

**DRAFT**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

**PART I. GAME FARM LICENSE APPLICATION**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Park's authority to regulate game farms is contained in sections 87-4-406 through 87-4-424, MCA and ARM 12.6.1501 through 12.6.1519.

1. Name of Project: Columbia Mountain Ranch

Application Date: September 11, 1995

2. Name, Address and Phone Number of Applicant(s): Shane A. Salminen, 333 Jensen Rd., Columbia Falls, MT 59912 (406)892-4207

3. If Applicable:

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: March 1, 1996

Estimated Completion Date: June 1, 1996

Is this an application for expansion of existing facility or is a future expansion contemplated? No

4. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township): Flathead County, R20W T30N Sec. 27

5. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:

(a) Developed:  
residential..... 1 acres  
industrial.....      acres

(d) Floodplain...      acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Areas....      acres

(e) Productive:  
irrigated cropland.      acres  
dry cropland..... 10 acres  
forestry.....      acres  
rangeland..... 5 acres  
other.....      acres

(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas.....      acres

6. **Map/site plan:** attach a copy of the map submitted with the application (an 8 1/2" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map) showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.

See attached maps.

7. **Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action:**

Mr. Salminen will fence an eight to ten acre alfalfa field to an eight foot height using steel pipe fence posts on 16 foot centers and stays (supports) every 8 feet. Contained within the alfalfa field are two small ponds. The pasture normally contains only one pond, but due to the wet summer of 1995, a second depression has filled with water. The pond which normally occurs has a surface of approximately 13,000 to 18,000 square feet and supports cattails, but surface water is usually gone by fall. However, during the summer of 1995, approximately 1,500 to 1,700 square feet of standing water from this pond extended into the neighboring property to the south. Fence type used throughout is commonly referred to as field fencing with variable sized grid (smaller squares at bottom and larger toward the top). The pasture is relatively flat with some rolling topography and will be managed to provide feed for elk. Elk will be held in a six to four acre fenced holding compartment (fenced similar to the above) and moved to the mowed alfalfa pasture after second cutting in late summer. The holding compartment will contain a quarantine area fenced with 1" x 8" planks continuous around the perimeter and will contain a separate water source that is isolated from ground water and other surface water uses. The operation will initially involve only 3 female elk, 1 of which is pregnant, and at capacity will contain no more than 15 elk. Ten 35mm slides provide information about the fence lines, proximity to other small ranches, and location of ponds.

8. **Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction:**

(a) **Permits:**

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#
Department of Livestock		

(b) **Funding:**

Agency Name	Funding Amount
-------------	----------------

**(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:**  
Agency Name                      Type of Responsibility  
Department of Livestock

- 9. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:**
- 1. Montana State Historic Preservation Office**
  - 2. Department of Livestock**
  - 3. Department of Environmental Quality-Water Quality Division**

## PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### 1. Evaluation of the Impacts of the Proposed Action Including Secondary and Cumulative Impacts on the Physical and Human Environment:

#### PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		x				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil which would reduce productivity or fertility?		x				
c. Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		x				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake?		x				
e. Other: _____						

PROPOSED ACTION: Fence 17 - 18 acres of cultivated pasture that is essentially flat.

NO ACTION:

COMMENTS:

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

2. <u>AIR</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality?		x				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			x		N/A	2.b.
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		x				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		x				
e. Other: _____						

PROPOSED ACTION:

NO ACTION:

COMMENTS: 2.b. Operation may eventually include male elk which do have mild odor during rutting period. Due to presence of other livestock operations and similar odors in the vicinity, there is no need to mitigate.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

3. <u>WATER</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			x		Yes	3.a.
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		x				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of flood water or other flows?		x				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		x				
e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?		x				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		x				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		x				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		x				
i. Violation of the Montana non-degradation statute?						
j. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		x				
k. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		x				
l. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		x				
m. Other: _____						

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:** 3.a. A small pond (approximately 13,000 to 18,000 square feet) exists on the south property boundary and 1,500 to 1,700 square feet of standing body extends onto neighboring property to the south. Potential adverse effects on water quality, including disease transmission, may occur if elk are not physically excluded from this pond. Because standing water crosses the property boundary, these adverse effects could potentially effect wildlife outside the game farm. Abundant sign of white-tail deer use was observed on the property, south of this pond. Elk should be excluded from the area using an 8 foot fence with steel pipe fenceposts on 16 foot centers with stays (supports) every 8 feet.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

4. <u>VEGETATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species?			x		Yes	4.a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		x				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		x				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		x				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			x		Yes	4.e.
f. Other: _____						4.f.

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:** 4.a. The small pond on the southern property boundary contains riparian vegetation which could be impacted by elk use of the area. Elk should be excluded by an 8 foot fence with steel pipe fenceposts on 16 foot centers with stays (supports) every 8 feet.

4.e. Knapweed is already present and is currently being treated with Curtail™ by Mr. Salminen.

4.f. Elk will be held in cross-fenced area to the north of alfalfa pasture from early spring until second cutting of alfalfa in late summer.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

5. <u>FISH/WILDLIFE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		x				5.a.
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game species?			x		Yes	5.b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		x				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		x				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		x				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		x				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)?		x				
h. Other: _____						

PROPOSED ACTION:

NO ACTION:

COMMENTS: 5.a. Surrounding area already developed for small horse ranches. Habitat suitability for threatened and endangered species may already be limited by existing development.  
5.b. Transmission of diseases to white-tailed deer which occupy the area is a concern. The risk for disease transmission includes nose-to-nose contact and water born diseases. Risks can be mitigated by disease testing of elk at change of ownership and excluding elk from pond.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish/Wildlife Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**PROVIDE NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

**Wildlife use of the area and potential for through-the-fence contact with game farm animals (consider year-around use, traditional seasonal habitat use, and location of travel routes and migration corridors).**

White-tailed deer currently use area through late fall/winter period. There could be some contact (through field fence) between white-tailed deer and game farm elk.

**Potential for escape of game farm animals or ingress of wildlife (consider site-specific factors that could reduce the effectiveness of perimeter fences built to standards outlined in Rule 12.6.1503A, including steepness of terrain, winter snow depths/drifts, susceptibility of fences to flood damage, etc.).**

Eight (8) foot perimeter fence with steel pipe fenceposts on sixteen (16) foot centers with stays (supports) every eight (8) feet.

Interior fenced quarantine area with 1" x 8" lumber, continuous coverage, 10' high

Water facility for quarantine area must have automatic shut-off to prevent runoff and contamination outside quarantine pen.

**Proportion (%) of the total habitat area currently used by wildlife that will be enclosed or otherwise impacted.**

100 percent.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

6. <u>NOISE EFFECTS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		x				
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?		x				
c. Other: _____						

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:**

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects of Noise Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

7. <u>LAND USE</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		x				
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		x				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		x				
d. Conflict with any existing land use that would be adversely affected by the proposed action?		x				
e. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		x				
f. Other: _____						

PROPOSED ACTION:

NO ACTION:

COMMENTS: The proposed use is in character with existing land uses in the area.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Risk of dispersal of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to chemicals, pathogens, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		x				
b. Creation of any hazard or potential hazard to domestic livestock?		x				
c. Creation of any hazard or potential hazard to human health?			x		Yes	8.c.
d. Other: _____						

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:** 8.c. Transmission of diseases to wildlife is a concern. White-tailed deer occupy the area and could potentially have contact with elk; contact with elk could be direct (nose-to-nose) or indirect (through standing water which stands outside of the game farm area). If elk contracted communicable diseases, there is some potential for transmission either through direct or indirect contact. This risk can be mitigated by requiring that elk either come from a certified, disease-free herd, or are tested at time of change of ownership and by excluding elk from the small pond.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

9. <u>COMMUNITY IMPACT</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		x				9.a.
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		x				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		x				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		x				
e. Changes in historic or traditional recreational use of an area?		x				
f. Changes in existing public benefits provided by affected wildlife populations and wildlife habitats (educational, cultural or historic)?		x				
g. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		x				
h. Other: _____						

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:** 9.a. Currently area is 10 - 20 acre tracts being used for horse ranches and hunting white-tailed deer not occurring due to safety concerns.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. A need for new or altered government services (specifically an increased regulatory role for FWP and Dept. of Livestock)?	x					10.a.
b. A change in the local or state tax base and revenues?		x				
c. A need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?		x				
d. Other: _____						

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:** 10.a. Depends on need/requirement for ongoing inspection.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?		x				
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		x				
c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings?		x				
d. Other: _____						

PROPOSED ACTION:

NO ACTION:

COMMENTS:

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?	x					12.a.
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		x				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		x				
d. Other: _____						

PROPOSED ACTION:

NO ACTION:

COMMENTS: 12.a. Montana SHPO was contacted on November 14, 1995. Their response dated December 18, 1995 indicated that according to the statewide cultural site database, there is no prehistoric or historic sites recorded in the proposed location of the game farm.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

13. <b><u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u></b>  Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNOWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		x				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?			x		Yes	13.b.
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements or any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan?		x				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		x				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		x				
e. Other: _____						

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**NO ACTION:**

**COMMENTS:** 13.b. Transmissible wildlife diseases are a concern but this risk can be mitigated by excluding elk from the pond and requiring that elk either come from a certified, disease-free herd, or are tested at time of change of ownership.

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (Continued)**

### **2. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

a. Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively considerable? (A project may result in impacts on two or more separate resources which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)

No.

b. Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?

13.b. Transmissible wildlife diseases are a concern. This risk can be mitigated by requiring that elk either come from a certified, disease-free herd, or are tested at time of change of ownership and that elk are excluded from the small pond.

**3. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

a. Alternative 1: Issue permit.

b. Alternative 2: Do not issue permit.

c. Alternative 3: Issue permit with mitigation stipulations. Elk either come from a certified, disease-free herd, or are tested at time of change of ownership. Elk be excluded from the small pond by using an 8 foot fence with steel pipe fenceposts and 16 foot centers to reduce the chance of spreading diseases outside game farm.

**4. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:**

a. Exclusion fencing required around small pond.

b. White-tailed deer occupy the area and could potentially have contact with elk; if elk contracted any communicable diseases, there is some potential for transmission. This risk can be mitigated by requiring that elk either come from a certified, disease-free herd, or are tested at time of change of ownership.

c. Elk should be excluded from the small pond by using an 8 foot fence with steel pipe fenceposts on 16 foot centers with stays (supports) every 8 feet to reduce the chance of spreading diseases outside game farm.

**PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

## **PART IV. EA CONCLUSION**

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? **NO**

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

An EA is appropriate because no significant effects will occur with stipulations as described under Part II. #4.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances? (At a minimum, all EAs must be MADE available to the public through the State Bulletin Board System.)

The Draft EA will be distributed to interested parties and the appropriate state agencies. It will also be placed as a legal notice in appropriate newspapers, will be sent out in an FWP News Release, and placed on the State Bulletin Board.

3. Duration of comment period if any: Fifteen days - January 11 - 26, 1996.

4. Name, title, address and phone number of the Person(s) Responsible for Preparing the EA:

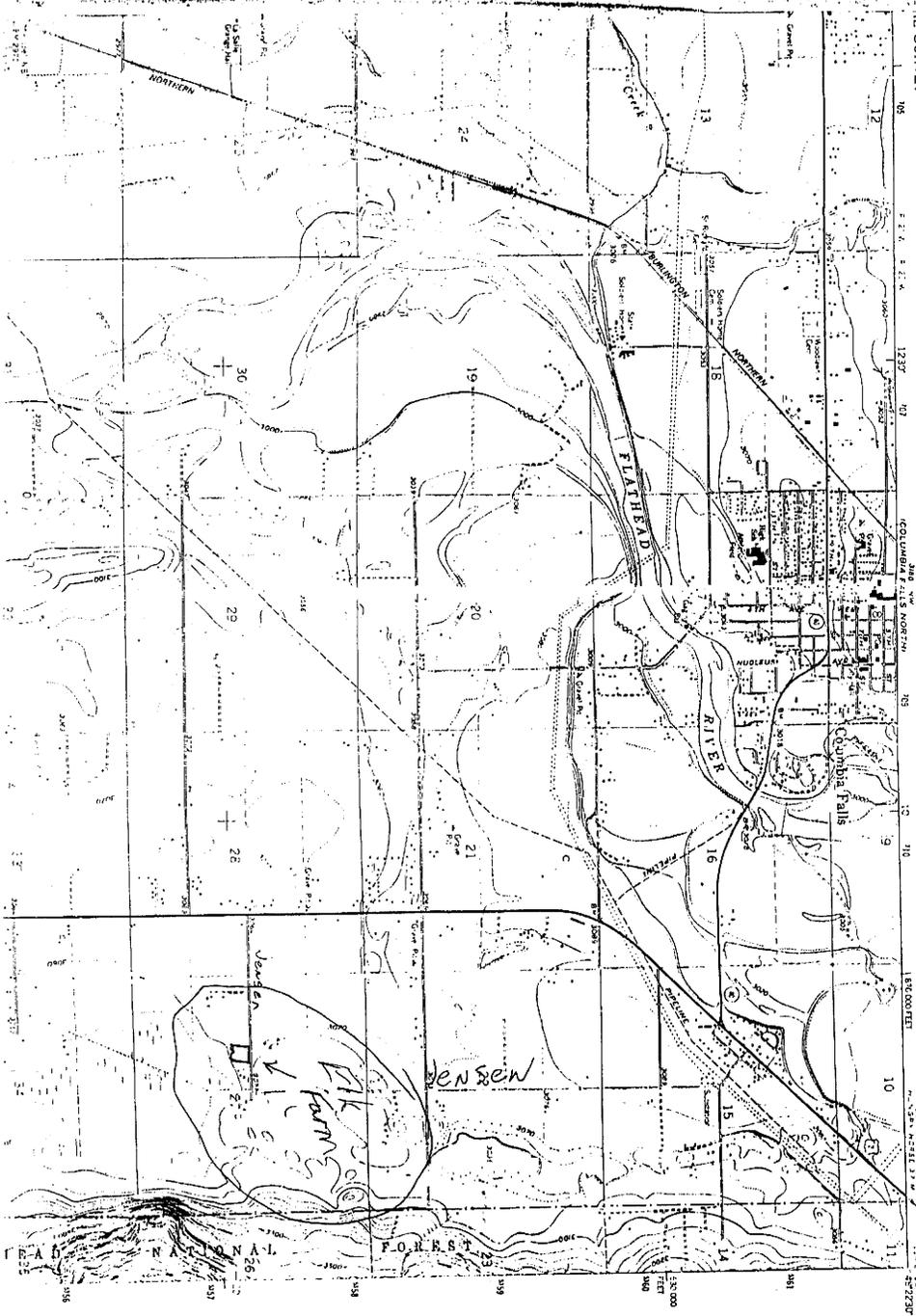
Wildlife Biologist Kevin Coates  
490 N. Meridian Rd.  
Kalispell, MT 59901  
(406)751-4582 or 837-3335

State Game Warden Perry Brown  
1325 S. Nucleus  
Columbia Falls, MT 59912  
(406)892-3996

REF:SALMINEN.EA  
01/10/96

GAFARMEA.FRM  
Rev. 12/95

STATES  
OF THE INTERIOR  
GENERAL SURVEY



COLUMBIA FALLS SOUTH QUADRANGLE  
MONTANA-FLATHEAD CO.  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)  
1:25,000

*County Flathead*  
*R 20 W*  
*T 30 N*  
*Sec 27*

# CORRALS

