

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	
Project Name: Westby Branchlines Project-Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority	Proposed Implementation Date: 2024
Proponent: Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority, P O Box 577, Culbertson, Montana 59218	
<p>Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to install service taps appurtenant to existing water transmission mainlines to several customers in the Westby and Plentywood areas north of Highway 5. These 2" and 3" lines are plowed into the ground in a process that uses a knife-like action that displaces soil and lays pipe in the same process from a machine being pulled behind a dozer.</p> <p>The purpose of the Right of Way Easement is for the pipeline construction, inspection, operation, maintenance, repair and replacement of the underground water pipeline and necessary structures for use in conjunction therewith.</p>	
See Attached Legal Descriptions	County: Sheridan

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority has submitted a Right of Way Easement application to the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Glasgow Unit Office to place two- and three-inch water pipelines service taps on State trust lands for human consumption. Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority has solicited these water supply requests to potential customers in this area.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	Other government agencies that have jurisdiction for this type of project are United States Army Corp. of Engineers, United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resource and Conservation Service, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, Valley County Conservation District, Valley County Commissioners, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Water Rights Division.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Action Alternative: Grant a Right of Way Easement to Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority to place water service taps on State land.

	No Action Alternative: Deny a Right of Way Easement to Dry Prairie Rural Water Authority to place these water service taps on State land.
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II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compatible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Sheridan County soils primarily represent the Eastern Glaciated Plains where nearly 75% of the soils are of the Williams, Vida, Zahill loam series. These productive soils have good production rates for both dryland agriculture crops and native grass vegetation. Utilizing plow in method of installation will minimize the potential for soil erosion and have no significant impact on the soil resource. Seeding will be required and will comply recommended DNRC seed mix if necessary.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no changes to soils on the State land.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There are no perennial streams or prairie potholes that will be impacted by the proposed action. There are small ephemeral drainage(s) that will be crossed. The minimal ground disturbance occurring because of the installation method utilized, is not expected to have a significant impact on the surface or groundwater resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no significant impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution.</p>
<p>6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality</p>	<p>Action Alternative: No significant impacts to long term air quality are anticipated.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to air quality.
7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	Action Alternative: No significant or permanent impacts to vegetative communities will result from this proposed action. No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to current uses of the lands under this proposal.
8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	Action Alternative: Under this proposal, there are multiple recorded occurrences of several species of special concern including black terns, Nelson's Sparrow, Le Conte's Sparrow, Boblink, Whopping Crane, Yellow Rail and Horned Grebe. Mammals include Haydens' Shrew as determined within the Montana Natural Heritage Program. The proposed action is temporary and will have no long-term impacts to the habitat for Species of Special Concern for birds, plants, mammals, reptiles, or fish No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no significant impact to species of special concern.
9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?	Action Alternative: There are no threatened and endangered species identified in this area in the Montana Natural Heritage Program. Species of special concern are listed above. No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to the environmental resources.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological	Action Alternative: The project areas have been reviewed in existing files. NO class III level inventory has

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
resources present?	<p>occurred within the proposed area. Installation of these service taps are mostly occurring in lands immediately adjacent to previous disturbances associated with other utility and roadway work, or in areas that have extensive cropping history. This project is unlikely to significantly impact additional cultural or paleontological resources. HOWEVER, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified in areas of native vegetation and undisturbed soils, during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to historical or archaeological sites under this alternative.</p>
<p>11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This project on State land will not impact the aesthetics of the surrounding area. The project is located next to existing roadways. During installation operations, the project will be visible. Dry Prairie has been extending services in the area and the population is aware of the minimal disruptions created which are of short term consequence.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to aesthetics associated with the State land.</p>
<p>12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There are no other projects are planned or underway that would affect the demands of environmental resources including land, water or energy.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There are no other projects are planned or underway that would affect the demands of</p>

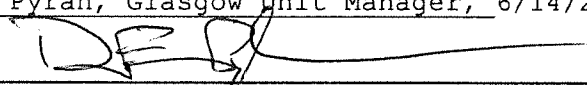
II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	environmental resources including land, water or energy.
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	<p>Action Alternative: There are no proposed additional projects currently.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There are no proposed additional projects currently.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>Action Alternative: The installation of a water pipeline has minimal human health and safety risks. These risks are to be mitigated by the contractor providing the installation services.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to human health or safety.</p>
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have no significant impact to the current livestock grazing or dryland agriculture activities that may be occurring on the State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts to agricultural activities on the State land.</p>
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	<p>Action Alternative: The project may create jobs for the construction companies that will construct the water pipeline.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>

<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the local and state tax base and tax revenues.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the local and state tax base under this alternative.</p>
<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will place no additional demands for government services.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no demand for government services.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: No effect.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No effect.</p>
<p>20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: No significant impacts to wilderness or recreational activity are anticipated.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to wilderness or recreational activity.</p>
<p>21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of population and housing.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the density and distribution of population and housing.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not disrupt the traditional lifestyles of the local community. The water project will enhance the day to day lives of the rural communities by supplying reliable, potable water.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social structures under this alternative.</p>
<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and</p>

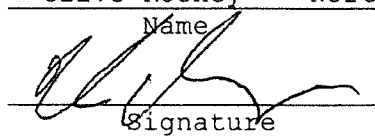
<p>some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>diversity of this rural area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.</p>
<p>24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The installation of these water service taps will improve the social and economic circumstances for the residents of Northeastern Montana area</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the economic circumstances under this alternative.</p>

EA Checklist Prepared By: Don Pyrah, Glasgow Unit Manager, 6/14/2024



<p>IV. FINDING</p>	
<p>25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:</p>	<p>Action Alternative</p> <p>Approve project request for Dry Prairie to install service taps appurtenant to existing water transmission mainlines to several customers in the Westby and Plentywood areas north of Highway 5.</p>
<p>26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:</p>	<p>No significant negative impacts anticipated.</p>
<p>27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis</p>	

EA Checklist Approved By: Clive Rooney Northeastern Area Manager/MTDNRC
Name Title



Signature

Date: June 14, 2024

Attachment: Dry Prairie-Westby Branch lines, Summer 2024, EA Legal Descriptions

Township 36N, Range 54E, Section 25 E2NE4, SE4. Strip 30' (15' each side of center line) 7835.34 ft
5.40 acres

Township 36N, Range 54E, Section 36 SE4. Strip 30' (15' each side of center line) 2648.79ft
1.82 acres

Township 36N, Range 56E, Section 16 N2S2. Strip 30' (15' each side of center line) 5211.01 ft
3.64 acres

Township 36N, Range 58E, Section 16 E2NE4, SE4, NW4. Strip 30' (15' each side of center line)
8082.19 ft 7.15 acres

Township 37N, Range 56E, Section 36 SW4SW4. Strip 30' (15' each side of center line) 623.62 ft
.44 acres

Township 37N, Range 57E. Section 16 N2. Strip 30' (15' each side of center line) 6491.96 ft
4.48 acres

