CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Easement for Stillwater Land Company
Proposed Implementation Date:	March, 2013
Proponent:	Stillwater Land Company Road Users Association, Inc.
Location:	State land in the NW ¼ NW ¼ , Section 28, Township 32 North, Range 23 West
County:	Flathead

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proposed project would grant additional Right-of-Way width on an easement for private access on an existing road that would service the ten (10) current parcels of land owned by members of the Stillwater Land Company Road Users Association, Inc. (see attached map). An easement for additional rights would provide revenue for the MSU 2nd Grant Trust.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

A public scoping letter (with attached map) that described the proposal was sent to interested groups and adjacent landowners on January 3, 2013. Comments on the proposal were requested; the comment period was open through January 18, 2013. Three individuals contacted the Montana Department of Resources and Conservation (DNRC) with questions related to the proposed easement. One concern involving speed control was identified.

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

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks has jurisdiction over the management of wildlife in the project area.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

No-Action Alternative

An easement for additional rights would not be granted and revenue would not be generated for the MSU 2nd grant trust in the proposed project area at this time. Ongoing timber management, general recreational use, fire suppression, noxious-weed control, additional requests for permits, and other ongoing management requests may occur.

This alternative can be used as a baseline for comparing the effects that the Action Alternative would have on the environment. The No-Action Alternative is considered a possible alternative for selection.

Action Alternative

Stillwater Land Company Road Users Association, Inc. proposes to expand the rights of the existing easement across state land that accesses their property. The current easement is for a 20' right-of-way and services some of their property on the east side of the Stillwater River. The proposed expanded easement would provide a 60' Right-of-Way and service their adjoining properties on both sides of the Stillwater River. The easement across State property is approximately 399 feet in length and is located in the NW ¼ NW ¼, Section 28, Township 32 North, Range 23 West (see attached map).

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.

Soil in the proposed project area is Aquepts (stream bottoms). These soils are underlain by stratified alluvial deposits of sand, silt and gravel. In relation to road management, wetness is a limitation affecting the location and construction of roads. Providing suitable subgrade material helps to prevent the damage caused by wetness and low strength. The easement would require that the DNRC approve any construction and, if needed, any fill material that would be necessary.

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.

Stillwater River flows just west of the project area. Water quality would not be affected by the implementation of the Action Alternative.

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.

Air quality would not be affected by the implementation of the Action 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 cumulative effects to vegetation.

Approximately 1/3 of an acre of forested vegetation could be affected by the implementation of the Action Alternative, which would expand the Right-of-Way width from 20 feet to 60 feet over a length of 399 feet. The forest stand is predominantly lodgepole pine and Englemann spruce.

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.

None would likely be affected.

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.

The project lies in the Olney urban interface and the zone of influence of U.S. Highway 93; therefore, no effects would be expected.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

No known historical features are associated with this land. Should historical archeological or cultural features be discovered, work in that area would be suspended until the site could be properly evaluated.

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 access road for this project is U.S. Highway 93. The project would be visible to anyone traveling this area on the highway.

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 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.

This project lies within the project area of the Highway 93 Corridor Timber Sale; however, negligible cumulative effects are likely to result from the proposed action.

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.

A "slow traffic" sign would be posted as you enter state land from U.S. Highway 93.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

None would be expected.

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.

None would be expected.

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.

Due to the relatively small size of the proposal, no measurable cumulative impacts on tax revenues would be expected from this proposed action.

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

None 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.

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.

The primary recreational uses in the area are hunting and fishing. No effects are expected under either alternative.

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.

None would be expected under either alternative.

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

If an easement were granted, the estimated return to the trust would be approximately $2,960.00. This amount is based by expanding the existing Right of Way width an additional 40 feet by 399 feet in length for a total acreage of 0.37 and then multiplying the acreage to the current market rate of $8,000.00 per acre.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	**Name:**	Nicole Stickney	**Date:**	January 23, 2013
	Title:	Special Uses Forester		

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

I select the Action Alternative. This action supports DNRC's mission to administer Trust Lands to produce the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return by facilitating fair compensation to the State for access on an existing road.

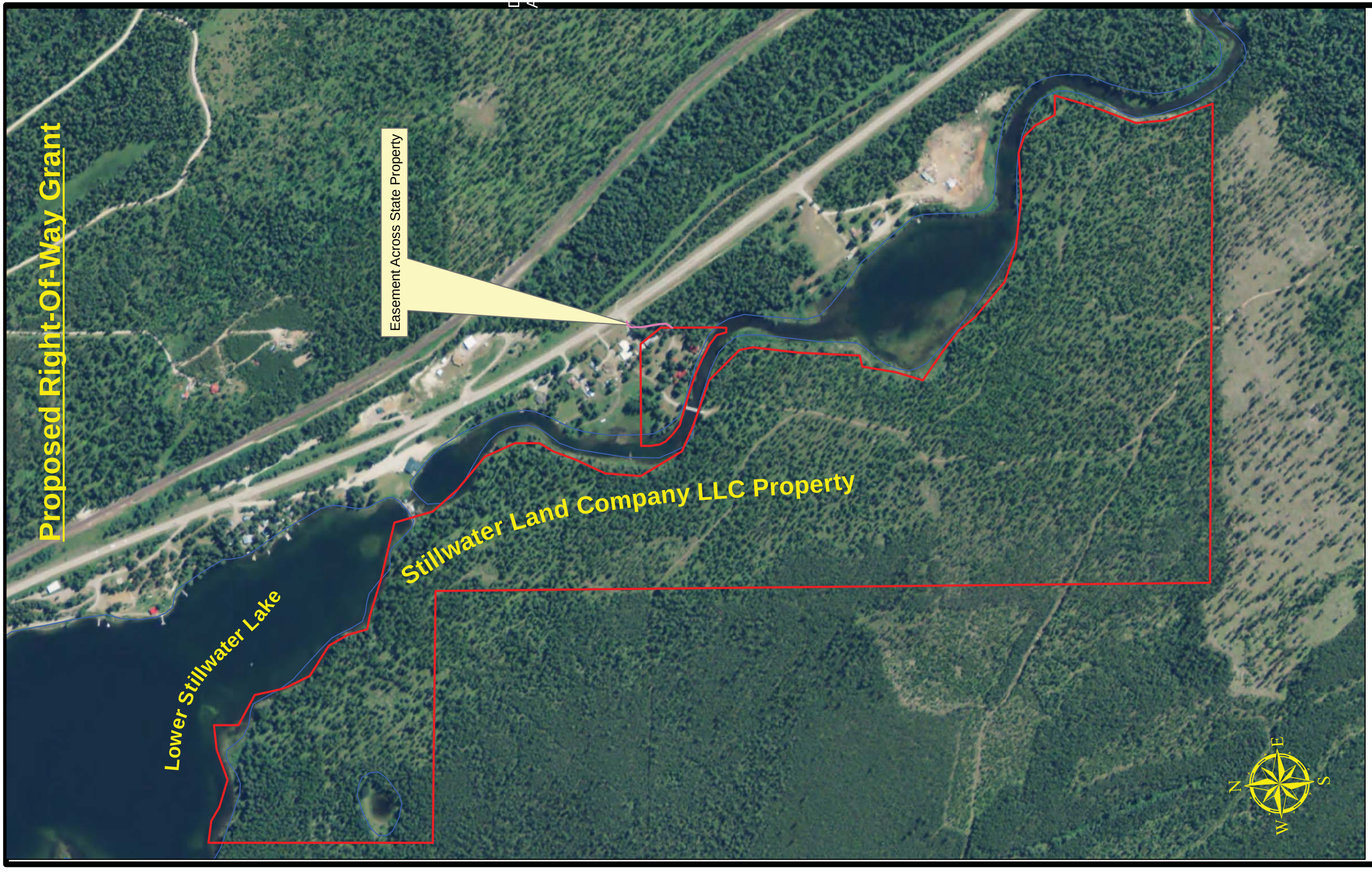
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

I find that implementing the Action Alternative will not have significant impacts on the human environment.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	X	No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Brian Manning		
	Title:	Stillwater Unit Manager		
Signature:	/s/ Brian Manning		**Date**:	Feb. 07, 2013


Proposed Right-Of-Way Grant
Easement Across State Property
Stillwater Land Company LLC Property
Lower Stillwater Lake
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