

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Gaelectric Wildlife Study – Land Use License #3283</b>
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	Summer, 2010
<b>Proponent:</b>	Gaelectric, LLC
<b>Location:</b>	See attached list of tracts
<b>County:</b>	Judith Basin County
<b>Trust:</b>	Common Schools

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proponent has requested a Land Use License to conduct environmental studies on State Land tracts (see the attached list). The proponent is requesting permission to enter onto State Land, to drive only on established roads to locate and to identify Threatened and Endangered species, Species of Concern and to generally observe any wildlife that may be present on the State and deeded land within the study area.

### SEE ATTACHED LIST OF LEGALS

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Northeastern Land Office (NELO), and the State surface lessees (see attached lists below) have all been informed of the proposed wildlife survey project.

### SEE ATTACHED LIST OF LESSEES

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

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), Northeastern Land Office (NELO), have jurisdiction over this proposed project. The proponent will need permission to cross deeded lands to access the State tracts. The proponent will need to provide the Lewistown field office with written verification that the surface lessees have agreed to allow access for the proposed project.

DNRC is not aware of any other agencies with jurisdiction or other permits needed to complete this project

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Alternative A (No Action)** – Under this alternative, the Northeastern Land Office (NELO) does not issue a Land Use License permit to conduct environmental studies on State Land.

**Alternative B (the Proposed Action)** – Under this alternative, the Northeastern Land Office (NELO) does issue a Land Use License permit to conduct environmental studies on State Land.

### 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 soils within the proposed project area are dense clays, clays, clay loams, and silty/clay loams. The terrain is mostly gently rolling plains.

Special Stipulations including motorized vehicles on established roads only, no vehicle operation during wet or muddy conditions will minimize any impacts.

No cumulative effects to the soils are anticipated.

#### 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.*

No important surface or groundwater resources will be impacted by the proposed project.

No cumulative effects to the water resources are anticipated.

#### 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 air quality in the area will not be affected.

No cumulative effects to air quality are anticipated.

#### 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.*

The vegetation within the proposed project area consists primarily of native rangeland grasses, forbs, and shrubs, and tame pasture.

Vehicle travel is restricted to established roads only

No rare plants or cover types are present.

No long term cumulative effects to vegetation are anticipated.

**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.*

The proposed action will not have long-term negative effect on existing wildlife species and/or wildlife habitat.

No cumulative effects are anticipated.

**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.*

There are no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources within the proposed project area.

A search of the Montana Natural Heritage Program (attached) identified a reptile, a mammal and several species of birds on the Species of Special Concern that may be present on the State tracts. The proposed wildlife survey is low impact, short duration and is not expected to disturb or displace these species.

A review of the 2009 Sage-grouse lek and lek area data in ArcGis showed no sage grouse leks in or near the proposed project area.

No cumulative effects to habitat or to the Species of Concern are anticipated.

**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

The proposed project will not impact any archeological, historical or paleontological resources that may be present in the project area.

No direct or cumulative effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources are anticipated.

**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.*

No direct or cumulative effects to aesthetics are anticipated.

**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 demands on limited resources are required for this project.

No direct or cumulative effects to environmental resources are anticipated.

**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 DNRC grazing and agricultural leases associated with the surface of the State land where this project is proposed.

There are no other projects or plans being considered on the tracts listed in this EA Checklist.

**IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION**

- *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.*

**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

There will be some health and safety concerns associated with wildlife surveys in remote areas. The proponent and their employees are aware of any health and safety hazards and accept them as occupational hazards.

Once the survey has been completed, there will be no health and safety concerns associated with this project.

**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

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

This project will not add to or deter from other industrial, agricultural, or commercial activities in this area.

**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 activity will create a limited number of jobs. These positions are already held by employees of the proponent. No new jobs will be created.

No cumulative effects to the employment market are anticipated.

**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.*

There are no direct or cumulative effects to taxes or revenue for the proposed project.

**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*

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on 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.*

There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting these lands.

**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 main recreational activity in this area is hunting. Approval of this proposed project would not affect hunting opportunities in this area.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on recreation or wilderness activities.

**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 proposal does not include any changes to housing or developments. Population and housing will not be affected.

No direct or cumulative effects to population or housing are anticipated.

**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 proposal.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

The proposed project will have no effect on any unique quality of the area.

**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 Land Use License fee returns approximately \$175 to the Common Schools Trust. The proposed project will not generate any other revenue.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Bill Creamer
	<b>Title:</b> Land Use Specialist
<b>Signature:</b> /s/ Bill Creamer	<b>Date:</b> 6/2/2010

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

I have selected the Proposed Alternative B, and recommend the proponent be issued the Land Use License to conduct environmental studies on the listed State Land in Judith Basin County.

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

I have evaluated the potential environment effects and have determined that no negative long-term environmental impacts will result from the proposed activity.

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	EIS	<input type="checkbox"/>	More Detailed EA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No Further Analysis
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<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	Barny D. Smith
	<b>Title:</b>	Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office
<b>Signature:</b> /s/ Barny D. Smith		<b>Date:</b> 6/2/2010

**LUL 3283 JUDITH BASIN COUNTY LEASE/LEGAL INFO**

LEASE	T R S	LEGAL	NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIP	PHONE
4841	16N 10E 26	SE4NW4, SW4SE4, E2SW4	SKELTON BARBARA	7256 HWY 3	BILLINGS	MT	59106	406.245.4076
1808	16N 10E 20	N2	KOLAR KENNETH & JEROME	119 SOURDOUGH RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4371
3188	16N 10E 19	E2	KOLAR KENNETH & JEROME	119 SOURDOUGH RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4371
7614	16N 10E 17	W2NE4, NW4	KOLAR KENNETH & JEROME	119 SOURDOUGH RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4371
7614	16N 10E 18	E2NE4, SW4NE4, SE4NW4	KOLAR KENNETH & JEROME	119 SOURDOUGH RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4371
7614	16N 10E 21	NW4	KOLAR KENNETH & JEROME	119 SOURDOUGH RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4371
7614	16N 10E 7	E2SE4	KOLAR KENNETH & JEROME	119 SOURDOUGH RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4371
7614	16N 10E 8	W2E2, S2NW4, SW4	KOLAR KENNETH & JEROME	119 SOURDOUGH RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4371
1806	16N 10E 11	S2SE4, SW4	VEJTASA JUDITH & FRED	PO BOX 54	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2344
1806	16N 10E 12	S2SW4	VEJTASA JUDITH & FRED	PO BOX 54	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2344
1806	16N 10E 13	N2NW4, SE4NW4	VEJTASA JUDITH & FRED	PO BOX 54	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2344
1806	16N 10E 14	N2NE4, SW4NE4, SE4	VEJTASA JUDITH & FRED	PO BOX 54	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2344
1806	16N 10E 23	NE4	VEJTASA JUDITH & FRED	PO BOX 54	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2344
6487	16N 10E 18	LOTS 1-2, NE4NW4, NW4NE4	SANDMEYER RANCHS INC	RT 1 BOX 55	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4996
6487	16N 10E 7	SE4NE4, W2SE4	SANDMEYER RANCHS INC	RT 1 BOX 55	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4996
6487	16N 10E 8	N2NW4	SANDMEYER RANCHS INC	RT 1 BOX 55	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4996
275	16N 10E 5	SW4SW4, E2SW4	SANDMEYER RANCHS INC	RT 1 BOX 55	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4996
3200	16N 10E 16	W2	SANDMEYER RANCHS INC	RT 1 BOX 55	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4996
3200	16N 10E 8	NE4NE4	SANDMEYER RANCHS INC	RT 1 BOX 55	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4996
3200	16N 10E 9	SE4SW4	SANDMEYER RANCHS INC	RT 1 BOX 55	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4996
4864	16N 10E 1	LOTS 1-4, S2N2, S2	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4864	16N 10E 2	LOTS 1-3, S2NE4, SE4NW4, E2SW4, SE4	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4864	17N 10E 35	S2	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4864	17N 10E 36	ALL	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4863	16N 11E 10	W2, E2NE4	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4863	16N 11E 15	NW4	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4863	16N 11E 16	S2N2, S2	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4863	16N 11E 20	SE4	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4863	16N 11E 21	W2SW4, NE4, NE4NW4	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4863	16N 11E 3	S2SW4, ALL SO OF HWY IN SE4SE4	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
4863	16N 11E 6	LOTS 1-2, SE4NW4, S2NE4, N2SE4, NE4SW4	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
6415	16N 11E 5	LOTS 1-4, S2N2, N2S2	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507

**LUL 3283 JUDITH BASIN COUNTY LEASE/LEGAL INFO**

LEASE	T R S	LEGAL	NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIP	PHONE
6415	16N 11E 6	LOTS 1-2, SE4NW4, S2NE4, N2SE4, NE4SW4	SURPRISE CREEK COLONY	PO BOX 310	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.781.0507
1805	16N 10E 4	LOTS 3-4, S2NW4	SKELTON RANCH CO	PO BOX 529	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2328
1805	16N 10E 5	SE4	SKELTON RANCH CO	PO BOX 529	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2328
4151	16N 10E 24	E2SE4	SKELTON STANFORD	PO BOX 529	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2328
4150	16N 10E 34	SE4SE4	SKELTON STANFORD	PO BOX 529	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2328
4150	16N 10E 35	S2SW4, SE4	SKELTON STANFORD	PO BOX 529	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2328
4150	16N 10E 36	ALL	SKELTON STANFORD	PO BOX 529	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2328
3838	16N 11E 29	W2SW4	SCHMITT BING	PO BOX 426	STANFORD	MT	59479	
3838	16N 11E 30	S2SE4, SE4SW4	SCHMITT BING	PO BOX 426	STANFORD	MT	59479	
3838	16N 11E 31	E2NW4, NW4NE4	SCHMITT BING	PO BOX 426	STANFORD	MT	59479	
4152	16N 10E 21	NE4	MCALLISTER JIM	RR BOX 40	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4394
4152	16N 10E 22	N2	MCALLISTER JIM	RR BOX 40	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4394
4524	17N 9E 21	N2	MCKAY PETER & EDITHA	RR1 BOX 29	RAYNESFORD	MT	59469	406.738-4414
1815	17N 10E 26	NW4	EVANS THOMAS & FRED A	PO BOX 147	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2356
5877	17N 10E 25	SW4	EVANS THOMAS & FRED A	PO BOX 147	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2356
5877	17N 10E 26	E2, SW4	EVANS THOMAS & FRED A	PO BOX 147	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2356
7188	16N 11E 3	LOT 1, SE4NE4, NE4SE4, ALL N OF HWY IN SE4SE4	EVANS THOMAS & FRED A	PO BOX 147	STANFORD	MT	59479	406.566.2356
4085	17N 10E 27	ALL	EVANS ROBERT	2500 EIGHT MILE RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4476
4523	16N 10E 6	LOTS 3-5, SE4NW4	EVANS ROBERT	2500 EIGHT MILE RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4476
4523	16N 10E 6	LOTS 1-2, 6-7, S2NE4, E2SW4, N2SE4	EVANS ROBERT	2500 EIGHT MILE RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4476
4865	16N 10E 3	S2N2	CROFF JAMES & HOLLY	RT1 BOX 54	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4391
4865	16N 10E 4	N2SW4, SW4SW4	CROFF JAMES & HOLLY	RT1 BOX 54	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4391
5420	16N 10E 11	NW4	CROFF JAMES & HOLLY	RT1 BOX 54	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4391
6658	16N 10E 16	E2	CROFF JAMES & HOLLY	RT1 BOX 54	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4391
6658	16N 10E 9	W2NE4, SE4	CROFF JAMES & HOLLY	RT1 BOX 54	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4391
6659	16N 10E 10	N2NE4, S2SE4, SW4	CROFF JAMES & HOLLY	RT1 BOX 54	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4391
5126	16N 10E 17	S2	ANDERSON KEY DAVID	8641 SOUTH PEAK RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4449
5126	16N 10E 18	LOTS3-4, SE4, E2SW4	ANDERSON KEY DAVID	8641 SOUTH PEAK RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4449
5126	16N 10E 19	LOTS 1-2, E2NW4	ANDERSON KEY DAVID	8641 SOUTH PEAK RD	GEYSER	MT	59447	406.735.4449