

DNRC - Trust Land Management Division

DS-252

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Fiber Optic Telecommunication Installation	Proposed Implementation Date: Summer 2004
---	--

Proponent: Northern Telephone Cooperative, Inc. Box 190, Sunburst, Montana 59482

Type and Purpose of Action: To install new underground fiber optic telecommunication cable facilities to upgrade their network within North Toole County Montana. These improvements will offer state-of-the-art telecommunications systems, and distribution facilities, as well as future growth capabilities. The proposed route was determined by field survey as the most direct route between terminus locations while also providing access to existing and future network considerations. The proposed route will provide accessibility for construction and maintenance since it is located parallel to an existing county roadway.

Location: T33N, R2E, Sec. 10 W2NW4	County: Toole
---	----------------------

RECEIVED

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

JUL 01 2004

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	DNRC, Box 961 Conrad, Montana 59404 Edward Diemert, Box 1096 Lothair, MT 59404 (Surface Lessee)
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	DS-457, DNRC Surface Damage Settlement DS-406a, DNRC Right-Of-Way Utility Easement Registered Survey Plat Showing Exact Location Of Right-Of-Way Centerline
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Deny the request Locate an alternative route Approve the proposed route

**LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY OFFICE**

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? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] The proposed route is through native rangeland paralleling an existing county road. The soil type consists of heavy clays. Vegetation is dominated by western wheat grass and blue grama. Impacts to the surface are expected to be quite minimal as a result of the installation of the optical line. The line will be ripped in with a dozer. The original sod will be replaced following installation.
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?	[N] The proposed route will not affect surface or groundwater resources in the area.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I air shed)? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[N] Air Quality will not be affected from the implementation of this project.
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?	[N] Damage to the vegetated community will be minimal. The original sod will be used after installation.
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?	[N] The implementation of this project will not have an adverse affect on area wildlife, birds, or fish.
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?	[N] There are no federally listed or threatened species or habitat present on this tract.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] There are no identifiable historical or archeological sites present along the proposed route through this tract of land.
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?	[N] There are no prominent topographic features along the proposed route of installation. The route does cross between Middle and West Butte within the Sweet Grass Hills.
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?	[N] There will not be demands on the areas resources from the installation of this proposal.
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?	[N] There are no other studies, plans, or projects that will be in conflict with this proposal along the surveyed route.

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?	[Y] The implementation of this communication network could aid area residents by providing faster communication and broader research capabilities.
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] This proposal will definitely help area business activity by accessing information and broadening new markets.
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 some contracting jobs for the construction phase. It will create some survey work and increase revenue for the proponent by increasing a broader customer base.

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] There will be some tax revenue generated from the implementation of this project.
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?	[N] This proposal will not increase the demand for government services to the area.
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 government zoning or management plans in affect along this proposed route.
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 areas along this proposed route.
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 proposal will not add to the population of the area.
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities' possible?	[N] This proposal will not affect any native lifestyle or traditions.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N] This proposal will not affect the cultural uniqueness 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] The area is a major oil and gas producing area. There is a chance for future pipeline, communication, or power transmission along this route. The return to the trust is a \$50.00 application fee plus a per acre dollar amount for the right-of-way easement.

EA Checklist Prepared By: Name: Steve R. Dobson Title: Land Use Specialist Date: June 10, 2004

Signature: Steve R. Dobson

