

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Access road across State land to Federal Natural Gas Well.	Proposed Implementation Date: October 21, 2004
Proponent: Athena Energy, LLC , 2100 Harrison Ave., Suite C, P O Box 4247, Butte, MT 59702	
Type and Purpose of Action: Athena Energy LLC has made a Land Use License Application to cross State land to access a natural gas well identified as Federal #1101-32. The access road will be located on an existing two tract trail, which will be upgraded and maintained. The two track access road is located on the S2SE4, with an estimated distance of 2,800 feet road use on the State land. The road will be kept to a minimum width.	
Location: S2SE4, Sec. 36 Twp. 34N Rge. 32E	County: Phillips

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Athena Energy LLC contacted the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Glasgow Unit Office. Athena Energy LLC has made a Land Use License Application to use an access road on State land for access to a natural gas well.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION. LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	The other agencies that would have jurisdiction for this type of project would be the Montana Board of Oil and Gas.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	<p>The road access, addressed in the letter dated September 24, 2004 to R. Hoyt Richards, Unit Manager, from Athena Energy, LLC, was reviewed by Randy Dirkson, Land Use Specialist per on site inspection. The inspection of the State land revealed that this access route would damage existing native rangeland resources. The access route as listed in the September 24, 2004 letter was rejected by Randy Dirkson, Land Use Specialist. The access route that was chosen by Randy Dirkson, Land Use Specialist, was the surveyed route that followed an existing two track trail.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Grant a Land Use License to the applicant to use an existing two track trail access road across State land to a natural gas well.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Deny a Land Use License to the applicant to use an existing two tract trail access road across State land to a natural gas well.</p>

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II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compatible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	Action Alternative: The soils on the access road will be disturbed. The topsoil will be disturbed by vehicular traffic to access the natural gas well. When the gas well has been shut in the access road will be reseeded to native vegetation. The access

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	<p>road will not be bladed or improved by applicant.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: This alternative will have no impacts to the soil types on the State land.</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?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on State land will not impact the water quality, quantity and distribution.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: This alternative will have no impacts to the water quality, quantity and distribution.</p>
<p>6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on the State land will not have impacts to the air quality.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the air quality on the State land under this alternative.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The native vegetation on the project area will be destroyed by vehicular traffic. The native vegetation will be restored upon well abandonment, through the reclamation plan developed for the Land Use License by Glasgow Unit Office personnel for this tract of State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the native rangeland vegetation under this alternative.</p>
<p>8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The state land contains habitat types for wildlife and upland birds. The project area is not large and expected impacts will be minimal to the habitat resources of the State land. The State land was inspected by Randy Dirkson, DNRC Land Use Specialist. He determined that the less than one percent silver sage brush on project area did not constitute sage grouse habitat.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the wildlife habitat types associated with the State land under this alternative.</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?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The area of impact contains no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the environmental resources of the State land under this alternative.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The State land was inspected for historical or archaeological sites by Randy Dirkson, Land Use Specialist of the Glasgow Unit Office. Mr. Dirkson found no evidence of historical or archaeological sites on the access road or drill pad area. The State land was also inspected by archaeologist David Ferguson and his report showed no significant findings of historical or archaeological sites.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the historical or archaeological sites under this</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	alternative.
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?	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on State land will have minimal impacts to the aesthetics of the state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the aesthetics under this alternative.</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?	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on State land will place no demands on the environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p>
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on State land will not impact other studies, plans or projects that DNRC may have in place on the state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to other environmental documents pertinent to the State land under this alternative.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>Action Alternative: Road use on State land has various human health and safety risks. The risks are understood by the employer and employee as occupational hazards.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to human health or safety risks under this alternative.</p>
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impact to the current livestock grazing activities that are occurring on the State land that surrounds the project area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to industrial, commercial and agricultural activities under this alternative.</p>
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the quality and quantity and distribution of employment.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the local and state tax base and tax revenues.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to local or state tax base under this alternative.</p>
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will	Action Alternative: The project will place no demands

substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	for government services. No Action Alternative: There would be no demand for government services under this alternative.
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	Action Alternative: The project will not impact locally adopted environmental plans and goals. No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the locally adopted plans or goals under this project.
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?	Action Alternative: The area of impact has recreational values such as hunting big game and upland birds. The project will have no impacts to the recreational values associated with the State land. No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to recreational activities under this alternative.
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of population and housing. No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to density and distribution under this alternative.
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	Action Alternative: The project will not disrupt the traditional lifestyles of the local community. No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the traditional lifestyles under this alternative.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the area. No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the cultural, uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	Action Alternative: The project will benefit the applicant for the production and sale of natural gas. The project will also provide additional revenue to the School trust from the Land Use License fee. No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the social and economic circumstances under this alternative.

EA Checklist Prepared By:

Randy Dirkson

Land Use Specialist

Date:

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action Alternative: The action alternative was selected to grant Athena Energy LLC, a Land Use License to use an existing two track trail on State land to access Federal Gas Well #1101-32. This alternative will provide for additional revenue for the School Trust.
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impacts to the state land natural resources. Reclamation planning by DNRC, Glasgow Unit Office

	personnel, upon road abandonment will reclaim the area to former livestock grazing activities.
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:

Name

Title *GUO Manager*

R. Hoyt Richards
Signature

Date: *11 24/04*