

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: LHC, Inc - Aggregate Test Permit

Proposed

Implementation Date: OCTOBER - 2025

Proponent: LHC, Inc.

Location: T 22N, R 3W, SEC. 16 – PART OF W2 LYING N OF RR R/W, NW4, NE4SW4

County: TETON 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 September 25, 2025, DNRC received an application from LHC, Inc. henceforth referred to as proponent, to test for aggregate on State of Montana School Trust Lands. The application was made for Township 22N, Range 3W, Section 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 proponent 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.

The application was forwarded by the Minerals Management Bureau to the Conrad Unit Office.

The surface lessee for this tract will be contacted and informed of the application.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action Alternative: The aggregate testing permit application would be denied.

Action Alternative: The aggregate testing permit would be issued 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 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.

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.

Species Occurrences



? Definition of Species Occurrences

+ V - Downingia laeta (Great Basin Downingia)	SOC
+ B - Clark's Grebe (Aechmophorus clarkii)	SOC
+ B - Black-necked Stilt (Himantopus mexicanus)	SOC
+ B - American Bittern (Botaurus lentiginosus)	SOC
+ B - Horned Grebe (Podiceps auritus)	SOC
+ B - Long-billed Curlew (Numenius americanus)	SOC
+ B - Black Tern (Chlidonias niger)	SOC
+ B - Black-crowned Night Heron (Nycticorax nycticorax)	SOC
+ B - White-faced Ibis (Plegadis chihi)	SOC
+ B - Red Knot (Calidris canutus)	SSS
+ B - Baird's Sparrow (Centronyx bairdii)	SOC
+ B - Caspian Tern (Hydroprogne caspia)	SOC
+ B - Chestnut-collared Longspur (Calcarius ornatus)	SOC
+ B - Forster's Tern (Sterna forsteri)	SOC
+ B - Franklin's Gull (Leucophaeus pipixcan)	SOC
+ B - Sprague's Pipit (Anthus spragueii)	SOC
+ M - Grizzly Bear (Ursus arctos)	SOC
+ B - Burrowing Owl (Athene cunicularia)	SOC
+ B - Common Tern (Sterna hirundo)	SOC

The location is adjacent to pre-existing human disturbances such as Highway 89. Although the habitat of the project area may be suitable for the listed species of concern, it is unlikely the aggregate testing process would have any lasting detrimental effects on Species of concern. Species of concern in the area during aggregate testing operations, would likely temporarily disperse and seek other suitable habitat, such as Freezeout Lake Wildlife Management Area, nearby. Due to the nature of the disturbance and its associated length, it is unlikely that the selection of the action would impact species of concern in a significant manner. Overall, the impacts would be expected to be short-term and minor.

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?

- 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 – *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 III level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). No cultural or palaeontologic resources were identified. No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. A report of findings will be drafted and submitted to the State Historic Preservation Officer per the Montana State Antiquities Act Mandates and the DNRC's Operating Rules that implement those statutory mandates.

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 – add any of the following that are included on the trust land tract(s).
 - *DNRC Grazing Lease – AG-7269*
 - The DNRC currently leases the project area for livestock grazing. The digging of aggregate test holes will temporarily decrease the amount of vegetation available for grazing. Damages to the lessee's grazing lease would be paid by the proponent in accordance with Administrative Rule 36.25.138.
 - *DNRC Real Estate Management – Granted Easement – ROW 3226, 7656, 13802, 8044, 418, 17956.*
 - *No impacts*

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: KELLY BERTELLOTTI	Date: 9-29-2025
	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, the programmatic EA, this supplemental checklist EA, and the management and mission of State of Montana school trust lands; I have decided to select the action alternative – issue the test permit.

26.SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Issuing the requested aggregate test permit on this State Trust Land is not expected to result in, nor cause significant negative environmental, social, and/or economic impacts.

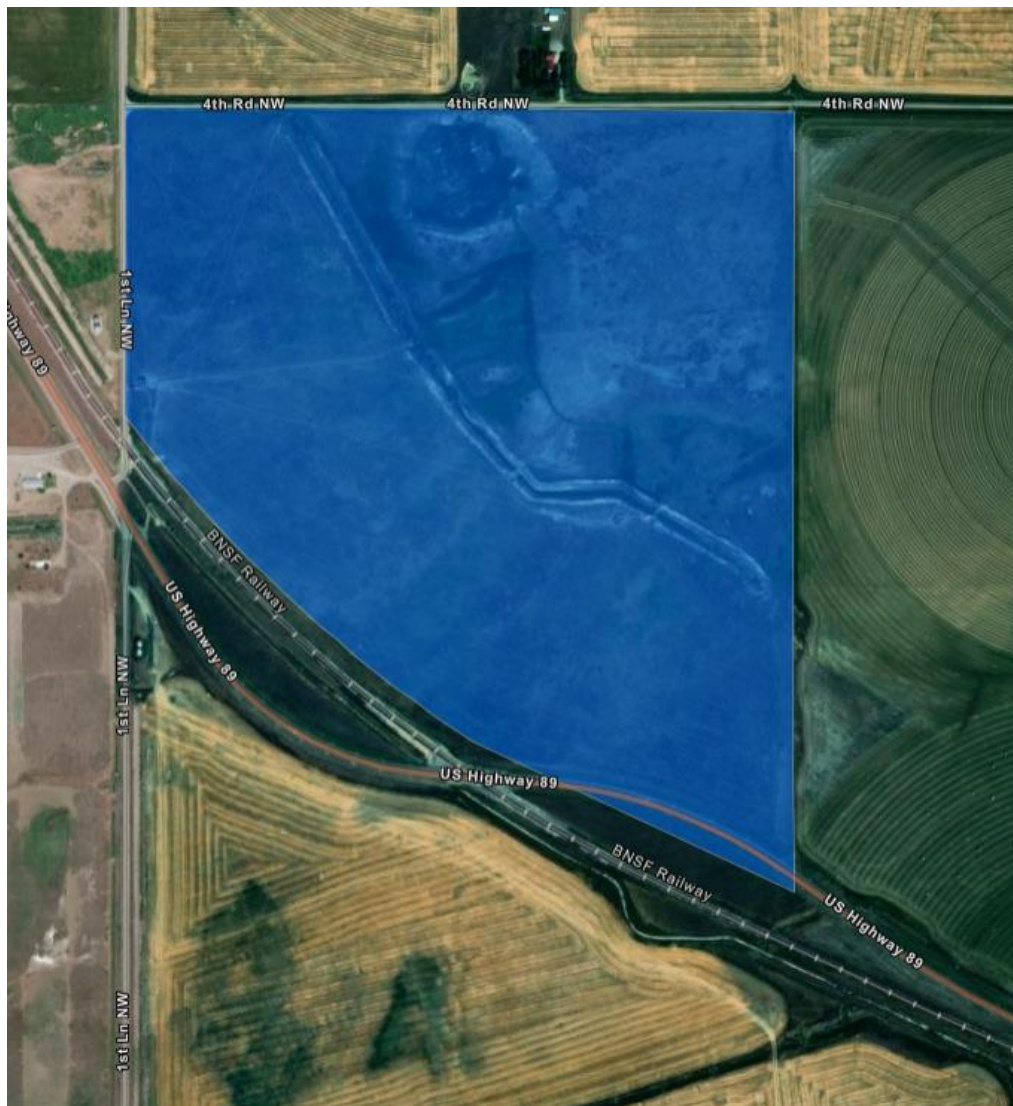
I conclude that all identified potential impacts will be mitigated by utilizing permit requirements, terms and conditions, Standard stipulations for aggregate testing permits, and the additional the stipulations listed below.

- Proponent shall contact the Surface Lessee, Justin Cleveland (ph# 406-467-3134) at least 24 hours before project activities commence.
- Proponent shall contact the Surface Lessee, Justin Cleveland (ph# 406-467-3134) at least 48 hours before project activities commence.
- 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.
- The proponent will seed disturbances with the below described certified weed free seed mix, before leaving project areas or at a time that will achieve successful germination.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Western wheatgrass	35%
Slender wheatgrass	35%
Bluebunch wheatgrass	15%
Green needlegrass	10%
Lewis blue flax or Purple prairie clover	5 %

- Native Mix
- Certified Noxious Weed Seed Free
- Drill seeding rate of 8 lbs/acre Pure Live Seed (PLS)
- Seed poundage should be doubled and harrowed if the area is broadcast seeded
- Seeding shall occur in the fall (after September 15) or early spring (before May 1).

Checklist EA	Name:	ERIK ENEBOE
Approved By:	Title:	Conrad Unit Manager, CLO MT DNRC
Signature:  Date: October 20, 2025		



General map of the proposed testing area.

T22N, R3W, SEC 16 – PART OF W2 LYING N OF RR R/W NW4, NE4SW4

Teton County