

DNRC - Trust Land Management Division

DS-252

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Land Reclassification, Lease 127	Proposed Implementation Date: Summer 2008
Proponent: Stanely Richardson	
Type and Purpose of Action: The Department wants to reclassify 79.3 acres of tame pasture grazing to alfalfa/grass hay land.	
Location: S16 T35N R53E	County: Sheridan

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>MT Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) contacted the surface lessee and informed him of the Department goal for this land. The surface lessee has been involved with the reclassification process.</p>
<p>2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:</p>	<p>DNRC Trust Land Division has complete authority to approve or reject the land reclassification proposal.</p>
<p>3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: Reclassify 79.3 acres of tame pasture grazing land to alfalfa/grass hay land.</p> <p>NO Action Alternative: Do not reclassify 79.3 acres of tame pasture grazing land to alfalfa/grass hay land.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
<p>4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are fragile, compactable or unstable soils present? Are there unusual geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">  <p>MAR 08 2006</p> <p>LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OFFICE</p> </div>	<p>Action Alternative: No Action Alternative:</p> <p>[Y] Action Alternative: The proposed acreage to be reclassified as dry land alfalfa/grass hay consists of #57 Turner sand loam: 2 to 8 percent slope, capability class IVe; 17 farland-Cherry silt loams, 2 to 8 percent slopes, capability class III; 59 Turner Beaverton complex, 8 to 15 percent slope, capability class IVe. Approximately 85% of the land is in the 57 or 17 series. All is classified as either a III or IV series capability class. These soils are highly suited for farming and or hayland production.</p> <p>[N] NO Action Alternative: There will be no affect to the soils in the area.</p>
<p>5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources</p>	<p>[Y] Action Alternative: There will be no impact to the water quality in the area.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	[N] NO Action Alternative: Water quality in the area will not be affected.
6.AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[Y] Action Alternative: If the land reclassification is approved, some airborne dust will be created when the hay is being cut. The impact area will be small and localized. [N] NO Action Alternative: Air quality will not be affected in this area.
7.VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be permanently altered? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[Y] Action Alternative: The vegetation in the area consists of alfalfa and crested wheatgrass. Reclassifying the 359.30 acres to hay land will not affect the vegetation. [N] NO Action Alternative: Vegetation in this area will not be effected.
8.TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[Y] Action Alternative: This area is sometimes used for forage by deer and is utilized for protective cover and nesting by some game and non-game bird species. Reclassifying this area to hay land may affect these wildlife uses. [N] NO Action Alternative: Wildlife and birds will not be affected.
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?	[Y] Action Alternative: The native rangeland in this area was broken and used for agriculture long ago. No unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources are present in this area. [N] NO Action Alternative: No resources in the area will be affected.
10.HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[Y] Action Alternative: No historic or archaeological sites will be effected by the land reclassification. [N] NO Action Alternative: No historic or archaeological sites will be affected.
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?	[Y] Action Alternative: The aesthetics of this area will not be affected. [N] NO Action Alternative: The aesthetics of in this area will not be affected.
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	[Y] Action Alternative: No other resources will be affected by this project.

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N] NO Action Alternative: No resources will be affected.
13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA: Are there other studies, plans or projects on this tract?	[Y] Action Alternative: No DNRC studies, plans or projects will be affected. [N] NO Action Alternative: There would be no affect on any studies, plans or projects.

III. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[Y] Action Alternative: There is some human risk involved with harvesting hay. The people involved with the haying operation accept these risks as occupational hazards. [N] NO Action Alternative: There will be no health and human safety risks.
15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[Y] Action Alternative: Currently the 79.30 acres are used for grazing with a carrying capacity of 39 AUM's. Reclassifying these acres to hay land would reduce the number of AUM's in this area. The hay production would increase for this land. [N] NO Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to agriculture activities on the State land.
16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[Y] Action Alternative: The quantity and distribution of employment will not be affected. [N] NO Action Alternative: The quantity and distribution of employment will not be affected.
17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[Y] Action Alternative: If the tame pasture grazing land is reclassified to hay land, the revenue generated from this land should increase. In turn, more tax revenue from should be created from this tract. [N] NO Action Alternative: The local and State tax base will not be affected.
18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc) be needed?	[Y] Action Alternative: The demands for government services will not be affected. [N] NO Action Alternative: The demands for government services will not be affected.
19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM,	[Y] Action Alternative: No State, County, City, USFS, BLM, or Tribal zoning or management plans will be

Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	affected. [N] NO Action Alternative: No State, County, City, USFS, BLM, or Tribal zoning or management plans will be affected.
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?	[Y] Action Alternative: The recreational opportunity on this State lease consists of hunting for deer, upland game birds and waterfowl. If the 79.3 acres of tame pasture are reclassified to hay land, the upland game bird hunting may be affected. [N] NO Action Alternative: The recreational opportunities in this area will not be affected.
21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[Y] Action Alternative: The density and distribution of population and housing will not be affected. [N] NO Action Alternative: The density and distribution of population and housing will not be affected.
22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[Y] Action Alternative: The social structures and mores will not be affected. [N] NO Action Alternative: The social structures and mores will not be affected.
23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[Y] Action Alternative: The cultural uniqueness and diversity in the area will not be affected. [N] NO Action Alternative: The cultural uniqueness and diversity in the area will not be affected.
24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[Y] Action Alternative: Reclassifying the 359.30 acres of tame pasture grazing land to hay land should increase the revenue generated from this tract. [N] NO Action Alternative: The social and economic circumstances in the area will not be affected.

EA Checklist Prepared By:

Hoyt R. Richards
Hoyt Richards

AWC manager

Date: November 30, 2005

IV. FINDING	
25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:	To reclassify 79.3 acres of some pasture growing land to alfalfa/grain hay land.
26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:	minimal negative impacts are expected with this project.
27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:	
<input type="checkbox"/> EIS <input type="checkbox"/> More Detailed EA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Further Analysis	

CHECKLIST EA
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EA Checklist Approved By: Barney Smith November 30, 2005
Barney Smith, Lewistown Unit Manager