

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Aggregate Testing – Riverside Contracting, Inc. – T-0400-28

Proposed

Implementation Date: Summer 2026

Proponent: Riverside Contracting, Inc.

Location: 5S, 6W, Sections 26, 27, and 28

County: Madison County

Trust: School for the Deaf and Blind

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 July 7, 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 5S, Range 6W, Sections 26, 27, 28. 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. The proponent will salvage and replace topsoil and reseed disturbed areas with an approved seed mix.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Application was received by DNRC Minerals Management Bureau on July 7, 2026.

The application was forwarded to the DNRC Dillon Unit office July 16, 2026.

The surface lessee for this tract was contacted by the Department to inform them of the application.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action Alternative: The aggregate testing would be denied

Action Alternative: The aggregate testing 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 will not impact any unique geologic features.

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.

Listed below are any species of concern identified in the proposed testing area through review of the Montana Natural Heritage Program Map. A comprehensive review of any impacts that aggregate testing would have on each of these species is included.

Table 1: Species of Concern species occurrences for the project area.

	 Definition of Species Occurrences
+	B - Brewer's Sparrow (<i>Spizella breweri</i>) SOC
+	B - Thick-billed Longspur (<i>Rhynchophanes mccownii</i>) SOC
+	M - Silver-haired Bat (<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i>) SOC
+	M - Little Brown Myotis (<i>Myotis lucifugus</i>) SOC
+	B - Great Blue Heron (<i>Ardea herodias</i>) SOC
+	M - Grizzly Bear (<i>Ursus arctos</i>) SOC

Aggregate testing permits allow the permittee to dig holes between 3ft and 20 ft in depth to observe and test the aggregate resource present. The proponent will salvage and replace topsoil and reseed disturbed areas with an approved seed mix.

Testing activities take place during daylight hours and are typically conducted over the course of a day or two. Impacts to the species listed above are anticipated to be minor and short-term. Any wildlife displacement would be temporary.

Is the project 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?

- No – This project is not located within designated Greater Sage Grouse General, Core or Connectivity Habitat.

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

- No – According to the Natural Heritage Program, as of July 20, 2026, 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 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 aggregate testing activities are expected to have *No Effect to Antiquities*. No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed activity. 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.

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 –the following are included on the trust land tract(s). Maps included in Exhibit B
 - AG-4010 – Grazing Lease
 - AG-3846 – Grazing Lease
 - AG-8305 – Grazing Lease
 - AG-8306 - Grazing Lease
 - AG-10738 – Grazing Lease
 - D-01390 – Overhead Power Transmission Easement
 - D-13211 – Buried Telephone Distribution Easement
 - D-16866 – Buried Telephone Transmission Easement
 - D-04512 – Overhead Power Transmission Easement
 - D-04510 - Overhead Power Transmission Easement

The proposed action is expected to have minor impacts on the grazing leases, and no impact on the easements.

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?

- Yes, evaluate the impacts to these plans or goals that aggregate testing would create.
 - USDA-NRCS Madison County Montana Long Range Plan 2022
 - USDA-NRCS Madison Valley Wildlife Passage TIP
 - Madison County Growth Policy

Aggregate testing would not have any impact upon either of these plans or policies.

Checklist EA	Name: Kelly Bertellotti	Date: 7/21/2026
Prepared By:	Title: Minerals Resource Specialist	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

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 been addressed through the checklist, programmatic EA or reduced to insignificance by the adoption of stipulations.

Appendix A: List of Standard Stipulations:

I have concluded that through the implementation of the stipulations listed below that the impacts of the proposed action are non-significant, being either negligible or minor and short-term in nature.

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.
13. The permittee shall complete an 811 call-before-dig utility locate prior to conducting testing.
14. No testing is allowed to the south or west of McHessor Creek Road.

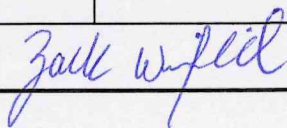
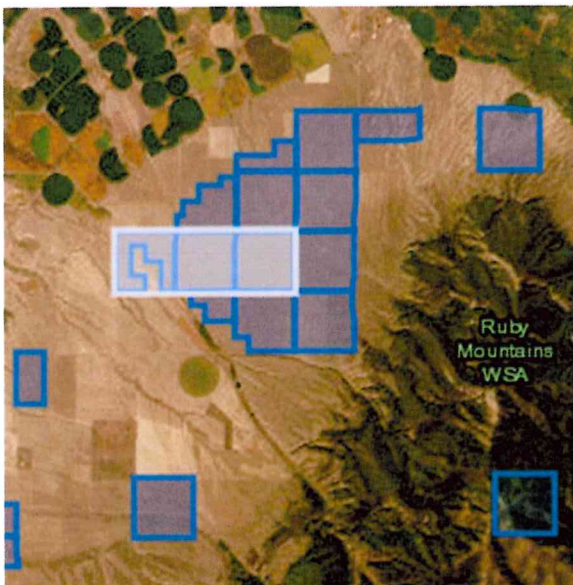
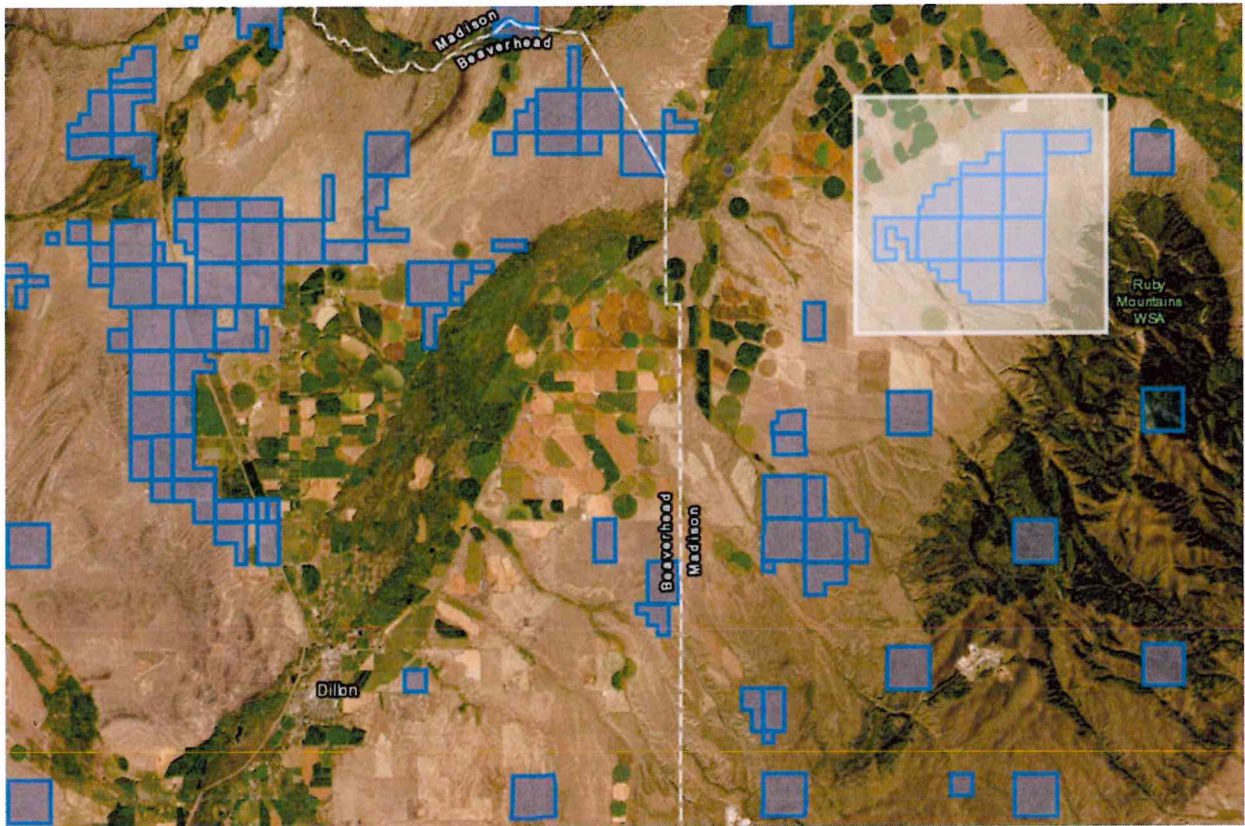
Checklist EA	Name: Zack Winfield	
Approved By:	Title: Petroleum Engineer	
Signature: 	Date: 8/20/2026	

Exhibit A:

Maps of Township 5S, Range 6W, Sections 26, 27, 28



N





FEF Mapping Group

EDIT FTLD Lines

- Fence
- Powerline
- Road
- Two Track Road
- Water Pipeline
- Oil Gas Pipeline
- Irrigation Canal or Ditch
- Other
- Fibero or Fiber Optics cable
- Diversion Dike
- Formed Wet Area Access Road
- Ag Tract Access Road
- Historic Driveway
- Oil Well Access Road
- Open Road (Recreational Use Discontinued)
- Mobile Cellular
- Railroad (Active)
- Railroad (Abandoned)
- Abandoned Road (Historical)
- Shoreline/Creek Location
- Shold Water Pipeline
- Reclamation

