

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	North Central Montana Regional Water Authority Tiber Water Pipeline Land Use License
Proposed Implementation Date:	August 1, 2010
Proponent:	North Central Montana Regional Water Authority, PO Box 2456, Havre Mt 50501 C/O KLJ 2445 South 3 rd Street West, Missoula, MT 59801
Location:	Several - See the attached list below
County:	Liberty

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Proponent is requesting a Land Use License to install a new buried water pipeline in the Tiber service area. This application is a part of a large regional water system project that will provide drinking water to rural residents and other towns located in north central Montana. The Tiber water pipeline will hook up the Rocky Boy core pipeline. The applicant has applied for 12 easements to cross state land with drinking water pipeline. The proponent will submit final easement applications and as-built surveys for all state lands crossed after the pipeline line has been installed. The below table includes the legal descriptions of the 12 tracts proposed to be crossed, pipeline size, feet crossed, lease number and lessee of record.

Parcel	TWN	RGE	SEC	Qtr	Line Size	FEET	LEASE	LESSEE
113	29N	5E	7	N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$	10"	5244.8	549	Pugsley Ranch
114	29N	5E	8	N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$	10"	5152.08	549	Pugsley Ranch
115	29N	5E	5	SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$	10"	158.92	549	Pugsley Ranch
125	30N	5E	36	NE $\frac{1}{4}$, S $\frac{1}{2}$	10"	6338	307	Stuart Erickson
130	30N	6E	34	N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	6"	2644	3253	WW Inc
139	29N	4E	20	W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$	4"	2655	8536	Kolstad Farms
140	29N	4E	29	W $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$	4"	5287	8536	Kolstad Farms
144	28N	4E	4	NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	4"	1346	4911	Earl Duncan
146	28N	4E	9	NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$	4"	1311	4911	Earl Duncan
148	28N	4E	16	N $\frac{1}{2}$	4"	7253	291	Bert Duncan
157	28N	5E	22	N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$	4"	5311	1844	Stewart Ranch
158	28N	5E	23	N $\frac{1}{2}$	4"	5702	1846	Riverview Colony

48,402.8 feet total or 110.9 acres (based on 100' wide).

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),
Kadmas Lee and Jackson Engineers – Julie Tichbourne
North Central Montana Regional Water Authority – Mary Heller
Surface Lessee's

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

USBR is providing the water for this pipeline through the Rocky Boy core pipeline. No other governmental agencies have jurisdiction over this proposal.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – DNRC does not issue the proposed Land Use License.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – DNRC issues the proposed Land Use License.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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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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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.

Soils are suitable for pipeline installation in this region. Soil textures vary from sandy to silty to clay loams. There are no fragile or unstable soils present in the area of the proposed area. Topography is relatively flat throughout the project area. The pipeline will be installed by digging a trench with excavator. Top soils will be stripped and used for reclamation. The attached erosion plan will be implemented by the contractor to minimize soil disturbances. All disturbed areas will be re-contoured and returned to the appropriate land use (agriculture, CRP, or grazing land) following installation.

No long term or cumulative impacts to soil erosion and /or other soil resources are expected.

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.

This application is a part of a large regional water system project that will provide drinking water to rural residents and other towns located in north central Montana. The Tiber Water service area pipeline will hook up to the Rocky Boy core pipeline. This pipeline project will provide high quality drinking water to rural residents in Liberty, Pondera, Toole and Chouteau Counties.

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

No effects to air quality would occur. 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.

There are no rare plants or cover types present in the project area. Current land use in the project area is a mixture of grazing land (native rangeland and tame pasture), agricultural land (small grain production), and CRP (tame grass species). The tables below describe the existing vegetation (land use) on each tract and the distance and acres potentially impacted by the proposed pipeline.

Parcel	TWN	RGE	SEC	Qtr	Line Size	FEET	Land Use
113	29N	5E	7	N ¹ / ₂ N ¹ / ₂	10"	5244.8	Grazing Land
114	29N	5E	8	N ¹ / ₂ N ¹ / ₂	10"	5152.08	Grazing Land
115	29N	5E	5	SE ¹ / ₄ SE ¹ / ₄	10"	158.92	Grazing Land
125	30N	5E	36	NE ¹ / ₄ , S ¹ / ₂	10"	6338	N ¹ / ₂ - Agricultural Land S ¹ / ₂ - Grazing Land
130	30N	6E	34	N ¹ / ₂ NW ¹ / ₄	6"	2644	Agricultural Land
139	29N	4E	20	W ¹ / ₂ SW ¹ / ₄	4"	2655	Agricultural Land
140	29N	4E	29	W ¹ / ₂ W ¹ / ₂	4"	5287	Agricultural Land
144	28N	4E	4	NW ¹ / ₄ NW ¹ / ₄	4"	1346	CRP
146	28N	4E	9	NW ¹ / ₄ NW ¹ / ₄	4"	1311	Grazing Land
148	28N	4E	16	N ¹ / ₂	4"	7253	CRP
157	28N	5E	22	N ¹ / ₂ N ¹ / ₂	4"	5311	Grazing Land
158	28N	5E	23	N ¹ / ₂	4"	5702	Agricultural Land

Land Use	Distance (Feet) Crossed	Acres (base on 100 feet wide)
Grazing Land – Native	20,875.8	47.9
Ag Land (Crop Land)	18,928	43.5
CRP	8,599'	19.5
TOTAL	48,402.8	110.9

All disturbed areas will be recontoured and reclaimed to pre-existing conditions following pipeline installation. Grazing land will be reseeded with noxious weed seed free native seed as indicated on the attached seeding plan. CRP will be reseeded with the appropriate species according to FSA and NRCS specifications. Agricultural land will be returned to small grain production in existing rotations.

Noxious weeds along the pipeline route will be addressed according to the attached noxious weed management plan.

No long term impacts to the existing vegetation are expected.

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 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. Temporary displacement of wildlife during construction is likely to occur. However, the proposed action 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. There are no unique or critical wildlife habitats associated with the state tracts and do not expect direct or cumulative wildlife impacts would occur as a result of implementing the proposal. The proposed action will not have long-term negative effects on existing wildlife species and/or wildlife habitat because of its relatively small scale.

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.

No specific on-site observations of Threatened or Endangered species have been recorded and no important habitat has been identified on the state lands. The proposal does not include any activities which would alter any habitat, so no effects are expected. No wetlands or riparian area are present on state land. No threatened or endangered species are known to exist in this area.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

A field inspection of the entire proposed route was completed on June 9 and 10, 2010 by Erik Eneboe and no archaeological features were identified.

A class III Cultural Resource Investigation (report of investigation 967 – Dated June 2010) authored by Jenifer Harty of Kadmas, Lee and Jackson, Inc. was completed for this project. This report indicated that “no previously recorded or new cultural resources were identified within the project corridor during the course of this investigation. KL&J recommends a finding of No Historic Properties Affected for the proposed project as inventoried, mapped, photographed, and described herein.”

There are no known historical, archeological, or paleontological resources in the area of the proposed project. Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archeologist, has been notified of the proposed project, and no site leads were identified from DNRC records.

Therefore, no historical, cultural or paleontological artifacts or resources will be impacted as a result of this project.

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.

The state land does not provide any unique scenic qualities not also provided on adjacent private lands. The pipeline will be buried and not changes to area aesthetics are anticipated.

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.

Other environmental documents pertaining to this project can be found on the Montana DEQ website and/or on the North Central Montana Regional Water Authority website (<http://robonc.org/index.htm>).

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.

The proposed project will provide local residents within the Tiber Water service area with reliable and high quality drinking water. No other impacts on human health or safety are expected.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

The proposed pipeline will provide residents in the Tiber Water service area with reliable and high quality drinking water. This will positively impact area residents, industry, and agricultural activities. The installation of the water pipeline may cause small scale and temporary damage to grazing lands, CRP and small grain crops grown in the area. The proponent has developed an actual damages payment process to compensate surface lessees and the DRNC for damaged agricultural comities.

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.

Project design and pipeline installation will be completed by private contractors. Cumulative effects to the employment market are anticipated to be positive.

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.

The proposed action will slightly increase local and State tax revenues.

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 a temporary increase in traffic and traffic patterns on rural roads during construction. No long term or cumulative impacts on traffic is expected. Area fire protection or police services will not be changed as a result of this project.

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.

There is no wilderness or recreational areas or access to wilderness or recreational areas through these tracts. There is very limited recreational potential and use in the proposed project area. The proposed action will not create conflict to any general recreational activities within the area.

There will be no direct or cumulative effects on recreational 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.

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.

This pipeline project will benefit rural residents in Liberty, Pondera, Toole and Chouteau Counties by providing reliable and high quality drinking water.

The school trust will receive a one time LUL installation fee of \$1,325.00 plus a \$25.00 application fee. After installation and as-built survey is provided to the DNRC, the school trust will receive a one time easement fee based upon fair market value of the land crossed.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Erik Eneboe
	Title: Conrad Unit Manager, CLO
Signature: /S/ ERIK ENEBOE	Date: April 10, 2009

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected Alternative B, issue the Land Use license authorizing installation of the proposed buried pipeline.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

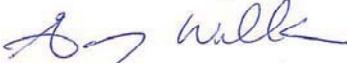
Significant impacts are not anticipated as a result of the proposed action. There are no known unique or limited resources within the project area which would be impacted by the activities. The majority of the area is located adjacent to existing roads, along property boundaries or adjacent to cultivated fields and consequently has been previously disturbed. Planned erosion control and weed mitigation plans are expected to be effective in preventing impacts.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Garry Williams
	Title: Area Manger, CLO
Signature: 	Date: 6/18/2010