

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Dry Fork Road Culvert Replacement for ROW 6734
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2024
Proponent:	Roger Solberg, Malta Field Office, Northcentral Montana District Bureau of Land Management
Location:	T24 N R26E Section 36 (SE4 NW4)
County:	Phillips
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Proponent Roger Solberg, Malta Field Office, Bureau of Land Management North Central Montana District is seeking approval to replace two existing two 48-inch diameter corrugated steel pipe culverts on the Dry Fork Road in South Phillips County. These culverts are failing and will be replaced with a new 96-inch diameter Polymer Coated CSP culvert.

To accomplish this task, construction will take place outside of the roads existing 50-foot easement on either side of its centerline. A detour road will be temporarily installed for traffic use during the construction process. Following the completion of this project, this temporary road will be reclaimed to its original condition and contours and topsoil will be replaced over the entire disturbed area. Equipment anticipated to be used on this project include scraper, dozer, excavator, and motorized sheepsfoot compactor.

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) & Glasgow Unit Office
Proponent: Roger Solberg, Malta Field Office, NCMD Bureau Of Land Management
Surface Lessees: Lazy JD Cattle Company, Jim C Robinson, President
Other:

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

Montana DNRC-Real Estate Management Bureau, and the Glasgow Unit, Northeastern Land Office have jurisdiction over this proposed project.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

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

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant this request to allow workspace necessary to facilitate replacement of the existing culvert on the Dry Fork Road in south Phillips County.

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.

Sunburst-Bascovy-Neldore complex soils and Bascovy-Neldore clay soils predominate this proposed area of use. On the peripheral edges of the proposed site are Thoeny-Elloam-Absher complex soils on relatively flat slopes.

Worksite area (bypass route) will be reclaimed and reseeded as necessary. The proponent will be responsible for the management, mitigation and elimination of invasive weeds introduced or propagated from this activity. The proponent will be responsible for reseeding the disturbed area with the certified weed free seed mixture approved by the Glasgow Unit office.

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.

Surface Water: an unnamed tributary to Beauchamp Creek, an ephemeral stream, flows through Section 36 and joins Beauchamp Creek in SE4, SE4 of Section 25. Some summer thunderstorm activity may have a local effect on the proposed area. No significant long-term effects are anticipated through the anticipated timeframe for completion of the proposed project.

Ground Water: A search of the Montana Ground Water Information Center's website found no water wells in the area.

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.

Emission sources in the project area primarily include vehicles traveling on adjacent county roads and agricultural producers. Fugitive dust from vehicle travel on other adjacent gravel roads contributes small amounts of airborne particulate matter in the area.

Decreased air quality in the area may occur during the project but will have no cumulative effects to air quality. Revegetation of the disturbed area will negate the air quality effects in the longer term.

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.

According to the Montana Natural Heritage Program the proposed testing area is covered by the Glaciated Northern Grassland system.

An inventory of the Montana Natural Heritage Program's Species of Concern database was conducted for the project area. The search yielded no vegetative species of concern. There are no long-term adverse effects anticipated for this project.

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 proposed area falls within the BLM defined Priority Habitat Management Area and falls under the State of Montana Executive Order Core Area for Sage Grouse. Short term avoidance of the area may occur, but the proposed timeframe is outside of normal breeding and nesting timeframes.

Other species occurrence from Montana NHP observations include mountain plover, black tailed prairie dogs, Brewer's sparrow, Burrowing Owl, Long billed Curlew, and Cassin's Finch.

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.

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

Other species occurrence from Montana NHP observations include mountain plover, black tailed prairie dogs, Brewer's sparrow, Burrowing Owl Long Billed Curlew, and Cassin's Finch.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

There are no recorded cultural observations on this tract and the activity of replacing an existing culvert in a previously disturbed site should not do additional historical, cultural, or paleontological resource harm.

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 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 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.

There will be an increase in equipment usage along the Dry Fork road during this repair period. There is minimal potential for individual harm to occur.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

This project will replace a corrugated 48" Corrugated Steel Pipe culvert that is failing with a new 96" polymer coated Corrugated Steel Pipe during mid to late summer of 2024. This project should have minimal impact on the usage of this road due to construction of a temporary bypass during the project timeframe.

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, so 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 is 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 qualities 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:

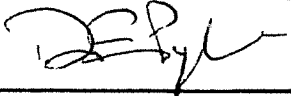
Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does grant this request to allow workspace necessary to facilitate replacement of the existing culvert on the Dry Fork Road in south Phillips County.


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:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Don Pyrah Title: Glasgow Unit Manager
Signature: 	Date: March 28, 2024

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Clive Rooney Title: Area Manager, Northeastern Land Office
Signature: 	Date: 3/28/24