

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Foothills Road Relocation and Reclamation
Proposed Implementation Date:	September 2011
Proponent:	Kalispell DNRC
Location:	Section 34 T28N R19W
County:	Flathead

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Kalispell Unit, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, proposes to build a new road segment and decommission a segment of road in a parcel of state trust lands located in Section 34 Township 28N Range 19W. The parcel is located approximately 15 miles west of Kalispell. The current road segment is approximately 2,600 feet and does not meet the DNRC Best Management Practices for Forestry (BMPs). It is located in a draw bottom and there are drainage issues with the road that cannot be corrected with its current location. The proposed new road is approximately 3,000 feet and will allow for proper drainage so the road will meet the DNRC BMPs.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.

The Bigfork Nordic Club came to the DNRC with concerns about the existing road segment.

DNRC resource specialists and pertinent staff were informed and visited the project area. After a field visit, it was determined that the road did not meet BMPs.

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

Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.

A timber permit will be needed from the DNRC to remove the timber in the road clearing limits.

A 124 permit from MFWP and a 318-Authorization from MDEQ will be needed to install a culvert in one stream and develop a ford on Noisy Creek.

3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Describe alternatives considered and, if applicable, provide brief description of how the alternatives were developed. List alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further analysis and why.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative the present road will not be relocated. There will continue to be water drainage issues that will cause erosion of the road surface and sediment delivery.

Action Alternative: Under this alternative the existing road segment will be decommissioned and a new road segment will be built. The old road will be brought back to contour and have woody debris and grass seed scattered across it. The new road segment will be constructed up the slope and out of the draw bottom.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to soils.

Soils along the proposed road location are not considered as highly erosive. Soils are included in the *Waits* series as silt loams and stony silt loams up to 35 percent. The majority of the proposed route is less than 20 percent sideslopes.

Potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts associated with the road construction include removing approximately 1.5 acres from timber production. Erosion potential would be increased on these acres until vegetation is established. Erosion would be reduced by implementing Best Management Practices such as adequate surface drainage and temporary erosion control measures.

Due to the small size of the project and the implementation of relevant BMPs, the risk of measureable, adverse direct, indirect or cumulative impacts would be very low.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to water resources.

The proposed road would cross an intermittent tributary to Noisy Creek via a corrugated metal pipe. Additionally, the proposal would include a new ford on Noisy Creek while abandoning an existing ford on Noisy Creek.

Noisy Creek is an intermittent stream on DNRC managed lands in section 34 T28N, R19W. The stream dissipates and flows subsurface prior to leaving the section approximately 1,000 feet downstream. Typically, within the DNRC managed section, this stream only flows during the spring snowmelt period.

Direct, indirect and cumulative impacts from implementing the action alternative would include a short-term sediment delivery during construction. This would be minimized by implementing BMPs including working when the streams are dry, installing silt fences to minimize sediment delivery, grass seeding immediately after construction and installing adequate surface drainage. Because the streams do not have surface flow onto other ownerships, no impacts to downstream users would be expected.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced (i.e. particulate matter from road use or harvesting, slash pile burning, prescribed burning, etc)? Identify the Airshed and Impact Zone (if any) according to the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to vegetation.

There will be a potential for noxious weeds to spread due to the disturbance from road building and road decommission. Grass seed will be applied along the decommissioned road and new road construction to help establish native vegetation. New road construction will be monitored to see if weed spraying is needed. There will be trees removed from the clearing limits on the new road construction. The total area of the clearing limits is about 3 acres. Due to the small percent of the existing tree cover that is being affected, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to vegetation are expected if the action alternative is selected.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.

A DNRC wildlife biologist was consulted and no direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

Because the work would be completed under dry conditions, impacts to potential fish habitat would be limited to minor turbidity increases during the following spring runoff.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The project area is in the Noisy/Red Owl grizzly bear subunit of the North Continental Divide Ecosystem, which is largely spring and fall grizzly bear habitat. Presently open roads, private residences, and general lack of large secure areas have decreased grizzly bear habitat quality in the vicinity. The new road construction would occur on a closed road so there will be no increase in open road density. Visual screening, where present, would be maintained along the new road construction. Road building and decommissioning activities would take place outside of the spring period. Given the proximity to the open road, human residences, and small project area, there will be negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effect to grizzly bears with the proposed project.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

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.

Foothills Timber Sale EIS

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES</i> potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.• Explain <i>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS</i> 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 direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to the employment market.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

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.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

The Bigfork Nordic Club currently has a land use license with the DNRC to use the area for cross country skiing. The project will create better recreational opportunities by increasing the standard of the road that is used for cross country skiing.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to population and housing.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would be expected under either alternative.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Tyrell Colombo	Date: 08-24-2011
	Title: Management Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

In the development of this EA two alternatives were considered, Action and No Action. These two alternatives were evaluated on their ability to: Improve forestry BMP's (Best Management Practices) by replacing a poorly located road segment with a new segment that can meet BMP's and improve water quality.

After a thorough review of the EA, project file, public correspondence, Department policies, standards, guidelines, I have selected the action alternative for implementation on this project.

I have selected the Action Alternative for implementation with the understanding that resource mitigation measures identified in the Environmental Assessment will be applied to meet the intended protection.

The Action Alternative has been selected for the following reasons:

- 1) The Action Alternative meets the Purpose of Action and the specific project objectives of the EA.
- 2) The Action Alternative includes the necessary mitigations and a consensus of professional opinion on limits of acceptable environmental impact.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I find that none of the project impacts are regarded as severe, enduring, geographically widespread, or frequent. Further, I find that the quantity and quality of the natural resources, including any that may be considered unique or fragile, will not be adversely affected to a significant degree. I find no precedent for future actions that would cause significant impacts, and I find no conflict with local, State, or Federal laws, requirements, or formal plans. In summary, I find that adverse impacts will be avoided, controlled, or mitigated by the design of the project to an extent that they are not significant.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

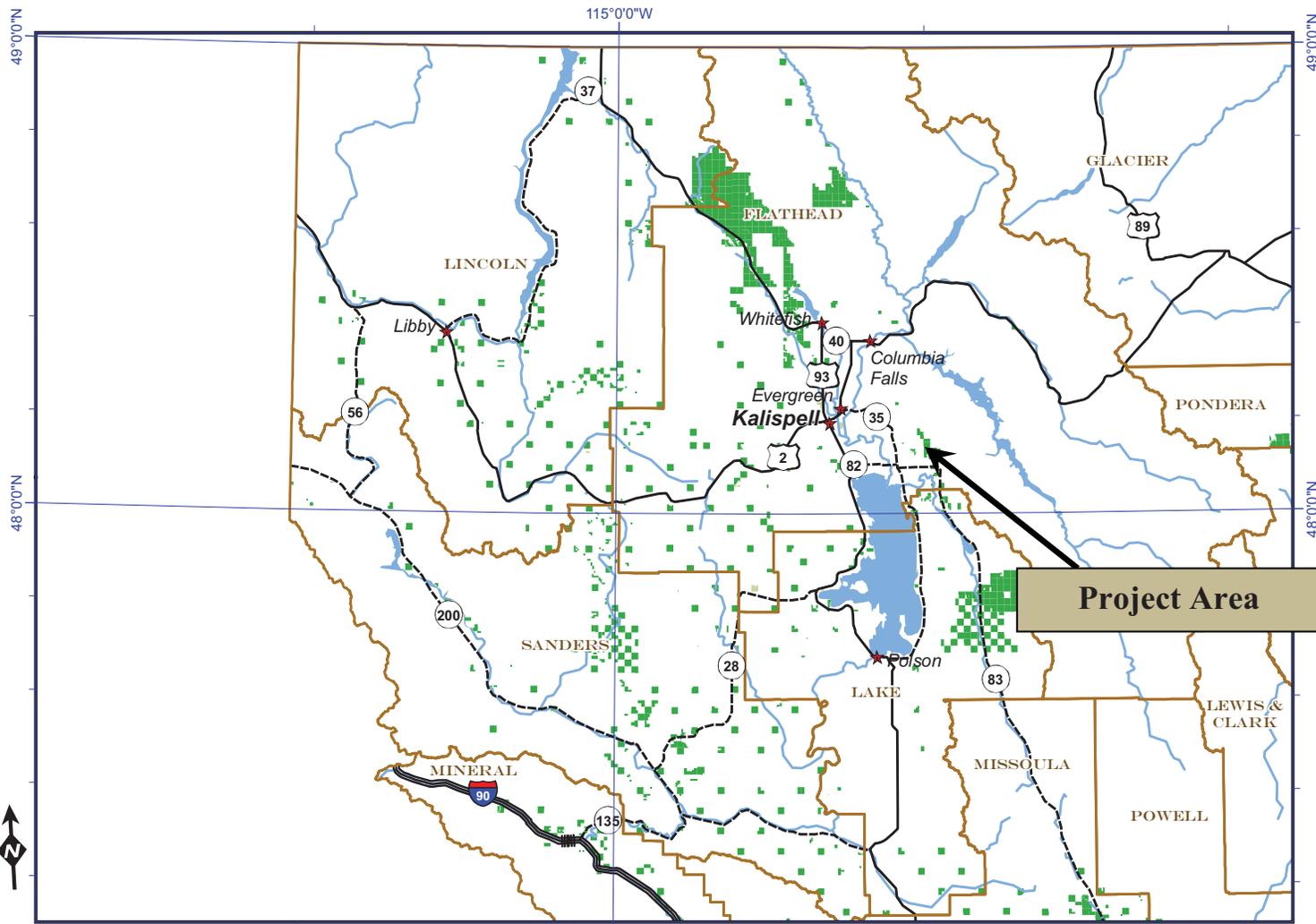
EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Pete Seigmund
	Title: Forest Management Supervisor
Signature: <i>Pete Seigmund</i>	Date: 09/07/2011

Vicinity Map

Foothills Road Relocation and Reclamation

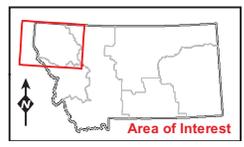
Attachment A, Page 1

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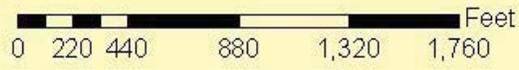


	Interstate Highway		Rivers		Lakes
	U.S. Route		City		DNRC managed for timber
	State Highway		County		DNRC other

21 February 2007
 Montana DNRC
 Technical Services Section/dr



Foothills Road Relocation and Reclamation



Legend

- New Road Location
- County Roads
- Existing Road
- State Trust Land

