

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Moltich, Trail Use Land Use License
Proposed Implementation Date:	September, 2010
Proponent:	Max and Terri Moltich
Location:	Section 36, Township 5 South – Range 3 West
County:	Beaverhead County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Max And Terri Moltich of Sheridan, MT have requested that the DNRC grant them a trail use license for ATV, foot and horseback use to access their property in Section 30, Township 5 South – Range 3 West. The purpose of the trail use would include trailing cattle in and out of their pastures, putting salt out for cattle, maintaining their fences and spraying for weeds. There is an old existing homesteader trail across state land that would be used to access their property for the above mentioned purposes. A short portion of this trail crosses the BLM in Section 25, T 5 South – Range 3 West and the Moltich’s have secured a “casual use” access from the Dillon Field Office for this use to cross the BLM’s portion of the trail.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

BLM, Dillon Field Office
Madison County Commissioners
Woods Three Creeks Ranches
Steve Woods, Horse Creek Hay & Cattle
Robert Bowling
Spanish Q Ranches LLC
Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archeologist
NRIS Search

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

Casual Use Access from the BLM. This access has been secured from the Dillon Field Office

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action Alternative: Grant Max & Terri Moltich a Land Use License to use an existing trail on State land for foot, horseback or ATV use to access their property for the purpose of trailing and salting cattle, fixing fences, and spraying weeds.

No Action Alternative: Deny the Moltich’s a Land Use License to access their ranch property over an existing trail 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.

NRSC soil survey for this area in Madison County is described as Tiban very stony loam. This soil is usually found in hills and moraines with parent material being gravelly till and or alluvium and or colluviums. The land capability rating is 7s. These are generally well drained soils; however they are also highly erosive when on steep slopes. The trails location is on gentle slopes (10-15 %) that are vegetated with grass, forbs, shrubs and trees. There is faint evidence of an old homesteaders trail approximately 60 – 70 feet above the unnamed creek. With the light use of the trail that is requested in this LUL vegetation for the most part should remain in place and not cause erosion into the creek or result in rutting of the trail. The trail should be checked periodically to determine if mitigation measures such as grass seeding or water bars need to be installed. At this time these mitigation measures are not anticipated with the use that has been applied for.

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.

The proposed trail is located approximately 60 - 70 feet east of Hudson Creek, a perennial stream that flows into Granite Creek. Currently the area is grazed by the lessee, Woods Three Creeks Ranches. The current trail is vegetated and does not have an adverse effect on the stream. Erosion of soil into the creek is not evident at this time. The trail use applied for under this LUL should not have an adverse effect on the existing vegetation on the trail because of the light occasional use of the trail. If erosion becomes evident mitigation measures such as water bars or broadcast grass seeding may be required in the future.

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.

This proposal would not affect air quality standards.

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 site is currently vegetated with Douglas fir and juniper trees, forbs and some grass. An NRIS search didn't identify any sensitive or rare plant types in this area. Because of the limited use of the trail and it being limited to ATV, foot or horseback travel no long term or cumulative effects are anticipated with this proposal to the existing vegetation.

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.

A variety of big game, small mammals, raptors, songbirds, and grouse may use this area. Minimal impacts may occur when the trail is used but no long term or 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.

Gray Wolf (Canus Lupus) Wolves are distributed throughout Southwest Montana. The project would not have any measurable effect on wolf prey or wolves, thus direct, indirect, or cumulative effects are not anticipated.

Brewer's Sparrow (Spizella breweri) – Brewer's sparrow is a BLM sensitive species. Per Montana Natural Resource Information Service (NRIS), the species prefers nesting in sagebrush averaging 16 inches in height. Where the trail is located there isn't any sage brush present however the birds may use the area during certain times of the year. The proposed project would not significantly alter the current vegetative community and the limited use of this proposal should not alter the vegetation on-site or lead to negative cumulative effects on Brewer's sparrow populations of the area.

Wolverine (Gulo gulo) – Wolverines are listed as sensitive by both the BLM and USFS. Per Montana Natural Resource Information Service (NRIS) wolverines have been seen within three miles of the proposed LUL site. This proposal however has a small foot print and use by the proponent will be intermittent in nature and should not alter the current existing habitat in the area. Because of this no cumulative effects to wolverines are anticipated.

Westslope Cutthroat Trout (Oncorhynchus clarkia lewisi) – Westslope cutthroat trout are listed by both the USFS and BLM as a sensitive species and a Species of Concern within the State of Montana. Current populations are outside of the direct impact area posed by the proposal. Westslope Cutthroat trout are found in the upper reaches of Mill Gulch Creek but currently are not present in Granite Creek or Hudson Creek where the proposal is located. As proposed the project should not cause erosion or stream degradation so no long term or cumulative effects are anticipated from this proposal to westslope cutthroat trout.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

Patrick Rennie Archeologist for the DNRC found no recorded archeological or paleontological resources in the area of the trail. He had no concerns with issuing this land Use License.

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 proposal is not located near any populated areas and will not affect the scenic values of the area. Because of the limited use of the LUL there will be no visual changes to the area.

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.

This area already has use by cattle ranchers and the use proposed will not interfere with land use or demands on environmental resources. No cumulative effects are anticipated to environmental resources if this proposal is approved.

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.

I am unaware of any known studies or plans by surrounding landowners or federal, county or state agencies for this area.

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 known safety or health risks are anticipated by this proposal.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

This proposal will not affect the current agricultural activities in the area. This will allow easier access to salt cattle and fix fences but will not change the current use of the land.

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.

This proposal will not create, move or eliminate any jobs.

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.

This proposal will not affect the local tax base or have any cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

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.

This proposal will not affect government services to the surrounding area, and no cumulative effects are anticipated.

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 proposal will not affect any State or County environmental or zoning laws.

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.

This State section is located off of a County road (Granite Creek Road) and allows access to the public for recreational use. However use is limited to foot or horseback so no additional heavy use is anticipated from granting this proposed license. The section is surrounded by private property that is not currently open to recreational use so any new use of the trail by the public will be limited.

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.

No new house or population changes are anticipated from this proposal.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

This will not change the traditional lifestyle of the area or communities surrounding this proposal.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

This license if granted will fit in with the current lifestyle and livelihood of the surrounding 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 license if granted will generate \$150.00/ year for the trust over the next ten years and at that time will be evaluated for renewal.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Tim Egan	Date: September 9, 2010
	Title: Dillon Unit Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I have selected the action alternative, which would authorize use of an existing trail by foot, horse or ATV for management purposes such as salting, fencing trailing livestock and weed spraying etc.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Significant impacts are not anticipated as a result of the proposed activity. The trail to be used is has been in existence for quite some time. The authorized use would facilitate sound management practices on adjacent lands. No critical habitat, water resources or Threatened or endangered species would be impacted.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Garry Williams
	Title: Area Manager Central land Office
Signature: /s/ Garry Williams	
Date: 9/23/2010	

State Section 36, Township 5 South - Range 3 West Moltich Land Use License Application Map

