

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Burma Road Sediment Control Project
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2026
Proponent:	Big Hole Watershed Committee (Rep. Nolan Salix)
Location:	T4S R8W Section 36
County:	Madison County
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Big Hole Watershed Committee, represented by Nolan Salix, has submitted a Land Use License application to authorize the installation of sediment control features in an unnamed ephemeral coulee to mitigate erosion and sediment contribution to the Big Hole River as follows:
*"Install an estimated 66 One Rock Dams and 33 Sediment Control Structures with Rocks on approximately one mile of channel. These will be hand-built structures....,....
8 machine-built Sediment Capture Structures with Large Woody Debris."*

The proposed project encompasses 2.9 acres. See the attached exhibits for the proposed location.

Exhibits:

- Exhibit A: Vicinity Map
- Exhibit B: Aerial Photo with Project Area Indicated
- Exhibit C: Construction Method (Typical) Drawing
- Exhibit D: Site Photos

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

- Grazing Lessee, Raffety Cattle Co (AG-1224)
- Madison County
- Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Archaeologist, Patrick Rennie
- Montana Natural Heritage Program

Public outreach was limited to the list above due to the small and isolated impacted project area on State Trust Land. No comments in opposition were received.

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

The proposed license activity would involve Montana State Trust Land allocated to the Common Schools Trust. Approval of the project is contingent on the proponent obtaining all necessary and lawful permits, licenses, and authorizations from the appropriate entities, specifically water body/stream permitting and authorizations from Madison County which may impact Burma Road.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A: No action alternative. The proposed project would not be approved.

Alternative B: Action Alternative: Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area.

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 following information was derived from Web Soil Survey for this section. The proposed project would be mostly located on "Pensore-Crago, cool-Rock outcrop complex, 25 to 75 percent slopes" (83%) combined with "Rivra-Ryell-Havre complex, cool, 0-2 percent slopes" (16%) and "Riverrun, frequently ponded family-Riverwash-Water Complex, 0-2 percent slopes" (1%) soil types. Restoration activities of the project offset suitability ratings.

Reclamation & re-seeding needs will be monitored and mitigated as necessary.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to geology and soils would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Action Alternative: Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. Minimal, short-term impacts to geology and soil quality, stability and moisture are expected following installation. Reclamation requirements will be monitored and implemented as necessary.

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.

Project objectives are focused on sediment control to alleviate water quality issues arising from erosion from run-off. No cumulative impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution are anticipated.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. No impacts to water quality, quantity and 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.

Minimal, short-term dust from the machinery and vehicles traveling the proposed easement areas during installation is anticipated, but no long-term effects to air quality are expected.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to air quality would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. Minimal impacts to air quality are expected to occur.

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.

Cover, quantity, and quality of vegetative communities will be minimally impacted by this project due to the relatively small area disturbed to install sediment control measures. Short-term impacts to vegetation cover, quantity and quality are expected. The disturbed area would be reclaimed and reseeded as necessary. The project site is mainly Sagebrush Steppe and Montane Grassland Systems.

DNRC staff completed a site visit to the project area on August 19, 2026. Observations at this time report the most occurrent species in the project to sage brush and native grasses including bluebunch wheatgrass, prairie junegrass, needle and thread, various introduced grasses near the county road plus various forbs. Some species of noxious weeds were observed including Leafy Spurge and Houndstongue.

DNRC will require the applicant to reseed and maintain weed management if necessary. Applicant may be responsible for weed management within the project area where noxious weeds result from the proponent's activities.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to vegetation cover, quantity, and quality would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. Minimal impacts to vegetation cover, quantity, and quality are expected to occur.

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 project area is not considered critical habitat. The small project footprint will result in no or minor, short-term impacts to terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats. Erosion and sediment control will benefit biological life and habitats, especially to those of aquatic life.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to terrestrial, avian, and aquatic life and habitats would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. Minimal impacts to terrestrial, avian, and aquatic life and habitats are expected to occur.

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 Montana Natural Resource Information Service (NRIS) was queried for information regarding sensitive or endangered species located near the proposed easement area. Species having habitat polygons occurring in the proposed project location include Brewer's Sparrow, Sage Thrasher, Long-billed Curlew, Ferruginous Hawk, West Slope Cutthroat Trout, and Arctic Grayling. The project area is not in General or Core Sage Grouse Habitat.

The proposed project will result in the installation of sediment control features and is anticipated to persist for a short duration. Once in place these features will have no negative impacts to special status species. The area is rural with very limited occurrences as the area is not considered critical habitat.

No cumulative impacts are anticipated to unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. Zero to minimal impacts to unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources are expected to occur.

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.

Proposed erosion control work is 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.

The proposed project is in a rural area of Madison County +/- 8 miles southeast of Glen, MT. Sediment control features will be at ground level and mostly imperceptible. No anticipated long-term impacts to aesthetics will result from the project.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to aesthetics would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. Short-term impacts during installation and reclamation (as needed) are expected, but no long-term impacts to aesthetics 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 demands for additional environmental resources are required for this project.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. No impacts to demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy 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.

No other studies, plans, or projects were identified regarding the project 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.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Minor, mitigatable health or safety risks are posed by the proposed project. Expected work-related risk associated with heavy equipment use (mini-excavator) would occur during the installation phase. Also, construction work along Burma Road will require proper signage and traffic management. Locating any other buried, underground utilities would be the responsibility of the proponent to avoid these utilities during installation.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to human health and safety would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. Potential impacts to human health and safety are not expected to occur.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

As proposed, this project is designed to mitigate sedimentation to the Big Hole river, and, secondarily, to reduce damage to Burma Road. Short-term delays to agricultural, commercial, public, and recreational traffic may occur.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to industrial, commercial and agriculture activities and production would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. Minimal impacts to industrial, commercial and agriculture activities and production 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.

Quantity and distribution of employment is not expected to change as a result of this proposed project.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to quantity and distribution of employment would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. No impacts to quantity and distribution of employment 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.

No significant increase in tax revenues is anticipated as a result of project implementation.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to local and state tax base and tax revenues would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. Minimal impacts to local and state tax base and tax revenues are expected to occur.

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.

No increased demand for government services is expected as a result of project implementation.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to demand for government services would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. No impacts to demand for government services are expected to occur.

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.

No locally adopted environmental plans will be impacted by this proposed project.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and goals would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. No impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and goals are anticipated.

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.

This project may temporarily alter recreational activities in the area, however, due to the small scope of installation this disruption will be brief and impact a small area on less than three acres of State Trust Land

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. No impacts to access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities are expected to occur.

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.

No impacts to density and distribution of population and housing are anticipated.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to density and distribution of population and housing would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. No impacts to density and distribution of population and housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

No changes in social structures and mores are expected as a result of project implementation.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to social structures and mores would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. No impacts to social structures and mores are anticipated.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

The project has no anticipated impacts to the unique quality of the area.

Alternative A (No Action): No work would occur. No direct impacts to cultural uniqueness and diversity would occur.

Alternative B (Proposed Action): Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area. No impacts to cultural uniqueness and diversity are anticipated to occur.

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 on State Trust Lands, funded by the proponent, will generate **\$400** in revenue for the Common Schools Trust from the Land Use License fee. The Sediment control structures will protect water resources and Burma Road.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Andy Burgoyne	Date: August 27, 2026
	Title: Trust Land Program Manager, Central Land Office	

V. FINDING**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Two Alternatives presented and analyzed in the EAC.

Alternative A: No action alternative. The proposed project would not be approved.

Alternative B: Action Alternative: Grant authorization by issuing a temporary Land Use License to the proponent for the purpose of installing sediment control features in the project area.

On behalf of the DNRC, I have selected Alternative B: Action Alternative.

- The Action Alternative will benefit the surrounding community and the environment by mitigating damage from erosion to the Big Hole River and county road infrastructure.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Upon review of the two Alternatives, I find that the Action Alternative will have no significant adverse impacts on the Physical Environment or the Human Population. Direct impacts have short duration.

These impacts have been analyzed, and mitigations have been developed to reduce or prevent undesirable effects or impacts. These mitigations include:

- All disturbed areas involving rutting or soil disturbance will be contoured by hand or equipment by the Proponent.
- Seeding with a seed mix recommended by DNRC will be completed by the proponent as necessary.
- Chemical weed treatment of the project area may be required of the proponent by DNRC.
- All necessary, lawful permits will be obtained before implementation.
- Notifications will be made to State grazing lessee, Madison County, easement holders by the proponent.
- All utilities will be located by the proponent before project implementation and avoided.
- Lawful traffic safety control measures must be implemented by the proponent when work occurs adjacent to the county road.

No secondary or cumulative impacts have been identified.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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More Detailed EA

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No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Cody Nelson
	Title: Dillon Unit Manager
Signature: <i>Cody Nelson</i>	
Date: 9/1/2026	

Exhibit A: Vicinity Map

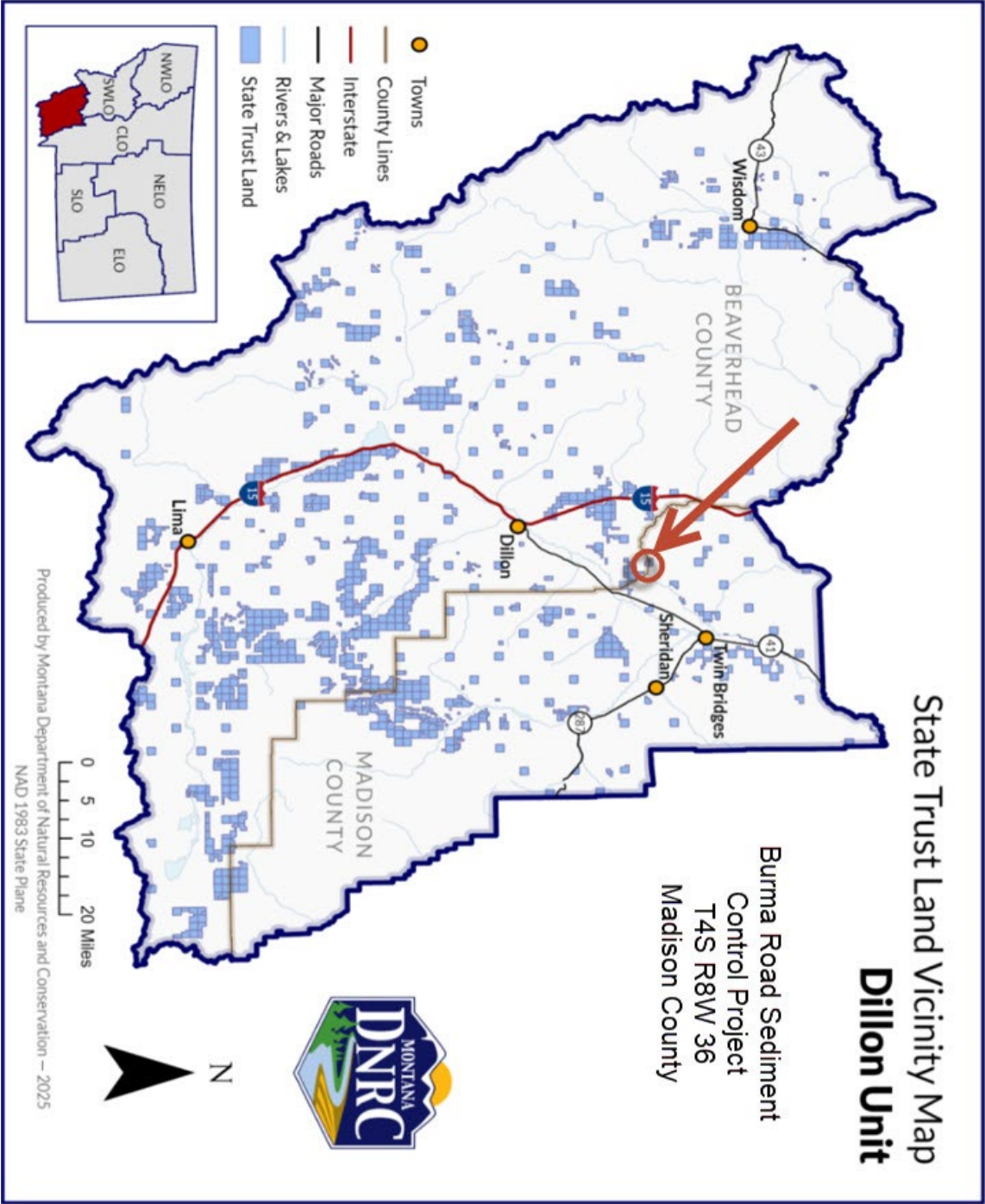


Exhibit B: Aerial Photo Project Location



Exhibit C: Construction Method (Typical) Drawing

Sediment Capture Structure

These are large Zuni (Zeedyk structure's that are designed to capture sediment.)

Figure 6 Top view of Sediment Capture Structure

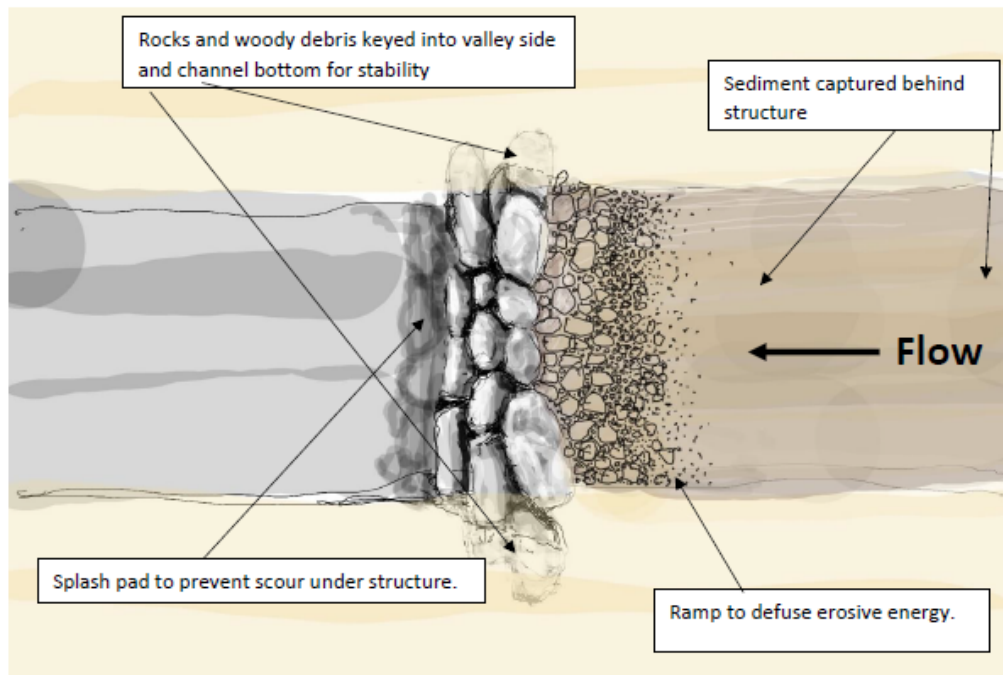


Figure 7 Side view of Flow of Water

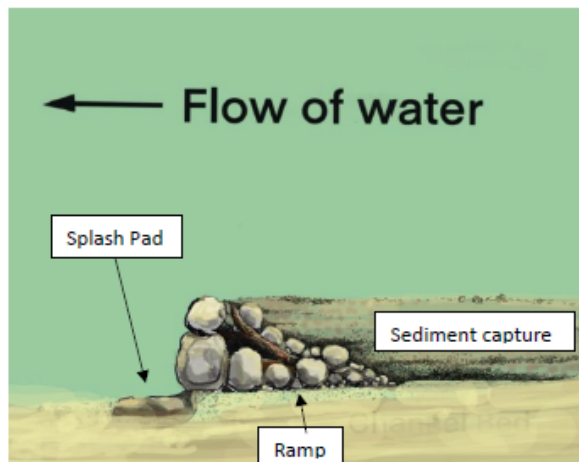


Exhibit D: Site Visit Photos



View up-drainage.



View from below Burma Road, up-drainage



Erosion, downhill side of Burma Road