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LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL  
POLICY OFFICE

DS-252

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**D.N.R.C.**

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Branch O&G Gathering line to State #10-9

**Proposed Implementation Date:** Winter 2004

**Proponent:** Branch Oil & Gas P.O. Box 766, Shelby, MT 59474

**Type and Purpose of Action:** To connect State Well #10-9 to a production line located approximately 1800 feet south of the well. (See enclosed quadrangle for locations.) The connection will allow the natural gas intersected in well #10-9 to be sold and marketed for public consumption.

**Location:** T35N, R4E, Sec 9 W2NE4, NW4SE4

**County:** Liberty

### I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

DNRC, Central Land Office, Conrad Unit Office (Surface Owner/Administrator) (406) 278-7869  
DNRC, MMB, Helena, MT (Minerals Administration) (406) 444-2074  
Branch Oil & Gas (Proponent) (406) 424-5291  
Hank Coolidge, Pipeline contractor, Sunburst, MT  
Errol Fritz Farm & Ranch Company (Surface Lessee) (406) 432-5054  
DNRC, MBOG, Shelby, MT (Production administration)

2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

NONE:

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Deny the request.

### 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, compactable or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?

[ N ] This proposal will take place on northern glaciated plains. The topography is made up of flat to gently rolling hills within the south flank of East Butte located in the Sweet Grass Hills. The soil profile is fairly shallow and consists of light to moderate silty to silty clay loam soils. The surface has an abundance of glacial erratics through out. The proposed pipeline route is dominated by native prairie consisting of blue grama, western wheat grass, and an abundance of club moss. The pipeline route will require re-contouring and seeding after completion. Seeding recommendation will be 50% western wheat grass and 50% green needle grass at 7 pounds per acre. If

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	<p>the mix is broadcast the rate will be at 14 pounds per acre. Travel will be during dry or frozen ground conditions only. Periodic noxious weed monitoring will be required for a couple years following the completion of the pipeline.</p>
<p>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? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?</p>	<p>[ N ] Water quality will not be an issue with the implementation of this proposal.</p>
<p>6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class 1 air shed)? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?</p>	<p>[ N ] Air quality will not be affected as a result of this project as the hole will be drilled wet.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?</p>	<p>[ N ] Cumulative impacts are not anticipated as a result of pipeline installation. The original environmental assessment addressed the possibility of plumbing in well # 10-9 if economic gas was intersected. The pipeline route was scouted during the drilling assessment process and found to be an acceptable route.</p>
<p>8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?</p>	<p>[ N ] There will not be any adverse impact to fish, wildlife, or birds resulting from this project.</p>
<p>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? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?</p>	<p>[ N ] There are no endangered or threatened species or habitat present on this site.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[ N ] There were no cultural sites found during the field inspection. The lease record files were also examined and indicated no cultural sites observed.</p>
<p>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? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?</p>	<p>[ N ] This area is very remote and will not be visible to the general public.</p>
<p>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? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?</p>	<p>[ N ]. The two major industries in this area are petroleum production and agriculture production. Both industries work well together in this area.</p>
<p>13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of other private, state or federal current actions w/n the analysis area, or from future proposed state actions that are under MEPA review (scoping) or permitting review by any state agency w/n the analysis area?</p>	<p>[ N ] None.</p>

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 ] This project will not add to the health and safety of the area.
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[ Y ] The results of this project can contribute to the industrial gas production of the area. This particular area is dependent upon both the petroleum and agricultural industries.
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number. Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[ Y ] This project will create a couple temporary contracting jobs during the line installation.
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[ Y ] This project will create tax revenue from the sale and production of natural gas.
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[ Y ] Substantial traffic will occur during the construction phase of the pipeline. After completion, traffic will resume to prior activity.
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[ N ] There are no other management plans in effect on this particular site.
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? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[ N ] There are no wilderness or recreational areas near this site.
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[ N ] This project will not add to the population of the area.
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or community's possible?	[ N ] This project will not disrupt any native or traditional lifestyle in the area.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[ N ] This project will not affect the cultural uniqueness or diversity of the area.
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES: Is there a potential for other future uses for easement area other than for current management? Is future use hypothetical? What is the estimated return to the trust. Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[Y] This project can benefit the state of Montana in terms of gas royalties from well production and license fees by granting this proposal.

A Checklist Prepared By: Alan R. DeWitt  
Name

L. O. S.  
Title

Date: 1-27-04



