

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Reed Point Logging Haul Access Road
Proposed Implementation Date:	January 2006
Proponent:	Robert Perkins
Location:	Section 36, Township 1 South, Range 17 East
County:	Sweet Grass County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Mr. Perkins is proposing to utilize an existing roadway to haul saw logs harvested from adjoining private land. The logs being harvested are from a salvage sale due to the Mysse fire that occurred in September 2005. Mr. Perkins is only requesting to utilize the subject roadway for approximately one year.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

No formal public scoping was performed by DNRC for this proposed project. Besides the applicant for the Land Use License, Mr. Perkins, the only other person contacted regarding this project was the State grazing lessee, Joseph Booth.

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

None

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3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL
POLICY OFFICE

Proposed Alternative: Issue a Land Use License to Mr. Perkins to allow the utilization of the existing roadway to haul saw logs.

No Action Alternative: Deny the request by Mr. Perkins to utilize the existing roadway to haul saw logs.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:

Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.

The roadway already exists and portions of it have been utilized for a number of years, while other parts are relatively new and were constructed during the Mysse fire. A stipulation of the Land Use License will require that water bars be installed as needed to prevent soil erosion. Additionally, the grazing lessee has requested that Mr. Perkins flatten the berms that were created by the construction of the fire lines and level the ground. No significant impacts to geology or soil quality, stability or moisture would occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:

Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.

The Land Use License will stipulate that water bars be installed as needed to prevent soil erosion and protect water quality. No significant impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution would occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The proposed alternative will increase vehicular traffic on the existing roadway for the approximate one year duration of the Land Use License.

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:

What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database indicated that no plant species of concern are located on the subject section. Additionally, the State grazing lessee has indicated that he would like to broadcast grass seed in areas that were disturbed to create fire lines for the Mysse fire. The Southern Land Office will work with the lessee to ensure that a desirable species is selected.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

No significant impacts to terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats would occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:

Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program database indicated that no endangered, threatened or sensitive species are located on the subject section.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

The subject road existed, in many places, prior to the Mysse fire and after the fire started there was considerable disturbance on the site creating fire lines and extending existing roadways. A cursory review of the site was conducted by Jeff Bollman, Area Planner, however due to the fact that the site had already been disturbed a detailed review was not conducted.

11. AESTHETICS:

Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The existing roadway is relatively well hidden on property and generally follows the topography of the section and is not readily visible from surrounding properties. The level of noise emanating from the property will increase during the period that logs are trucked out through the State section.

12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:

Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No significant impacts to environmental resources of land, water, air or energy would occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:

List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.

There are no known state or federal actions in the vicinity and no known future actions proposed by the state that would have cumulative impacts with this proposal.

<p style="text-align: center;">IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

No significant impacts to human health and safety would occur as a result of implementing the proposed alternative.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The issuance of the proposed Land Use License will facilitate the removal of saw logs from adjoining private property. The saw logs that are removed would support continued activity at area saw mills. The location of the existing roadway will have a minimal impact on the State lessee's agriculture and grazing operation on the State land and is not anticipated to cause any conflicts. The proposed action would not have a significant impact on industrial, commercial and agricultural activities and production.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.

The proposed action of utilizing the existing roadway to haul saw logs will support an existing logging business and facilitate the transfer of logs from the adjoining private property to area saw mills. The logging activity is not anticipated to create any new jobs, only utilize existing personnel from the logging company and therefore would not have a significant impact on employment.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

No Impact. The subject property is State Trust land and is exempt from taxes and the utilization of the road will not affect the tax exempt status of the parcel.

18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

The implementation of the proposed alternative will generate a temporary increase in traffic during the duration of the logging operation, approximately one year. The issuance of the Land Use License is not expected to have any other impacts or increase demand for government services.

19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.

Sweet Grass County does have an adopted Growth Policy that covers the entire County and the proposed alternative does not conflict with this Growth Policy. Also, the subject section is not zoned by Sweet Grass County.

20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

The subject State land currently has legal access via a county road that generally bisects the property. The approval of the Land Use License would allow logging access until 31 December 2006 and there could be some minor disturbance to recreational and wildlife activities while the License and timber harvesting are active.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.

The proposed alternative would have no effect on density and distribution of population and housing.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by the proposed alternative.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The proposed alternative would not directly impact cultural uniqueness or diversity.

24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:

Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

The Common Schools Trust will benefit by getting a rental fee from Mr. Perkins of \$200.00 for the use of the roadway until 31 December 2006 and he will also assist in the reclamation of some of the fire lines by doing some earthwork and then the lessee will broadcast grass seed to further reclaim the fire lines and help bring these areas back as productive grazing lands.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Jeff Bollman, AICP	Date: 17 January 2006
	Title: Area Planner, Southern Land Office	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The proposed alternative has been selected and it is recommended that a Land Use License (LUL) be issued to Mr. Perkins. This LUL would permit Mr. Perkins to utilize an existing roadway to haul saw logs harvested from adjoining private land.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

The potential for significant impacts to the State land has been mitigated by the imposition of a stipulation to the Land Use License that would require the placement of water bars where needed to prevent soil erosion and protect water quality.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS
 More Detailed EA
 No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Sharon Moore	
	Title: Area Manager, Southern Land Office	
Signature:	<i>Sharon Moore</i>	Date: 1/18/06