

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Cargill Land Co. Stock Water Pipeline System Land Use License #309-2400057
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2024
Proponent:	Chelcie Cargill - Lessee of Lease #2113
Location:	Section 36, Township 4 North, Range 14 East
County:	Sweet Grass (Common Schools Trust)

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Chelcie Cargill of Cargill Land Co. is applying for a Land Use License for the purpose of installing a stockwater pipeline system across her leased state land with two stock tanks in Section 36, Township 4 North, Range 14 East. The water point of origin is located on private land belonging to the Cargill Land Co. and the pipeline will traverse the State Trust Land section to end on private land. (See attached map)

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) Southern Land Office
Chelcie Cargill owner of Cargill Land Co., Lessee of State Lease #2113
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)- Levi Gage- Liaison

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

The proponent/lessee will be required to notify the Montana 811 system at least 48 hours in advance of excavating at the site to ensure that all underground utilities have been properly located and marked.

No other government permits are needed affecting this section of State Trust Land

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Deny the Land Use License for authorization to the Cargill Land Co. to install a stock water pipeline development with two stock tanks in the above-described tract.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Issue the Land Use License for authorization to the Cargill Land Co. for the purpose of installing a stockwater pipeline development with two stock tanks in the above-described tract.

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.

The soils consist predominantly of sandy to clay loams. The rating on web soil survey indicates that these soils can be unsuited (9.0%) to well suited (90.1%) to shallow excavation. Once construction is finished, the affected area will be reseeded with native grasses to reduce erosion. Various pipelines in the area show that with post

installation reclamation, these soils are capable of handling such an action. Construction will only be completed during dry conditions to minimize damage to the immediate area.

These soils are described as being at moderate to severe risk for hazardous soil rutting. This is typical for the soils in the area and any ruts will be reclaimed by the lessee and reseeded during the reclamation process.

No significant adverse impacts to the soils 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.

The installation of the stock water pipeline development and associated stock tanks will provide a more reliable water source for livestock and local wildlife, which will in turn better distribute grazing pressure in the immediate area. The point of origin is located on private land while the two stock tanks will be located on the State Land. The stockwater pipeline will traverse the State Land section and end on private lands.

No significant adverse impacts to water quality, quantity, or distribution 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.

Dirt work may generate some airborne dust. There may be short-term isolated impacts in the form of airborne particulate emission from construction equipment. These activities will minimally affect air quality for a very limited amount of time.

Due to the relatively short duration of the project, and remote location of said project, no significant adverse impacts are anticipated implementing the proposed action.

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.

Vegetation in the area of the proposed pipeline and fence installation consists of the following native and introduced species: Western Wheatgrass, Bluebunch Wheatgrass, Blue Grama, Carex Spp., Needle & Thread, Prairie June Grass, Sandberg Bluegrass, Cheatgrass, and various forbs.

The placement of the stock water tanks are planned to avoid unstable areas. Once construction is finished, the affected area will be reseeded with native grasses to reduce erosion. Various pipelines in the area show that with post installation reclamation, these soils are capable of handling such an action.

No significant adverse impacts to vegetation cover 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.

A variety of big game (antelope, deer, elk, etc.), small mammals, raptors, songbirds and turkeys may traverse the subject section. Local wildlife may be displaced during construction for a very short period. Once construction has finished, the area will be available for use by local wildlife once again. The proposed improvements, once installed, are not anticipated to significantly impact their habitat or movement throughout the tract.

The proposed pipeline will supply water to a new stock water tank on the adjacent deeded which will provide a new water source for livestock as well as the local wildlife.

No significant adverse impacts to terrestrial, avian, and aquatic life and 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.

The Species of Concern Report from the Montana Natural Heritage Program indicated there were no endangered or threatened species occurrences within a mile of Section 36. The Species of Concern report indicated that that Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Great Blue Heron, Golden Eagle, Baird's Sparrow, Bobolink, Brewer's Sparrow, Burrowing Owl, Chestnut-collared Longspur, Greater Sage-Grouse, Loggerhead Shrike, Long-billed Curlew, Sage Thrasher, Sprague's Pipit, and Thick-billed Longspur are Montana Species of Concern that have been observed within a mile of this section. Although these species have been observed nearby, there is no immediate concern of displacing or disturbing these species indefinitely. Local wildlife may be displaced during construction for a very short period, but once construction has finished, the area will be available for use by local wildlife once again.

The lessee will reclaim and reseed all disturbed areas with a native seed mix.

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

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, but it should be noted that Class III level inventory work has not been conducted there to date.

Proposed activities are expected to 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, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

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.

Stock water pipeline developments and stock water tanks are commonplace in the area and the addition of this proposed pipeline should not impact the aesthetics of the local area significantly.

No significant adverse impact to aesthetics is expected as a result of implementing the proposed alternative..

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 demands on limited resources are required for this project. No adverse impacts are anticipated.

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 on this EA.

<p style="text-align: center;">IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No significant adverse impacts to human health and safety would occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

The project will not alter any current use patterns dealing with agricultural use. Livestock grazing would continue as before, with possible better distribution of grazing pressure due to the better availability of water.

No adverse impacts to agriculture activities are anticipated.

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 proposed activity will not create, move, or eliminate any jobs. No new jobs will be created.

No adverse impacts 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 be no increases in traffic, no changes in traffic patterns, and no need for additional fire protection, or police services.

The proponent will be responsible for contacting the Montana 811 system at least 48 hours prior to starting construction on the pipeline so that underground utilities can be located and marked properly.

No adverse impacts to government services are anticipated.

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 other locally adopted environmental plans or goals that are pertinent to this tract.

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.

No adverse impacts to the recreational value are anticipated.

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 proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments.

No adverse impacts to population or housing are anticipated.

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 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 effect on any 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 Common Schools Trust would benefit by receiving a one-time fee of **\$250.00** for the Land Use License to allow for the stockwater pipeline traversing the State Section and stock tanks.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jack Bernhardt Title: Land Use Specialist for the Southern Land Office
Signature: 	Date: 05/28/24

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The Proposed Alternative B has been selected and it is recommended the license be granted for the purpose of a stockwater pipeline traversing the State section 36, Township 4 North, Ranger 14 East. The stockwater

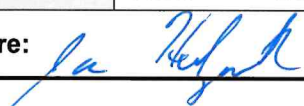
pipeline and tanks will provide a more reliable water source for livestock and local wildlife, which will in turn better distribute grazing pressure in the immediate area. .

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The potential for significant adverse impacts to the Trust lands listed above are minimal due to the nature of the proposed action which would entail issuing a license to allow a stockwater pipeline and stock tanks on the above-mentioned State Trust Land Section. The proponent of this pipeline is the lessee of this section and the proposed alternative will improve grazing management. There are no natural features that could produce adverse impacts or species of concern occupying the parcels that are expected to be impacted by implementing the proposed action.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Joe Holzwarth
	Title: Southern Land Office Area Manager
Signature: 	Date: 5/28/24