CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Proposed 2010 Land Banking – Glasgow Unit – NELO – Proposed Land Sale 620, 621, and 622 Tracts located in the NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E
Proposed Implementation Date:	2010
Proponent:	Land Sale 620: 2.2 acre parcel of land located in NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E Nominated by DNRC. Land Sale 621: 5.48 acre parcel of land located in NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E Nominated by Pro CO-OP. Land Sale 622: 3.84 acre parcel of land located in NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E Nominated by DNRC.
Location:	All tracts of land are located in the NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E: The total sale of all three parcels would be 11.52
County:	Valley County
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Offer for Sale at Public Auction 11.52 acres of state land currently held in trust for the benefit of Common Schools. Revenue from the sale would be deposited in a special account, with monies from other sales around the State, to purchase replacement lands meeting acquisition criteria related to legal access, productivity, potential income and proximity to existing state ownership which would then be held in trust for the benefit of the same beneficiary Trust in relative proportion. The 2003 State Legislature passed statutes (77-2-361 through 367 MCA) authorizing the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) to sell State School Trust Lands and utilize those funds to purchase replacement lands for the school trust through a process called Land Banking. The intent of the program is for the state to dispose of scattered tracts of land that generally do not have legal access, generate substantially less income for the trust than their relative value or are difficult for the DNRC to manage. The funds generated from sales are then used to purchase property that is blocked or contiguous to state land, has legal access, has potential for increased Trust revenue and consequently is more efficient to manage. In 2005 the Department accepted nominations from lessees and DNRC personnel for state tracts to be considered for sale under the program. Nominations were evaluated and the State Board of Land Commissioners (Board) prioritized for sale. To date the DNRC and the Board has sold 42,968 acres and purchased 46,169 acres.

Two maps are attached to this EA checklist: 1. Labeled “Valley / Daniels Land Sale Vicinity Map” is a general map of all state land within the county (blue) and those parcels of land considered for sale under land banking (red). 2. Labeled “Town of Richland Sales” is a satellite imagery map that indicates the tract considered for sale in the EA checklist.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:
Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

- Proposed land sale numbers 620 and 621 are parcels of land within the town site of Richland, Valley County. The State acquired the land on 7/1/1918 (10-1097, Disposition number, Volume 4, page 1097). On 10/17/1925 the State granted ROW to GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY CO (Deed # 1379). Deed #

1379 had a reverser clause that if the right of way was no longer used for railway purposes, it reverts to the state. On July 15, 1926, the State sold the remainder of the land in lot 2 and lot 3 subject to existing ROW's to the North Country Townsite and Land Company. On 8/17/2009 the ROW was terminated DUE TO NON-USE. On August 17, 2009, Mr. Joe Lamson (DNRC Deputy Director) issued a letter on behalf of the Director that officially terminated ROW Deed # 1379. The net result is that the land formerly issued to the Great Northern Railroad reverted back to the State. The State does not own any other in Lot 2 and 3 due to the Sale to the North Country Townsite and Land Company.

- Proposed Land Sale 623 is presently leased to a Mr. Russell G. Solberg (state lease no. 7362). The land to the west of this proposed sale is owned by Pro CO-OP and is being managed to support a large bulk fertilizer plant. Pro CO-OP approached Mr. Solberg and received his permission for them nominated and purchase the said land.
- Legal notices were published in the in the Daniels County Leader June, 10, 2010 and in the Glasgow Courier, June 16, 2010.
- Direct mailings were made to lessees, adjacent land owners, County Commissioners, State Legislators (from the involved Districts and who were associated with the legislation), and a host of organizations and individuals who had expressed previous interest in this process. A full listing of contacts is attached as Appendix C.
- Follow-up contacts were made by phone, mail, or email with parties requesting additional information. These are also included in Appendix C.
- The tract was also posted on the DNRC web page at, http://dnrc/mt.gov//TLMSPublic/LandBanking/LBTest.aspx

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

No other governmental agencies have jurisdiction over this proposal.

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3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the State retains the existing land ownership pattern and would not sell the 11.2 acres of Common School Trust Land contained in the NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E.

Alternative B (the Proposed action) – Under this alternative, the Department would request and recommend approval by the Land Board to sell 9.36 acres of Common School Trust Land contained in NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E. If approved by the Board, the sale would be at public auction, subject to the requirements found in Title 77, Chapter 2, Part 3 of the Montana Codes Annotated. The income from the sale would be pooled with other land sale receipts from across the State to fund the purchase of other state land, easements, or improvements for the beneficiaries of the respective trusts. *(The State would then review available lands for sale which would generally have access and an increased potential for income. A separate public scoping and review would be conducted when a potentially suitable parcel was found. It is not possible for this analysis to make any direct parcel to parcel comparisons.)*

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.*

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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.

This parcel of land is adjacent to the town site of Richland. The land has been highly disturbed by the installation of the Railroad, and the creation of the town site of Richland.

The State owns certain minerals under this parcel and would retain ownership of these mineral rights if the tract is sold.

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.

There are no ephemeral drainages present on this tract. There are no documented and/or recorded water rights associated with the proposed tract for sale. Other water quality and/or quantity issues will not be impacted by the proposed action.

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 proposal does not include any on-the-ground activities, or changes to activities. No effects to air quality would occur.

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.

Sale No. 621 is native grass species. The nominator of this land will continue to allow Mr. Solberg to graze a portion of these acres. No changes are anticipated to take place.

Sale No. 620 and 622 is tame grass species. Both of these parcels are highly disturbed.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted, as well as tract specific requests for concerns being made to the MT FWP and they made no comments regarding plant species. There were no plant species of concern noted or potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey.

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.

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.

A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted, as well as tract specific requests for wildlife concerns were made to the Montana FWP. Montana FWP did not provide any site specific comments regarding wildlife. There were no animal species of concern identified and no potential species of concern identified on the NRIS survey.

There are no threatened or endangered species, sensitive habitat types, or other species of special concern associated with the proposed land sale.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

No state owned cultural properties are located on the state tracts slated for sale in Valley County. Further, neither Hell Creek nor Judith River geologic formations are present on these tracts.

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.

This tract is located adjacent to the town of Richland. The Pro CO-OP is a prominent feature on the landscape.. These tract are commonly known in the community and is highly visible.

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.

There are 5,153,434.65 acres of Trust land and 4,625,112.67 acres of Common School surface ownership in Montana *(TLMD, 2009 Annual Report)*. There are approximately 220,579 acres of Trust lands in Daniels County. There are 215,246 acres of Trust lands in Valley County. This proposal includes 11.52 acres in Valley County, a small percentage of the state land within this County.

There are additional tracts of state land currently under consideration for sale through the Land Banking Program. .

The potential transfer of ownership will not have any impact or demands on environmental resources of land water, air, or energy.

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 no other projects or plans being considered on the tract listed on this EA.

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.

No impacts to human health and safety would occur as a result of the proposal.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

Two of the tracts in this proposal are not being leased. The third tract Sale621 is presently leased to a Mr. Russell Solberg and is used for Grazing. The Pro COOP club and Mr. Solberg have came to an agreement to continue to allow Mr. Solberg to graze the parcel of land.

Legal	Acres	Lease #
Land Sale 620: NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E Nominated by DNRC.	2.2	Vacant
Land Sale 621: NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E Nominated by Pro CO-OP.	5.48	7362
Land Sale 622: NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E Nominated by DNRC.	3.84	Vacant

This proposal does not include any specific changes to the industrial, commercial or agricultural activities. The nominating lessees indicated that they will continue to manage the land they have been managed in the past.

No direct or cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposal.

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 proposal would have no affect on quantity and distribution of employment.

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.

State School Trust Lands are currently exempt from property tax. Valley county has greater than 6% State Trust Lands and therefore receives a payment in lieu of taxes (PLT) to mitigate for the State Trust Land tax exempt status. If sold, the Pro CO-OP and Perry Theivin would pay taxes on the land. The sale will not result in the State owning less than 6% of the land in the county. The State will continue to pay PLT taxes on the land they own in the County.

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

Being adjacent to the city of Richland, the local Richland volunteer fire Department would respond to fire. No traffic changes would be anticipated. All state and private land are under the County Coop wildfire protection program. The proposed sale will not change fire protections in the area.

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.

This tract is surrounded by State land, and private land. There are no zoning or other agency management plans affecting this land.

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 sale of this land does not prohibit access or recreational opportunities.

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. The nominating lessee has indicated that the land would continue to use the land as the former lessees had or in the same manner that has been conducted in the past. No effects 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 potential sale of the state land would not directly or cumulatively impact cultural uniqueness or diversity. It is unknown what management activities would take place on the land if ownership was transferred. The tract was nominated by the lessee with the intent of purchasing and continuing use as grazing land.

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.

Legal	Acres	2010 Lease Income	Income per acre
Land Sale 620: NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E Nominated by DNRC.	2.2	Vacant	$0.00
Land Sale 621: NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E Nominated by Pro CO-OP.	5.48	6.12	1.12
Land Sale 622: NE¼ Sec. 2, T35N, R43E Nominated by DNRC.	3.84	Vacant	$0.00

The tract proposed to sell is small, legally accessible, and adjacent to the city of Richland.
No land has been sold in Valley County. .

Under DNRC rules, an appraisal would be conducted if preliminary approval to proceed is granted by the Board of Land Commissioners. The former appraisal could not be utilized because the appraisal was not conducted within the last year. The Department is conducting more detailed evaluations at this time in order to make a determination on whether to offer the tracts for sale. The revenue generated from the sale of these parcels would be combined with other revenue in the Land Banking Account to purchase replacement property for the benefit of the Trust. It is anticipated the replacement property would have legal access and be adjacent to other Trust lands which would provide greater management opportunities and income. If replacement property was not purchased prior to the expiration of the statute, the revenue would be deposited into the permanent trust for investment.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:** Hoyt Richards	**Date:** April 19, 2010
	Title: Glasgow Unit Manager, Glasgow Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The action alternative, sale of the property.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

No significant impact.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

[ ] EIS	[ ] More Detailed EA	[X] No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:** Clive Rooney, **Title:Area Manager**	
Signature: S/Clive Rooney/S		**Date**:6-30/10

Appendix C

Circle 4 Farms	P O Box 886	Shelby MT 59474
F Outfit, Inc. **C/O Joe Fretheim**	658 South Telstad Road	Shelby MT 59474
Ron Iverson	10068 Iverson Road	Ledger MT 59456
Gus Winterrowd	P O Box 231	Brady MT 59416
Homer Thompson	P O Box 162	Brady MT 59416
Earl Thompson	1409 Sixteenth Street South	Great Falls MT 59405
Lindseth Charolais Ranch **Ray Lindseth**	P O Box 183	Dupuyer MT 59432
Kirk and Rusyl Klingaman	P O Box 797	Bynum MT 59419
Marion Trexler **C/O Kirk & Rusyl Klingaman**	General Delivery	Bynum MT 59419
Boneyard Coulee Ranch	P O Box 736	Bynum MT 59419
Miller Colony	5130 U.S. Highway 89	Choteau MT 59422
Rice Ridge, LLC	2931 Tenth Lane NW RR2 Box 200	Choteau MT 59422
RL Reiquam Ranch Company	2751 Fern Drive	Great Falls MT 59404
Mark and Kathy Engstrom	257 Schaeffer Road	Whitlash MT 59545
Rick and Lois Belcher	595 Flat Coulee Road	Whitlash MT 59545
James and Marlene Grammar	605 1251 East	Chester MT 59522
Robert and Rebecca Bronec	3000 Ames Road	Carter MT 59420
Stewart Ranch, Inc.	P O Box 98	Fort Benton MT 59442
Witt Ranch Company	2555 Russell Road	Carter MT 59420
Don Buffington	16 South Main Street	Conrad MT 59425
Sharon Jensen **C/O Don Buffington**	16 South Main Street	Conrad MT 59425

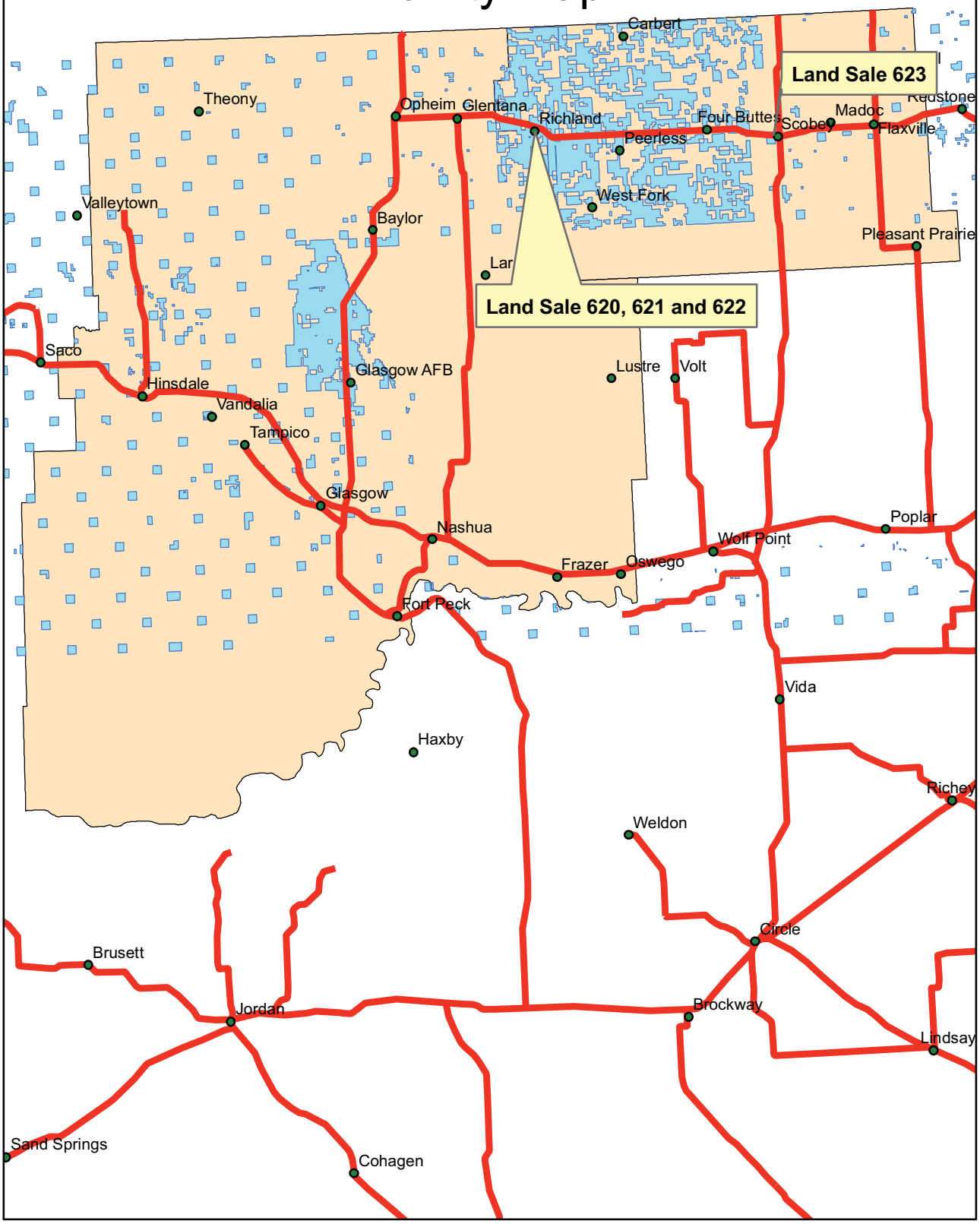
Lee Ann Buffington **C/O Don Buffington**	16 South Main Street	Conrad MT 59425
Marie Monroe **C/O Don Buffington**	16 South Main Street	Conrad MT 59425
Douglas Buffington **C/O Don Buffington**	16 South Main Street	Conrad MT 59425
Norman Buffington	55 Carneros Drive	Sparks, NV 89441
Pondera Coulee Farm	198 West Dugout Road	Ledger MT 59456
Earl Duncan	296 Eagle Drive	Conrad MT 59425
Kathleen Lynch & Susan Elings	683 Horseshoe Boulevard	Lewistown MT 59457
Gordon Hurley	299 Dugout Road	Ledger MT 59456
Bert Duncan	124 Skyline Drive NE	Great Falls MT 59404
Randahl English **C/O Lauener Ranch**	814 Cole	Helena MT 59601
Kolstad Family Trust	295 Montana Highway 366	Ledger MT 59456
Selma Hardeland	701 South Illinois, Apt. #103	Conrad MT 59425
Tiber Farming Company	126 Twelfth Avenue North	Shelby MT 59474
Chris and Vicki Kolstad	295 Montana Highway 366	Ledger MT 59456
Underdahl Enterprises, Inc.	1308 Third West Hill Drive	Great Falls Mt 59404
Duncan Ranch Company	625 2100 Road East	Joplin MT 59531
Vern Pimley	P O Box 482	Chester MT 59522
Nancy Ray and Mindi Anderson	5542 North Fifth Drive	Phoenix, AZ 85013
William Frazer	P O Box 628	Chester MT 59522
Bureau of Reclamation	P O Box 100	Helena MT 59624
George Mattson Farms, Inc	P O Box 382	Chester MT 59522
Janice Mattson	P O Box 382	Chester MT 59522

Vicki Fey Schultz Family Parnership	223 Commons Way	Kalispell MT 59900
CF Anderson Family Partnership	223 Commons Way	Kalispell MT 59901
David or Lenora McEwen	1334 Coal Mine Road	Galata MT 59444
Ratzburg Livestock, LLP	265 Bobcat Angus Loop	Galata MT 59444
Albert Fey	HC 51 Box 270	Galata MT 59444
Fretheim Brothers	P O Box 251	Shelby MT 59474
Bureau of Land Management	Granite Tower	Billings MT 59107
Ann Hedges **Montana Environmental Info Center**	P O Box 1184	Helena MT 59624
Bill Orsell **Montana Wildlife Federation**	P O Box 1175	Helena MT 59624
Stan Frasier **Montana Wildlife Federation**	P O Box 1174	Helena MT 59624
Bob Vogel **Montana School Boards Assoc.**	1 South Montana Avenue	Helena MT 59601
Daniel Berube	27 Cedar Lake Drive	Butte MT 59701
Ellen Engstedt **Montana Wood Products**	P O Box 1149	Helena MT 59624
Harold Blattie **MT Association of Counties**	2715 Skyway Drive	Helena MT 59601
The Nature Conservancy	32 South Ewing	Helena MT 59460
Jack Atcheson, Sr.	3210 Ottawa	Butte MT 59701
Janet Ellis **Montana Audubon Society**	P O Box 595	Helena MT 59624
Jeanne Holmgren	email: jholmgren@mt.gov	
Leslie Taylor **MSU Bozeman**	P O Box 172440	Bozeman MT 59715
Nancy Schlepp **MT Farm Bureau Federation**	502 19th, Suite 4	Bozeman MT 59715

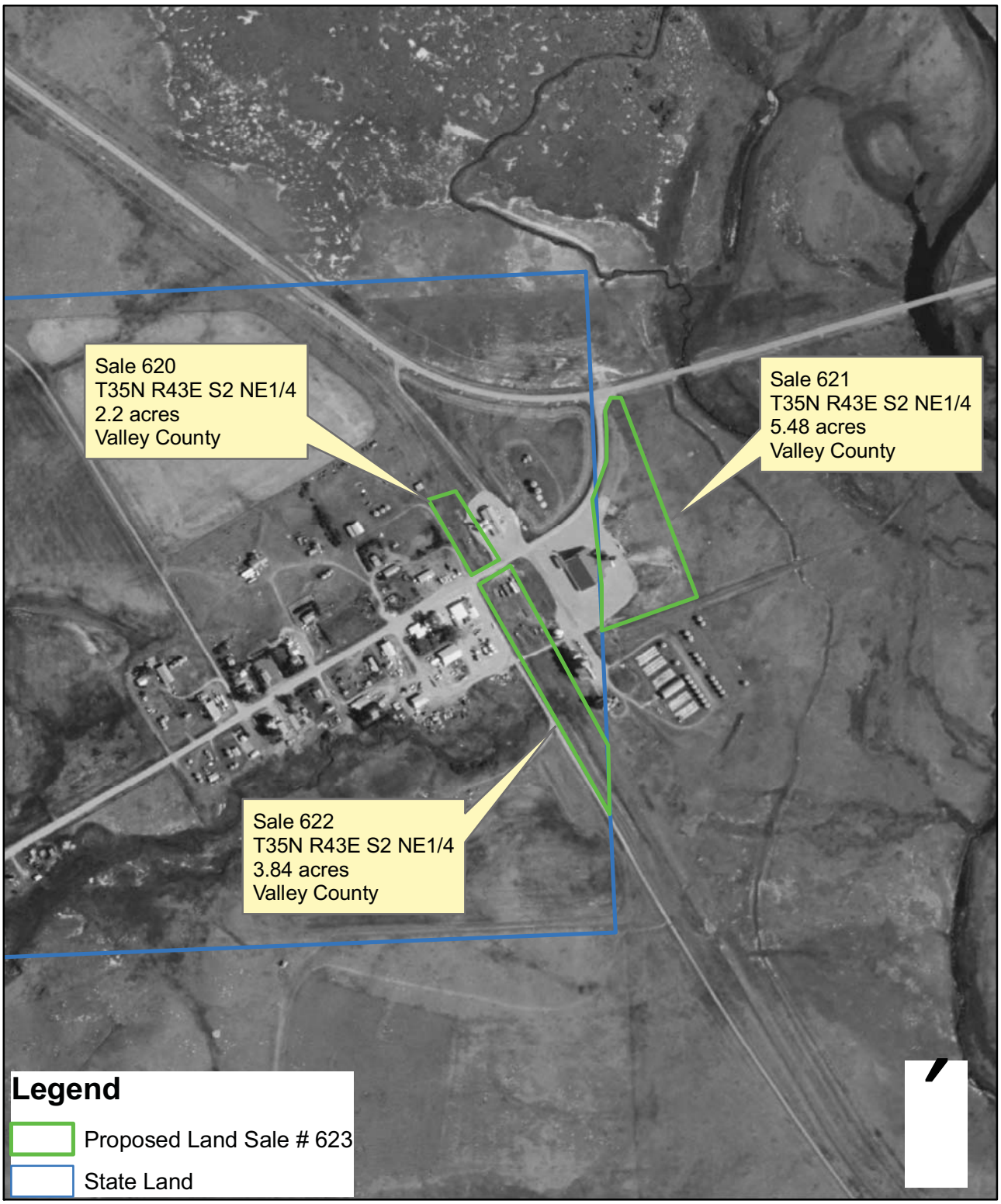
Ray Marxer **Matador Cattle Company**	9500 Blacktail Road	Dillion MT 59725
Rosi Keller **University of Montana**	32 Campus Drive	Missoula MT 59812
County Commissioner **Toole County**	226 First Street South	Shelby MT 59474
County Commissioner **Teton County**	110 south Main Street	Choteau MT 59422
County Commissioner **Liberty County**	111 First Street E	Chester MT 59522
County Commissioner **Pondera County**	20 Fourth Avenue SW	Conrad MT 59425
Representative Joey Jayne **House District 15**	299 Lumpry Road	Arlee MT 59821
Representative Llew Jones **House District 27**	1102 Fourth Avenue SW	Conrad MT 59425
Senate, Jerry Black **Senate District 14**	445 O'Haire Boulevard	Shelby MT 59474
Representative Rick Ripley **House District 17**	8920 Montana Highway 2	Wolf Creek MT 59648
Senate, John Cobb **Senate District 9**	P O Box 78	Augusta MT 59410
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	51383 Highway 93 North	Pablo MT 59855
Blackfeet Tribe	P O Box 850	Browning MT 59417
Senate, Carol Juneau **Senate District 8**	P O Box 55	Browning MT 59417
Fish, Wildlife & Parks **Region 4 Office**	4600 Giant Springs Road	Great Falls MT 59405
Fish, Wildlife & Parks **Attn: Gary Olson**	514 South Front Street	Conrad MT 59425
Fish, Wildlife & Parks **Attn: Brent Lonner**	P O Box 488	Fairfield MT 59436

Fish, Wildlife & Parks **Attn: Joe Weigand**	P O Box 200701	Helena MT 59620
Representative Frosty Calf Boss Ribs **House District 15**	P O Box 20	Heart Butte MT 59448
Representative Roy Hollandsworth **House District 28**	1463 Prairie Drive	Brady MT 59416-8928
Representative Shannon Augare **House District 16**	P O Box 2031	Browning MT 59417-2031
Representative Russell Bean **House District 17**	P O Box 480	Augusta MT 59410-0480

Valley / Daniels Land Sale Vicinity Map



Town of Richland Sales



0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles