

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name: Fiber optic telecommunications cable installation.	Proposed Implementation Date: Pending
Proponent: Triangle Telephone Cooperative Inc., PO Box 1220, Havre, MT, 59501	
Type and Purpose of Action: Triangle Telephone Cooperative has submitted an easement application to place a fiber optic telecommunication line on State land.	
Location: W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 22 T36N R15E	County: Hill

I. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED: Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.	Triangle Telephone Cooperative submitted an easement application to the Montana Department of Natural resources and Conservation (DNRC) to place a fiber optic telecommunications line on State land in the referenced location. Triangle Telephone Cooperative has contacted Willow Creek Ranch Two Inc., the surface lessees of the referenced State tract, concerning the proposed telecommunication line.
2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:	The DNRC is the only government agency with jurisdiction over this project.
3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:	<p>Action Alternative: Grant permission to the proponent to install a telecommunication line on State land in the referenced location.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: Deny the proponent permission to install a telecommunication line on State land in the referenced location.</p>

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II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

RESOURCE	POTENTIAL IMPACTS
<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>Action Alternative: The soils within the proposed project area consist of fine sandy loams. If the proponent is allowed to install the communication line some soils will be displaced and there is the potential for soil compaction to occur. The proponent will be required to put back any displaced soil and construction activities will only be allowed when the soil is dry or frozen.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the soils under this alternative.</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: The proposed project will have no impacts on water quality, quantity or distribution in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to water resources under this alternative.</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: During the construction phase of the proposed project, some dust will be created by the activities.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the air quality under this alternative.</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 proposed telecommunication line will cross range land that consists mainly of native vegetation. The vegetation within the project corridor will be disturbed. The vegetation will regenerate naturally.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: The vegetation will not be impacted under this alternative.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<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 proposed project area is not located near any known critical habitat types for wildlife species. However, if the proposed project is approved, any wildlife near the project area may be disturbed by construction activities. Any disturbances will be temporary.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to wildlife species or habitat under this alternative.</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 proposed project area contains no known unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the environmental resources under this alternative.</p>
<p>10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The proposed project site was inspected by DNRC personnel and no historical or archaeological sites were observed. The State Archaeologist has been contacted regarding the proposed project and is confident that compliance with the Antiquities Act has been achieved regarding this proposed project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: No impacts to historical or archaeological sites will occur under this alternative.</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: The project site is located in a rural area of Hill County and is not visible to the general public. The project will have no long term impacts to the aesthetic values associated with the State land involved with this project.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the aesthetics associated with the land under this project.</p>

II. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

<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: The project will place no demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the environmental resources of land, water, air or energy under this alternative.</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 known studies, plans, or projects occurring on the state land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There are no other known studies, plans, or projects occurring on the state land.</p>

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: During the installation of the telecommunication line, there will be some human health and safety risks. The employer and employees identify the health and safety risks as occupational hazards.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to human health or safety under this alternative.</p>
<p>15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?</p>	<p>Action alternative: The installation of the telecommunication line will not impact industrial, commercial or agricultural activities in this area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the agricultural activities under this alternative.</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 proposed project would help secure continued employment for workers employed by the proponent.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the quantity and distribution of employment under this alternative.</p>
<p>17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: State and local tax revenue will not be affected.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: State and local tax revenue will not be affected.</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: There would be no impacts on government services under this alternative.</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: There would be no impacts to locally adopted environmental plans and 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>Action Alternative: The recreational value in the area of the proposed telecommunication line is hunting. The installation of the line will not impact the recreational value associated with the State land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the recreational value associated with the land under this alternative.</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 project will not impact the density and distribution of the population and housing in this rural area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the density and distribution of the population and housing under this alternative.</p>
<p>22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?</p>	<p>Action Alternative: The project will not impact the social structures of the local communities.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There will be no impacts to the social structures under this alternative.</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 project will not impact the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the land.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the cultural uniqueness and diversity under this alternative.</p>
<p>24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:</p>	<p>Action Alternative: the new telecommunication lines will provide a better communication system to people who live in the area.</p> <p>No Action Alternative: There would be no impacts to the social and economic circumstances under this alternative. .</p>

EA Checklist Prepared By: *Craig Biggart* Date: *2/27/08*
 Craig Biggart, Land Use Specialist

<p>IV. FINDING</p>	
<p>25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:</p>	<p><i>the "Action Alternative"</i></p>
<p>26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:</p>	<p><i>Minimal negative impacts are expected.</i></p>
<p>27. Need for Further Environmental Analysis:</p> <p>[] EIS [] More Detailed EA [<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>] No Further Analysis</p>	

EA Checklist Approved By *Barry D. Smith* Date: *2/29/08*
 Barry Smith, Lewistown Unit Manager