Montana DNRC Water Resources Division, State Water Projects Bureau
Categorical Exclusion Checklist

PROJECT: St. Mary Canal Drops Geotechnical Drilling and Test Pits DATE: 18 August 2011

NATURE OF ACTION:
DNRC and TD&H will contract with a geotechnical drilling firm to drill 30 hollow stem auger holes along the proposed realignment of the canal to bypass the existing drops. One alternative would eliminate 4 of the 5 existing drops and put all the drop in one location. The more likely alternative would bypass 3 of the existing drop and end up with a two-drop system. After analysis of the samples collected during the drilling phase, locations will be identified for excavated testpits. As many testpits will be excavated as can be done in a 2 or 3-day timeframe. All data will be shared with the Blackfeet Tribe and USBR.

EXCLUSION CATEGORY:
Data Collection

EVALUATION OF CRITERIA FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

(1)	This action or group of actions would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.	No X	Uncertain ____	Yes ____
(2)	This action or group of actions would involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.	No X	Uncertain ____	Yes ____
(3)	This action would have significant adverse effects on public health or safety.	No X	Uncertain ____	Yes ____
(4)	This action would have an adverse effect on unique geographical features such as wetlands, wild or scenic rivers, rivers in the nationwide inventory, refuges, floodplains, or prime or unique farmlands	No X	Uncertain ____	Yes ____
(5)	The action will have highly controversial environmental effects.	No X	Uncertain ____	Yes ____
(6)	The action will have highly uncertain environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risk.	No X	Uncertain ____	Yes ____
(7)	This action will establish a precedent for future actions.	No ___	Uncertain X	Yes ____
(8)	This action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant effects.	No X	Uncertain ____	Yes ____

(9)	This action will affect properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.	No historic properties affected __X__ Historic properties affected _____ A. No adverse affect _____ B. Adverse affect _____
(10)	This action will adversely affect a species listed or proposed to be listed as Endangered or Threatened.	No _X_ Uncertain _____ Yes _____
(11)	This action threatens to violate State, local, or tribal law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.	No _X_ Uncertain _____ Yes _____ Federal,
(12)	This action will affect Indian Trust Assets (ITAs).	No __X__ Uncertain _____ Yes_____

MEPA ACTION RECOMMENDED:

CEC __X__ EA ____ EIS __

ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRUST ASSET COMMITMENTS, EXPLANATION AND/OR REMARKS: None

ACTION REQUESTED BY: John Sanders DATE: 18 Aug 11

MEPA RECOMMENDED: Jessica P Bonnie DATE: 8/18/11

NHPA RECOMMENDED: Patrick J. Rennie DATE: 8/18/2011

Blackfeet THPO Concurrence: Blackfeet THPO DATE: 8/23/2011

DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR APPROVED: T J DATE: 8/29/11