

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: DNRC - City of Libby Lower Flower Creek Reservoir staging area Alternative Practice
Proposed Implementation Date: September 28, 2026
Proponent: Montana DNRC & City of Libby
Location: Section 16, T30N R31W (48°21'23.95"N, 115°34'00.89"W)
County: Lincoln

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Due to severe flooding during December 2025, it has been identified that the lower Flower Creek reservoir dam and spillway have been compromised. To facilitate the repairs and replacement of the dam, additional parking and staging area need to be cleared of trees and a staging area of 0.38 acres constructed. This proposed staging area lies completely within the SMZ of Flower Creek.

While an Alternative Practice would typically be used to modify a silvicultural practice during a commercial logging activity, the intent of this proposal is to change the use of the land from a forested site to develop the site to support city infrastructure. This Alternative Practice would allow the operation of wheeled or tracked equipment in a streamside management zone, removal of all vegetation, both commercial and non-commercial, and allow the construction of a road and staging area within the SMZ. The proposed action would impact 0.38 acres of SMZ, both sides of approximately 175 lineal feet of a side channel and one side of approximately 75 feet of the main channel would be impacted. 48 commercial sized trees would need to be removed and would be sold. Stumps would be dug out and hauled away along with the slash. Clean fill would be hauled onto the site to build up the parking and staging area.

The project would impact fish habitat by increasing likelihood of sedimentation into Flower Creek, the reduction of shade thus increasing water temperature, and the removal of coarse woody debris recruitment material that complex streambeds require.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.

DNRC trust lands was consulted in mid-September 2026 by the City of Libby. The City of Libby was recently made aware of the dam's condition by the DNRC's dam safety visit. City of Libby has handled all public involvement.

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

Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.

City of Libby is working w/ the landowner, DNRC, to secure authorization to construct this on DNRC trust lands. City of Libby is working to obtain an SMZ Alternative Practice to comply with the SMZ law. City of Libby is working with the Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks to obtain a 124 permit. The City of Libby is not aware of any other permits needed from the DNRC, DEQ, USACE, or Conservation District (per phone call with Sam Sikes 9/22/2026).

3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

There would be none to minor anticipated impacts to terrestrial, and avian resources. Aquatic resources would have a reduction in habitat within this 0.38 acre impacted area, however the impacts are not likely to be significant downstream from the development site.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

Threatened or endangered species such as bull trout may use this reach of stream and its habitat is likely to be diminished. The lower Flower Creek dam is a fish barrier thus the impact would be minimal in scope.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

No impacts to historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources are expected.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No impacts to aesthetics are expected.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No limited resources will be used for this project. There are no other activities nearby that will affect the project.

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 known other environmental documents pertinent to this area.

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.*

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to population and housing.

This activity would have no impact to density or distribution of population and housing.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There would be no anticipated changes to social structures.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

Cultural uniqueness and diversity would not be affected.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

There are no unique social or economic qualities on this site.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jeremy Rank	Date: 9/22/2026
	Title: Service Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The Action Alternative is selected. Issue Alternative Practice that allows operation of wheeled and tracked equipment within the SMZ, harvest of all trees within the 0.38-acre development site, removal of sub-merchantable trees and brush as well as construction of the staging area within the SMZ. This would allow City of Libby to meet their state need. Mitigate impacts to the stream by employing straw waddles or sediment fencing around the perimeter of the disturbed site and vegetating with grass seed promptly.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

All action alternatives have the potential to have impacts to the land or water resources. This action alternative proposes to both minimize these impacts while still allowing management activities to proceed. The application of mitigation measures and BMPs will minimize impact to water quality.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

☐ EIS ☐ More Detailed EA ☒ No Further Analysis

Tree Locations

