

# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Natural gas pipeline.

Proposed Implementation Date: November 15, 2010

Proponent: Decker Operating Company, 1706 Seamist, Suite 590, Houston, Texas 77008

Type and Purpose of Action: Decker Operating Company has made application to place a 3 inch to 4 inch natural gas pipeline on a tract of State land located in Phillips County. The natural gas pipeline will start at an existing natural gas well and travel northwest to an existing pipeline located off state owned land. The proposed project will improve the movement of natural gas within the gas wells located on this tract of State land and other gas wells on surrounding deeded lands.

Location: NW4NW4, Section 19 Township 33 North,  
Range 31 East

County: Phillips

## I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Decker Operation Company has made a Land Use License application to place a 3 inch to 4 inch tie-in natural gas pipeline on State land. Decker Operating Company has contacted the surface owner concerning the natural gas pipeline project.

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

The other government agencies with jurisdiction for this project are the Montana Board of Oil and Gas, Billings Office.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action Alternative: Grant a Land Use License to Decker Operating Company to construct a tie-in natural gas pipeline on State land.

No Action Alternative: Deny a Land Use License to Decker Operating Company to construct a tie-in natural gas pipeline on State land.

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

### RESOURCE

### POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?

Action Alternative: This type of project will impact the silty and clay loam soils on the gas pipeline route. The impacts are minimal and the pipeline route will continue to produce native vegetation. The impacted area will produce native plant communities through existing seed sources upon project completion or area will be reclaimed by reseeding.

No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the soils on the land under this alternative.

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?

Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the water quality, quantity and distribution associated with this tract of state land. The project area contains no surface or groundwater resources.

No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to water resources under this alternative.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
<p>6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impacts on the air quality of the land involved with the project. The project will produce some dirt particles to become air borne from the natural gas pipeline installation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the air quality under this alternative.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The natural gas pipeline installation will impact the vegetation on the pipeline route. Depending on the type of pipeline installation, the area of impact will produce native seed from existing plant communities in the vicinity of the project site. This native seed source maybe sufficient to re-establish native plants on the pipeline route. If area does not re-establish from existing seed sources, it will be reseeded by the applicant. The on site inspection showed a native plant community consisting of Western wheatgrass, Needle&amp;thread grass, Sandberg bluegrass, Fringe sagewort, Silver sagebrush, etc.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the vegetation under this alternative.</p>
<p>8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This type of activity will disturb the habitat types on the State land. The area of impact is small in scope and there will be minimal impacts to the wildlife and upland bird resources of the area. This tract has a very minimal population of Silver sagebrush plants. The State land is not part of identified areas containing known sage grouse leks.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the wildlife habitat resources associated with the land under this alternative.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project area contains no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources. The area of impact contains very minimal habitat resources for Sage Grouse (scattered Silver sagebrush). The project will have minimal impacts to the habitat resources associated with this tract of State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the environmental resources under this alternative.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There are no known historical or archaeological sites on the areas to be impacted by this project. The state land was inspected by Craig Biggart, Land Use Specialist, Glasgow Unit Office, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. Some areas along the proposed pipeline route contain surface rock of various sizes. The area was also inspected by ACR Consultants Inc. Melissa Ray Gentry, RPA Project Archeologist. The on-site report indicated that there were no archeological sites on or near the immediate pipeline location.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to historical or archaeological sites under this alternative.</p>
<p>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?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project site is located in a rural area and is visible to the general public from a county road, next to the project site. The project will have no impacts to the aesthetic values associated with the state land involved with this project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the aesthetics associated with the land under this</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	project.
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?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the environmental resources of land, water, air or energy under this alternative.</p>
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	<p>Action Alternative: The pipeline installation will not impact other projects or plans that may be occurring on the state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the plans, studies or other projects on the land under this alternative.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>Action Alternative; The pipeline installation has various human health and safety risks. The employer and employee identify the health and safety risks as occupational hazards.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to human health or safety under this alternative.</p>
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	<p>Action alternative: The project will have no impacts to the agricultural activities that are occurring on the land. The current agriculture activities occurring on this tract are livestock grazing.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the agricultural activities under this alternative.</p>
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the quantity and distribution of employment.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	<p>Action Alternative: The project may create additional tax revenue for Phillips county.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the local and state tax base under this alternative.</p>
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands for government services. There will be some additional vehicle traffic from the natural gas companies on the county road associated with this tract.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts for government services under this alternative.</p>
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and goals under this alternative.</p>
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	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the hunting or hiking recreational values associated with the land.</p>

