

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Grosvold Log Hauling Fox Gulch Road
Proposed Implementation Date:	June, 2012
Proponent:	John Grosvold
Location:	Sections 26, 27, & 28, Township 4 South – Range 15W
County:	Beaverhead

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proposed action is the issuance of a Land Use License for the use of approximately 2.5 miles of existing road on state land. The purpose of the road use is to facilitate access to private land to the east of the State sections for timber harvesting and log hauling of harvested timber. An estimated 140 MBF will be harvested and hauled over the road.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

The project is already in progress. The proponent purchased the MT DNRC Fox Trot Timber Permit in the S1/2S1/2 Section 26, Township 4 South, and Range 15 West. The timber permit was purchased in the fall of 2011 and harvest activities were suspended in the winter months due to the steepness of the ground where the harvest is occurring. A thorough scoping process occurred prior to the sale of Fox Trot Timber Permit. There weren't any issues that were identified during the scoping process for the Fox Trot Timber Permit. The following parties were contacted for that permit;

Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Regional Supervisor, P. Flowers

Dick Hirschy Cattle, Inc.

Forty Bar Ranch, Inc./Russel Peterson (Lessee)

Jack Hirschy Livestock, Inc.

Other contacts:

DNRC, Archaeologist, P. Rennie

FWP, Wildlife Biologist, C. Fager

Montana Natural Heritage Program

Montana Fisheries Information System

Proponent purchased the neighbors timber who is also the lessee, Russell Peterson of the Forty Bar Ranch. DNRC discovered that proponent was hauling private timber over state lands without a permit in late spring of 2012. Mr. Grosvold was informed of his error and has applied for a land use license to finish the hauling of logs off of private land.

This proposal by the proponent would use the same roads that are currently being used for the Fox Trot Timber Permit where no environmental impacts were identified during that environmental scoping process. Because the majority of logs from the Forty Bar Ranch have already been hauled no additional scoping for this proposal has occurred. This EA is tiered off of the Fox Trot Timber Permit which is made a part of this EA.

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

NONE

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No Action Alternative: A Land Use License would not be issued. Current management actions would be maintained. This tract is currently leased for grazing and a timber permit has been sold in Section 26, T4S – R15W.

Action Alternative: The Land Use License would be issued as proposed.

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 any cumulative impacts to soils.

The haul road is located on flat to moderate slopes with a slope range of 5-10%. No unusual or unique geologic features were noted on the proposed haul road. General area is an intermontane basin of valley-fill sediments composed of volcanic debris and debris from rocks of the local mountain ranges. Primary soils within the proposed harvest area are moderate to well bonded, volcanic ash sandstone and siltstone containing secondary interbeds of limestone and marl and lenses of pebble and cobble conglomerate. These soils tend to be poorly consolidated and non-resistant with a moderate erosion hazard. Appropriate erosion control measures would be required on the haul road.

The primary soil concerns associated with timber hauling would be rutting. Soil effects would be minimal and long-term productivity would be maintained. There are no apparent direct and indirect impacts to soils in the proposed project area. No significant impacts or cumulative effects are expected to soil resources.

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 cumulative effects to water resources.

The project area lies within the mid-reaches of Fox Gulch drainage, an intermittent stream located in the Big Hole River drainage. No cold-water fisheries are present within the Fox Gulch watershed and it is not a tributary to any other streams.

Harvest and road levels within the Fox Gulch watershed are well below the levels of forest crown removal that are normally associated with increased water yields. It is unlikely that there are measurable effects on stream flow regimes (water yield, magnitude, and duration of peak flows) due to vegetation manipulation in the Fox Gulch watershed.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to water quality, cold-water fisheries, or other beneficial uses in the Big Hole River are expected to result from the proposed actions.

Due to the size and duration of the proposed project, no impacts are expected to occur to water quality, water yield, watershed conditions, or fisheries in the Fox Gulch watershed.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.

The project includes piling and burning of harvested logging slash on private lands. Localized short duration particulate emissions occur during slash burning. Slash burning is normally conducted in late October through November.

Particulate emissions during this period are regulated by the DEQ and the Cooperative Airshed groups.

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 cumulative effects to vegetation.

No rare plants or cover types have been noted in the project area or on the State tracts. The area along the road is mainly bunch grasses and sage brush.

No noxious weeds have been noted along the road to the proposed project or on the State tracts.

The DNRC requires the washing of equipment, seeding of grass and monitoring of disturbed areas to minimize the potential of noxious weeds being introduced.

No impacts are expected.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

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

A variety of big game, small mammals, raptors and songbirds potentially use this area. Fox Gulch has no cold-water fisheries.

Fox Gulch Drainage lies within the Pioneer Elk Management Unit. Elk security, bull elk vulnerability and potential reductions in hunter opportunity are a primary concern expressed by DFWP in this hunting district. Achieving this goal can be hampered when available cover at the landscape level is reduced appreciably through timber harvest activities, road management, or natural disturbances, such as wildfires.

There are vast amounts of federal lands adjacent to the state and private lands, which have never been harvested and provide excellent hiding cover. Under their current management, these federal lands are not likely to be harvested unless a major natural disturbance occurs, such as wildfire or insect and disease.

Although security cover is limited in the proposed project area, no significant impacts to wildlife are anticipated due to the size of the proposed project. The proposed project would not affect the present public access, which presently provides low human levels.

Due to the size and duration of the proposed project, no impacts are expected to wildlife and fisheries habitats.

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 cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

No cold-water fisheries are present within the Fox Gulch watershed and it is not tributary to any other streams.

No threatened or endangered species have been documented within the proposed project area. Preferred habitat for grizzly bear, lynx and bald eagles is not present within the proposal area. Occasional use of the area from these species could potentially occur but is generally considered outside of their normal occupied habitat.

The proposed project falls within the Central Idaho Nonessential Experimental Area for gray wolves. The closest pack in the vicinity of the project area is the Battlefield pack, approximately 16 air miles to the northwest. Individuals from these packs or transients from other packs could occasionally use portions of the project area; however, due to the size, nature and location of the proposed project, activities associated with this proposal are not expected to affect wolves or recovery efforts.

A Sage Grouse lek has been documented approximately one-mile northwest of the proposed haul road. Any effects to habitat or disturbance-related effects would be expected to be minimal, and preferred sagebrush habitat would not be appreciably altered. Impacts to sage grouse are not anticipated.

No other sensitive species/species of special concern have been documented or observed within the proposed project area.

Due to the size and duration of the proposed project, no impacts are expected to occur to any endangered, threatened or sensitive species.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

There are no cultural resource concerns within the proposed project area. No additional archaeological investigative work is recommended prior to road use.

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 cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The proposed use is confined to an existing road that receives minimal use from the Peterson Ranch and the occasional hunter during the big game hunting season. Due to the size and duration of this proposal there isn't any long term or cumulative impacts to aesthetics anticipated from this proposal.

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 cumulative effects to environmental resources.

NONE

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.

A range evaluation was conducted in September 1997.

No cumulative impacts are expected.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *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.

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

NONE

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

NONE

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

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

People are currently employed in the wood products industry. Due to the relatively small size of the timber sale program, there would be no measurable cumulative impact from this proposed action on employment.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

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

People are currently paying taxes from the wood products industry in the region. Due to the relatively small size of the timber sale program, there would be no measurable cumulative impact from this proposed action on tax revenues.

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 cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.

There would be no measurable cumulative impacts related to demand for government services due to the small size of this proposal, the short-term impacts to traffic and the small possibility of a few people temporarily relocating to the area.

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.

NONE

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 cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

Persons possessing a valid state lands recreational use license or FWP conservation license may conduct recreational activities on the tract. The proposed project would not affect the existing access for the general public.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

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

There would be no measurable cumulative impacts related to population and housing due to the relatively small size of the timber sale on private lands and the use of the road on state lands, and the fact that people are already employed in this occupation in the region.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

NONE

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

NONE

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

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Tim Egan	Date: 6/20/2012
	Title: Dillon Unit Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Issue Land use License authorizing log hauling.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

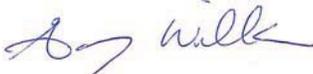
Significant impacts are not anticipated as a result of the proposed activity. The road is existing, suitable for log hauling purposes and has been used for the proposed action in the past without issue.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Garry Williams
	Title: Area manager, Central land Office
Signature: 	Date: 6/21/2012

**John Grosvold Land Use License
Sections 26, 27, & 28, T4S - R 15W, Beaverhead County**

