

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Two Dog Shooting Range on State Trust Lands
Proposed Implementation Date:	Fall 2026
Proponent:	Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Location:	T1N R2E Sec. 36
County:	Gallatin
Trust:	Montana Tech

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) submitted an easement application on January 16, 2025. The proposed easement is to facilitate the development of a formal public shooting range encompassing 86 acres located along the I-90 corridor, approximately two miles south of Logan, Montana. DNRC Trust Lands owns the entirety of the project area (see Exhibit A).

This document reviews the environmental issues related to the proposed alternatives. It includes an Environmental Assessment (EA) based on, and associated with, the FWP EA attached as Exhibit B. The FWP EA document was posted for public comment from February 26, 2026, to March 28, 2026, on the FWP website. DNRC staff reviewed the FWP EA and decided the analysis was largely sufficient.

The following analysis conducted by the DNRC is meant to tier to and supplement the FWP EA. This EA addresses a limited set of issues relevant to State Trust Lands. In its role as landowner and steward, DNRC will decide whether to recommend approval of all, part, or none of the project proposed by FWP to the Montana Land Board of Commissioners.

This parcel is currently managed as a grazing lease (AG-9183) with a 5-year (2022-2026) revenue average of \$769.36. The proposed easement would reduce the currently assessed 47 AUMs to 27 AUMs. The most recent AUM valuation is \$26.07, which in 2026 would reduce the revenue to the trust by \$391.05.

An appraisal, completed in May 2026, established the following value: \$5,000/acre. 86.4 acres x \$5,000 = \$432,000 for the easement of the State Trust Land on Section 36 of Township 1N Range 2E. If approved, these monies would be distributed to the Montana Tech Trust.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.

FWP conducted a public scoping period of the initial project proposal between March 24, 2025, and April 23, 2025. The scoping notice was distributed to interested parties, neighboring landowners, and State and Federal agencies. FWP also engaged with local clubs, businesses, organizations, and the general public through a press release on the proposed project. FWP received public comments during the scoping period related to public safety, accessibility, communication and education, environmental concerns, land use, facility maintenance and management, and funding.

Additionally, FWP released a Draft EA for public review and comment from February 26, 2026, to March 28, 2026. FWP received public comments during the Draft EA's public review process with the majority of commenters showing general support for the proposed project, as well as some commenters expressing concern for wildlife, fisheries, exploring additional action alternatives, safety hazards to neighboring properties, adequate resources and funding for management, soil contamination and fire hazards.

DNRC Trust Lands decided not to conduct a separate public comment period, as it is anticipated that the majority of public concerns and issues were sufficiently captured during FWP's public scoping process and Draft EA review periods. The lessee for the tract, Craig DeBoer, was consulted when the easement was received, and while they would prefer the lease acreage to remain the same, they were generally supportive of the proposed use and associated increase in management of target shooting.

DNRC Trust Lands staff consulted:

- Kara Huyser, Bozeman Unit Manager
- Andy Burgoyne, Central Land Office Trust Lands Program Manager
- Emilia Grzesik, Trust Lands Forest Management MEPA Planner

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

Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.

As the project proponent, FWP would be responsible for obtaining and complying with agency authorizations for the proposed project.

3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Describe alternatives considered and, if applicable, provide brief description of how the alternatives were developed. List alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further analysis and why.

Two Alternatives are presented and fully analyzed in this document.

Alternative A (No Action alternative). DNRC recommends the Montana Board of Land Commissioners to deny the easement. No new revenue sources would be generated for the Montana Tech Trust from this State Trust Lands parcel.

Alternative B (Proposed Action Alternative): DNRC recommends the Montana Board of Land Commissioners to grant the easement to FWP for a formalized target shooting range, encumbering 86.4 acres. Approximately \$432,000 of revenue would be generated for the Montana Tech Trust.

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.*

An analysis of potential impacts from the proposed FWP project on the physical environment are described in the FWP EA (Exhibit B). No significant adverse impacts to wildlife, water resources, geology, soils, vegetation, aesthetics, air quality, unique, endangered, fragile or limited resources, historical and archaeological resources are anticipated, per the FWP EA.

In addition to the analysis presented in the FWP EA, DNRC Trust Lands offers the following information to provide further context regarding current aesthetic conditions within the project area, along with additional recommendations to FWP for implementing the action alternative should it be approved:

- As of July 1, 2025, the proposed easement location is seasonally closed to recreational use target shooting between May 1st and September 15th annually. This seasonal restriction was implemented in response to a petition submitted by the neighboring landowners April 1, 2025, and supported largely by the adjacent community.
- Noise pollution from recreational shooting at the informal shooting range currently exists within the project area. DNRC anticipates that a formalized target shooting range will likely draw more frequent and consistent use by the public than the current informal shooting range and would likely result in increased noise pollution. If the action alternative is approved, a public target shooting range would likely remain open year-round and may not be subject to existing, seasonal shooting restrictions.
- FWP's project design should be implemented to reduce noise pollution in the surrounding area which would mitigate these impacts to the extent practicable.
- The proposed project area is and has been intensely used for recreational target shooting. Therefore, potential wildland fire occurrences and other existing safety risks are not expected to increase as a result of the proposed action. While safety risks exist obviously from accidental wildfire ignitions, among other shooting-related accidents, DNRC anticipates and expects FWP shooting range design and FWP oversight and management of range use to reduce the likelihood but not eliminate all risks associated with the operation of a public shooting range.

V. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *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.*

An analysis of potential impacts of the proposed FWP project on the human population are described in the FWP EA (Exhibit B). No significant adverse impacts to human health and safety, agricultural production, employment, tax base and revenues, demands for government resources, density and distribution of population and housing, social structures and mores and cultural uniqueness and diversity resources are anticipated, per the FWP EA.

In addition to the analysis presented in the FWP EA, DNRC Trust Lands offers the following information to provide further context regarding demands on government services, along with additional recommendations to FWP for implementing the action alternative should it be approved:

- A formalized target shooting range would likely draw more frequent and consistent use by the public than the current informal shooting range. If approved, a public target shooting range would likely remain open year-round, requiring consistent facilities management by FWP staff.
- A plan for management was not required or submitted by FWP as part of DNRC's easement application. DNRC strongly recommends that FWP develop a management plan as part of the proposed project that includes coordination with and input from DNRC.

**EA Checklist
Prepared By:**

Name: Kara Huyser
Title: Bozeman Unit Manager
Bozeman Unit—Central Land
Office

Date: August 21, 2026

II. FINDING

1. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Two Alternatives presented and fully analyzed in the EAC.

Alternative A (No Action alternative). DNRC recommends the Montana Board of Land Commissioners to deny the easement. No new revenue sources would be generated for the Montana Tech Trust from this State Trust Lands parcel.

Alternative B (Proposed Action Alternative): DNRC recommends the Montana Board of Land Commissioners to grant the easement to FWP for a formalized target shooting range, encumbering 86.4 acres. Approximately \$432,000 of revenue would be generated for the Montana Tech Trust.

On behalf of the DNRC, I have selected Alternative B: Action Alternative for the following reasons.

- The Action Alternative will provide a much-needed space for a safe and managed public recreational target shooting infrastructure that is currently lacking in Gallatin County and the immediate surrounding communities. DNRC anticipates a site management plan from FWP before project implementation.
- The proposed project area is held by the State of Montana in trust for the support of specific beneficiary institutions. As such, the DNRC is required to look for feasible and profitable opportunities to generate revenue for the trust beneficiaries. This project is consistent with MCA 77-1-202.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

After Reviewing the two Alternatives, I find that the Action Alternative will have less significant adverse impacts on the Physical Environment or the Human Population than the existing state of the proposed project location.

Direct impacts have long duration. These impacts have been analyzed, and mitigations developed to reduce undesirable effects or impacts.

The secondary and cumulative impacts have been identified and do not reach a level of significance which would preclude DNRC from recommending approval of this easement.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

☐ EI

☐ More Detailed EA

☒ No Further Analysis

EA Approved By:	Name: <u>Walt R. Daniels</u>
	Title: <u>CLO Area Manager</u>
Signature:	Date: <u>8/26/26</u>

Exhibit A: Vicinity Map

State Trust Land Vicinity Map Bozeman Unit

Proposed MT Dept. Fish
Wildlife & Parks- Two Dog
Shooting Range Easement

T1N R2E Section 36

Approx. 86 acres

