

**Montana Department  
of  
Fish, Wildlife & Parks**



Region One  
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Kalispell, MT 59901  
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FAX: 406-257-0349  
Ref:DV094.97  
August 9, 1996

TO: Environmental Quality Council, Capitol Building, Helena, 59620-1704  
Dept. of Health & Environmental Quality, Metcalf Bldg., PO Box 200901, Helena, 59620-0901  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Director's Office  
Fisheries Division  
Regional Supervisor  
Legal Unit

Parks Division  
Wildlife Division  
Lands Section  
Karen Zackhiem, Enforcement

Montana Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office, 225 North Roberts, Veteran's  
Memorial Building, Helena, 59620-1201

Montana State Library, 1515 East Sixth Avenue, Helena, 59620-1800

Jim Jensen, Montana Environmental Information Center, PO Box 1184, Helena, 59624

George Ochenski, PO Box 689, Helena, 59624

Rep. Bob Keenan, P.O. Box 697, Bigfork, MT 59911

Montana Department of Livestock, Game Farm Applications, 301 Roberts, Helena 59620

Donald Kern, Program Director, Montana River Action Network, PO Box 383, 30 N. Last Chance  
Gulch, Helena, 59624

Lake County Commissioners, Lake County Courthouse, Polson, MT 59960

Flathead County Library, 247 First Ave E., Kalispell, 59901

Flathead County Library, Bigfork Branch, 521 Electric Ave., Bigfork, 59911

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The enclosed Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared for Royal Tine Game Farm for Justin Haveman and Doug Averill, and is submitted for your consideration. Questions and comments will be accepted until Thursday, September 12, 1996. Please direct you questions or comments to Game Warden Mike Quinn at PO Box 1095, Bigfork, MT 59911. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Dan Vincent*  
*by er*

Dan Vincent  
Regional Supervisor

/nb  
Enclosure

**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:**

Application Date: 05/02/96

**2. Name, Address and Phone Number of Applicant(s):**

Justin Haveman, Facility Mgr., 319 Sylvan Dr., Bigfork MT 59911, 837-3557

Doug Averill, Box 248, Bigfork MT 59911, 837-5100

**3. If Applicable:**

Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: ASAP

Estimated Completion Date: 12 months

Is this an application for expansion of existing facility or is a future expansion contemplated? Yes, this is an expansion of an existing facility. Additional expansion of this facility has not been suggested but is a possibility because the shareholders own 2 adjacent sections of land.

**4. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township):** Flathead and Lake Counties, Township 26N, Range 19W, Section 7

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

(a) Developed:

residential..... \_\_\_ acres

industrial..... \_\_\_ acres

(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Areas.... 520 acres

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

(d) Floodplain... \_\_\_ acres

(e) Productive:

irrigated cropland. \_\_\_ acres

dry cropland..... \_\_\_ acres

forestry..... \_\_\_ acres

rangeland..... \_\_\_ acres

other..... \_\_\_ 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:** The applicant requests a permit to fence 520 acres and raise  $\geq 70$  male elk. The parcel is in Flathead and Lake Counties. This is an expansion of an existing facility, separated by a State Highway and animals being moved from the original facility to the expansion will have to be loaded and trucked across the right-of-way. Plans have been submitted to and approved by the DOL allowing use of one quarantine facility for both areas. The proposed area is heavily wooded and has broken topography effectively "buffering" nearby residences and making it well suited for a "shooting" operation where individuals will be able to engage in fee hunting of older bulls. Younger bulls will be managed for antler harvest, the products of which are used in alternative medicinal practices. The 520 acre parcel of land being considered is currently being used for trailrides, and barbecues. For the past 40+ years another primary use of this land has been to pasture 40+ horses. There is an intermittent stream, with free flowing reaches on the parcel. Soil disturbance, damage to vegetation, and fecal deposition, due to horse movement and feeding practices, are present in some reaches of the creek. The creek percolates underground before leaving the property. Ultimately water percolates below ground, across the highway, and collects in a shallow pond located partly in the original game farm property. Surface water from this pond extends outside the applicant's property fence on the existing game farm into a closed basin (Lamb 1996). In the event that FWP does not issue a permit for the elk game farm, trustees intend to use the property to raise bison. Bison are not within the jurisdictional authority of FWP, but effects are contrasted for purposes of comparison only.

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

(a) Permits:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
Department of Livestock		

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
Department of Livestock (DOL)	

**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
4. Montana Natural Heritage Program

## PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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				IS MITIGATION POSSIBLE	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKWN	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		Yes, see no action narrative	1.b.
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 approximately 520 acres of forested habitat and convert from the current practice of grazing/feeding approx. 40+ horses principally to managing bull elk.

**NO ACTION:** The trustees are currently in the process of clearing the right-of-way, removing hazard trees, and harvesting trees infested with mistletoe. Presently there is some ground disturbance and water running down logging roads. However, the facility manager is in the process of installing culvert pipe to improve drainage systems. Trustees use the property for trail rides associated with a nearby guest lodge (approx. 6,000+ horse trips in 1995). Also this property has been used to pasture 40+ horses yearlong for the past 40 years; localized soil disturbance already exists at feeding and watering areas. Trustees will use the property to manage 30+ head of bison if not licensed for elk. Whether used for elk or bison, trustees will discontinue trailrides.

**COMMENTS:** 1.b. Soil disturbance from horses already exists in localized areas. The proposed action is not expected to result in additional soil disturbance.

**Evaluation of Cumulative and Secondary Effects:** Topography is broken with 20 to 30 percent slopes throughout and a predominantly south-western aspect. The site is relatively dry, and supports an open larch-fir forest. Cumulative and Secondary effects of the proposed action on soils in the area are not expected to be significant.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

2. AIR  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKNWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality?		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?			X			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:** Elk would be permitted to disperse throughout the entire area, but there would be "handling pens" where animals would be worked as well as adjacent "holding pens." These pens would be used on a short term basis during the time of year that antlers are harvested and animals are vaccinated. Off-site odors associated are not expected to be significant.

**NO ACTION:** Trustees currently use the area for pasturing 40+ head of horses, and there are several areas approximately 1 to 3 acres in size where feed and manure have accumulated (6-12+ inch depth). These odors are probably representative of the type associated with an elk farm. Also, trustees plan to use the area for 30+ bison, should the elk farm not be licensed. Bison odors are probably intermediate to the type associated with horses or elk. Elk will not be held in confinement areas, so manure accumulation could be minimized.

**COMMENTS:** 2.b. Elk, esp. rutting males do have a distinct odor, which at times is noticeable some distance downwind. However, off-site odors associated are not expected to be significant.

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

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

3. WATER	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?			X			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?		X				
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:						

(NARRATIVE CONTINUED)

**PROPOSED ACTION:** The 520 acre enclosure does contain an intermittent stream courses. Elk would be permitted access to the stream. The stream percolates below ground before leaving the proposed game farm property. Water ultimately collects in a shallow pond located in a closed basin, partly inside the original game farm (Lamb 1996).

**NO ACTION:** Surface water of this pond extends outside the perimeter fence of the original game farm. There is concern for degraded water quality and disease transmission associated with surface water from this pond standing outside the game farm property. Effects on water quality in the pond do not appear to be related to current activities around the stream course upslope from the pond (Lamb 1996). Water quality concerns by FWP relate more to a potential risk that is associated with a pre-existing and approved use, established before more stringent water quality guidelines were developed.

Currently, 40+ head of horses have access to the stream. Supplemental feeding of horses in proximity to the stream course is occurring and contributes both manure and vegetative litter to surface water. Limited hydrological sampling conducted for this EA indicated that the stream had a fecal coliform count of 2 organisms/100 ml. Also limited sampling indicated fecal coliform count of 720 organisms/100 ml in surface waters from the pond on the original game farm. Effects on water quality from bison would be similar to those associated with elk and horses.

**COMMENTS:** 3.a. The intermittent stream on the property is currently impacted by concentrated horse use. Limited sampling indicated fecal coliform count of surface water from the intermittent stream of 2 organisms/100 ml. Even though elk feces might get into this stream, dispersed movement patterns of elk compared to horses will probably allow the area to recover over time depending on management techniques. The conclusion based on limited hydrological analyses is that it appears that elk present less of a potential threat to off-site surface waters and groundwater uses than do horses. This conclusion is based on the finding that surface waters do not leave the property and because elk will be distributed over a larger area than horses. Additionally, elk produce less feces than horses, thus the potential for fecal material entering any surface water will be decreased.

**Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):** There do not appear to be any cumulative or secondary effects on water quality of the pond associated with upslope activities. However, it may be useful to establish a more rigorous analysis of water quality in the pond in order to compare future levels to a known baseline.

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

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

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Approximately 70+ elk will be confined within the 520 acre parcel. Little to no supplemental feeding is expected. Utilization of native browse should be moderate at the proposed stocking rate and impacts to vegetation are not expected to be significant. However, potential effects depend on site-specific application of management practices.

**NO ACTION:** Currently about 40+ head of trail horses are supplementally fed hay on the parcel. Impact from horses (accumulation of trampled hay, damage to surrounding vegetation, and piles of manure) is concentrated in the feeding area but evidence of horse use exists elsewhere on the parcel. Impacts to vegetation associated with 30+ head of bison would be intermediate to impacts associated with horses or elk.

**COMMENTS:** 4.a. Elk will utilize a greater variety of native vegetation than horses. Depending on management practices, influences on native plant communities are not expected to be significant. Impacts to vegetation associated with 30+ head of bison would be intermediate to impacts associated with horses or elk.

4.c. Distribution of rare and/or listed plants in the 520 acre parcel is not known. Natural heritage databases are being researched during the draft comment period.

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>	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKWN	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			5.b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			5.c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				5.d.
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				5.e.
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				5.f.
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:** Free-ranging big game and other large mammals will be displaced from approximately 520 acres. The principal game species in the area is white-tailed deer. A moderate degree of utilization of browse indicated WTD densities in the range of 15-20 per square mile; approximately 15 to 20 WTD will be displaced. Low numbers of mountain lions, forest grouse, black bears, mule deer use the area, and there is adequate-adjacent habitat for displacement. Some turkeys currently use the area and will continue to do so after it is fenced. Very few moose and elk occur because of surrounding human activity.

**NO ACTION:** The area has been used by 40+ head of horses for the past 40 years and in the existing condition habitat quality in the general area has been compromised for a number of big game species. Trustees intend to enclose the parcel in a game proof fence and stock 30+ head of bison if the game farm license is not granted.

(continued)

**COMMENTS 5.a.** The area is located some 10 miles west of a designated grizzly bear recovery zone. The parcel is not in the recovery zone. Due to concerns for human safety, management direction is to discourage long-term occupancy of this and similar areas by grizzly bears.

**5.b.** The area is predominantly south west in aspect with broken topography, and vegetation typical of big game winter range in the area. Changes in diversity or abundance of game species are not expected to be significant. This determination is based on the finding that white-tailed deer are the principal big game species that inhabit the area and that suitable displacement habitat exists in the vicinity.

**5.c.** Native vegetation species and associated non-game should not be effected significantly by the proposed action. This determination is based on preservation of native vegetative, open space, and habitat components important to birds and small mammals.

**5.e.** The area is not in a big game movement corridor for wildlife. It's adjacent to Flathead Lake and already developed for human uses.

**5.f.** The area does not provide known habitat for any listed species.

**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).**

The risk of disease transmission via through-the-fence contact of indigenous wildlife (esp. bull elk during the rut) and game farm animals is a concern but is mitigated by adherence to all applicable DOL disease testing requirements.

Adverse water quality and risk of disease transmission in the original game farm, via standing water extending outside the perimeter fence is a concern but the situation is pre-existing and was approved before new guidelines were developed. There does not appear to be a connection between water quality of the pond and current activities on the 520 acre expansion area. (Fecal coliform count of the pond was 720 organisms/100 ml while surface water in the proposed 520 acres was only 2 organisms/100 ml)

**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.).**

The area is quite large in size and the facility manager will be using ATV's to patrol the perimeter. Slope of perimeter fence reaches 27-30% near the southeast corner. Most slopes are 20 to 25% and fences cross contours near right angles. Two potential areas of ingress/egress do however exist. It will probably be easiest and most effective to fence out a rock outcrop on the south perimeter fence, approximately 500 ft west of the southeast corner. Also, an adverse slope exists on the west perimeter some 600 ft south of the northwest corner, where the fence will have to parallel a contour along as 22 to 27% slope. The facility manager may need to install risers on the wooden fenceposts in this area, as requested by FWP, so he can increase the height of the fence if problems are identified after construction (and before stocking). Danger trees have been cleared from the vicinity of the perimeter fence to minimize the potential for windthrow across the fenceline.

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

Approximately 520 acres of PICO/LAOC timber type will be fenced. This is not a rare or limiting vegetative community in northwest Montana.

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

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

**PROPOSED ACTION:** The area is sparsely developed and is bordered by a small trailer court. However, noise levels associated with the facility will be minimal at the trailer court which is separated from the perimeter fence by a 100+ ft buffer of mature coniferous trees. An increase in existing noise level at the trailer court is not expected.

**NO ACTION:** Similar noise levels are associated with the existing use of the area for trailrides and as a horse pasture. Noise levels of bison would be similar to elk and horses.

**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
	UNKWN	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:** The proposed game farm is located in an area of sparse development.

**NO ACTION:** There are no conflicts with the current use of the parcel for trail rides and horse pasture. If trustees put 30+ head of bison on the parcel, they would probably construct a similar class of effects associated with elk (because of a change in the perimeter fence).

**COMMENTS:**

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

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS 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				8.a.
b. Creation of any hazard or potential hazard to domestic livestock?			X		Y	8.b.
c. Creation of any hazard or potential hazard to human health?			X		Y	8.c.
d. Other: _____						

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Density dependent diseases, like tuberculosis and brucellosis, are a concern. However, testing requirements by DOL mitigate risk of transmitting diseases via through-the-fence contact with free ranging wildlife outside the game farm.

**NO ACTION:** Bison may also be vectors for some diseases which may be transmissible to livestock and/or humans.

**COMMENTS:** 8.a. There are concerns for existing water quality in surface waters in the pond that extends outside the property boundary of the original game farm. Water quality effects of this pond do not appear to be related to current activities in the expansion area.

8.b. Risks to human health associated with the expansion will be mitigated by adherence to all applicable DOL disease testing requirements. Management practices of the game farm play a large role in mitigation of potential risk for disease occurrence/spread. Handling time required for harvesting velvet is minimal and animals will be free to roam 500 acres.

8.c. FWP has concerns for human safety and trespass risk from a nearby trailer court. Concern also exists for injury or death as a result of discharging firearms in the direction of occupied residencies. Both these concerns can be mitigated by establishing a no shooting zone around the court and insuring that the 8 foot electric game farm fence is adequately signed.

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
	UNKWN	NONE	MINOR	SIGNIFICANT		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
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:** Both the current use and the alternative uses (bison) are probably perceived similarly by the local community.

**COMMENTS:**

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

0. <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:**

**MENTS: 10.a.** This would depend on any future-additional monitoring requirements.

**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. <b>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</b>  Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKWN	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:** The parcel is not visible from the highway and is not associated with any vistas or viewing areas.

**NO ACTION:** Same.

**COMMENTS:**

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

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

TRANSFORMING AMERICA

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

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

**NO ACTION:** Same

**COMMENTS:** 12.a. The State Historic Preservation Office has responded that cultural, archeological or historic sites are not known to occur in the project area.

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

**HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

PROJECT NAME

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE	POTENTIAL IMPACT				CAN IMPACT BE MITIGATED	COMMENT INDEX
	UNKWN	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		Y	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:** Approximately 70+ game farm elk would be enclosed and free-ranging wildlife would be excluded from 520 acres of low-elevation winter-range habitat. The area does not possess any unique ecological features and is not in a recovery zone for any listed species; impacts to T&E species habitat are not significant. White-tailed deer are the most numerous big game species in the area and <= 20 WTD will be excluded from the area, primarily during winter.

**NO ACTION:** The area is already impacted by horse feeding and trail riding from the Flathead Lake Lodge, and existing levels of use may be reducing habitat quality for big game species. Additionally, the alternative to the proposed action is to put bison on the parcel. There are impacts to wildlife in both the no action and alternative action scenarios.

**COMMENTS:** 13.b. The potential for disease transmission to free ranging wildlife, livestock and humans associated with through-the-fence contact is a concern but risk should be mitigated by adherence to all applicable DOL testing guidelines and monitoring.

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

### **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? Spread of diseases from game farm elk to free ranging wildlife and/or livestock poses concerns. Risk associated with the expansion are adequately mitigated by adherence to DOL disease testing requirements. Risk associated with the pond and surface water extending beyond the fence do exist but are not related to the proposed expansion. Disease risks associated with the pond should be evaluated and addressed separately from this application because there do not appear to be any direct, secondary, or cumulative effects to water quality in the pond as a result of current activities in the proposed expansion area. The proposed use for elk may actually present less of a potential risk to off-site ground and surface water quality than does the current use by horses and/or the proposed alternative -bison.

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: The analyses contrast effects from 3 situations: the existing condition with 40+ head of horses for the past 40+ years; versus the proposed action of fencing in 70+ elk; or, the alternative action of enclosing 30+ head of bison. These analyses indicated that the proposed action was less impactful than either the alternative action or the existing condition in terms of soil disturbance, vegetative impacts and off-site water users.

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

The following measures should reduce risk of through-the-fence contact with game animals as well as lessen the risk of ingress/egress:

1. Game farm elk should not be fed along the fence or stream channel (if supplemental feeding ever becomes necessary).
2. Follow commonly accepted sanitation practices regarding methods for disposing of, and final destination of carcasses and other infectious waste.
3. Regular and frequent fence inspections to locate potential areas of ingress/egress.
4. Reporting both ingress and egress to FWP immediately upon discovery. Determining and remedying problem immediately.
5. If fence integrity appears to be a problem upon initial inspection of construction at rock outcrops and adverse slopes, adjustments will be made as agreed with FWP.
6. Removing free ranging big game from the expansion area is the responsibility of the applicant pursuant to Montana Statute 87-4-410. FWP will have 60 days after this effort to estimate the base

number of animals remaining and 120 days from the date the base number was determined to remove those animals. If FWP decides not to remove the animals, or there are animals remaining after the removal effort, the public must be granted access to harvest those animals during a special hunt scheduled for that purpose during the next regular hunting season. The applicant is responsible for reimbursing FWP the cost to arrange this special hunt.

### **PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

A review of the license application and the elements within this environmental review indicate that the potential for conflict in the social and physical environments is extremely low.

### **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: Potential impacts were minor in scope and mitigation measures were identified. As such, and by definition, an EIS is not required.

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 complete EA will be sent to adjoining landowners, local newspapers and other potentially affected interests, explaining the proposal and requesting comment with a 21 day public review period.

3. Duration of comment period if any: 21 days

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

Kevin Coates, Wildlife Biologist, 490 N. Meridian, Kalispell MT 59901 751-4582

Mike Quinn, Game Warden, 490 N. Meridian, Kalispell MT 59901 755-2614

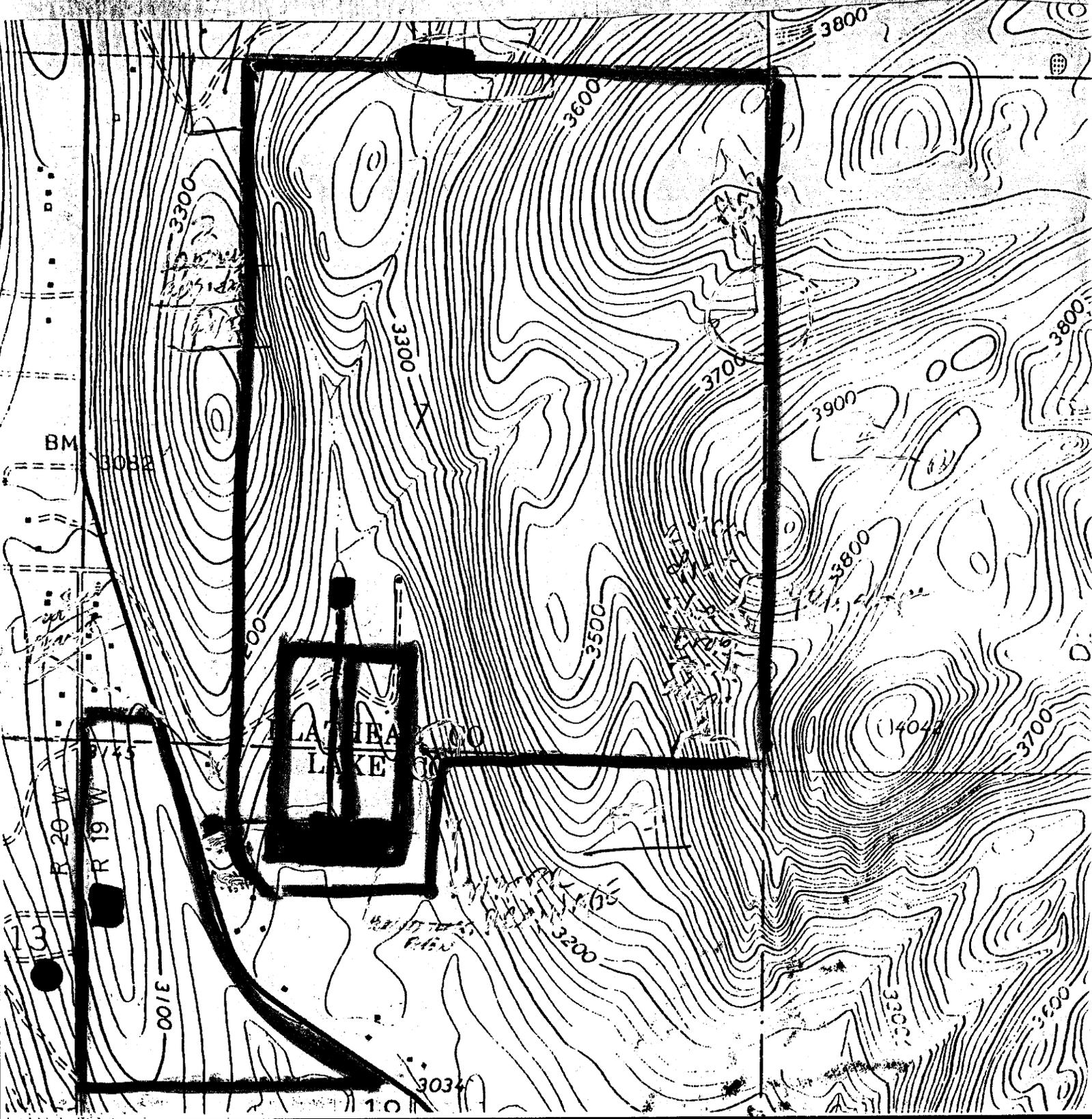
### **REFERENCES**

Lamb, B. 1996. Potential hydrologic and water quality impacts of proposed game farm, Royal Tine Ranch, L.L.C., Flathead and Lake Counties, Montana. 7 pp.

REF:ROYALEA  
August 9, 1996

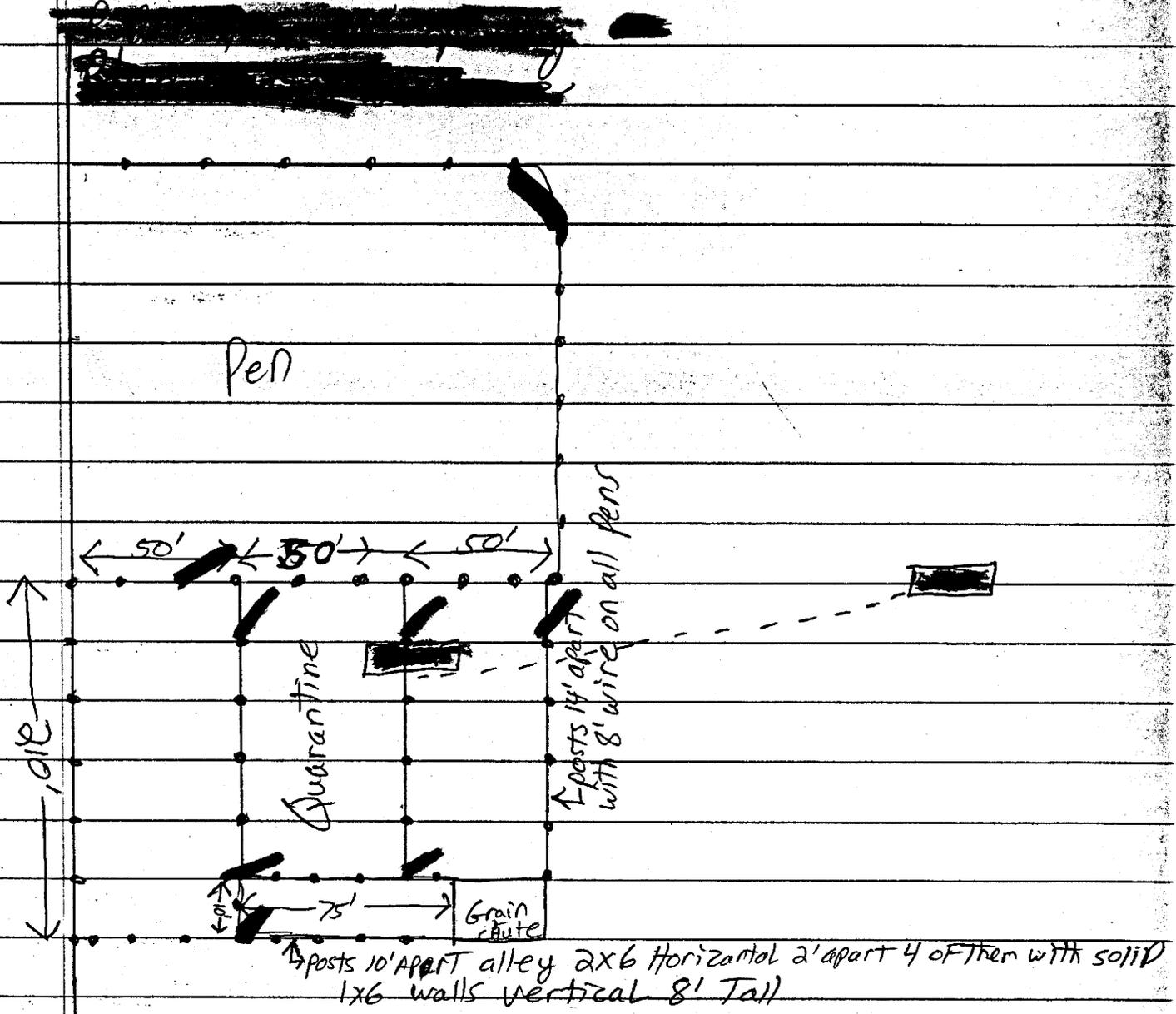
GAFARMEA.FRM  
Rev. 12/95

- Quarantine facility in Black
- Perimeter fence in Orange
- Exterior Gates in Red
- Handling facilities in Green (Approx. 50 acres)
- Loading & unloading area in Brown
- Water source (existing well) in Blue



16.C.

# Existing Quarantine Facilities on Royal Tine Ranch.



Addendum -- Royal Tine Application for License

Item A

1. Boundaries Fence
2. Fence Specification

2-7/8" thick wall steel pipe buried 3' in ground with cement corners 3' in ground. Pipes are 13' apart from each other. Gate opening pipes tied on top with metal pipe across for arch and fence posts (pipe) 10' either side of gate pipes for strength. Langley 8' game wire will be used for fence.

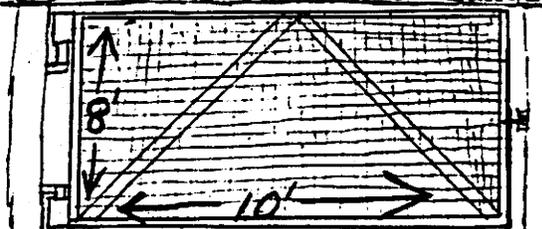
Gate Locations

Locations of the two gates marked in red on the map.

Gate Type

Materials for gates are as follows:

2" square metal frame with 10' span and cross-braced with 2" square metal stock covered with 8' Langley game wire. See drawing.



Gates will be self-closing by heavy springs with self-locking latches. Chained and locked at night.

Item B

No cross fences.

Item C Special Facilities

4. Located in green on map, smaller pens: approximately 50 acres fenced with 8' Langley wire and metal posts.

Located in brown on map, loading and unloading area with chute and alley ways to sort. Solid wall wood 8' high on the alley ways.

6. Located in blue on map, water source: An existing well will feed underground to water tanks in pens and outside pens.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION

That portion of the Northwest  $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 18, Township 26 North Range 19 West, Principal Meridian, Lake County, Montana described as follows:

Parcel A

Beginning at the northeast corner of the Northwest  $\frac{1}{4}$  Section 18 and also the northeast corner of Tract 2 per Certificate of Survey No. 2550 records of Lake County, Montana; thence along the east line of said aliquot part and said Tract 2, South  $1^{\circ}01'29''$  East 856.96 feet; thence North  $89^{\circ}48'48''$  West 593.29 feet; thence North  $89^{\circ}49'09''$  West 991.78 feet to a point on the easterly Right-of-Way line of Montana Highway No. 35; thence along the easterly Right-of-Way line of Montana Highway No. 35, North  $17^{\circ}35'33''$  West 31.40 feet; thence South  $89^{\circ}49'09''$  East 925.20 feet; thence North  $0^{\circ}10'51''$  East 824.96 feet to the northwest corner of said Tract 2; thence along the north line of said Tract 2, South  $89^{\circ}58'53''$  East 651.43 feet to the Point of Beginning containing 13.608 acres of land as shown hereon.

SUBJECT TO and TOGETHER WITH a 30.00 foot private road and utility easement as shown hereon.

AND ALSO INCLUDING:

A portion of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ , Section 18, Township 26 North, Range 19 West, P.M.M., Lake County, Montana, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at a point which bears North  $89^{\circ}58'53''$  West 652.06 feet from the North  $\frac{1}{4}$  corner of said Section 18; thence South  $00^{\circ}10'51''$  West 825.35 feet; thence North  $89^{\circ}49'09''$  West 634.00 feet; thence North  $00^{\circ}10'51''$  East 823.55 feet; thence South  $89^{\circ}58'33''$  East 634.00 feet to the point of beginning.

Further identified as being Tract 1-A on Certificate of Survey No. 3625 on file in the office of the Clerk and Recorder of Lake County, Montana.

AND ALSO INCLUDING:

East  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Section 7, T26N, R19W

EXHIBIT "A"