CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Hodgskiss Water Pipeline Installation
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2026
Proponent:	Lyle Hodgskiss, PO Box 1415, Choteau, MT 59422
Location:	NW4 of Section 36 T23N, R6W
County:	Teton
Trust:	Common Schools (CS)

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Lyle Hodgskiss proposes the installation of approximately ½ mile of buried water pipeline for livestock watering located on state land. This water pipeline will convey water from deeded land, through state land, to other deeded land. The water pipeline will serve as a reliable source for livestock use.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:
Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

Lyle Hodgskiss is the proponent and surface lessee.
Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is the surface owner.

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

The Project will be permitted under Land Use License (LUL) 307-2700026. DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this Project.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Deny the proponent permission to install the stock water pipeline.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant the proponent permission to install the stock water pipeline.

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.

Soil Properties:

There is a complexity of soil for this project area (Silty and Clayey). This has been broken down into four soil types for better interpretation.

Gravelly Clay Loams:
These soils are generally 0 to 8 percent slopes. The depth to restrictive features is approximately 80 feet deep and the soil is classified as well-drained. They are found within stream terraces. The available water supply is high at 0-60 inches. The mean annual precipitation for the region is 12 to 14 inches. (Soil Survey of Choteau-Conrad Area; Parts of Teton and Pondera Counties, MT).

Clay Loams:
These soils are generally 0 to 15 percent slopes. The depth to restrictive features is approximately 80 inches and the soil is classified as well-drained. They are found within flood plains. The available water supply is moderate to low at 5.1 to 6.3 inches. The mean annual precipitation for the region is 11 to 14 inches. (Soil Survey of Choteau-Conrad Area; Parts of Teton and Pondera Counties, MT).

Silty Loam and Mixed Loam Complexes:
These soils are generally 8 to 15 percent slopes. The depth to restrictive features is approximately 20 to 40 inches and the soil is classified as well-drained. They are found within hills. The available water supply is low to moderate at approximately 5 to 8 inches. The mean annual precipitation for the region is 12 to 14 inches. (Soil Survey of Choteau-Conrad Area; Parts of Teton and Pondera Counties, MT).

Rocky Complexes:
These soils are generally 8 to 35 percent slopes. The depth to restrictive features is approximately 10 to 20 inches and the soil is classified as well drained. They are found within hills. The available water supply is very low at 2.8 inches. The mean annual precipitation for the region is 11 to 14 inches. (Soil Survey of Choteau-Conrad Area; Parts of Teton and Pondera Counties, MT).

Soil Stability:

K – Factor:
The soil identified within the Project footprint has a Soil Erodibility (K) Factor of 0.10 to 0.28, see **Table 1 – K Factor**, for additional information (Soil Survey of Choteau-Conrad Area; Parts of Teton and Pondera Counties, MT). The K Factor range is 0.02 to 0.69 (0.69 being the most susceptible to sheet and rill erosion by water.) The K Factor is low for the Project site which indicates a low susceptibility to erosion by water.

Table 1 – K Factor

Soil Type	Rating
Gravelly Clay Loam	0.13
Clay Loam	0.22
Silty Loam and Mixed Loam Complexes	0.24
Rocky Complexes	0.37

Wind Erodibility Group:
The soil identified within the Project footprint has a Wind Erodibility Group (WEG) of 4, see **Table 2 – Wind Erodibility Group**, for additional information (Soil Survey of Choteau-Conrad Area; Parts of Teton and Pondera Counties, MT). The WEG range is 1 – 8 (1 being the most susceptible to wind erosion and 8 being the least susceptible). The WEG is moderate for the Project site which indicates a moderate susceptibility to erosion by wind.

Table 2 – Wind Erodibility Group

Soil Type	Rating
Gravelly Clay Loam	5
Clay Loam	5
Silty Loam and Mixed Loam Complexes	5
Rocky Complexes	6

Suitability and Limitations for Use:

Shallow Excavations:
The soil identified within the Project footprint was identified as "somewhat limited" to "very limited", see **Table 3 – Shallow Excavations Suitability**, for additional information (Soil Survey of Choteau-Conrad Area; Parts of Teton and Pondera Counties, MT). "Somewhat limited" indicates the soils have features that are moderately favorable for shallow excavations. NRCS indicates that "the limitations can be overcome or minimized by special planning, design, or installation". "Very limited" indicates the soils have one or more features that are unfavorable for shallow excavations. NRCS indicates that "the limitations generally cannot be overcome without major soil reclamation, special design, or expensive installation procedures".

Table 3 – Shallow Excavations Suitability

Soil Type	Rating
Gravelly Clay Loam	Somewhat limited
Clay Loam	Somewhat limited
Silty Loam and Mixed Loam Complexes	Somewhat limited
Rocky Complexes	Very limited

BMPs:
The proponent proposes to rip the water pipeline into the soil and drill under any existing pipelines. As part of the stipulations under LUL – 307-2700026, the DNRC will require Hodgkiss to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office.

Determination:
Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Effect. The Project has the potential to impact soils, however, given its low to moderate susceptibility to erosion, its moderate suitability for shallow excavations, and the implementation of the BMPs described above, the Project is not expected to have negative cumulative effects on soil.

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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 or Groundwater Resources:
The water source for this project is from a well placed on deeded land. There is one permitted "Place of Use" water right located on Section 36 of T23N R6W, for additional information see http://wrqs.dnrc.mt.gov/default.aspx. The proposed action will improve water reliability and quantity for the proponent on state land.

BMPs:
The proponent proposes to rip the water pipeline into the soil. As part of the stipulations under LUL – 307-2700026, the DNRC will require the proponent to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office and monitor for noxious weeds.

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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.

Air Quality:
There are no non-attainment areas located on or near the Project, per the Montana Air Quality Non-Attainment Areas | Discover DEQ's Data. The proposed action will not have any effect on air quality.

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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.

Vegetative Community:
Vegetation will have a minimal impact on the pipeline being ripped in due to the lack of surface disruption and preservation of topsoil layers. This method of installation is considered a minimal disturbance. The plant community of the project area is diverse and therefore will have a minimal effect on vegetation.

BMPs:
As part of the stipulations under LUL – 307-2700026, the DNRC will require the proponent to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office and monitor for noxious weeds. The recommended re-seeding mix shall consist of 35% Western Wheatgrass, 35% Slender Wheatgrass, 15% Bluebunch Wheatgrass, 10% Green Needlegrass, and 5% Lewis Blue Flax. The mix shall be Certified Noxious Weed Seed Free, drilled at a seeding rate of 8 lbs/acre Pure Live Seed (PLS), if broadcast seeding, poundage shall be doubled and harrowed, and seeding shall occur either in the fall (after September 15) or early spring (before May 1).

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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.

Habitat:
This project site is not considered critical wildlife habitat. This area does provide habitat for a variety of big game animals (mule deer, whitetail deer, pronghorn antelope), predators (coyote, fox, badger), upland game birds (sharp tail grouse, Hungarian partridge), other non-game animals, raptors and various songbirds. The proposed action has the potential to impact wildlife temporarily, but it will not significantly impact wildlife forage, cover, or travel corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover. Wildlife usage is expected to return to "normal" (pre-action usage) following the installation of the water pipeline. This action will also provide a reliable water source for wildlife.

BMPs:
As part of the stipulations under LUL – 307-2700026, the DNRC will require the proponent to re-seed the disturbed area with a seed mixture approved by the DNRC – Conrad Unit Office and monitor for noxious weeds.

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 proposed water pipeline is expected to impact habitat minimally/not at all. There are not federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitats identified within this project area.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects on historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the 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 no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE.

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 water pipeline will be buried and therefore will not have any effect on aesthetics.

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 on environmental resources.

The proposed project will not utilize resources that are limited in the area, therefore there will be no effect 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 additional plans or projects being considered on this tract.

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:

The proposed project will have no impact on human health and safety. Any risks with installing the water pipeline are limited to Hodgkiss and the hired contractor.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

State lease #3592 is 640 acres of grazing land. The proposed pipeline installation will improve water reliability on this lease. This proposed project will also be beneficial for the Common School (CS) Trust. The LUL fee of $200.00 for a 10-year duration will be applied. This project is expected to increase overall production of state tract Section 36 T23N R6W and will not affect the existing or future land use activities.
The current land use on which the water pipeline will be installed on state lease #3592 is 640 acres of grazing land.

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.

This proposed project will not create, move or eliminate jobs. A local contractor will be hired for the pipeline installation. There will be no effects on the employment market.

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.

The proposed project will have no effect on taxes and revenue.

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

This project is of small scale and will be funded by Hodgkiss. There will be no effects on government services.

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.

The proposed project is in compliance with State and County laws. The project will be granted under an LUL issued by the DNRC. There are no additional management plans that are in effect for the area.

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.

The project is located on legally accessible land via Hodgkiss Road. The proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational and wilderness activities on state land.

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 population changes or additional housing, therefore there will be no effect.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, traditional lifestyles or communities near the proposed project area that would be impacted by this proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

The proposed action will have no effect on the 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 action will benefit the Common School Trust in terms of an LUL fee of $200.00 for a 10-year period.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:** Samantha Johnson	**Date:** 10/13/2026
	Title: Land Use Specialist, Conrad Unit, Central Land Office	

V. FINDINGS

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Grant Hodgskiss permission to install the water pipeline for livestock watering.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

There are no significant impacts expected to occur from the proposed installation of the water pipeline. A minimal disturbance is expected as a result of the proposed action, but the effects will not be significant.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	X	No Further Analysis

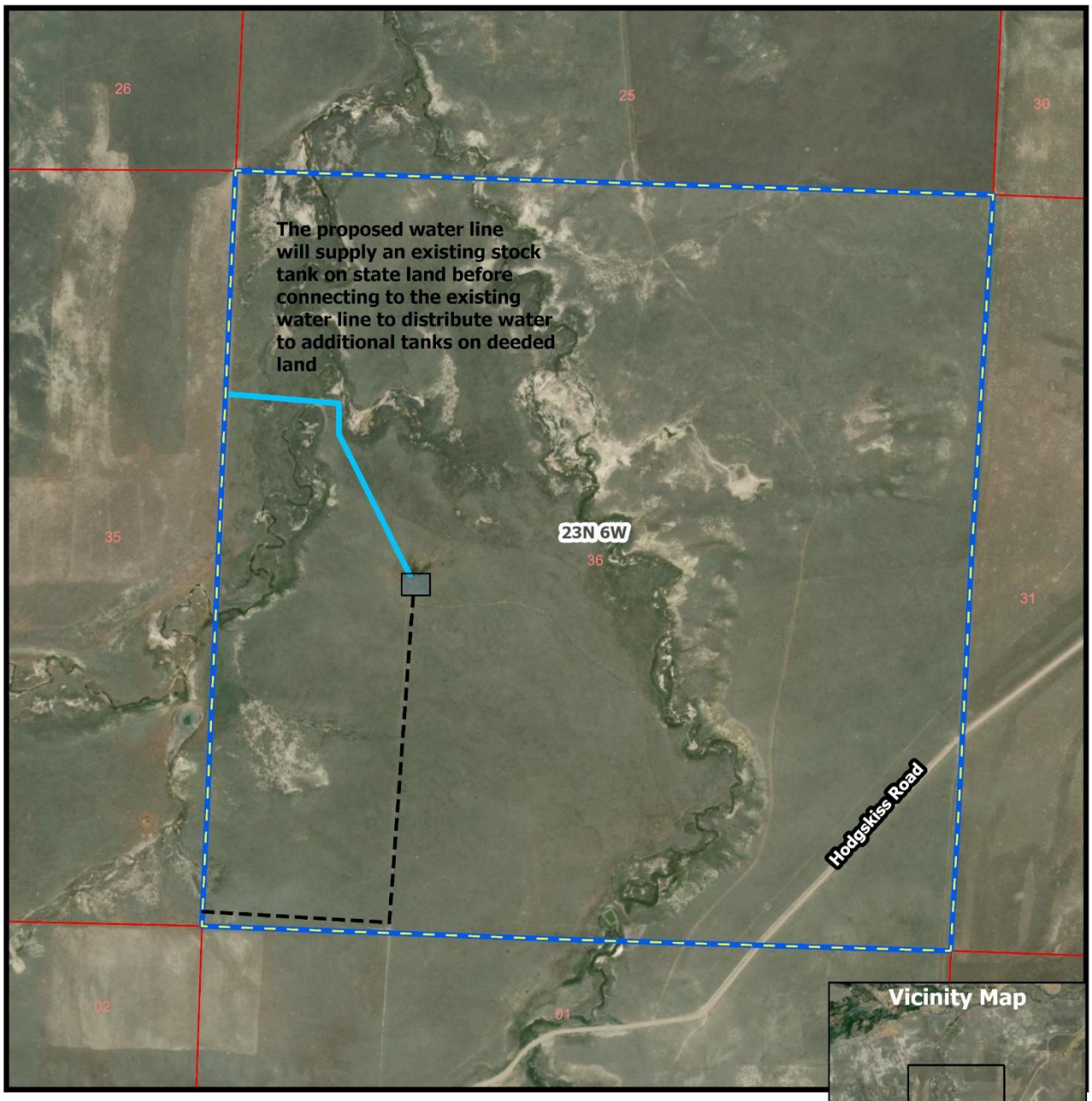
EA Checklist Approved By:	Name:	Erik Eneboe
	Title:	Conrad Unit Manager, CLO, DNRC
Signature:		**Date**: 11/9/26

Attachment A
Project Location Map

The Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation

Lyle Hodgskiss Water Pipeline Installation

Exhibit A - Project Location



End of Documentation