CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Lease#5852-Improvement, Fertigation Buried Main Line	**Proposed Implementation Date: April 2010**
Proponent: Birch Creek Colony Corp., %John Kleinsasser, 900 Birch Creek Colony Rd., Valier, MT 59486	
Type and Purpose of Action: The surface lessee has requested to install a 10" buried main line from an existing pivot main line that is on private ground to the center point of a pivot that irrigates state and private ground. Than the surface lessee wants to continue the 10" buried main line from the center point of the pivot to another existing main line that is on private ground. The center point for the pivot where the two lines will join is on state ground. This project will lead to fertigation of the ground using livestock waste. A detailed map showing the locations for this NRCS project lay out is included within this assessment. The primary objective is to have better livestock waste distribution.	
Location: S½SE¼, Sec.27, T29N, R7W	**County:** Pondera

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, Surface owner Bill Kleinsasser, Surface Lessee, Farm Boss Jeanne LaSorte, NRCS-Conrad
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	There are no other agencies with jurisdiction on this project.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Approve the requested main line and fertigation development. No action. Do not approve the requested fertigation project.

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?	[Y] Soils and geology in this area are suitable for the installation of the main line. A limited amount of soil disturbance will occur during the installation of the main line and the areas will be returned to cropland as part of the necessary farming practices. Cumulative impacts are likely to be minimal on the main line installation. However, the fertigation project will cause some concern as the soil type, Kobase, has a slow saturated hydraulic conductivity due to its texture. This concern is mitigated by using sprinkler intake group B which will accommodate the limited saturated hydraulic conductivity of the soil. Any concerns about the soil type have been noted in the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan that is being implemented by the NRCS. Intense soil testing and monitoring by the lessee and the NRCS

	will also help to mitigate any concerns over the soil type.
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?	[Y] The proposed main line installation will not affect overall water quality as it will isolate the livestock waste from the water that is contained in Irrigation Canal B. The fertigation project may affect the water quality, but any effect will be mitigated by intense soil and water testing as is outline in the Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan. There are no wells on this tract of state ground as the water for irrigation is provided by Canal B. Cumulative impacts are mitigated by intense testing as part of the fertigation project.
6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?	[Y] The proposed action of installing the mail line will not impact the air quality. However, the fertigation project may affect the air quality for the people directly East of the project because the prevailing wind in the area is from the West. The area is not part of a Class I air shed, and is not influenced by those regulations. Cumulative impacts of the air quality are likely to affect the people of Birch Creek Colony as they are only one mile away from the 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] Cropland will be temporarily disturbed for the placement of the pipeline, but it will be on a small scale and will be seeded back to cropland, so there will be no permanent damage. Cumulative impacts on the vegetation are not expected as the disturbed areas will be seeded back to cropland... The fertigation project will help the vegetation as it will increase the nutrients and organic matter available for the growing crops.
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 area where the construction is taking place is not close to any area currently being used by wildlife. Cumulative impacts are not likely to occur as the area is continuously cropped.
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 species of special concern or any other sensitive habitat types associated with the proposed project area.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] The area that the project will disturb has been continuous farmed for years, so any historical or archaeological sites have lone since been removed. This project will have no impact on these resources.
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] Since the main line will be buried, it will have no aesthetic impact on the area. Also, the fertigation will not change the aesthetics of the area.
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] The demand on environmental resources such as land, water, air, or energy will not be affected by the proposed project. The proposed project will not consume resources that are limited in the area. There are no other projects in the area that will affect the proposed project.

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] Currently, there are no other studies, plans, or projects associated with the proposed project area.

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 proposed project main line and fertigation project may affect the people of Birch Creek Colony which is down wind of the pivots which are applying the livestock waste.
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] The proposed main line and fertigation project will lead to a better overall distribution of livestock waste that is generated at Birch Creek Colony's facilities and increase the nutrients available for the crops that are grown on the state land.
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?	[N] The proposed action will not significantly affect long-term employment in the surrounding communities.
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?	[N] The proposed action will not affect tax revenue.
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] This project is being cost shared under the NRCS program. There will be no excessive stress placed of the existing infrastructure of 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] The proposed project is in compliance with Federal, State, and County laws. No other management plans are in effect for the area.
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] The area where the project is being performed on the State Land is not readily accessible to the public. The proposed project is not expected to impact general recreation activities on this State Land.
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] The proposed project will not change the human population distribution or the housing requirements in the area.
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N] The proposed project will not alter the social structure of the surrounding native communities.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N] The proposed project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and/or cultural 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?	[N] No other unique circumstances exist.

EA Checklist Prepared By: /S/ Tony Nickol — Land Use Specialist –Conrad Unit Date: May 7, 2009

Tony Nickol — Title

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Approve the improvement request for installing a buried mainline and fertigation.
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	Disturbed areas along the pipeline route will be will be recontoured and returned to crop production. Archaeological sites are not present within the project area. The fertigation of state and private land will be according to NRCS nutrient management plan. This irrigation project will benefit the school trust (common schools) and private land by increasing yields and overall crop share payments. Overall, no negative environmental impacts are expected.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis: [ ] EIS [ ] More Detailed EA [X] No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By: Erik Eneboe (Name) Conrad Unit Manager - CLO (Title)

/S/ ERIK ENEBOE (Signature) June 26, 2009 (Date)