

Connie Durak

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	MDU Utility line T7N-61E-19	RECEIVED MAR 24 2006 LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OFFICE
Proposed Implementation Date:	Spring of 2006	
Proponent:	Montana Dakota Utilities	
Location:	T7N-R61E-Sec 19	
County:	Fallon County	

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

MDU has requested to install an overhead power line to distribute the heavy summer electrical load between two substations. The present substation is currently overloaded.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

MDU has requested that the DNRC allow the passage of the new power line mentioned above across The state owned land within section 19

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

None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A- Allow MDU to construct overhead power line requested
Alternative B- Deny MDU request

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.

Alternative A- Disturbance of the soil will occur, but effects will be minimal. There will be no lasting adverse effects to the soil quality, stability or moisture.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- No Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- Pollutants and Particulates will be increased during the construction of the project. After the completion of the project pollutant and particulate levels will return to normal. Increase in pollutants during construction will be almost negligible.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- Where the construction takes place there will be disturbance to the vegetation cover. This impact will be minimal and the vegetation make-up will recover quickly. The primary plant species are Western Wheatgrass, Green Needle Grass, Blue Grama, Needle and Thread Grass, Threadleaf Sedge and Big Sagebrush.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- There will be very minimal effect on any animal habitats within the boundaries of the project construction. After completion of the project there will be no impact to these species. Project will create a perching rest for many birds.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- There may be potential habitat for sensitive species on these tracts, but there would minimal effects during construction. After the completion of the project there will be no impact to these species.

Alternative B- No Impact

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

Alternative A- Upon inspection of the parcels by the Eastern Land Office staff no significant findings were noted on these parcels. Due to the small scope and previous disturbance in all but one of the parcels no significant impacts should occur.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- There will be a new power line on the horizon but considering the amount of power lines in the oil field it will be all but unnoticeable.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- No Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

None

<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.

Alternative A- There will be risks to human health and safety in the construction of the project, but this will be done by qualified professionals. Safety concerns become minimal for work done in this fashion

Alternative B- No Impact

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

Alternative A- It would have a positive effect on Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Activities and Production. This would allow for easier access to electricity for all parties concerned, in addition to a more reliable electricity supply.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- This project has the potential to create jobs with further development possibilities.

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- No Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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

Alternative A- No Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- No Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- No Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- No Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Alternative A- No Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

Alternative A- No Impact

Alternative B- No Impact

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.

Alternative A- This will provide income for the trust in the form of the purchase of a permanent easement. The amount is not set at this time. This will also reduce the load on the electrical supply for this area reducing the risk of potential brownout situations.

Alternative B- No Impact

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Scott Aye	Date: 3-1-06
	Title: Land Use Specialist	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

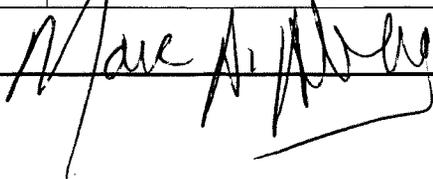
Alternative A

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

None

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS
 More Detailed EA
 No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Marc Aberg	
	Title: Lands Program Manager	
Signature:		Date: 3/1/2006