CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	LTS Telecommunication Services (USA) Inc. Kinsey Bridge
Proposed Implementation Date:	2026
Proponent:	LTS Telecommunication Services (USA) Inc.
Location:	T9N-R48E-Sec 17
County:	Custer

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

LTS Telecommunication Services has requested a right of way easement from the DNRC. This ROW easement is for the purpose of placing a fiber optic cable across the mentioned tract of State Trust Land. This line will provide for a more reliable communications link between the outlying areas of Custer County.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:
Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

LTS Telecommunications has requested that the DNRC allow the passage of the new fiber optic cable across the state-owned portioned of the referenced tract. The total acreage encompassed by this project will be +-.15 acres. Said easement will be 10 feet wide, 5 feet on each side of the centerline. The line will be constructed using conduit attached to a county owned bridge over the Yellowstone River.

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

None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A- Grant Easement requested by the proponent for the purpose of construction, maintenance and operation of the buried fiber optic telecommunication line.

Alternative B- No Action.

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.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:
Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

Alternative A- There should be no disturbance of the state-owned acreage. There should be no lasting adverse effects to the soil quality, stability or moisture. The soil structures are not fragile or unstable. The sites should recover within one to two growing seasons.

Alternative B-No Impact

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:
Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

6. AIR QUALITY:
What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

Alternative A- Pollutants and Particulates may be increased during the construction of the project. After the completion of the project pollutant and particulate levels should return to normal preconstruction levels. Increase in pollutants during construction should be almost negligible.

Alternative B- No Impact

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:
What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

Alternative A- There should be no disturbance of vegetation on state-owned acreage.

Alternative B- No Impact

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:
Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

Alternative A-Construction on each tract should take less than one week, there should be very minimal effect on any animal habitats within the boundaries of the project construction area. Wildlife may be temporarily disturbed during the construction of the project. After completion of the project wildlife usage should return to pre-construction levels.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Database showed the following species of concern in the general area:

Black-tailed Prairie Dog(Cynomys ludovicianus)
Northern Hoary Bat(Lasiurus cinereus)
Silver-haired Bat(Lasionycteris noctivagans)
Alder Flycatcher(Empidonax alnorum)
American Goshawk(Astur atricapillus)

American White Pelican(Pelecanus erythrorhynchos)
Black-billed Cuckoo(Coccyzus erythropthalmus)
Bobolink(Dolichonyx oryzivorus)
Brewer's Sparrow(Spizella breweri)
Burrowing Owl(Athene cunicularia)
Eastern Screech-Owl(Megascops asio)
Ferruginous Hawk(Buteo regalis)
Golden Eagle(Aquila chrysaetos)
Great Blue Heron(Ardea herodias)
Greater Sage-Grouse(Centrocercus urophasianus)
Least Tern(Sternula antillarum)
Lewis's Woodpecker(Melanerpes lewis)
Loggerhead Shrike(Lanius ludovicianus)
Long-billed Curlew(Numenius americanus)
Red-headed Woodpecker(Melanerpes erythrocephalus)
Sharp-tailed Grouse(Tympanuchus phasianellus)
Solitary Sandpiper(Tringa solitaria)
Sprague's Pipit(Anthus spragueii)
Trumpeter Swan(Cygnus buccinator)
North American Snapping Turtle(Chelydra serpentina)
Spiny Softshell(Apalone spinifera)
Western Hog-nosed Snake(Heterodon nasicus)
Great Plains Toad(Anaxyrus cognatus)
Northern Leopard Frog(Lithobates pipiens)
Blue Sucker(Cycleptus elongatus)
Pallid Sturgeon(Scaphirhynchus albus)
Sauger(Sander canadensis)
Sicklefin Chub(Macrhybopsis meeki)
Sturgeon Chub(Macrhybopsis gelida)
Danaus plexippus(Monarch)

While the above listed species have been identified as having been found within the tract as a whole, there should be minimal impact from this project due to the location, scale, and nature of the project.
This project is not located within any identified Sage Grouse habitat areas. The project was not submitted to the Montana Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program in compliance with EO-12-2015 and EO-21-2015.

Alternative B- No Impact

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10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

Alternative A-A site visit by DNRC staff and a search on TLMS showed that no historical or cultural items have been identified in the project work area. 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 revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. 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.

Alternative B- No Impact

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

Alternative A-LTS Telecommunications would need to be able to perform maintenance on the communication line from time to time. This should be of a temporary nature and not be a significant impact. There will be no pedestals located within the project area.
Alternative B- No Impact

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

None

IV. 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.*

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Alternative A- There may be risks to human health and safety in the construction of the project, but this should be done by qualified professionals. Safety concerns should be minimized with proper safety protocol employed by the workers.

Alternative B- There may be less reliable communication infrastructure available in the remote rural area. This could lead to safety and emergency problems.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Alternative A- It should have a positive effect on Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Activities and Production in the area.

Alternative B- No Impact

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

Alternative A- This project has the potential to create jobs with further development possibilities.

Alternative B- No Impact

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

Alternative A- No Impact expected

Alternative B- No Impact

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

Alternative A- No Impacts expected

Alternative B- No Impact

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

Alternative A- The value for this easement will be established by the DNRC Real Estate Bureau. The total impacted acreage of this proposal is .15 acres..
Alternative B- No Impact

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Aaron Kneeland	**Date:**	11-10-2026
	Title:	Land Use Specialist		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative A

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The granting of the requested right of way easement across state owned trust lands for the proposed LTS Telecommunications Services fiber optic communication line project should not result in nor cause significant environmental impacts. The predicted impacts will be adequately mitigated through the construction and reclamation plans. The proposed action satisfies the trusts fiduciary mandate and ensures the long-term productivity of the land. An environmental assessment checklist is the appropriate level of analysis for the proposed action.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

[ ]	EIS	[ ]	More Detailed EA	[X]	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Scott Aye		
	Title:	ELO Land Program Manager		
Signature:	/s/ Scott Aye		**Date**:	11-10-2026