

# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**Project Name:** Lease #3598 , Livestock Water Pipeline

**Proposed Implementation Date:** Summer/Fall 2010

**Proponents:** Miller Colony, ( David Wipf), 5130 Hwy #89, Choteau, MT 59422

**Type and Purpose of Action:** The current lessee, Miller Colony, (David Wipf), has requested to place a livestock water line across the NW4SE4, NE4SE4, Sec. 11, T25N, R6W in order to connect water well located on deeded land in Sec. 11 with state and deeded pasture land located in Sec. 11 and Sec. 12. The water line will be 2” pipe placed 6’ deep and travel for an approximate distance of 1816’. A detailed map showing the locations for this project lay out is included within this assessment. The primary objective is to provide reliable stock water to state and deeded pasture in order to allow for better livestock distribution.

**Location:** NW4SE4, NE4SE4, Sec. 11, T25N, R6W  
**Trust:** Common Schools

**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  
 Miller Colony, (David Wipf), Surface Lessee, Lease #3598  
 Miller Colony, (David Wipf), adjacent land owner, 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 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 Yamacall-Delpoint loams which contain 8 to 15% slopes, Cabbart-Delpoint loams which contain 15 to 35% slopes, and Delpoint-Cabbart-Rootel loams which contain 2 to 15% slopes. These soil types are made up of class 4E, 6E and 7E soils which are gently rolling to steep topography. The concerns over the steepness of the slopes will be mitigated as the water line will be installed in order to avoid the steep slopes. 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 trench 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.

**II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

	<p>Cumulative impacts on soil resources are not expected and any difficulties will be further mitigated by the use of an excavator to place the water line due to the shale outcroppings which will result in limited soil disturbance. In addition, the disturbed areas will be reclaimed and reseeded by the proponent.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>[N] There are no ephemeral drainages present on this tract. There are no documented and/or recorded water rights associated with the proposed water line installation project. Other water quality and/or quantity issues will not be impacted by the proposed action. The water well to feed the project is located on private land owned by Miller Colony. The proposed action will improve overall water reliability and quantity for Miller Colony on their adjacent state and deeded pastures.</p>
<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 1816' of 2" pipe will be placed 6' deep. The pipe will be installed by the utilization of an excavator. 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 35% Western Wheatgrass, 35% Slender Wheatgrass, 10% Green Needle grass, 15% Blue Bunch Wheatgrass and 5% Lewis Blue Flax . 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. The livestock water project will allow for better livestock distribution in the pastures.</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. The livestock water project will also provide a water source for wildlife.</p>

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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] A review of Natural Heritage data through the NRIS was conducted. There were four animal species of concern and two potential species of concern noted on the NRIS survey:

The ferruginous hawk and Swainson's hawk were found to be potentially located in the general area. The ferruginous hawk and Swainson's hawk are generally associated with needing cliffs, trees, or mid-elevation slopes for nesting. The proposed project area contains none of these habitat features, so these species of concern will likely be transient in the project area. No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are expected to either of these species of concern.

The black tern, horned grebe, and the hooded merganser were found to be potentially located in the general area. These species are generally associated with ponds, riparian areas and clear flowing streams. The proposed project area contains none of these habitat features, so this species of concern will likely not be located in the project area. No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are expected to these species of concern.

This tract is located within the northern grizzly bear recovery zone. The grizzly bear primarily use meadows, seeps, riparian zones, mixed shrub fields, closed timber, open timber, side hill parks, snow chutes, and alpine habitats. Habitat use is highly variable between areas, seasons, local populations, and individuals. Desirable grizzly bear habitat, such as security cover (aspen stands, shrubby riparian areas) or foraging areas are not present in the project area. Grizzly bear use in the immediate area is very limited and likely restricted to a traveling corridor between Muddy Creek and the Teton River. The construction area does not contain desirable grizzly bear habitat features, so these species of concern will likely be transient in the project area. No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are expected to this species of concern.

There was one identified threatened species (grizzly bear), noted to potentially utilize this area. The proposed livestock water pipeline does not include any activities which would alter any habitat, so no effects are expected in either alternative.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?

[Y] The livestock water line installation route was surveyed and no items of archaeological significance were located. Past lease records indicate the presence of stone circles on the tract above the project area on the shale outcroppings. The stock water line will be installed in a manner to avoid any existing stone features.

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.

<b>II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>	
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] There are no other studies, plans or projects that will affect this proposed action.
<b>III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</b>	
<b>RESOURCE</b>	<b>[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES</b>
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 Miller Colony'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?	[N] This project is being funded by Miller Colony. 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 is on State Land that is not 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] Cumulative impacts are not likely as the area is only used for grazing and the buried livestock water pipeline will not affect the long-term viability of grazing on the tract. This project is covered under the improvement request form.

EA Checklist Prepared By:  /S/ Tony Nickol  
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 Title

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