# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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|---|---|
| **Project Name:** | Three Bar Ranch – Buffalo Creek Crossing |
| **Proposed Implementation Date:** | February 2026 |
| **Proponent:** | Three Bar Ranch Inc. |
| **Location:** | NE4NE4 – Sec.36, T13N R15E |
| **County:** | Fergus |
| **Trust:** | Common Schools |

## I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Josh Sanofsky, the manager of Three Bar Ranch Inc., submitted an improvement request to install a culvert crossing across Buffalo Creek. This crossing will primarily be used by UTV's while conducting lease management practices and assist in grazing management by encouraging

## 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: Three Bar Ranch Inc.
Surface Lessees: Three Bar Ranch Inc
Other: Fergus Conservation District, FWP- Fisheries Biologist

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

The DNRC has jurisdiction over this proposed project, the project would be administered by the Lewistown Unit of the Northeastern Land Office.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring a 310 Permit with Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks approval for the proposed project and settle all surface damages with the surface lessees.

### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Alternative A (No Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant the improvement request.

**Alternative B (the Proposed Action)** – Under this alternative, the Department authorizes the installation of a culvert crossing across Buffalo Creek as requested by Three Bar Ranch Inc.

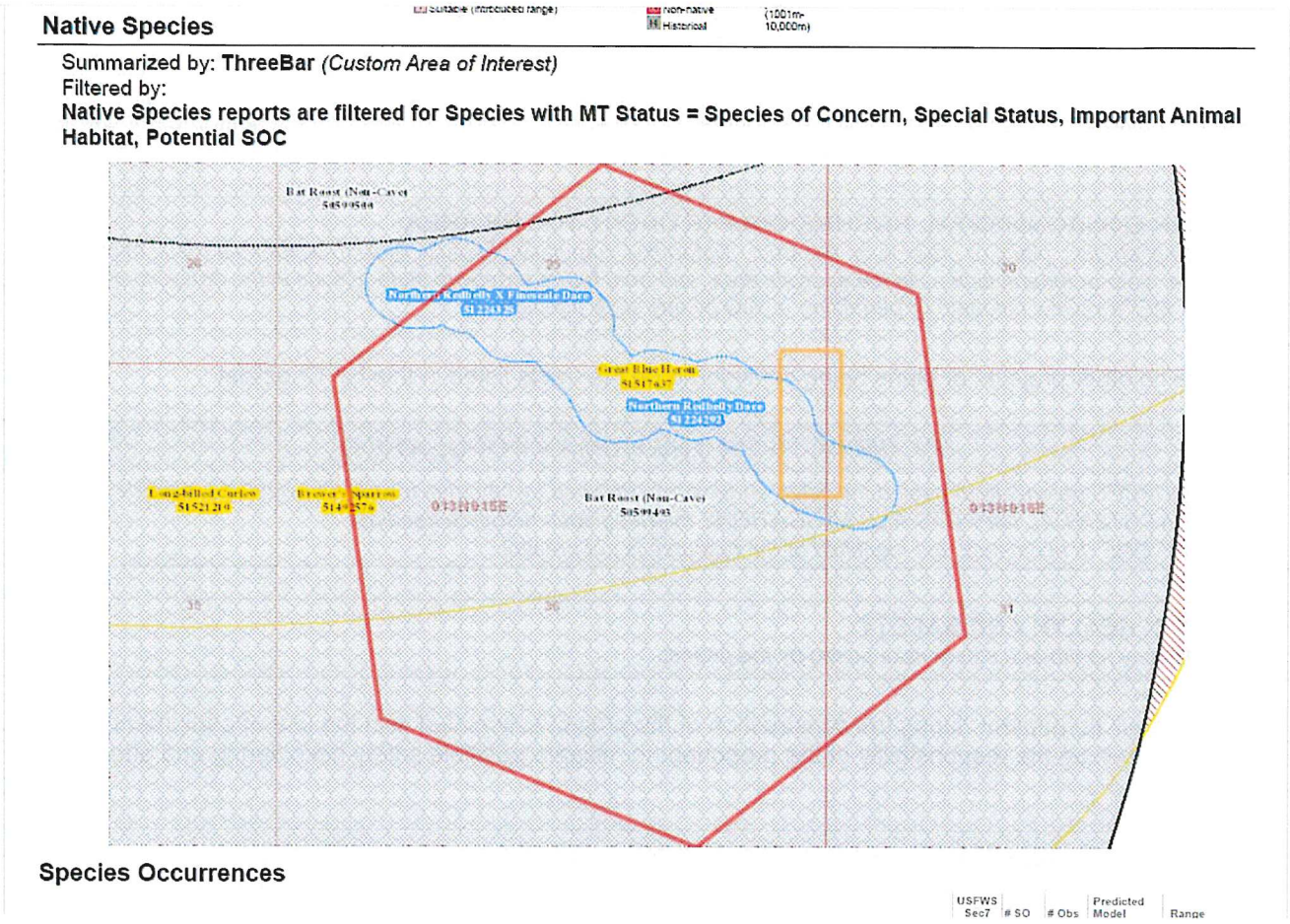
## III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *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 the map below for possible species of concern in the area. Additional species of concern information is available in appendix B.




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 revealed that *Antiquities* have not been identified in the APE. 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.

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.*

**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.*

Once completed this culvert crossing will provide recreationists and easy way to walk across Buffalo Creek, improving access to the State Land south of the creek.

There will be a slight improvement to 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 authorizes the installation of a culvert crossing across Buffalo Creek as requested by Three Bar Ranch Inc.

**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.

# Appendix A: Soil Data

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

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

**Summary by Rating Value**

Summary by Rating Value

| Rating | Acres in AOI | Percent of AOI |
|---|---|---|
| Slight | 30.0 | 73.6% |
| Null or Not Rated | 10.8 | 26.4% |
| **Totals for Area of Interest** | **40.8** | **100.0%** |

**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.

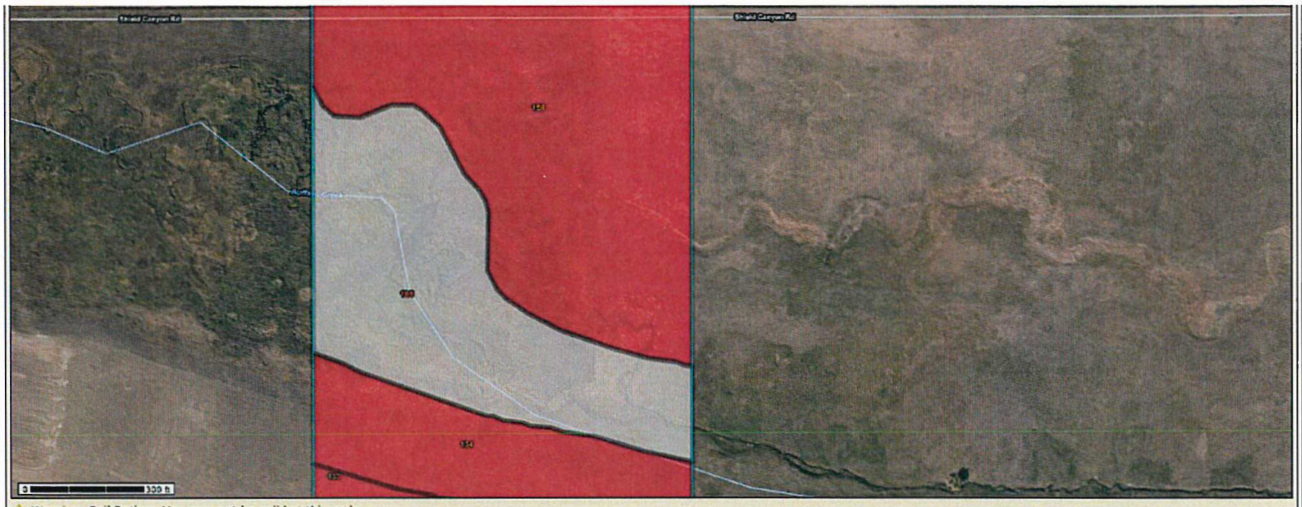
Other components with different ratings may be present in each map unit. The ratings for all components, regardless of the map unit aggregated rating, can be viewed by generating the equivalent report from the Soil Reports tab in Web Soil Survey or from the Soil Data Mart site. Onsite investigation may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

**Rating Options — Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail)**

**Aggregation Method:** Dominant Condition

**Component Percent Cutoff:** *None Specified*

**Tie-break Rule:** Higher



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

**Tables — Soil Rutting Hazard — Summary By Map Unit**

**Table — Soil Rutting Hazard — Summary by Rating Value**

**Summary by Rating Value**

Summary by Rating Value

| Rating | Acres in AOI | Percent of AOI |
|---|---|---|
| Severe | 29.6 | 72.4% |
| Slight | 0.5 | 1.1% |
| Null or Not Rated | 10.8 | 26.4% |
| **Totals for Area of Interest** | **40.8** | **100.0%** |

**Description — Soil Rutting Hazard**

**Appendix C: Project Map**

Culvert is planned to be installed at point 1.