

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Northern Telephone Easement	Proposed Implementation Date: Summer - 2011
Proponent: Northern Telephone Cooperative, Inc. PO Box 190, Sunburst, MT 59482	
Type and Purpose of Action: Northern Telephone Cooperative Inc. has applied for an easement to install and maintain a buried telecommunications cable (fiber optics) across state land. The cable will cross approximately .25 miles of state land (native rangeland).	
Location: N½NW¼NE¼ , Sec 23, T34N, R2E (along north section line)	County: Toole

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
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	None
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Approve the LUL. No action. Do not approve the LUL.

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, compactible 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?	[N] Soils are suitable for cable installation. Cable will be ripped in to minimize soil disturbances. All disturbed areas will be re-contoured and returned to grazing land. No long term impacts to soil erosion and /or other soil resources are expected.
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?	[N] The proposed action will not affect water quality and quantity.
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?	[N] The proposed action will not impact air quality.
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	[N] Current land use is grazing land – native rangeland. The cable will be ripped in which will minimized impacts to the existing vegetation. All disturbed areas will be recontoured and

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of this proposed action?	reseeded to native vegetation similar to the surrounding plant communities. No long term impacts to the existing vegetation are expected.
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?	[N] No long-term negative affects on existing wildlife species and/or wildlife habitat are expected.
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] No threatened or endangered species are known to exist in this area.
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] A field inspection of the proposed cable route was completed on June 13, 2011 by Erik Eneboe and no archaeological features were identified. A class III Cultural Resource Investigation (Dated April 7, 2011, DNRC Report #2011-3-2) authored by David Ferguson, GCM Services , Inc. was completed for this project. This report indicated that no cultural or paleontological resources were identified. Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archeologist, has received SHPO concurrence on April 12, 2011. Thus, no cultural artifacts and/or cultural resources will be impacted as a result of this project.
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 fiber optics cable will be buried. Not long term changes to the aesthetic character of the land will occur.
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 action. 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] Currently, there are no other studies, plans, or projects associated with the proposed project area.

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
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 fiber optics cable will provide state of the art telecommunications for rural residents in the area. This will positively impact area industry and agricultural activities.
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?	[Y] Local contractors and cooperative employees will be used to install this cable. The proposed action will increase local jobs.

