

DS-252{PRIVATE }

{PRIVATE } CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Land Use License #3209	Proposed Implementation Date: September 15, 2004
Proponent: Riverside Contracting, Inc., 5571 Alloy South, Missoula, MT 59808 Phone: (406) 721-9267	
Type and Purpose of Action: Riverside Contracting, Inc. has applied for a land use license from the Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on state land. The purpose for stockpiling gravel and staging heavy equipment on state land is for a road construction project that is located approximately 26 miles north of Havre, MT on the St. Joe Road, also known as State Hwy. 233. The size of the proposed disturbance is approximately 3.7 acres that is located directly off the road in which the construction project will be taking place.	
Location: NW 1 / 4 NW 1 / 4 NW 1 / 4 , Sec. 1, T36N, R15E	County: Hill County, Montana

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{PRIVATE } PROJECT DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL

	POLICY OFFICE
1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	The Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation/ Trust Land Management Division (DNRC/TLMD) has been petitioned by Riverside Contracting, Inc. to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on state land for a road construction project. Riverside Contracting, Inc. has contacted the state's surface lessee, Mary D. Pleskac to notify her of the proposed project. Damages are anticipated and arrangements have been made for compensation. The Montana Department of Transportation applied for a right-of-way easement from the DNRC for this road construction project and has received a road right-of-way for this project.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	The MT DNRC/TLMD is the only governmental agency with jurisdiction for this type of project on State School Trust lands. The Montana Department of Transportation applied for a right-of-way easement from the DNRC for this road construction project and has received a road right-of-way for this project.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	Action Alternative: Riverside Contracting, Inc. is proposing to use a tract of state land to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment for a road construction project on State Hwy. 233. The Montana DNRC will issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land for a road construction project north of Havre, Montana. No Action Alternative: Riverside Contracting, Inc. will not be able to use this tract of state land to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment for a road construction project north of Havre, Montana. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.

{PRIVATE }IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactible or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geological features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The soils in the area of the proposed disturbance are mostly silty loams. These soils are suitable for this type of activity. The topography in this area consists of gently rolling plains. There are no unusual geological features present in the area of the proposed disturbance. The soils may become slightly compacted from the heavy equipment and stockpiled gravel. All disturbed areas will be reshaped, resloped, and reseeded. The proponent will be required to reclaim the disturbed site with native grasses after the road construction project is completed.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The soils on this tract of state land will not be disturbed. There will be no need for a reclamation plan for this project. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</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>Action Alternative: Riverside Contracting, Inc. will not impact the surface or ground water resources that exist in this area. There is no potential to contaminate drinking water. This project will not violate any ambient water quality standards. The water quality will not be degraded in this area with this type of project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no adverse ecological impacts on the water quality, quantity, and distribution on this tract of state land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</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: Traffic and heavy equipment will produce a fair amount of dust particulates in this area, throughout the entire time it takes to complete the road construction on State Highway 233. However, no pollutants will be produced from this project. There are no air quality regulations or zones for this project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The air quality will not be altered on this tract of state land. No dust particulates will be produced by the road construction activity in this area. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>

{PRIVATE } IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?

The vegetative communities found within this area include the following plants: western wheatgrass (*Agropyron smithii*), needle-and-thread (*Stipa comata*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), green needlegrass (*Stipa viridula*), sedges (*Carex spp.*), sandberg bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), cudweed sagewort (*Artemisia ludoviciana*), fringed sagewort (*Artemisia frigida*), dense clubmoss (*Selaginella densa*), and silver sagebrush (*Artemisia cana*).

Action Alternative: The total area of disturbance on the grazing land will be approximately 3.7 acres. There are no rare plants or cover types present in the area of the proposed disturbance. The proponent will be required to reclaim the area of disturbance with a mixture of native grasses and yellow sweetclover. Reclamation efforts will ensure that the vegetative community will be enhanced after the project is completed. The reclamation plan will provide erosion protection, support for the existing habitat type, and an increase in the overall forage production on this tract of state land in the future.

No Action Alternative: The vegetative communities on this tract of state land will not be altered. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?

Action Alternative: Wildlife habitat will not be significantly impacted with the proposed action. Road construction may temporarily displace some wildlife species found in this area. Wildlife species will not be permanently relocated with this type of activity. The area of the proposed disturbance is small in scope and reclamation efforts will ensure that wildlife habitat will be restored to its original status.

No Action Alternative: The terrestrial and avian life and their associated habitats will not be disturbed on this tract of state land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.

<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 proposed action is not expected to cause adverse ecological impacts on threatened or endangered species. There is no confirmed use of threatened or endangered species using this area, but the potential of occasional use does exist. There are no species of special concern, nor are there any sensitive habitat types associated with the proposed project area. There are no wetlands located in the immediate area of disturbance. Reclamation efforts will ensure that the area of disturbance is reseeded to a mixture of native grasses and yellow sweetclover.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The unique, endangered, fragile, and/or limited environmental resources that exist on this tract of state land will not be disturbed. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: No historical or archaeological sites were observed during the inspection that was conducted on this tract of land. No surface features or cultural artifacts were discovered during the cultural review for the proposed project. The proposed project area does not contain any known cultural resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There are no known historical or archaeological resources present on this tract of state grazing land. Unknown historical and archaeological resources will not be disturbed. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>
<p>11. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographical feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed action will lower the aesthetic value of the state land temporarily. The proposed project will produce some excessive noise during the construction phase of this project. Traffic will be substantial in this area until the project is completed. However, the area will be reclaimed and the aesthetic value will be returned to normal on this tract of state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The aesthetics will remain the same on this tract of grazing land. This area is used primarily for grazing land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>

<p>12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENGERGY: 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: The proposed project will demand the environmental resource of land to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment for the road construction project. The project will not use resources that are limited in this area. There are no other known activities in this area that will affect this project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no additional demands on the environmental resources of land, water, air, and/or energy on this tract of state land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>
<p>13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There are no other environmental documents pertinent to this area for this project. The Montana DNRC will continue to administer all surface and subsurface activities on this tract of state land. Staff from the Montana DNRC will continue to evaluate grazing management practices and set stocking rates on this tract of state land every ten years in accordance with Montana State Statute.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There are no other environmental documents pertinent to this area for this project. The MT DNRC/TLMD will continue to manage the State of Montana's trust land resources to produce revenues for the trust beneficiaries, while considering environmental factors and protecting the future income-generating capacity of the land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>

{PRIVATE }III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

<p>14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risk in the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed action will not impact the human health and safety risks found in this area. Paving this portion of State Highway 233 will decrease the overall human safety risks in this area. This project will provide a more reliable highway for the Montana DOT. Stockpiling gravel and staging heavy equipment on this tract of state land will have no impact on the human health and safety risks found in this area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The human health and safety risks found in this area will continue to be low. Riverside Contracting, Inc. will have to find another place to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>
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{PRIVATE }III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

<p>15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed action would provide a more reliable highway for residents in this area throughout the year. The grazing land will be impacted with this type of disturbance. However, the area of disturbance will be reclaimed with native grasses and yellow sweetclover. Livestock grazing will continue to be the only other activity on this tract of state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The livestock grazing activities will not be altered on this tract of state land. The grazing land will not be disturbed and forage production will not decrease because of this activity. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of 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 quantity and distribution of employment will not be impacted with the proposed action. Stockpiling gravel and staging heavy equipment on this tract of state land will not create, move, or eliminate jobs within the surrounding area. This project will simply provide residents in this area with a more reliable highway.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The quantity and distribution of employment will not be impacted in this rural area. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed action will not create or eliminate tax revenue in Hill County. The local and state tax base will not change as a result from stockpiling gravel and staging heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The local and state tax base will remain the same. Tax revenue from this tract of land will not change in Hill County. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</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: There will be a substantial increase in traffic in this area throughout the entire road construction phase. No government services will be needed as a result of the proposed action.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no additional demands for government services on this tract of state land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license.</p>

{PRIVATE }III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

<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: There are no other locally adopted environmental plans or goals for this tract of state land. The MT DNRC/TLMD will continue to evaluate state land resource issues from a logical, environmental, and economical point of view. There are no zoning or management plans in effect for this tract of state land at this time.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There are no other locally adopted environmental plans or goals that the MT DNRC/TLMD has for this tract of state land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</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: This tract of state land does have a perfected legal access for recreational purposes. This tract has a low recreational value for hunting, hiking, and bird watching. No impacts on the recreational activities are anticipated as a result of the proposed action.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The recreational activities will continue to be low on this tract of state land. This tract of state land will continue to have legal access. Anyone with a State Lands Recreational Use License from the State of Montana can recreate on this tract of state land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of 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>Action Alternative: The proposed action will not increase the density and distribution of the human population and housing in this area. The proposed project will not require additional housing and the population will remain the same.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The density and distribution of population and housing will not be impacted. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed project will not disrupt the traditional lifestyles found in this area. The surrounding community consists mainly of farming and ranching families. The proposed project will be beneficial to the people in this area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The native and traditional lifestyles that are found within this area will not be altered.</p>

<p>23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed action will not impact the cultural uniqueness and/or diversity that are found within this area. The roads existence does not interfere with a cultural site and/or cultural artifacts. Stockpiling gravel and staging heavy equipment on this tract of state land will be temporary. This tract will be reclaimed after the road construction activities have been completed and the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the land will return to normal.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The cultural uniqueness and diversity of the land and its people will remain the same. This tract of state land will continue to be used as grazing land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land.</p>
<p>24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMICAL CIRCUMSTANCES:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: There are no other social or economical circumstances associated with the proposed project on this tract of state land. Stockpiling gravel and staging heavy equipment on this tract of land will be temporary until the road construction is finished in this area. The disturbed areas shall be reclaimed under the terms and conditions outlined in the stipulations for this land use license.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The social and economic circumstances will remain the same on this tract of state land. The Montana DNRC will not issue Riverside Contracting, Inc. a land use license to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on this tract of state land. Riverside Contracting, Inc. will have to find another tract of land to stockpile gravel and stage heavy equipment on for this road construction project.</p>

EA Checklist Prepared By: Dan Dobler, Havre Unit Manager, Northeastern Land Office

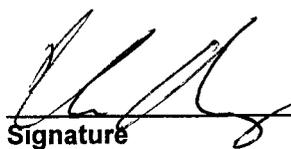

Signature

Date: September 3, 2004

{PRIVATE }IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	25 Action
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	N.S.I.
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:

CLIVE ROONEY, Area Manager, Northeastern Land Office


Signature

9/10/4
Date