

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Aggregate Testing – Riverside Contracting - South of Glasgow

Proposed

Implementation Date: June 2026

Proponent: Riverside Contracting, Inc.

Location: Township 26N, Range 40E, Sections 16

County: Valley County, Montana

Trust: Common Schools

Introduction: In January of 2025, the Minerals Management Bureau of the Forestry and Trust Lands Division of the Montana DNRC, completed a programmatic environmental analysis for aggregate testing. The programmatic environmental analysis goes into further detail and evaluates a wider scope of resources than this checklist environmental assessment. This checklist environmental assessment should be read and understood in conjunction with the programmatic environmental analysis. The programmatic environmental assessment can be found on the Departments website at: <https://dnrc.mt.gov/TrustLand/subsurface-resources/Aggregate-Testing-Programmatic-EA-FINAL.pdf>

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

On June 1, 2026 DNRC received an application from Riverside Contracting, Inc, henceforth referred to as proponent, to test for aggregate on State of Montana School Trust Lands. The application was made for Township 26 North, Range 40 East, Sections 16. This checklist analysis, in conjunction with the programmatic analysis, will evaluate the impacts of an action alternative and no action alternative.

The issuance of an aggregate testing permit allows the permittee to dig holes between 3ft and 20 ft in depth to observe and test the aggregate resource present.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

June 1, 2026, Application was received by DNRC Mineral Management Bureau.

June 2, 2026, Glasgow Unit was notified of the application.

June 2, 2026, the Glasgow Unit office contacted the surface lessee of the application.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action Alternative: The aggregate testing application would be denied

Action Alternative: The aggregate testing application would be approved with standard stipulations along with any special stipulations identified resulting from this analysis.

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Will the project impact any unique geologic features?

- No - This project area does not contain any unique geologic features, therefore, no unique geologic features will be impacted by testing.

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.

List any species of concern identified in the proposed testing area through review of the Montana Natural Heritage Program Map. Identify any impacts that aggregate testing would have on each of these species.

⊕ **Birds - Greater Sage-Grouse** (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)

Figure 1: Species occurrences within the project area

Conducting aggregate testing on each of these Sections is not expected to have any direct, secondary or cumulative long-term impacts to unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources. Aggregate testing lasts for approximately 1-2 days and is conducted during daylight hours.

Increased noise and human activity levels will occur on the tracts during aggregate testing. The testing activity would likely cause wildlife within the vicinity to temporarily disperse and seek other suitable habitat on adjacent tracts during the day(s) of testing. Any wildlife that is dispersed from the project area would be expected to be able to return to the area upon conclusion of testing. Overall, impacts would be expected to be short-term and minor. Negligible amounts of vegetation/forage would be disrupted for approximately two growing seasons.

Is the testing area contained within the boundaries of the DNRC Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)?

- No – this testing area is not contained within the boundaries of the DNRC Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP).

Is the project area within Core or General Sage Grouse Habitat?

- Yes– This project is located within designated Greater Sage Grouse General, Core or Connectivity Habitat. The proponent has consulted the Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Program.

Is the project area within one-half mile of an active Bald or Golden Eagle Nest?

- No – This project area is not within one-half mile of an active Bald or Golden Eagle Nest.

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 two cultural resource sites (24VL27 and 24VL569), both consisting of low-profile cairns and tipi ring-size stone circles are recorded in the E1/2SE1/4 of section 16.

A map will be provided to the permittee, and the recorded sites shall be avoided.

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.

Are there other studies, plans, or projects currently in place on this tract?

- Yes
 - AG - 2167 Grazing Lease – Authorizing the testing permit would create a negligible reduction in available forage for the surface lessee. Any monetary damages that occur to the lessee’s leasehold interest shall be paid by the proponent.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:
Are there any locally adopted environmental plans and goals for the tracts upon which aggregate testing is proposed?

- No

Checklist EA Prepared By:	Name: Zack Winfield	Date: 6/2/2026
	Title: Petroleum Engineer	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action Alternative: The proponent’s application will be granted, and the proponent will be allowed to dig test pits during the time-period requested in the application

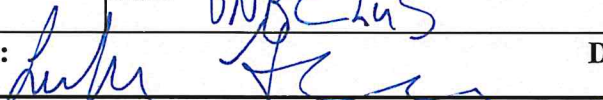
After a thorough review of the programmatic environmental analysis, the applicable rules and statutes related to aggregate testing, this checklist EA, and the management and mission of State of Montana school trust lands; I have decided to select the action alternative, and the Department will issue an aggregate testing permit as applied for by the proponent. This decision is consistent with the mission of the State of Montana School Trust Lands and will protect the future income generating capacity of the land.

26.SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I have concluded that through the adoption of the standard stipulations and the checklist EA that all potential impacts have either be addressed through the checklist, programmatic EA or reduced to insignificance by the adoption of stipulations.

Appendix A: List of Standard Stipulations:

1. The permittee must contact the Department's surface lessee at least 24 hours prior to entering the tract and commencing testing activities. Any damages to the surface lessee's leasehold interest, caused by the permittee's activities authorized herein are subject to Administrative Rule 36.25.138.
2. The permittee shall only conduct operations under dry or frozen conditions. Operations are not allowed under wet or muddy conditions.
3. No testing shall occur in areas where the slope is steeper than 4:1.
4. The permittee shall abide by a 100-foot buffer from all surface water including wetlands.
5. Topsoil/sod will be stockpiled separately from subsoil for reclamation. The permittee shall fill holes with subsoil before covering them with topsoil and sod. All holes must be filled and reclaimed immediately upon completion of logging the test hole.
6. The permittee shall report test results to DNRC within 30 days of completing testing activities.
7. The permittee shall only spread a native, weed-free seed mix on the disturbance. The mixture must be approved by the unit office prior to the spreading of seed.
8. The permittee shall inspect and wash any equipment being utilized in operations prior to commencing work. This shall mitigate the risk of fire and the spread of noxious and invasive weeds.
9. The permittee shall be responsible for the elimination of noxious and invasive weeds that are introduced or exacerbated resulting from permitted activities.
10. The permittee shall keep a fire extinguisher readily available during operations. A fire start caused by permitted operations is the sole responsibility of the permit.
11. The Department may postpone operations if they are deemed as a fire risk.
12. If any previously unidentified historical, archeological or paleontological resources are encountered during permitted activities the permittee shall stop activities, avoid the site, and immediately report it to DNRC.

Checklist EA	Name: Luke Gunderson
Approved By:	Title: DNBC LUS
Signature: 	Date: 6-4-25