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 applicants request a permit to fence 520 acres and raise ≥ 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 transported by truck 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 providing some buffering to nearby residences. Vegetation and topography mitigate risks to human safety in the event that fee hunting is implemented by applicants in the future. Younger bulls will be managed for antler harvest. The 520 acre parcel of land being considered is currently being used for trailrides, barbecues, and pasturing horses. These activities may continue in the future. 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, under the highway, and collects in a shallow pond located partly on 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).

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 (DOL)	
Flathead Regional Development Office (FRDO)	
Lake County Planning Office (LCPO)	
Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)	

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

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

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	POTENTIAL IMPACT				IS MITIGATION POSSIBLE	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		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 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. During a spring inspection there was evidence of some ground disturbance and water running down logging roads. Given this was an extremely wet year, this may be an infrequent event. The facility manager will install culvert pipes in the future if needed. 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 horses yearlong for the past several years; localized soil disturbance already exists at feeding and watering areas.

COMMENTS: 1.b. Soil disturbance from horses already exists in localized areas. The proposed action is not expected to result in additional soil disturbance if grazing levels are managed to preserve adequate vegetative cover and condition. Vegetative cover and condition may be monitored during annual inspections by the regulatory authority.

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, if grazing levels are management to preserve adequate cover and condition.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

2. AIR 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			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. Associated off-site odors are not expected to be significant.

NO ACTION: Trustees currently use the area for pasturing horses, and there are several areas approximately 1 to 3 acres in size where feed and manure have accumulated. Current pasture land odors are probably representative of the type associated with an elk farm. Elk will not be held in confinement areas, so manure accumulation there should be minimized.

COMMENTS: 2.b. Elk, esp. rutting males do have a distinct odor, which at times is noticeable some distance downwind. However, associated off-site odors 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 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			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:_____						

PROPOSED ACTION: The 520 acre enclosure contains an intermittent stream course. Greater than or equal to 70 elk would permitted access to the stream. The stream percolates below ground for approximately 3/4 mile before leaving the property and collecting in a shallow pond on the existing game farm. 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 intermittent stream course up-slope from the pond (Lamb 1996).

Horses have access to the intermittent stream. Supplemental feeding of horses in proximity to the intermittent 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.

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 water 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.

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 up-slope 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. Use of the area for trail rides will continue, but supplemental feeding of horses will be limited. Supplemental feed will not be provided within 100 feet of the stream corridor. Therefore, the major source of impacts to water quality be curtailed.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

4. VEGETATION 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			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. Some 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 grazing management practices.

NO ACTION: Currently horses are fed hay on the parcel. Impacts from horses (accumulation of trampled hay, damage to surrounding vegetation, and piles of manure) are concentrated in the feeding area but evidence of horse use exists elsewhere on the parcel.

COMMENTS: 4.a. Elk will utilize a greater variety of native vegetation than horses. Depending on grazing management practices, influences on native plant communities are not expected to be significant. If elk stocking rate exceeds carrying capacity, the vigor of native vegetation would decrease as well as the percent vegetative cover. The regulatory authority would monitor the condition in the expansion area, and the pasture will be managed to preserve vegetative cover and condition.

4.c. Distribution of rare and/or listed plants in the 520 acre parcel is not known. A query of the Montana Natural Heritage data base brought up 11 records involving 8 species of sensitive plants (designated by the Forest Service) within a 3 mile radius. FWP recognizes that potential impacts would occur if these species were present. However, the majority of sensitive plants are aquatic and of limited distribution with limited suitable habitat on the project area. We encourage the applicants to show due diligence and protect any rare plants that are found on the property. See Appendix A for the list of sensitive plants found within a three mile radius.

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

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

5. FISH/WILDLIFE **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			5.b.
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?			X			5.c.
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
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: Trailrides			X			5.h.

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. Therefore, some number of WTD will be displaced. Low numbers of mountain lions, forest grouse, black bears, and mule deer use the area, and there is adequate-adjacent habitat for displacement. Turkeys and grouse 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 horses for the past several years and in the existing condition habitat quality has been compromised for a number of big game species.

COMMENTS: 5.a. The area is located some 10 miles west of a designated grizzly bear recovery area. The parcel is not in the recovery area. 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. If stocking levels are kept at a moderate rate, 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. Localized movements of resident terrestrial wildlife will be restricted by the 520 acre enclosure.

5.f. The area does not provide known habitat for any Federally listed Threatened or Endangered Species.

5.h. The area supports over 6,000 trail rides per year. During each trail ride, the gate will be opened temporarily. If the gate malfunctions or is inadvertently left open, game farm elk could escape, or wild deer/elk could enter with the potential for disease transmission or genetic exchange. Escapement will be minimized with specially designed gates and narrow corridors screening each horse gate.

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 with 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/drifting, susceptibility of fences to flood damage, etc.).

The area is quite large in size and the facility manager will be using ATVs to patrol the perimeter fence. Slope of perimeter fence reaches 27-30 percent near the southeast corner. Most slopes are 20 to 25 percent and fences cross contours near right angles. 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 fence some 600 ft south of the northwest corner, where the fence will have to parallel a contour along a 22 to 27 percent slope. The facility manager may need to install risers on the 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). Escapement will be minimized with specially designed gates and narrow corridors screening each horse gate. Fences and gates will be constructed according to FWP game farm fencing requirements (12-6-1503 MAC). Danger trees have been cleared from the vicinity of the perimeter fence to minimize the potential for windthrow across the fenceline. Potential for escape of game farm animals or ingress of wildlife also is associated with the trail ride operation and repeatedly opening and closing the gate.

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

Approximately 520 acres of Ponderosa pine/Western larch timber type will be fenced. This is not a rare or limited vegetative community in northwest Montana.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE EFFECTS 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			6.a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?			X			6.b.
c. Other:_____						

PROPOSED ACTION: The area is sparsely developed and is bordered by a small trailer court on southwest corner. However, noise levels associated with the facility will be minor at the trailer court which is separated from the perimeter fence by a buffer of mature coniferous trees. Some increase in existing noise level at the trailer court might be expected.

NO ACTION: Similar noise levels are associated with the existing use of the area for trailrides and as a horse pasture.

COMMENTS:
6.a.b. The amount of elk bugling during August, September, and October would increase.

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

7. LAND USE 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					7.c.
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. Outfitting of the general public for hunting free ranging wildlife within the expansion area would cease.

NO ACTION: There are no conflicts with the current use of the parcel for trail rides and horse pasture. There have been no conflicts associated with use of the property for outfitted hunting services which have been provided in this area for the past several years.

COMMENTS:
7.c. There is some question about use of the area for fee hunting operations as it pertains to the existing SAG-5 zoning that has been designated by the Flathead Regional Development Office (FRDO). The applicants must comply with all appropriate zoning regulations and may need prior approval from FRDO before conducting any fee hunting operations.

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

8. 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. Proper design and maintenance of fences and gates, as required by regulations, will reduce the possibility of ingress/egress as well as reduce the possibility of disease transmission.

NO ACTION: No change.

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. Adverse water quality of this pond does not appear to be related to current activities up-slope in the expansion area (Lamb 1996).
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 520 acres.
8.c. The public has expressed concern 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 buffering the trailer court and insuring that the fence is adequately signed. Human safety risks associated with fee hunting in the vicinity of occupied residences will be minimized by the presence of licensed guides, informing hunters of location of these residences, establishing a no-shooting area at the holding pen, and maintaining a tree buffer between residences and the proposed game farm expansion.

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. COMMUNITY IMPACT 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				9.g.
h. Other:_____						

PROPOSED ACTION:

NO ACTION: Both the current use and the alternative uses involving livestock are probably perceived similarly by the local community.

COMMENTS:

9.a. Using this land for a game farm may reduce the acreage available for additional subdivisions.
9.g. The parcel is not visible from the highway and is not associated with any vistas or viewing areas. It will not be a destination recreation area and FWP does not expect an increase in traffic levels.

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/ UTILITIES **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:
Little or no impact is anticipated.

NO ACTION:

COMMENTS: 10.a. This would depend on any future-additional monitoring requirements, including fence inspections, disease testing, and monitoring vegetative condition and cover.

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. AESTHETICS/RECREATION 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: The parcel is not visible from the highway and is not associated with any vistas or viewing areas.

NO ACTION:

COMMENTS:
No impact.

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

HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES **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 impact.

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

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE **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		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 posses any unique ecological features and is not in a recovery zone for any Federally listed Threatened or Endangered species; impacts to T&E species habitat are not significant. White-tailed deer are the most numerous big game species and they will be excluded from the area.

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. There are impacts to wildlife in both the no action and 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 will be mitigated by adherence to all applicable DOL testing guidelines and monitoring, and FWP fencing regulations.

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?

Spread of diseases from game farm elk to free ranging wildlife and/or livestock poses concerns. Disease risks 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.

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 analysis compares effects between the proposed action and the existing condition. These analyses indicated that the proposed action would not cause effects that are significantly greater than the existing condition in terms of soil disturbance, vegetative impacts and surface or ground water quality. The No Action alternative would include continued grazing of the pasture by livestock, which are not regulated by FWP.

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. No supplemental feeding will occur within 100 feet of any fence or stream channel.

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 by applicants to locate potential areas of ingress/egress.

4. To prevent ingress or egress, the fence will have a gate system designed so that ingress of wild animals or egress of game farm animals would not occur when trailrides enter or leave the game farm. All gate design and locations will be approved prior to construction by FWP.

5. Reporting both ingress and egress to FWP immediately upon discovery. Determining and remedying the problem immediately.

6. 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.

7. Removing free ranging big game from the expansion area is the responsibility of the applicant pursuant to Montana Statute 87-4-410 and must be completed prior to the fence being closed. FWP will have 60 days after issuance of the license to determine the base number of animals remaining and FWP will have 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.

8. The condition and percent cover of vegetation within the game farm will be monitored by the regulatory agency and managed by the applicants under good stewardship practices.

9. The applicants must comply with all appropriate zoning regulations and may need prior approval from FRDO before conducting any fee hunting operations.

10. The fence will be signed by the applicants to warn the public of possible risks. The sign, shape, and language on the signs will be mutually agreed to between the administering agency and applicant.

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 <u>why</u> 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 35 day public review period.

3. Duration of comment period if any:

27 days; extended 8 more days for a total of 35 days; public meeting at the Swan Community Hall, Sunday, 9/1/96.

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

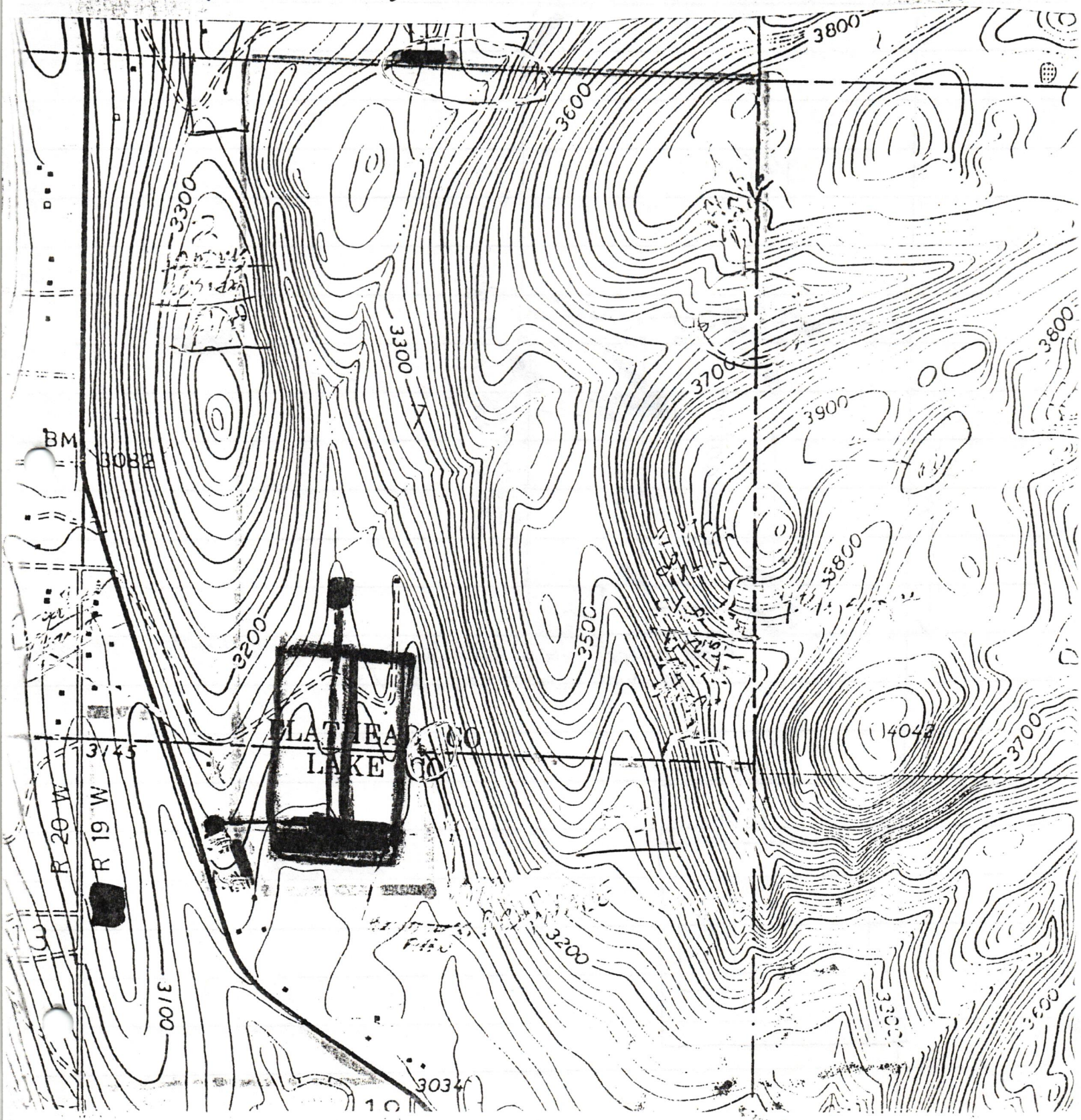
REFERENCES

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:ROYAL.EA
September 30, 1996

GAFARMEA.FRM
Rev. 12/95

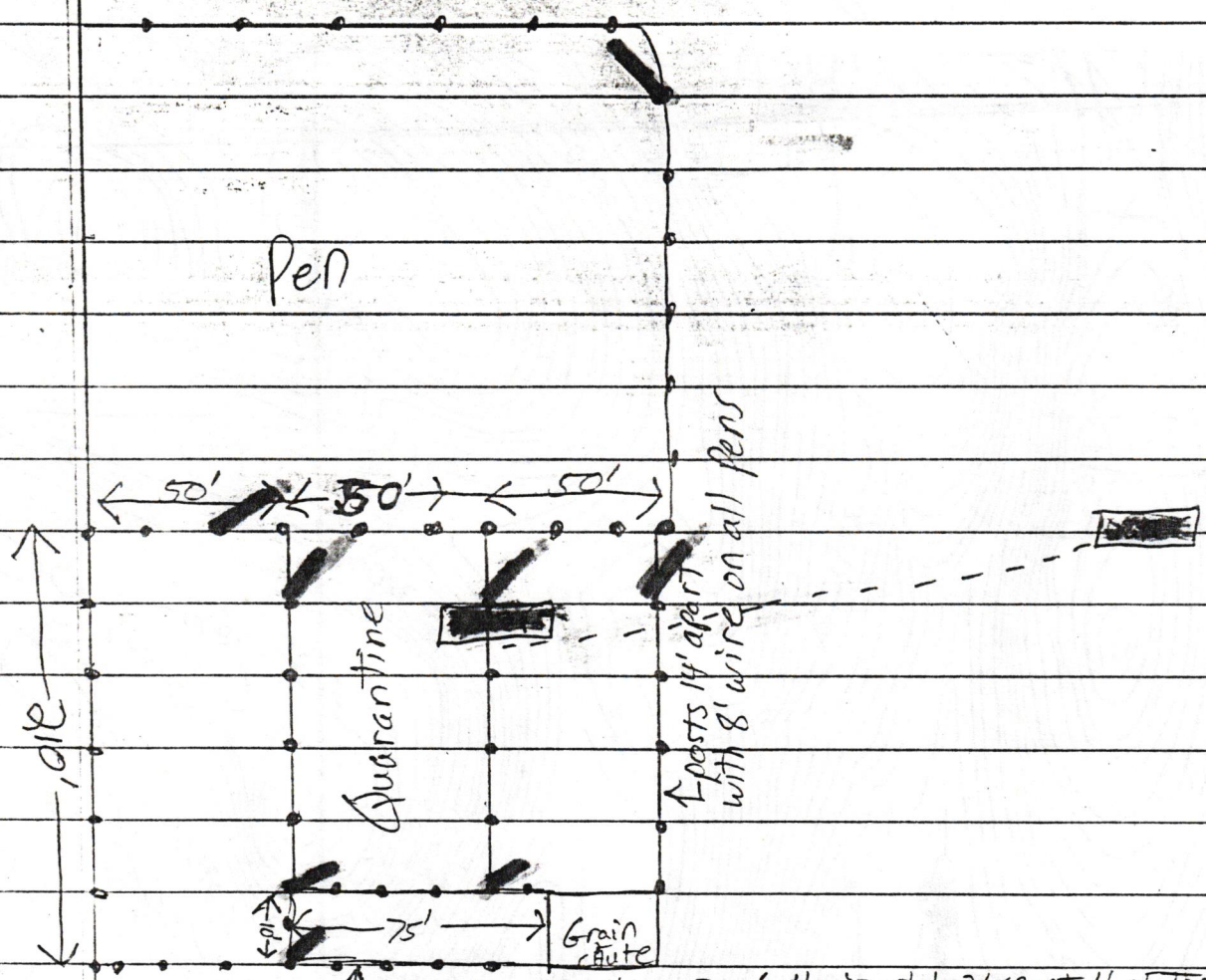
Quarantine facility in Black
Perimeter fence in Orange
Exterior Gates in Red
Handling facilities in Green (Approx. 50 acres)
Loading & unloading area in Brown
Water source (existing well) in Blue

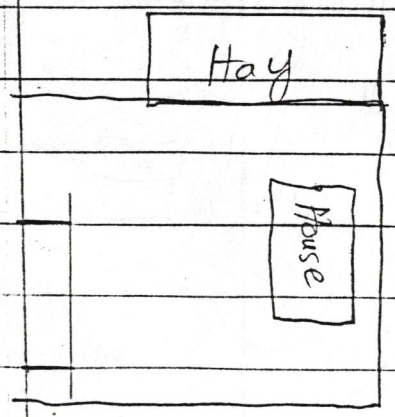


16.C.

Exciting Quarantine Facilities on Royal Tine Ranch.

[redacted]





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APPENDIX A

SENSITIVE PLANT LIST

COMMON NAME	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Beck-water-marigold	*Bidens beckii*
Pygmy water-lilly	*Nymphaea tetragona*
Bristly sedge	*Carex comosa*
Many-headed sedge	*Carex sychnocephala*
Columbia water-meal	*Wolffia columbiana*
Blunt-leaved pondweed	*Potamogeton obtusifolius*
Mountain moonwort	*Botrychium montanum*
Wavy moonwort	*Botrychium crenulatum*
Mingan Island moonwort	*Botrychium minganense*