

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Judith Mountain Property Residential Well Replacement
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall, 2023
Proponent:	Judith Mountain Property LLC – Homesite Lessee of Lease #5010
Location:	Section 35, Township 17 North, Range 20 East
County:	Fergus

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Judith Mountain Property LLC is proposing to drill a new well near their homesite. This well will replace an older well that supplied water to the homesite until it failed recently. The homesite is without water currently until a new well is drilled.

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, and the Judith Mountain Property– Homesite Lessee, are involved in this project.

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

Judith Mountain properties will need to obtain a water right in the State's name after installation of the new well.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – The DNRC does not grant permission to Judith Mountain Properties to install the well for residential use.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – The DNRC does grant permission to Judith Mountain Properties to install the well for residential use.

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.

There are no fragile or unstable soils present in the area of the proposed well installation location. The soils consist of clay loams.

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 proposed well use will take water from the local ground water supply. Based on the current number of wells in the immediate surrounding area, there should be little to no adverse impacts to the ground water supply.

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. These activities will minimally affect air quality for a very limited amount of time.

No significant adverse impacts to air quality are anticipated.

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.

The existing well location area is within the existing homesite lease #5010. The vegetation species that are present include: Western Wheatgrass, Green Needlegrass, Needle & Thread, Prairie Junegrass, Sandberg Bluegrass, and various forb species. Installing a well is not anticipated to have any adverse impacts to the vegetation cover, quantity or quality.

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.

Local species may be displaced temporarily during construction and installation of the stock water pipeline. Post installation, there should be little to no impact to the local fauna's use of the site.

No significant adverse impacts 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 noted four species of concern within the project area. The proposed well installation may temporarily displace these species, but will not impact their use of the area any longer than the length of time it takes to drill the well.

Species Group	Common Name	Scientific Name
Mammals	Hoary Bat	Lasiurus cinereus
Mammals	Long-eared Myotis	Myotis evotis
Mammals	Townsend's Big-eared Bat	Corynorhinus townsendii
Birds	Bobolink	Dolichonyx oryzivorus

No significant adverse impacts are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

A thorough field inspection of the homesite was completed back in 2021 in preparation for a possible homesite sale. No historic or archaeological sites were identified immediately near the proposed well location or within the homesite boundaries. The Fort Maginnis historical site is located east of the homesite but will not be impacted by the proposed well installation.

No significant adverse impacts 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.

The proposed well use and stock water pipeline installation is not anticipated to have a significant impact to the aesthetics of the local area.

No significant adverse impacts 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.

The proposed well will require the use of groundwater. The proposed well's use of the local groundwater to supply stock water tanks is not anticipated to significantly impact the groundwater levels in the local area.

No significant adverse impacts to environmental resources 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>IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p> <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.

There are some human safety risks associated with operating equipment. The proponent and their employees accept these risks as acceptable occupational hazards.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

The proposed well installation will provide water to a homesite lease. With the previous old well failing, this well is necessary for the use of the homesite into the future.

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 may create work for a local well driller, but 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.

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 zoning or other agency management plans identified that affect these lands.

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. The proposed well installation is due to an old well failing that had supplied the homesite. The new well will only replace the use of the old well.

No adverse impacts to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

No adverse impacts are anticipated due to the proposed activity.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:


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

The proposed project is not anticipated to have any adverse impacts to 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 proposed well installation will benefit the existing homesite lease as their previous well has failed. No compensation to the Trust will be made at this time. The new well be an improvement owned by the homesite lessee.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jocee Hedrick
	Title: Lewistown Unit Manager
Signature:	 Date: November 28, 2023

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the Proposed Alternative B and recommend that permission be granted to Judith Mountain Properties to install the well for residential use..

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The potential environmental effects have been evaluated and it has been determined that no significant adverse environmental impacts will result from the proposed activity.

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: Clive Rooney
	Title: Northeastern Land Office Area Manager
Signature:	 Date: 11/28/23

