DS-252

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: LUL#8640 , Livestock Water Pipeline	**Proposed Implementation Date:** **Summer/Fall 2010**
Proponents: B & B Ranch Co. (Mike Ehlers), 33 Fivemile Coulee Lane, Oilmont, MT 59466	
Type and Purpose of Action: The adjacent land owner, B & B Ranch Co. (Mike Ehlers), has requested to place a livestock water line across the W2W2NW4, Sec. 24, T35N, R1E in order to connect a water well in Sec. 13 with pasture land in Sec. 25. The water line will be 2" Drisco pipe placed 6' deep and travel for a distance of 2640'. A detailed map showing the locations for this EQIP project lay out is included within this assessment. The primary objective is to provide water to deeded pasture.	
Location: W2W2NW4, Sec. 24, T35N, R1E **Trust:** Common Schools	**County:** Toole

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT	
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Misty Vermulm-NRCS DNRC, Surface owner Robert Parsell, Surface Lessee, Lease #4054 B & B Ranch Co. (Mike Ehlers), adjacent land owner, Proponent
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	A 310 permit is not required on Willow Creek per the Toole County Conservation District. A 404 permit may be required but all liabilities are assumed by the licensee. There are no other agencies with jurisdiction on this project.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Approve the requested livestock water line installation. No action. Do not approve the requested livestock water line installation.

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] The soil types are Acel silty clay loam which contain 0 to 2% slopes and Joplin-Hillon clay loams which contain 2 to 8% slopes. These soil types are made up of class 3E and 4E soils which are relatively flat to gently rolling and are generally suitable for the installation of the buried water line. The Gerdrum-Absher complex contains 0 to 2% slopes and is made up of class 6S and 7S soils. This soil is contained in the Willow Creek drainage which is a seasonal flowing creek. Cumulative impacts to the creek are likely to be mitigated by installation of the water line in the summer or fall when the

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	creek has dried up. Equipment will cause localized areas of soil compaction and will disturb the soil were the water line is being placed. Reclamation requirements are to compact and level the plow scar created in the installation of the water line. Then seed the impacted area with the existing grass types and seeding rates that are listed in item 7 of this assessment. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected and any difficulties will be further mitigated by the use of a static plow to place the water line which will result in limited soil disturbance. In addition, the disturbed areas will be reclaimed and reseeded as per the NRCS/EQUIP contract.
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 action will improve overall water quality and quantity for B & B Ranch Co. on their adjacent deeded land.
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?	[N] The proposed action will not impact the air quality.
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] Vegetation will be minimally impacted as approximately 2640' of 2" Drisco pipe will be placed 6' deep. The pipe will be installed by the utilization of a static plow. Noxious and annual weeds within the proposed construction areas are a concern, but this concern will be mitigated as the applicants are responsible for controlling weeds within the construction areas. Cumulative impacts on the vegetative resources are not expected as the proposed construction areas will be reclaimed and reseeded. The reseeding mixture will consist of a grass seed mixture of 30% Western Wheatgrass, 30% Slender Wheatgrass, 20% Green Needle grass, and 20% Blue Bunch Wheatgrass. If drilled the rate will be 7#/acre. If broadcast the rate will double. There were no plant species of concern or potential species of concern noted on NRIS survey.
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 is not considered critical wildlife habitat. However, these tracts provide habitat for a variety of big game species (mule deer, whitetail deer, pronghorn antelope), predators (coyote, fox, badger), upland game birds (sharp tail grouse, Hungarian partridge), other non-game mammals, raptors and various songbirds. The proposal does not include any land use change which would yield changes to the wildlife habitat. The proposed action will not impact wildlife forage, cover, or traveling corridors. Nor will this action change the juxtaposition of wildlife forage, water, or hiding and thermal cover.
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 animal species of special concern or potential species of concern per the NRIS survey.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[Y] The water line installation route was surveyed and no items of archaeological significance were located. Past lease records indicate there are no historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources present in the installation area. In addition, the site will be further reviewed by the NRCS's archaeologist prior to the installation of the water line.
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] The water line will be buried so there will be not aesthetic impacts.
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?	[N] The proposed project will not affect human health or human safety in the area.
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] The proposed water development will improve livestock distribution and generally improve the adjacent land owner's ranching opportunities.
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-EQIP 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 State Land that is 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] Currently LUL#8575 is in effect in the same area as this proposed project. The license is for a 4" gas pipeline that expires 02/28/2018. The gas pipeline is located approximately 30' off of the fence and this proposed water pipeline would be placed approximately 20' off of the existing gas pipeline. Placement of the proposed water pipeline in close proximity to the existing gas pipeline will mitigate any damages by keeping the pipelines in a small area and limiting the surface damages. This project will return $150.00 over the next ten year term of the LUL #8640 and will not affect the productivity of the grazing lease.

EA Checklist Prepared By: /S/ TONY NICKOL Land Use Specialist –Conrad Unit Date: March 26, 2010

Tony Nickol Title

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Approve LUL #8640.
26. SIGN4IFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	Short-term and small-scale impacts to the native rangeland are expected along the pipeline route. All disturbed areas will be recontoured and reseeded to native grass. No known archaeological sites are located within the project area. The surface lessee has been contacted and no damages are anticipated. The School Trust will receive a one time payment of $150.00 for installation. Overall, no negative environmental impacts are expected.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis: [ ] EIS [ ] More Detailed EA [X] No Further Analysis	

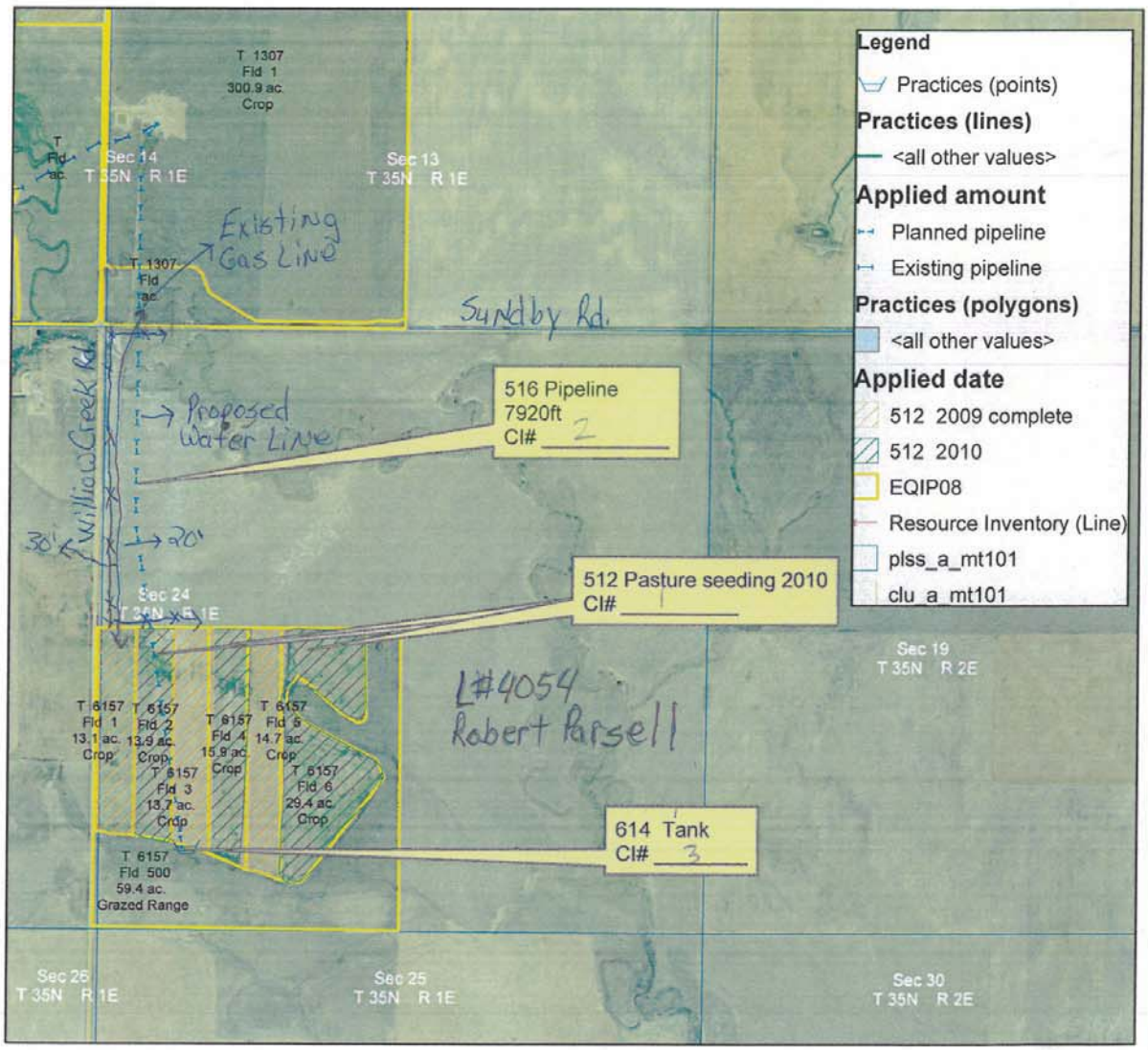
EA Checklist Approved By: Erik Eneboe (Name) Conrad Unit Manager - CLO (Title)

/S/ ERIK ENEBOE (Signature) April 14, 2010 (Date)

PLAN MAP

Customer(s): B & B RANCH CO

Field Office: SHELBY SERVICE CENTER
Agency: USDA - NRCS
Assisted By: Misty A Vermulm



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