

MONTANA FISH WILDLIFE & PARKS

MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

NOTE: Another five pages of checklist and letters developed for HB495 by the Parks Division are not attached to this document. The Parks Division and each Regional Parks Manager has the HB495 information.

The file is H:\user\fwps\share\forms\ecklist. It is a Word document. If you need it as a WordPerfect 6.1 document, it is available from the Administration & Finance Support Unit at phone (406) 444-4786.

Following is the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks checklist for Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Environmental Assessments (EA's). It can also be used for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Categorical Exclusion and Environmental Assessment documents for Federal Aid in Wildlife (P-R) and Sport Fish (W-B) Restoration projects.

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Files\OLK3\DeVries and Ophus EA.doc
August 24, 1999

Misc

DRAFT

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Region 6, Migratory Bird Stamp Program Environmental Assessment

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. Type of Proposed State Action Reservoir Construction and Repair
2. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
3. Name of Project DeVries and Ophus Wetland Project
4. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency)
5. If Applicable:
 Estimated Construction/Commencement Date July, 2002
 Estimated Completion Date August 2002
 Current Status of Project Design (% complete) 70%

6. Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, range and township) Blaine County, NE1/4 Section 24, T32N R17E

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

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	<u>0</u>
residential	<u>0</u>	(e) Productive:	
industrial	<u>0</u>	irrigated cropland	<u> </u>
(b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation	<u>0</u>	dry cropland	<u> </u>
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	<u>0</u>	forestry	<u> </u>
		rangeland	<u>2</u>
		Other (CRP)	<u>5</u>

8. Map/site plan: attach an original 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 map. If you wish to see a map and there is no map attached, please contact Rick Northrup at the locations listed above for a copy of the project map.

9. 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>
MT DNRC	605	Upon Completion

(b) Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
USFWS	\$1000
Ducks Unlimited, Inc.	\$1000
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks	\$1000
North American Wetlands Conservation Act	\$1000

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Type of Responsibility</u>
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10. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) proposes to repair one 1-acre reservoir and construct a new 6-acre reservoir in Blaine County. The reservoir repair would entail moving approximately 800 cubic yards of fill to repair a breach in an existing earthen dam embankment. The new dam would require constructing a 2,500 cubic-yard earthen embankment across a shallow drainage and cutting a spillway to allow excess runoff water to flow around the dam. Both of these wetlands, which are under 15-acre-ft in capacity would typically fill from snowmelt runoff.

The surrounding uplands of both of these proposed wetland sites are enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The purpose of this project is to establish 7 acres of wetland habitat that will primarily benefit breeding and migrating waterfowl and shorebirds. Water would also be available for other wildlife and livestock. By providing livestock water, these proposed reservoirs would allow the landowners to convert this tract to grazing land when the property comes out of CRP. Keeping the project area in grass cover has additional benefits for native wildlife occurring in the area, including antelope, sharp-tailed grouse, ring-necked pheasant, and many species of grassland birds.

This project would be funded through a 3-way funding agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The total estimated cost of this project is \$4,000.

11. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA: USDA Natural Resource and Conservation Service

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially 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			A
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. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other:						

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

2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (also see 13 (c))		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
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. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a)		X				
f. Other:						

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

- * Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
 *** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
 **** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
 ***** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

A. This project would result in borrowing approximately 3,000 cubic yards of earthen fill for constructing and/or repairing two earthen embankments. The soils are a stable compactable clay-based texture which would be well-suited for holding form and retaining water. The borrow site and locations of embankments are the only sites which would be disturbed for construction.

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated*	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?			X			B
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?			X			C
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?			X			D
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. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				E
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?			X			F
l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c)		X				
m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a)		X				
n. Other:						

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

B. The watershed which flows into these wetland sites comprises 443 acres. On average, a watershed of this size is estimated to produce 15-30 acre-ft of runoff annually. This is well-matched for the combined volume of these reservoirs which is estimated to be 14 acre-ft.

C. This project would impact water flows immediately downstream from the proposed construction sites. However, the coulee downstream from this project area becomes very steep and has "badland" characteristics which suggests high runoff during rain or snowmelt events. Therefore, it is not likely this project would significantly impact runoff flows much beyond 0.25 miles downstream of the lower dam.

D. This project would result in establishment of 7 wetland surface acres. The new dam would hold approximately 12 acre-ft of water and the repaired dam would hold approximately 2 acre-ft of water.

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E. The downstream landowner was contacted regarding this project. They are supportive of the project as they believe it may help reduce downstream erosion.

F. The combined capacity of these two reservoirs is approximately 14 acre-ft. That is a relatively small volume of water, considering the estimated average annual runoff 1 mile downstream of these projects is estimated to be 88 acre-ft, less whatever volume these wetland projects would capture. Although 14 acre-ft is their capacity, it is likely they will carry-over water storage between years which effectively reduces their remaining capacity for capturing runoff.

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Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

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Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. VEGETATION	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated	Comment
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X		*	Index G
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X	X			
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?			X			H
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?		X				
f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?		X				
g. Other:						

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

** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?				X		I
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?				X		I
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. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f)		X				
i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d)		X				
j. Other:						

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

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- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
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G. These wetland projects would flood up to 7 acres of grassland habitat. The site of the dam repair is in native grass that does not have a farming history due to the steeper coulee sides. The new dam would be constructed in a location that does have a farming history and is presently enrolled in CRP.

H. The landowners are interested in keeping this parcel in grassland after it is no longer in CRP. These wetland projects will help set up this parcel for cattle grazing. This will provide an overall benefit by maintaining the grassland cover which reduces soil erosion and maintains wildlife habitat. These projects are therefore expected to have a long term benefit to the agricultural values of this property.

I. These wetland projects will benefit migrating and breeding waterfowl and shorebirds and will also provide watering sources to an array of other game and nongame species which occur in the area.

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Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)

Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?		X				
b. Exposure of people to serve or nuisance noise levels?		X				
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:						

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

7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?			X			
b. Conflicted 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. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other:						

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

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- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?		X				
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a)		X				
e. Other:						

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

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
Will the proposed action result in:						
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	X			J
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?		X				
f. Other:						

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

J. The construction of these projects will provide a relatively minor, temporary source of income to a local earth-moving contractor.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
 * Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM)
 * Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
 **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:		X				
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in 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. Will the proposed action result in increased used of any energy source?		X				
e. **Define projected revenue sources						
f. **Define projected maintenance costs.						
g. Other:						

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

** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?						
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?						
c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach Tourism Report)						K
d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c)		X				
e. Other:						

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

K. Although these projects are not expected to provide hunting sites in and of themselves, they would result in an increase of waterfowl production in this area.

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- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially Significant		
a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance?		X				L
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. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12.a)		X				L
e. Other:						

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

L. Both of the construction sites were reviewed by a certified archaeologist. There was no sign of culturally significant materials at either site. A letter of clearance will be included in the project file.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. <u>SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE</u> Will the proposed action, considered as a whole:	IMPACT *				Can Impact Be Mitigated *	Comment Index
	Unknown *	None	Minor *	Potentially 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 that 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				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of 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				
f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e)		X				
g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required.						M

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

M. 2 DNRC Forms 605 permit will be completed and submitted upon completion of these projects.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.
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PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW, CONTINUED

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:

Action Alternative – As described above. This alternative would result in repair and establishment of 7 wetland surface acres with associated benefits.

No Action Alternative – This would maintain the status quo. That is, no wetland construction or repair work would be completed at this site, at this time.

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

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required (YES/NO)? If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action. An EIS is not required for this project. No significant negative impacts would occur as a result of this project. The limited size of this project will result in only temporary and isolated negative impacts, none of which are considered significant or long-term.
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? This EA will be available for public comment over a 30-day period. The EA will go out to a standard mailing list and will also be available for review on the FWP web site.
3. Duration of comment period, if any. 30 days

4. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

Rick Northrup, Wildlife Biologist, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, P.O. Box 1122,
Malta, MT 59538

Phone: 406-654-1341

Email: north@ttc-cmc.net

