

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Natural gas well access road.	Proposed Implementation Date: December 21, 2010
Proponent: Fidelity Exploration and Production, P O Box 1010, Glendive, Montana 59330	
Type and Purpose of Action: Fidelity Exploration and Production has made a Land Use License application to build an access road to a natural gas well on deeded land. That portion of the access road that crosses State land is 744.5 feet in length and 20 feet in width.	
Location: Access road, SE4SW4, Section 26 Township 31 North, Range 35 East, NE4NW4, Section 35 Township 31 North, Range 35E	County: Valley County

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Fidelity Exploration & Production has made a Land Use License application to construct an access road on State land. The access road will be used to access a natural gas well site located on deeded land. Fidelity Exploration & Production has contacted the surface lessee concerning this project and surface damages have been negotiated per the involvement of the Glasgow Unit Office.
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 Fidelity Exploration & Production to place an access road on State land. No Action Alternative: Deny a Land Use License to Fidelity Exploration & Production to place an access road 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 clays and dense clay soils on the access road. The native vegetation on the access road is Western Wheatgrass with a small amount of forb species. The impacts are minimal and the area of impact

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	<p>is small in scope. The access road area will continue to produce native rangeland vegetation upon access road reclamation.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the soils under this alternative.</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?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the water quality, quantity and distribution associated with this tract of State land. The road access area of impact is located on a somewhat upland bench area. The area at the access road site receives minimal water from spring runoff. The road access site should have minimal surface water ponding after completion.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the water quality, quantity and distribution under this alternative.</p>
<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 no impacts on the air quality of the land involved with the project. Some dirt particles will become air borne during the access road construction. This type of air pollution will be short term with minimal impacts to the air quality.</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 construction of an access road will impact the native rangeland vegetation along the access road route. The native vegetation will be destroyed on the access road during the road construction operation. The drilling company will reclaim the access road upon gas well site abandonment. The access road route will be reseeded with native vegetation per reclamation plan of operations.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the native 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. There are no Sage Grouse leks in the vicinity of the project. There was no information that directly informed the writer of this document that a Sage Grouse lek was located on the State land. The writer of this document has therefore</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	<p>determined that there are no reasons to place additional stipulations pertaining to Sage grouse on the natural gas company. The on site survey showed that this tract of State land contained some habitat resources for Sharptail Grouse, Mule Deer, Whitetail Deer, and Pheasant.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the wildlife habitat 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 road access route contains minimal habitat resources.</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. This was determined by Randy Dirkson, Land Use Specialist, Glasgow Unit Office through an on site survey of the project area and surrounding area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to historical and 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. The well site location is visible to the general public from US Highway No. 2. The project will have no impacts to the aesthetic values associated with the State land involved with this type of project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the aesthetics associated with this tract under this alternative.</p>
<p>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>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy. Other activities of the surrounding area are natural gas development on private and federal lands.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impact to the environmental resources of land, water air or energy under this alternative.</p>
<p>13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The construction of an access road will not impact other projects or plans that Department of Natural</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
tract?	<p>Resources and Conservation may have occurring on the land. The construction of an access road on State land will not have impacts to other land owners of the surrounding area. The surrounding land owner will be compensated monetarily for that portion of the access road on deeded land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to other plans or studies that DNRC has on this tract 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 construction of an access road to a gas well 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 will be no impacts to the human health and 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 minimal impacts to the dryland and irrigated agriculture activities that are occurring on the State land. The surface lessee will be compensated for the minimal loss of acreage for access road construction.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the industrial, commercial and agriculture 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. The access road construction will provide for the continuation of jobs in the field of natural gas development in Northeastern Montana.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will 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 will have no negative impacts on the local or state tax base. The road access development will provide the State of Montana additional revenues for the School Trust, through the issuance of a Land Use License. There will also be additional revenues for Valley</p>

	<p>County.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the state tax base or revenues under this alternative.</p>
<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>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands for government services. The area of impact will see additional vehicle traffic from the gas company employee who travels on the access road and is responsible for onsite well inspections.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no demand for government services under this alternative.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact locally adopted environmental plans and goals. There are no known environmental plans for the surrounding deeded and federal lands that this project would impact.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the locally adopted environmental plans and goals under this alternative.</p>
<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 within the tract?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the recreational values associated with the state land. The construction of an access road on the State land will have minimal impacts to the recreational upland bird and wildlife hunting associated with this tract.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the recreational activities associated with the State land under this alternative.</p>
<p>21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of the population and housing on this rural area. This project is not associated with housing or population within the area of natural gas field development.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the density and distribution of population and housing under this alternative.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the social structures of the local communities. The project site is located in a rural area that will have no impacts to the lifestyles of the local population.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the local lifestyles under this alternative.</p>

<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the land. The area of impact is not identified as having a cultural uniqueness associated with this type of ecological site.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity.</p>
<p>24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project provides some economic benefit to the local community businesses that supply products to the company that will be constructing the access road.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social or economic circumstances under this alternative.</p>

EA Checklist Prepared By Randy Dirkson Land Use Specialist Date: _____

<p>IV. FINDING</p>	
<p>25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Grant a Land Use License to Fidelity Exploration and Production to construct an access road on State land.</p>
<p>26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:</p>	<p>The construction of an access road will have no significant impacts to the natural resources on the State land.</p>
<p>27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:</p> <p>[] EIS [] More Detailed EA [X] No Further Analysis</p>	

EA Checklist Approved By: R. Hoyt Richards Glasgow Unit Manager
Name Title

/s/ Signature Date: 1/20/11