CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Sun River Electric Cooperative Inc. – Breaker Station / Overhead Power Line Easement
Proposed Implementation Date:	Spring / Summer 2026
Proponent:	Sun River Electric Cooperative Inc., PO Box 309, Fairfield, MT 59436
Location:	NW4NW4NW4NW4, Sec 36, T22N, R6W
County:	Teton
Trust:	Common Schools (CS)

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Sun River Electric Coop has applied for an easement to install a breaker yard and overhead power line located on state land. The proposed easement location is adjacent to an existing powerline parallel on 1st Road NW. The project will encumber 1.25 acres.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Proponent - Sun River Electric
Landowner - Montana DNRC – Trust Land Management Division – Real Estate Bureau.
Surface Lessee: Robert E Stephens Jr. - Lease 8610

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

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project. The Project will be permitted under a Right–of–Way Easement for Utilities Over, Under, Along, or Across State-Owned Lands.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Deny Sun River Electric Cooperative the requested easement to install the breaker station.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Recommend granting Sun River Electric Cooperative the requested easement to install the breaker station.

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.

Soils at the proposed project sites are silty and shallow to gravel in texture. The topography is flat and adjacent to a county road. The soils and slopes are suitable for the installation of a breaker yard. Equipment will cause localized areas of soil compaction and will disturb the soil where the powerline is installed. Very limited soil disturbances are expected. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected.

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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.

Water rights, water quality and water quantity will not be impacted by the proposed project.

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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.

The proposed action will not impact the air quality.

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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.

Vegetation in the project area consists of native rangeland with the dominate species including: western wheatgrass, blue bunch wheatgrass, blue grama, needle and thread grass, sandburg blue grass and prairie June grass. Vegetation will be minimally impacted from the installation of the powerline. Noxious and annual weeds within the proposed construction areas are a concern, but this concern will be mitigated by the applicants required weed control after installation. Cumulative impacts on the vegetative resources are not expected as the proposed construction areas will be reclaimed and reseeded. Disturbed areas will be reseeded with a native grass seed mixture of 35% Western Wheatgrass, 35% Slender Wheatgrass, 15% Bluebunch Wheatgrass, 10% Green Needlegrass, and 5% Lewis Blue Flax. If drilled the rate will be 8#/acre, but if broadcast seeded the rate will be 16#/acre.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted for the project area and no species of concern were reported.
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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.

The area is not considered critical wildlife habitat. However, this tract provides habitat for a variety of big game species (mule deer, whitetail deer, pronghorn antelope), predators (coyote, fox, badger), upland game birds (sharp tail grouse, Hungarian partridge), other non-game mammals, raptors, and various songbirds. The proposal does not include any land use change which would yield changes to the wildlife habitat. The proposed action will not impact wildlife forage, cover, or traveling corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover. Wildlife usage is expected to return to "normal" (pre-action usage)

following the installation. The proposed action will not have long-term negative effects on existing wildlife species and/or wildlife habitat.

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.

There are no threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern associated with the proposed project area. At this time, no known unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources have been identified within the proposed project area.

No species of concern will be impacted within the Project.

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.

The proposed project is expected to have No Effect to Antiquities. No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. 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.

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.

Installation of the breaker station will not drastically affect the aesthetics of the land. The yard and powerlines will blend into the landscape and is a common use of area property.

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.

The demand on environmental resources such as land, water, air, or energy will not be affected by the proposed action. The proposed action will not consume resources that are limited in the area. There are no other projects in the area that will affect the proposed project.

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.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tract listed on this EA.

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.

The proposed project will not change human safety in the area.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The results of this project will not affect the industrial, commercial, or agricultural activities or production in the area.

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.

This project will not create any new jobs, as the project will be completed in-house by the proponent.

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.

The proposed action will add to the tax revenue.

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

This project is of a small scale and being funded by Sun River Electric Coop. There will be no excessive stress placed of the existing infrastructure of the area.

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.

The proposed action is in compliance with State and County laws. No other management plans are in effect for the area.

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.

This proposed project area is adjacent to a public county road. The tract is legally accessible, and the proposed action is not expected to impact general recreational and wilderness activities on this state tract.

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

The proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments. No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique, or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed action will not impact the cultural uniqueness or diversity of the area.

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.

The project will benefit the Common School Trust in terms of a one-time easement fee of $1,500.00 plus a $50.00 application fee. The Project will not impede the existing use of State Lease 8610. The project will provide updated power services for rural residents in Teton County Montana.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:** Erik Eneboe	**Date:** Dec 22,2025
	Title: Conrad Unit Manager, Conrad Unit, Central Land Office	

V. FINDINGS

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Recommend granting Sun River Electric Cooperative the requested easement to install the breaker station.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

After Reviewing the two Alternatives, I find the Action Alternative will have no significant adverse impacts on the Physical Environment or the Human Population.

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

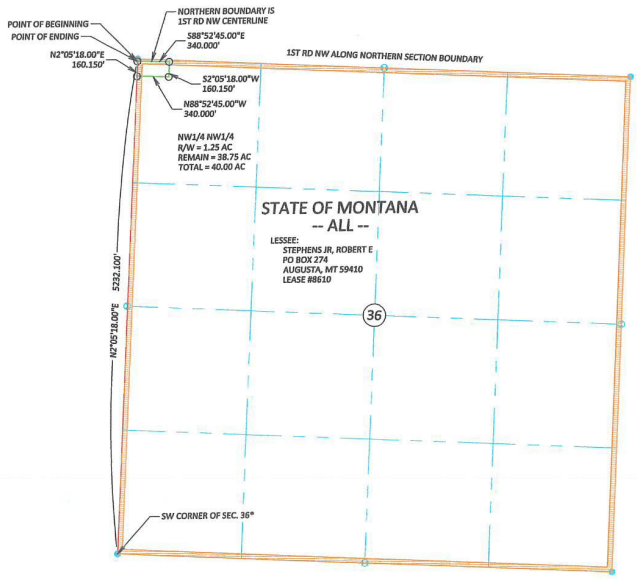
No secondary or cumulative impacts have been identified

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Andy Burgoyne
	Title:	Trust Lands Program Manager, CLO, DNRC
Signature: 		**Date**: 12/22/2025

NOTE: ALL BEARINGS AND DISTANCES ON SECTIONS ARE TAKEN FROM FIELD GPS DATA CORRECTED IN SYSTEM; US STATE PLANE, ZONE: MONTANA 2500, DATUM: NAD 1983 (CONUS).

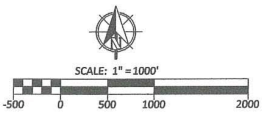


* THE SOUTHWEST CORNER IS A BRASS CAP SET BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT IN 1955.

A RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR AN ELECTRIC UTILITY BREAKER STATION, ENCOMPASSING APPROXIMATELY 1.25 ACRES, WITH A BOUNDARY OF 340' X 160', ALL WITHIN NW¼NW¼, OF SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 22 NORTH, RANGE 06 WEST OF THE PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, MONTANA, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:

COMMENCING AT THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 36, TOWNSHIP 22 NORTH, RANGE 06 WEST; THENCE NORTH 02° 05' 18" EAST A DISTANCE OF 5,232.1 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY BOUNDARY; (SAID LINE FOLLOWS PROPERTY BOUNDARY FENCE TO THE CENTERLINE OF THE COUNTY ROAD); THENCE ON AND ALONG THE RIGHT-OF-WAY BOUNDARY ON A BEARING OF SOUTH 88° 52' 45" EAST A DISTANCE OF 340.0 FEET; THENCE SOUTH 02° 05' 18" WEST A DISTANCE OF 160.15 FEET; THENCE NORTH 88° 52' 45" WEST A DISTANCE OF 340.0 FEET; THENCE NORTH 02° 05' 18" EAST A DISTANCE OF 160.15 FEET, TO THE POINT OF ENDING OF THE RIGHT-OF-WAY PARCEL; THENCE SOUTH 02° 05' 18" WEST A DISTANCE OF 5,231.1 FEET TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID SECTION 36.

SAID EASEMENT AREA CONTAINS 1.25 ACRES, MORE OR LESS.



LEGEND
- SECTION LABEL
- SECTION CORNER
- QUARTER CORNER
- RIGHT-OF-WAY POINT
- RIGHT-OF-WAY CENTERLINE
- BEARING AND DISTANCE LINE
- SECTION LINE
- QUARTER SECTION LINE
- STATE LANDS BOUNDARY

EXHIBIT of RIGHT-OF-WAY on STATE LAND
Sec. 36, T 22 N, R 6 W, P.M.M.
TETON COUNTY, MT

SUN RIVER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.
310 1ST AVE. SOUTH
PO BOX 309
FAIRFIELD, MT 59436