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DNRC - Trust Land Management Division JUN 29 2004

D.N.R.C.

DSL-252

# CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Gravity Survey

Proposed Implementation Date: June 24, 2004, 2004

Proponent: Athena Energy LLC, 2100 Harrison Avenue, Suite C, Butte, MT 59701

Type and Purpose of Action: The applicant proposes to conduct a Gravity Survey on State land in Phillips County under Land Use License No. 400-04...

Location: All, Sec. 36 Twp. 34N Rge. 32E, E2SW4, W2SE4, Sec. 7, All, Sec. 16, SE4, SE4SW4, SE4NE4, Sec. 17, NE4 Sec. 18, W2NW4, SE4NW4, NE4SW4, Sec. 20, NW4NW4, Sec. 21, All, Sec. 36, Twp. 34N Rge. 33E, All, Sec. 36 Twp. 35N 32E, All, Sec. 36 Twp. 35N Rge. 33E

County: Phillips

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LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OFFICE

## I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Athena Energy LLC contacted the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, contacted the Glasgow Unit Office to complete the Environmental Assessment process for a Land Use License. Athena Energy LLC has applied for a permit under a Land Use License to conduct a gravity survey operation on State land. Athena Energy LLC has sent maps to the Glasgow Unit Office showing project location.

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

The other agencies that would have jurisdiction for this type of project would be the Montana Board of Oil and Gas.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Action Alternative: Grant a Land Use License to the applicant to conduct a gravity survey project on State land.  
  
No Action Alternative: Deny a Land Use License to the applicant to conduct a gravity survey project on State land.

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

### RESOURCE

### POTENTIAL IMPACTS

4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compatible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?

Action Alternative: This type of project will alter the surface soils on the state land. The surface soils will retain the same capabilities of producing native vegetation upon completion of activities.

No Action Alternative: Under this type of action, no impacts would occur on the surface soils.

5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are

Action Alternative: This type of project on State

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<p>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>land will not impact the water quality, quantity and distribution.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this type of action, no impacts would occur on water quality, quantity and distribution.</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>Action Alternative: This type of project on the State land will not have impacts to the air quality.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this type of alternative there would be no impacts to air quality.</p>
<p>7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The native vegetation on the project area will not be destroyed with this type of activity.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no impacts to native vegetation or small grain crops.</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>Action Alternative: The state land contains habitat types for wildlife and upland birds. The project will be short term and there will be minimal impacts to the habitat types.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no impacts to the habitat types.</p>
<p>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>	<p>Action Alternative: The area of impact contains no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no impacts to the State land environmental resources.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The state land contains stone circles on Sec. 7, Sec. 18, Sec. 20 Twp. 34N Rge. 33E. This type of project will not impact the stone circles. Attempts will be made to avoid these areas.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative no project would occur on the State land.</p>
<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>	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on State land will not impact the aesthetics of the state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no impacts on the State land.</p>
<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>	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on State land will place no demands on the environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p>
<p>13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on State land will not impact other studies, plans or projects that DNRC may have in place on the state land.</p>

## II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

No Action Alternative: This alternative would have no impacts to other environmental documents pertinent to the State land.

## III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
<p>14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: This type of project on State land has minimal human health and safety risks. The risks are understood by the employer and employee as occupational hazards.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: This type of alternative will have no impacts to human health and safety.</p>
<p>15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have minimal impacts to the current agriculture activities that are occurring on the State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this type of alternative there would be no impacts to agriculture activities on the State land.</p>
<p>16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the quality and quantity and distribution of employment.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no impacts to 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>Action Alternative: The project will have no impacts on the local and state tax base and tax revenues.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this type of alternative there will be no impacts to the local and state tax base and tax revenues.</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>Action Alternative: The project will place no demands for government services.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there will be no impacts for the demand 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: Under this alternative there would be no impacts on locally adopted environmental plans and goals.</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>Action Alternative: The area of impact has recreational values such as hunting antelope and upland birds. The project is short term and there will be no impacts to the recreational values associated with the State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Under this type of alternative there would be no impacts to the recreational values</p>

	associated with the State land.
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	Action Alternative: The project will not impact the density and distribution of population and housing.  No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no impacts to density and distribution of population and housing.
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	Action Alternative: The project will not disrupt the traditional lifestyles of the local community.  No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no disruption of native or traditional lifestyles of the local communities.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	Action Alternative: The project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the area.  No action Alternative; Under this alternative there would be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the area.
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	Action Alternative: The project may provide benefits to the local community through supplying petroleum, food products, lodging, etc., as well as other products to the applicant.  No Action Alternative: Under this alternative there would be no impacts to the social and economic circumstance of the local communities.

EA Checklist Prepared By: Randy Dirkson Land Use Specialist Date: 6-24-2004  
Randy Dirkson Land Use Specialist

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	Action Alternative: Grant Athena Energy LLC to conduct a gravity survey project on State land.
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	The project will have minimal impacts to the state land natural resources.
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 \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_  
R. Hays Richards Signature Date: 6-24-04