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D.N.P.C.

DNRC - Trust Land Management Division
CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

John Smith
Plains Unit

Project Name:	WEEKSVILLE - SMILEY RECIPROCAL ROAD USE	RECEIVED
Proposed Implementation Date:	Spring, 2004	
Proponent:	Plains Unit, MT DNRC	MAR 1 6 2004
Location:	Section 36, T21N R27W (Weeksville) & Sections 3 and 4, T21N R26W (Smiley)	
County:	Sanders	LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OFFICE

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Montana DNRC, Plains Unit, is proposing (at the request of adjacent landowner[s]) a reciprocal access agreement. This agreement would allow non-commercial access the private property in the north 1/2 and the north 1/2 of the south 1/2 of section 35, T21N R27W. Access would be on one existing road plus an estimated 1200' of new road in section 36, T21N R27W. In exchange the State of Montana would receive use of 1/2 mile of existing road crossing private property in sections 3 and 4, T21N R27W. This granted road use (for all legal purposes) would connect with roads in the Smiley Creek area covered in an existing agreement between DNRC and Plum Creek Timber Company.

New construction to complete this exchange would be completed by the private property owner(s) in section 35. Road would be constructed to DNRC specifications and construction supervised by DNRC personnel. Maintenance of the road crossing section 36 would be to DNRC determined specification and be the responsibility of the private landowner(s). All required gates and gate maintenance on section 36 would be the responsibility of the private landowner(s). Any and all financial costs associated with this exchange will be borne by the private landowner(s). Appraisal of each road will be conducted and differences in cost will be borne by the private landowner(s).

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

No significant issues were identified during public scoping. Scoping letters were mailed to all adjacent landowners on October 7, 2003. An announcement was published in the Valley Press October 15, 2003. Three responses were received regarding clarification of the location. One comment was received voicing concern over special privileges on trust land that may come as a result of this action. After a telephone conversation this party was satisfied that DNRC was doing all possible to eliminate this possibility.

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

None

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

- 1 - Action: Enter into this agreement
- 2 - No Action: Do not enter into this agreement

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.

None

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.

None

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.

None

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.

None

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.

See attached memo concerning wildlife use in the project area. All measures recommended by the reviewing biologist will be included in the final agreement.

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.

See attached memo concerning possible occurrences of endangered species in the project area. All measures recommended by the reviewing biologist will be included in the final agreement. No other fragile or limited resources have been identified in the project area.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

The project area has been reviewed by a DNRC archaeologist and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. No historic or archaeological sites have been identified or located within the project area.

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.

No change to aesthetics would occur as a result of this action.

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.

None

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i> • <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i> • <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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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.

Full legal access to State land in the Smiley Creek drainage may result in increased management activity in this area.

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

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.

Proposed development (1 residential unit) in the Weeksville area may result in increased property tax revenue.

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

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.

Non-motorized recreation would continue as it now occurs.

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

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?

No change

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.

Return to the Trust would be minimal. The involved roads would be appraised and any cost differential would be paid to the state by the private landowner(s). Length of the included roads and associated right of ways indicate costs that would favor DNRC. Approximately 4 MBF of timber from the new construction right of way would be sold by DNRC at current market value. Legal access into Smiley Creek may allow more efficient management of trust land in this area, creating the possibility for increased resource value. No other economic or social effects are likely to occur as a result of this action.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Larry Ballantyne	Date: November 4, 2003
	Title: Resource Program Manager, Plains Unit, MT DNRC	

V. FINDING**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Action

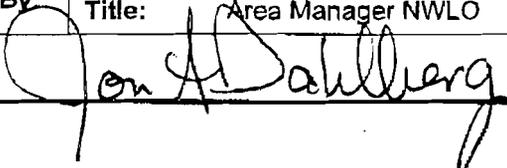
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS: None

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Jon Dahlberg
	Title: Area Manager NWLO
Signature: 	Date: November 26, 2003