

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

RECEIVED

<p>Project Name: Land Breaking of crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover hayland.</p>	<p>Proposed Implementation Date: April 29, 2004 MAY 24 2004</p>
<p>Proponent: Matthew B. Miller, HCR 272, Box 3065, Glasgow, MT 59230</p>	
<p>Type and Purpose of Action: Surface lessee, Matthew B. Miller has contacted the Glasgow Unit Office of the DNRC and requested permission to break approximately 376.8 acres of crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover hayland for the purpose of growing small grain crops. The acreage would be reclassified from dryland hay to dryland agriculture.</p>	
<p>Location: W2SE4, E2SW4, Sec. 24 Twp. 29N Rge. 39E</p>	<p>County: Valley</p>

LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OFFICE

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

<p>1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.</p>	<p>Matthew B. Miller the surface lessee has made a written application to break approximately 376.8 acres (more or less) of crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover hayland on State land Lease No. 7284. The application was sent to the DNRC Glasgow Unit Office for review and evaluation. The application will be reviewed per DNRC land breaking criteria for all lands other than native rangeland. The Glasgow Unit Office contacted the following government agencies and special interest groups for their comments concerning the land breaking request. Montana Fish Wildlife &amp; Parks, US Fish &amp; Wildlife Service, Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, and Nature Conservancy. There were no responses from the various groups contacted.</p>
<p>2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:</p>	<p>The other government agencies that may have jurisdiction for this project are the USDA Farm Service Agency and USDA Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Service.</p>
<p>3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: Deny permission to the surface lessee to break 376.8 acres of crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover hayland for small grain crops.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Grant permission to the surface lessee to break 376.8 acres of crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover hayland for small grain crops.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
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II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: The soils on the State land will remain the same and continue to produce crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover vegetation. The area will continue to produce vegetation for dryland hay production.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of project will impact the soils that are currently producing crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover vegetation. The soils will be broken up for the purpose of producing dryland small grain crops. The soil types that will be broken for the dryland agriculture are: Phillips-Scobey complex, Harlem-clay and Thoeny Phillips complex. The Phillips-Scobey complex soil type is suitable soil for dryland agriculture. This soil type has medium to moderate wind and water erosion capabilities. The Harlem-clay soil type is suitable soil for dryland agriculture. This soil type has moderate wind and water erosion hazards. The Thoeny-Phillips complex soil type is suitable for dryland agriculture. This soil type has medium to moderate wind and water erosion. The on site inspection of these soil types showed no alkaline present in the topsoil profile. The 376.8 acres requested for breaking will maintain current soil qualities and soil stability under dryland agriculture management.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative annual precipitation will be utilized by the tame grass/yellow sweet clover plant community. There will be no impacts to water quality, quantity and distribution.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will allow the surface lessee to expand his dryland agriculture small grain production. The land breaking for small grain crops will not use water resources, other than the water associated with the topsoil.</p>
<p>6. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: No impacts will occur to air quality under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The breaking of the hayland for dryland agriculture purposes will have no impacts to the air quality of the State land.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative the current tame grass/yellow sweet clover plant community will remain intact.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The breaking of the crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover hayland will permanently destroy the hayland vegetation on the project area. The crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover area requested for breaking contains no known rare plant species. The project area will produce small grain crop vegetative type communities.</p>
<p>8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: The habitat types associated with a tame grass/yellow sweet clover plant community will remain intact.</p> <p>Action Alternative: This type of activity will disturb the habitat types on the State land. The area of impact is crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover hayland. There will be minimal impacts to the wildlife and upland bird</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
	resources associated with the State land.
9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Sensitive Species or Species of special concern?	<p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no change to the current environmental resources.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project area contains no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources. The project area consists of an upland bench area, with crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover vegetation.</p>
10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	<p>No Action Alternative: The project area has no known historical or archaeological sites and existing status would remain.</p> <p>Action Alternative: There are no known historical or archaeological sites on the project area that will be impacted. DNRC Archaeologist, Patrick Rennie has given approval for the land breaking project.</p>
11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	<p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts that would occur to the aesthetic values associated with the State land under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project site is located in a rural area and is no visible to the general public. The project will have no impacts to the aesthetic values associated with the State land involved with this project.</p>
12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY: Will the project use resources that are limited in the area? Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	<p>No Action Alternative: There will be no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy occurring under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p>
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	<p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no changes to existing plans, studies or projects that DNRC may have occurring on the State land.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The breaking of crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clover hayland will not impact other projects or plans that DNRC may have occurring on this tract of State land.</p>

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	<p>No Action Alternative: No human health or safety risks would occur under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The breaking of crested wheatgrass/alfalfa hayland for small grain production has minimal human health or safety risks.</p>
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	<p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no changes to current agriculture activities.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will enhance the</p>

	<p>surface lessee's ability to produce small grain crops on his State land lease. The production of small grain crops will also enhance the revenue generated for the School Trust.</p>
<p>16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to quantity and distribution of employment.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the quantity and distribution of employment.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: No local and state tax base and tax revenues would be impacted under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the local or state tax base.</p>
<p>18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no demands for government services.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands for government services.</p>
<p>19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</p> <p>No Action Alternative; No impacts would occur to locally adopted environmental plans or goals under this alternative.</p>
<p>20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: No impacts would occur to access and quality or recreation associated with the State land under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project area has minimal recreational values (upland bird hunting) in its current status. The land breaking project will have minimal impacts to the recreational values associated with the state land.</p>
<p>21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: No impacts will occur to density and distribution of population and housing under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of the population and housing on this rural area.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative; No impacts will occur to native or traditional lifestyles or communities under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the social structures of the local communities.</p>
<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: No impacts will occur to the cultural uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.</p> <p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the State land.</p>
<p>24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</p>	<p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no social or economic impacts that would occur</p> <p>Action Alternative: The cumulative affects or this project provides economic benefit to the surface lessee and DNRC. The dryland agriculture acreage on</p>

	the State land will increase lessee's annual revenue from his State land lease holdings. The DNRC will see additional revenue generated from this tract of State land for the School Trust. The revenue will exceed the current hayland rental received on the 376.8 acres.
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EA Checklist Prepared By: Randy Dirkson Land Use Specialist Date: April 30, 2004  
 Randy Dirkson Land Use Specialist

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	<p>No Action Alternative: This alternative was no selected by DNRC Glasgow Unit Office personnel.</p> <p>Action Alternative: Grant written permission to surface lessee Matthew B. Miller to break 376.8 acres of crested wheatgrass/pubescent wheatgrass and yellow sweet clove hayland located on State land.</p>
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	<p>Action Alternative: The project will enhance the natural resources capabilities to produce dryland small grain crops on the State land and increase revenue for the School Trust.</p>
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis: <input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

EA Checklist Approved By:

Name  
R. Hoyt R. Adams  
 Signature

Title

Date: 5/14/04