

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Lease #5644, EQIP Cross Fence	Proposed Implementation Date: Spring/Summer 2010
Proponents: Scattered Acres Farms Inc., (Duane Vick), 871 24 th Lane NE, Power, MT 59468	
Type and Purpose of Action: The current lessee of Lease #5644 has requested to build 1.5 miles of cross fence on the rangeland contained in Sec. 15, 22, 23, T23N, R2E. This will allow for the 400.00 acres contained in Lease #5644 to be split into three pastures. There is an additional 555 acres of deeded land that will benefit from these cross fence as it is intermingled with the above state land. The primary objective of this project is to make pasture rotation possible and allow for better livestock distribution. This project is being funded through the EQIP program.	
Location: Sec. 15, 22, 23, T23N, R2E Trust: Common Schools & State Industrial School	County: Teton

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 Paula Gunderson, NRCS Scattered Acres Farms Inc., (Duane Vick), Proponent
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 cross fence project. No action. Do not approve the requested cross fence 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?	[N] The soil types are generally suitable for the placement of cross fences in the interior of the lease. Topography is flat to gently rolling and suitable for the placement of cross fences. Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected.
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] There are no ephemeral drainages present on this tract. Other water quality and/or quality issues will not be impacted by the proposed action.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<p>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?</p>	<p>[N] The proposed action will not impact the air quality.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N] Vegetation will be minimally impacted as approximately 1.5 miles of cross fence will be built. Noxious and annual weeds within the proposed construction areas are not a concern. Cumulative impacts on the vegetative resources are not expected due to the small amount of soil disturbance caused by placing a fence post. There were no plant species of concern or potential species of concern noted on NRIS survey.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[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.</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? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?</p>	<p>[N] A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted. There were three animal species of concern and one potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.</p> <p>The burrowing owl, ferruginous hawk, mountain plover, and swainson's hawks were found to be potential located in the township that contains this lease. This tract contains features that may allow for transient use by these species, but given the fact the proposal does not include any activities which would alter any habitat, any effects are not expected in either alternative.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>[N] The cross fence project installation route was surveyed during past lease appraisals and no items of archaeological significance were located.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N] No cumulative affects to aesthetics in the area are expected from the cross fence.</p>
<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? Are cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of this proposed action?</p>	<p>[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.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>[N] Currently, there are no other studies, plans, or projects associated with the proposed project area.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

State actions that are under MEPA review (scoping) or permitting review by any state agency w/n the analysis 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 cross fence will improve livestock distribution and generally improve the Scattered Acres Farm Inc.'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 funded by the NRCS-EQIP program. There will be no excessive stress placed on 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 is 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] The proposed cross fence will improve the livestock distribution on the lease. It will also allow for a pasture rotation which is currently not possible as the tracts are fenced in one complete block. This project is covered under a lease improvement, so no monetary return to the trust will be realized, but this will be mitigated by the improved livestock distribution on the lease. No other unique circumstances exist.

EA Checklist Prepared By: _____

Tony Nickol

Land Use Specialist –Conrad Unit Date: April 29, 2010

Title

2009 EQIP

Customer(s): SCATTERED ACRES FARMS INC

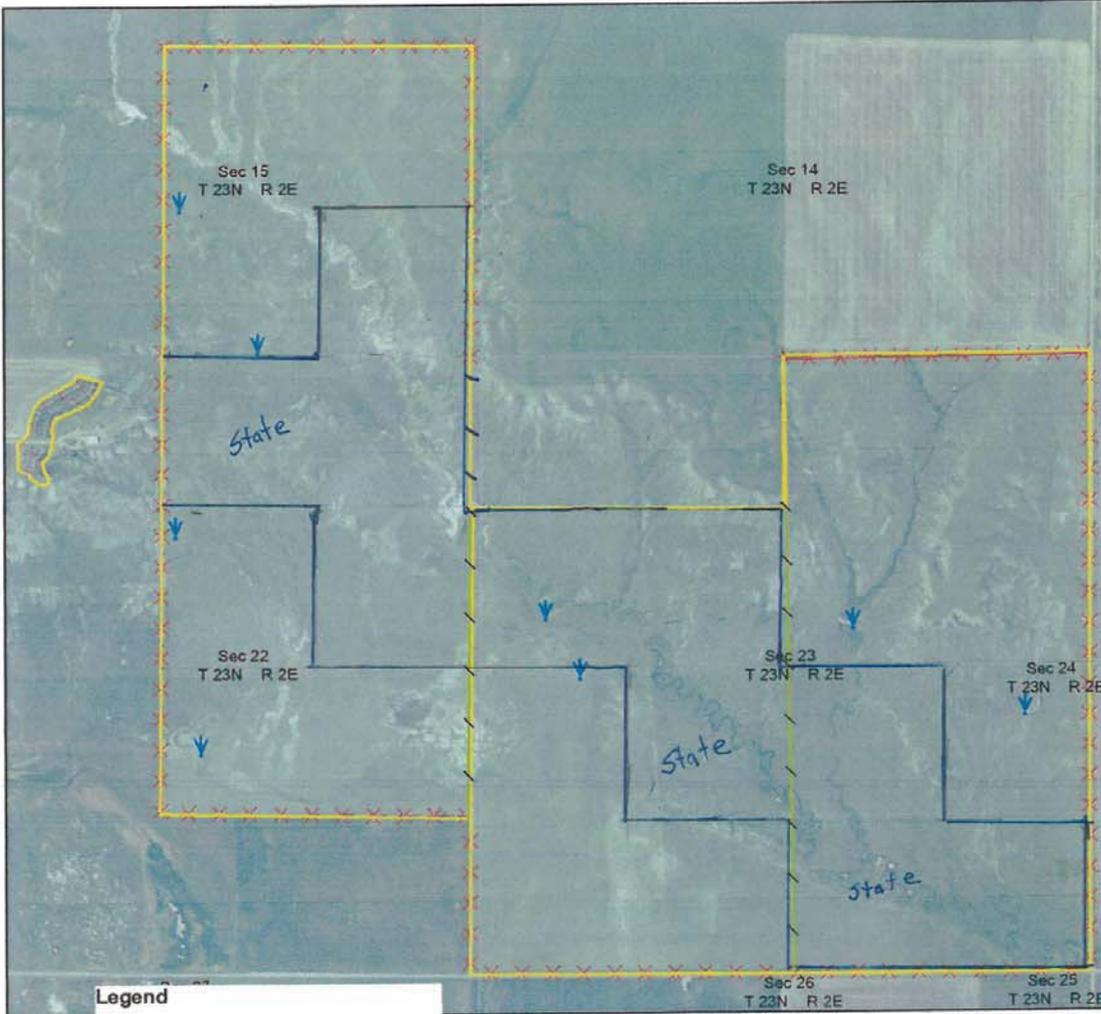
Approximate Acres: 955

Field Office: CHOTEAU FIELD OFFICE

Agency: NRCS

Assisted By: Gunderson, Paula M

State and County: MT, TETON



Legend

Practices (lines)

Practice name

-  Fence
-  Windbreak/Shelterbelt Renovation
-  EQIP 09 Range
-  Existing Water
-  Existing Fence
-  Section Lines

