

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Rick Smith Spring Development
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	June, 2012
<b>Proponent:</b>	Rick Smith
<b>Location:</b>	Section 21, Township 13 South – Range 5 West
<b>County:</b>	Beaverhead County

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Proponent proposes to develop and install a spring tank, 1,200 feet of 1.5 inch underground pipeline and 2 stock water tanks to water livestock on an 80 acres parcel of state land in Section 21, T 13 S – R 15 W. The spring box will be installed using a track hoe and will be placed at the spring location. An underground pipeline of approximately 1,200 feet will be run to two stock tanks. One tank will be located on each side of the county road. The proponent has obtained permission from the Beaverhead County Road Department to install the pipeline under the road. The stock tanks will both have a wildlife ramp installed in them and a fence will be constructed around the spring area to prevent any damage from livestock.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Matador Cattle Company, Kyle Hardin, Manager  
Bob Brannon, FWP Wildlife Biologist  
Patrick Rennie, DNRC Archeologist  
MT Natural Heritage Program

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

Beaverhead County Weed Management Plan

**3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:**

**Action Alternative:** Allow the proponent to develop an existing spring by installing a spring box, installation of underground pipeline and stock tanks for watering livestock on state land.

**No Action Alternative:** Deny permission to develop an existing spring by installing a spring box, installation of underground pipeline and stock tanks for watering livestock on state land.

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

**4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:**

*Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.*

An NRCS soil survey of the area identified the soils at the location of the proposal as being Philipsburg gravelly loam with the parent material being alluvium. The soils are well drained and the soil survey identified the gravelly loam being present to 60 inches. The non-irrigated land capability of these soils is rated at 6e. This proposal if allowed to be implemented should not present any long term or cumulative impacts to the soils at the location of this proposal.

**5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:**

*Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.*

The current area where the spring is located is sustaining some minor rutting and trampling from cattle use where the livestock are trying to find water. The installation of the spring box and fencing of the spring may improve the water quality around the spring area if the proposal is allowed to move forward.

**6. AIR QUALITY:**

*What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.*

There will be no air quality issues associated with this proposal. The location is an isolated site away from populated areas. Construction should take about two days. Some dust will be generated during the construction of this project; however no long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated.

**7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:**

*What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.*

An NRIS search of the area didn't identify any sensitive or rare plants or cover types in the proposal location. The underground pipeline would be plowed in and little ground disturbance would occur. There is no long term or cumulative impacts to vegetation anticipated from this proposal.

**8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:**

*Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.*

The installation of the stock water tank will not affect the use of the area by terrestrial, avian and aquatic life. The proposal may improve use of the spring by keeping the cattle from trampling the vegetation around the spring. Installation of the stock tank will be of short duration and overall disturbance of terrestrial, avian, and aquatic life will be minimal. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats are foreseen from this proposal.

**9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:**

*Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.*

The Montana Natural Heritage program was contacted regarding species of concern within the project area. The search identified two species of concern; Greater Sage Grouse, and Ferruginous Hawk.

**Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus Urophasianus*)** Greater sage Grouse use has been recorded in the project area. The DNRC is not aware of any important breeding leks in the vicinity. If sage-grouse are using the tract, they could be directly disturbed and displaced by activities associated with this project; however, the disturbance would be short term and would not be expected to have a measureable impact on sage –grouse habitat. Measurable direct, indirect, or cumulative effects would not be anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

**Ferruginous Hawk – (*Buteo regalis*)** – The ferruginous hawk is a BLM sensitive species. Ferruginous hawks have been documented using the general area around the project as nesting and hunting ground. The low surface impacts of this project will not significantly alter the vegetation composition or nesting habitat for the hawks. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects are anticipated from this proposal to Ferruginous hawks.

**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

MT DNRC Archeologist Patrick Rennie was contact and there are no known archeological or historical sites associated with this proposal.

**11. AESTHETICS:**

*Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.*

The project is located in an isolated area away from public view. The area receives the most traffic during the big game hunting season. The two stock tanks if installed will be visible from the North Centennial County Road. The project will not have a significant impact to the aesthetics of the area for livestock grazing is the only major activity that occurs in this area. A new spring development will not impact the overall character of the landscape.

**12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:**

*Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.*

Demands on environmental resources will be minimal. The DNRC Dillon Unit is unaware of any planned or future projects in this area.

**13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:**

*List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

The scoping process for this project didn't identify any other proposals under MEPA review in the area at this time.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

#### 14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

No long term or cumulative impacts to human health and safety were identified from this proposal.

#### 15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

*Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.*

The installation of the spring box, underground pipeline, stock tanks and fencing of the riparian area could benefit the grazing on this state lease. At this time the lessee doesn't graze the 80 acres due to a lack of water for livestock.

#### 16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

*Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.*

The proposal if approved would provide a contractor in the area with a few days work. Employment opportunities from this proposal will not have any effect on the long term employment in the Lima, MT area.

#### 17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

*Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.*

The project if approved would not provide any increase in tax revenue to Beaverhead County or the State of Montana.

#### 18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

*Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.*

There would be no increase in demand for government services if this project was approved.

#### 19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

There aren't any zoning or management plans associated with this tract of state land.

#### 20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

*Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.*

This proposal would have no long term or cumulative impacts to recreation in the Lima, MT area.

#### 21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

*Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.*

This proposal will not impact current density and distribution of population and housing in the Lima, MT area.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

This proposal is compatible with the current use of the land which is livestock grazing. There would be no long term or cumulative impacts to social structures and mores if this project was approved.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

The project is located in an isolated area with a county road passing through the tract. The area receives the most traffic during the big game hunting season. The project will not have a significant impact to the aesthetics. The main activity in this area is cattle grazing and a new spring development will not impact the overall character of the landscape.

**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**

*Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.*

This project if approved would be listed as an improvement on the lessee's lease. The estimated cost of the development is \$5,678.00.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Timothy Egan	<b>Date:</b> 6/1/12
	<b>Title:</b> Dillon Unit Manager	

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

Grant authorization to allow the proposed spring development

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

Significant impacts are not anticipated as a result of the proposed activity. Spring development projects typically improve livestock distribution and reduce impacts to soil and water resources resulting from livestock use around springs.

**27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

EIS       More Detailed EA       No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Garry Williams
	<b>Title:</b> Area Manager, Central Land Office
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 6/4/2012



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