

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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FEB 11 2004

Project Name: PRE Corp. Power line
 Proposed Implementation Date: February 1, 2004
 Proponent: Powder River Energy Corporation
 Type and Purpose of Action: Electric power to produce CBM
 Location: NWSW, NESW, SWNE, SENE, Sec. 36, T9S-R40E
 County: Big Horn

LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
 POLICY OFFICE

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Surface lessee Surrounding landowners
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	None
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	No action or disallow the proposed power line on State land. Find alternative route within the tract. Accept proposal and issue an easement

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS
	N = Not Present or No Impact will occur. Y = Impacts may occur (explain below)
4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	[N] The proposal will basically parallel a ranch road (2 track trail) on a ridge top in a general east-west direction. Soils can be considered stable, silty loams.
5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	[N] Power line to run along a ridge top
6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N]
7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[N] The power line would cross a sagebrush-grassland ridge top aspect, very common throughout the area.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] Typical of the overall area with good Mule deer and upland game bird habitats including that of Sage grouse.
9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?	[N] The fairly dense sagebrush covered ridge top, common throughout the area, provides good seasonal to yearlong habitats for various wildlife species of the area. Other than the construction phase, the power line should have little effect on these habitats and their associated wildlife species.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] A cultural survey titled "Class III Cultural Resources Inventory for the Tongue River-Badger Hills Project Located In Bighorn County, MT" has been completed and submitted to DNRC Archeologist, Patrick Rennie.
11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	[Y] This power line will detract from the current pristine viewshed, but burying this primary distribution line is not an option due to it's size, overall cost, and maintenance difficulties.
12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N]
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	[Y] Proposed CBM production

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[N]
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] The proposed CBM production is dependent on this power line.

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16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[Y] Proposed CBM production jobs are dependent on electric power distributed by this power line.
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[Y] The power line itself will generate \$3825.00 in Trust land revenues, not to mention CBM production royalty revenues generated by the installation of this power line.
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	[N]
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N]
20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	[N] There is no legal public access to this tract.
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N]
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N]
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N]
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N] CBM production in the area, and it's financial benefits to the school trust will be dependent on the electric power distributed through this line.

EA Checklist Prepared By: Gary Brandenburg Southern Land Office, Land Use Specialist

IV. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	The proposed action is the logical alternative due to the fact that there is no electrical distribution system available for CBM production in the area. The route which follows a two-track ranch trail along a ridge top is the most environmentally unintrusive, and cost effective.
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	Other than it's intrusion on the pristine viewshed, potential impacts of this action are expected to be minimal.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis: <input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By:

Sharon Moore
Name

Area Manager
Title

Sharon Moore
Signature

1/8/04
Date