View Range Maps USFS: Sensitive - Known in Forests (BD, BRT, K00T) FWP SWAP: SGCN Species of Concern - Native Species Global: G3G4 State: S2S3					
Delineation Criteria: Confirmed area of occupancy based on the documented presence (mistnet captures, definitively identified acoustic recordings, or definitively identified roosting individuals) of adults or juveniles. Point observation location is buffered by a distance of 1,600 meters in order to encompass the greater than 1,500 meters foraging distance reported for the species in New Brunswick, Canada and otherwise buffered by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 5,000 meters. When cave locations are involved, point observations are mapped in the center of a one-square mile hexagon to protect the exact location of the cave entrance as per the Federal Cave Resource Protection Act and associated regulations (U.S. Code Title 16 Chapter 63, Code of Federal Regulations Title 43 Subtitle A Part 37). The outer edges of the hexagon are then buffered by a distance of 1,600 meters and otherwise by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 5,000 meters. All of the one-square mile hexagons intersecting this buffered area are presented as the Species Occurrence record. (Last Updated: Sep 24, 2025)					