

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

FOR THE

Middle Henry Rock Permit

PREPARED BY

Dale Peters, Management Forester

Plains Unit, Northwestern Lands Office

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation

May 2013

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CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Middle Henry Rock Permit
Proposed Implementation Date:	June, 2013
Proponent:	DNRC, Northwestern Land Office, Plains Unit
Location:	Section 34, Township 20 North, Range 25 West
County:	Sanders County, Montana

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation proposes to sell an estimated 2,000+ tons of stone from the west ½ of Section 34, Township 20 North, Range 25 West, five air miles northeast of Plains, Montana. This action would produce revenue for the Common School (C.S.) Trust Grant.

Income to the Trust from this project is estimated to be between \$60,000.00 and greater.

Lands involved in this proposed project are held by the State of Montana in trust for the support of specific beneficiary institutions such as the public buildings trust, public schools, state colleges, universities, and other state institutions (Enabling Act of February 22, 1889:1972 Montana Constitution, Article 1 Section 11). The Board of Land Commissioners and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation are required, by law, to administer these trust lands to produce the largest measure of reasonable and legitimate return over the long run for these beneficiary institutions (Section 77-1-202, MCA). DNRC would manage lands involved in this project in accordance with the State Forest Land Management Plan (DNRC 1996), the Administrative Rules for Forest Management (ARM 36.11.401 through 71), and conservation commitments contained in the Montana Forested State Trust Lands Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) as well as other applicable state and federal laws.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project. List number of individuals contacted, number of responses received, and newspapers in which notices were placed and for how long. Briefly summarize issues received from the public.

Hydrological, soils, wildlife, archaeological, and vegetative concerns were identified by DNRC specialists and field foresters for both the No-Action and the Action Alternatives. Issues and concerns have been resolved or mitigated through project design and/or would be included as specific contractual requirements of the project. Recommendations to minimize direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts have been incorporated in the project design.

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

Examples: cost-share agreement with U.S. Forest Service, 124 Permit, 3A Authorization, Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit.

Small Miner Exclusion Statement - Department of Environmental Quality

Registration - Mine Safety and Health Administration

Incidental Take Permit – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

In December 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued DNRC an Incidental Take Permit under Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act. The Permit applies to select forest management activities affecting the habitat of grizzly bear, Canada lynx, and three fish species — bull trout, westslope cutthroat trout, and Columbia redband trout — on project area lands covered under the HCP. DNRC and the USFWS will coordinate monitoring of certain aspects of the conservation commitments to ensure program compliance with the HCP.

3. ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Describe alternatives considered and, if applicable, provide brief description of how the alternatives were developed. List alternatives that were considered but eliminated from further analysis and why.

Action Alternatives: No additional action alternatives were identified or proposed.

No Action: The no-action alternative would propose no revenue-generating activities on this section. This alternative would not produce revenue for the Common School (C.S.) Trust Grant. No decorative stone removal would occur.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.</i>• <i>Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.</i>• <i>Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.</i> |
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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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to soils.

Rock is a combination of Pre-Cambrian Pritchard formation argillites and Ravalli and Burke formation quartzite. Reclamation of the mined area would be accomplished mechanically in conjunction with contractual quarry activity. No fragile, compactable, unstable soils or unusual geological features have been identified.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to water resources.

There is no surface water within the permit area that would be impacted.

Henry Creek is located below the proposed permit area and below the Henry Creek road. No activity would take place within the riparian area.

6. AIR QUALITY:

What pollutants or particulate would be produced (i.e. particulate matter from road use or harvesting, slash pile burning, prescribed burning, etc)? Identify the Airshed and Impact Zone (if any) according to the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to air quality.

The proposed project is located in the Montana State Airshed 2 as designed by the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group. No pollutants or particulates would be produced by this operation

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to vegetation.

This parcel is classified as forest land with scattered Douglas-fir, western larch and ponderosa pine among the rocky outcrops. Removal of quarried rock would have a very minor impact on vegetative communities. No rare plants or cover types were identified.

8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:

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

Area receives light use by white-tailed deer, black bear, elk, and mule deer. Rock removal should have no adverse impacts on these species.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.

The Montana Natural Heritage Program has identified Canada Lynx, *Lynx canadensis*, habitat between the elevations of 1,870 feet and 11,187 feet. Lynx are associated with subalpine fir forests, generally between 4,000 to 7,000 feet in elevation, in western Montana (Ruediger et al 2000). Lynx habitat in western Montana consists primarily of young coniferous forest with plentiful snowshoe hares, stands with abundant coarse woody debris for denning and cover for kittens, and densely forested cover for travel and security. This site sits between 3,960 and 3,640 feet and is dominated by Douglas-fir. No important Canada Lynx habitat is present and no occurrence on the state tract has been established.

Gray Wolves, *Canis lupus*, using the area could be temporarily disturbed by quarrying activities; however they are most sensitive at den and rendezvous sites, which are not known to occur within the project area. Minor adverse direct and indirect effects would be expected to affect gray wolf displacement risk and big game prey availability.

The Flammulated Owl, *Otus flammeolus*, and the Pileated Woodpecker, *Dryocopus pileatus*, have been identified sensitive species in this area. Mitigations would include the retention of ponderosa pine and western larch within the immediate area. Rock removal should have no adverse impacts on these species.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

Identify and determine direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

No known or visible historical, archaeological or paleontological resources have been identified that would infer aboriginal use of the area.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to aesthetics.

The proposed permit site is located near the bottom of the Henry Creek drainage in mountainous terrain; therefore topography blocks the view from populated areas.

On site, visible impacts would be noticeable in the short term, and are not likely to have a cumulative impact. The project area after reclamation would have a slightly altered appearance. Utilization of existing vegetation would help mitigate the appearance.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to environmental resources.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts would likely occur under either alternative.

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.

Environmental Assessment Checklist – Henry Divide Timber Sale - 1988

Sections 35 & 36, Township 20 North, Range 25 West; closed 10/1991

Environmental Assessment Checklist – Henry Peak Timber Sale – 1994

Section 35, Township 20 North, Range 25 West; closed 9/1996

Environmental Assessment Checklist – Upper Henry Rock Permit – July, 2007

NW 1/4 of Section 34, Township 20 North, Range 25; active

Environmental Assessment Checklist – North Henry Rock Permit – January, 2009
NW 1/4 of Section 34, Township 20 North, Range 25; active

Environmental Assessment Checklist – Henry Fuels Timber Sale – July, 2010
Sections 35 & 36, Township 20 North, Range 25 West; active

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.

There are no unusual safety considerations associated with this proposed permit. Human health would not be impacted by the proposed permit or associated activity. However, risks would increase along public roads adjacent to the project for a short period. Cumulative impacts are not likely to occur.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

The quarrying of stone would be a minor contribution to industrial production in the Plains area.

16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

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

Project would provide limited seasonal employment. Due to the relatively small size of this project, there would be no measurable cumulative impact from this proposed action on employment.

17. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

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

People are currently paying taxes from the rock quarry industry in the region. Due to the relatively small size of the permit, there would be no measurable direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts from this proposed action on tax revenues.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

Vehicles hauling the quarried stone would result in temporary increases in traffic on the Henry Creek road #661, and Montana Highway 200. This increase is a normal contributor to the activities of the local community and industrial base and cannot be considered a new or increased source. Cumulative impacts are not likely to occur.

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.

In March 2003, DNRC adopted Administrative Rules for Forest Management (ARM 36.11.401 through 450). The DNRC would manage lands involved in this project in accordance with the Rules.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.

This proposed action would not affect the ability of people to recreate on these parcels. No increase in recreational use is expected following the project. Wilderness is not accessed through this tract. There would be no change regarding cumulative impact.

21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:

Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify direct, indirect, and cumulative effects to population and housing.

There would be no measurable direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts related to population and housing due to the relatively small size of the permit, and the fact that people are already employed in this occupation in the region.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

No direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts related to social structures and mores would be expected under either alternative.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

No direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts related to cultural uniqueness and diversity would be expected under either alternative.

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 direct, indirect, and cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.

Costs, revenues and estimates of return are estimates intended for relative comparison of alternatives. They are not intended to be absolute estimates of return. The estimated royalties is based on comparable sales analysis, returning approximately \$60,000.00 to the Common School (C.S.) Trust Grant. This value may increase once the project is initiated and it is determined that additional volume is available to quarry. Development costs borne by the purchaser have been included when determining the projected income to the Trust.

The No Action alternative would not generate any return to the school trust at this time.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Dale Peters	Date: 5/9/2013
	Title: Management Forester	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

To meet stated goals and objectives associated with the proposed projects, I selected the Action Alternative for implementation

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Analysis has not shown nor identified significant impacts as likely to occur as a result of implementation of the Action Alternative

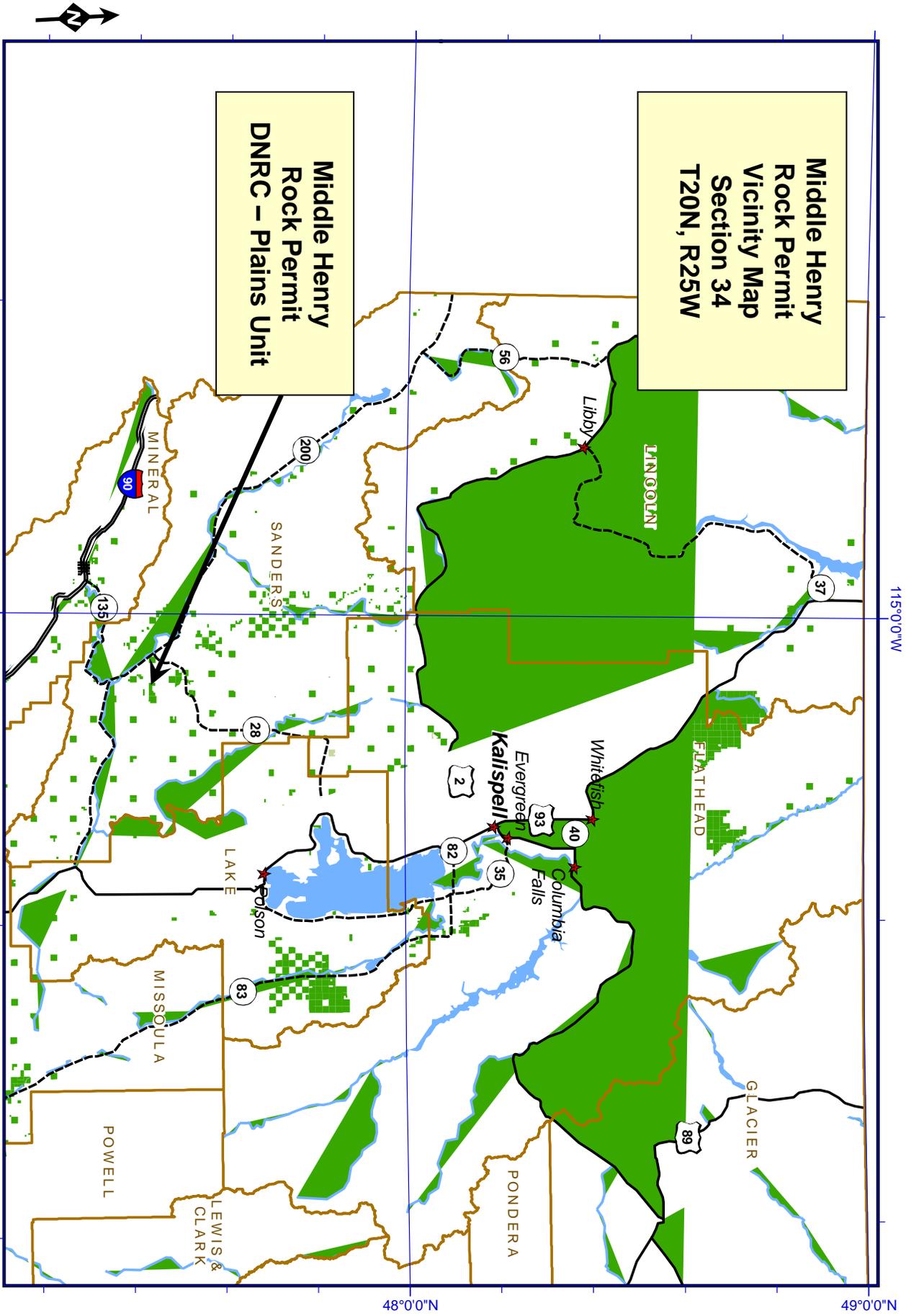
27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: David M. Olsen
	Title: Forest Management Supervisor
Signature: /s/ <i>David M. Olsen</i>	
Date: May 9, 2013	



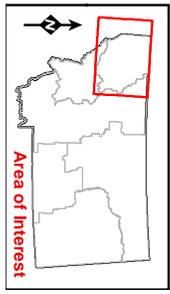
**Middle Henry
Rock Permit
Vicinity Map
Section 34
T20N, R25W**

**Middle Henry
Rock Permit
DNRC – Plains Unit**

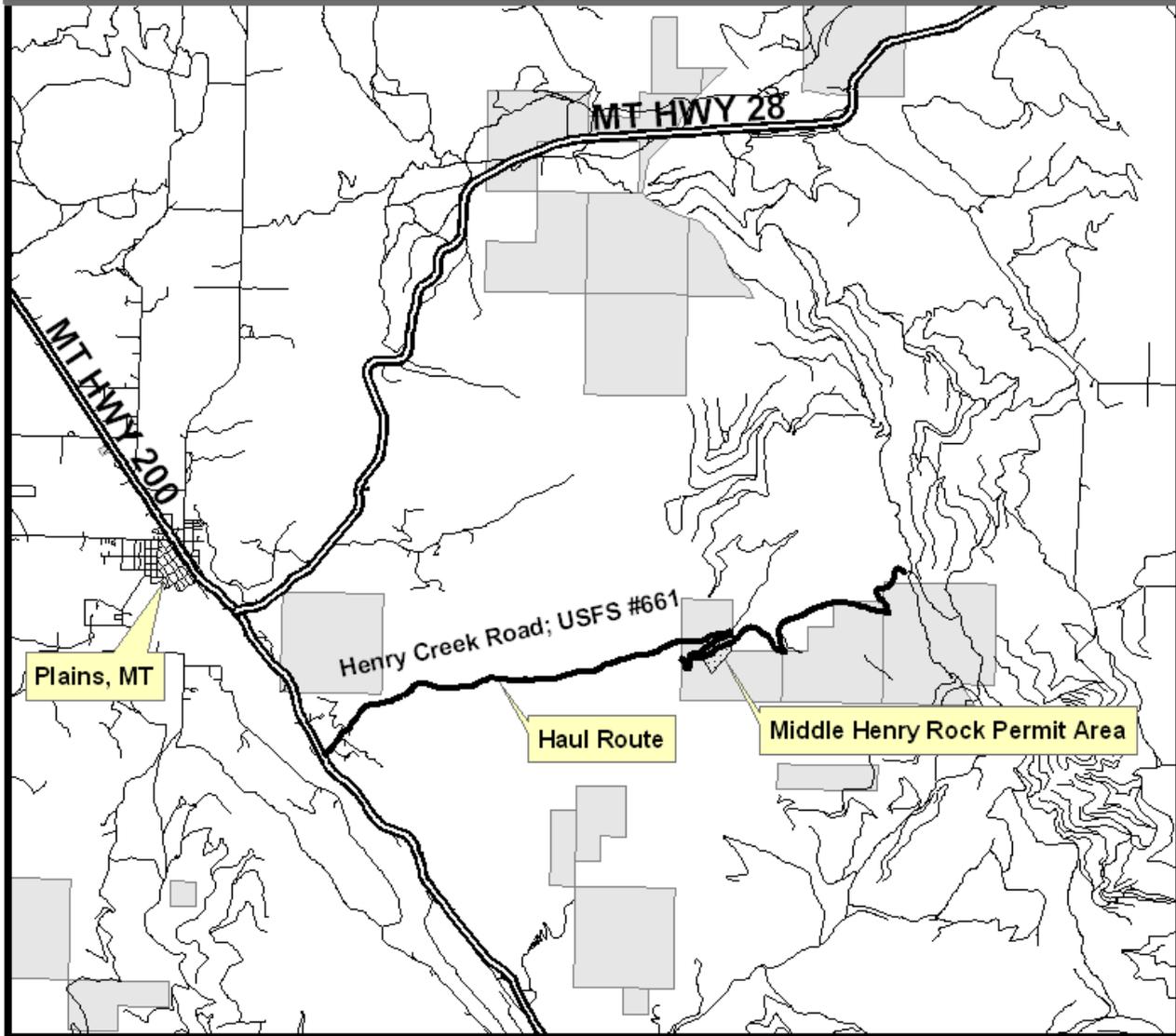
- Interstate Highway
- U.S. Route
- State Highway
- Rivers
- City
- County
- Lakes
DNRC managed for timber
- DNRC other



21 February 2007
Montana DNRC
Technical Services Section/dr



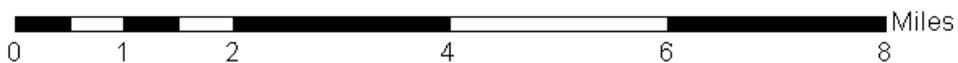
Middle Henry Rock Permit; Haul Route Map Section 34, T20N R 25W



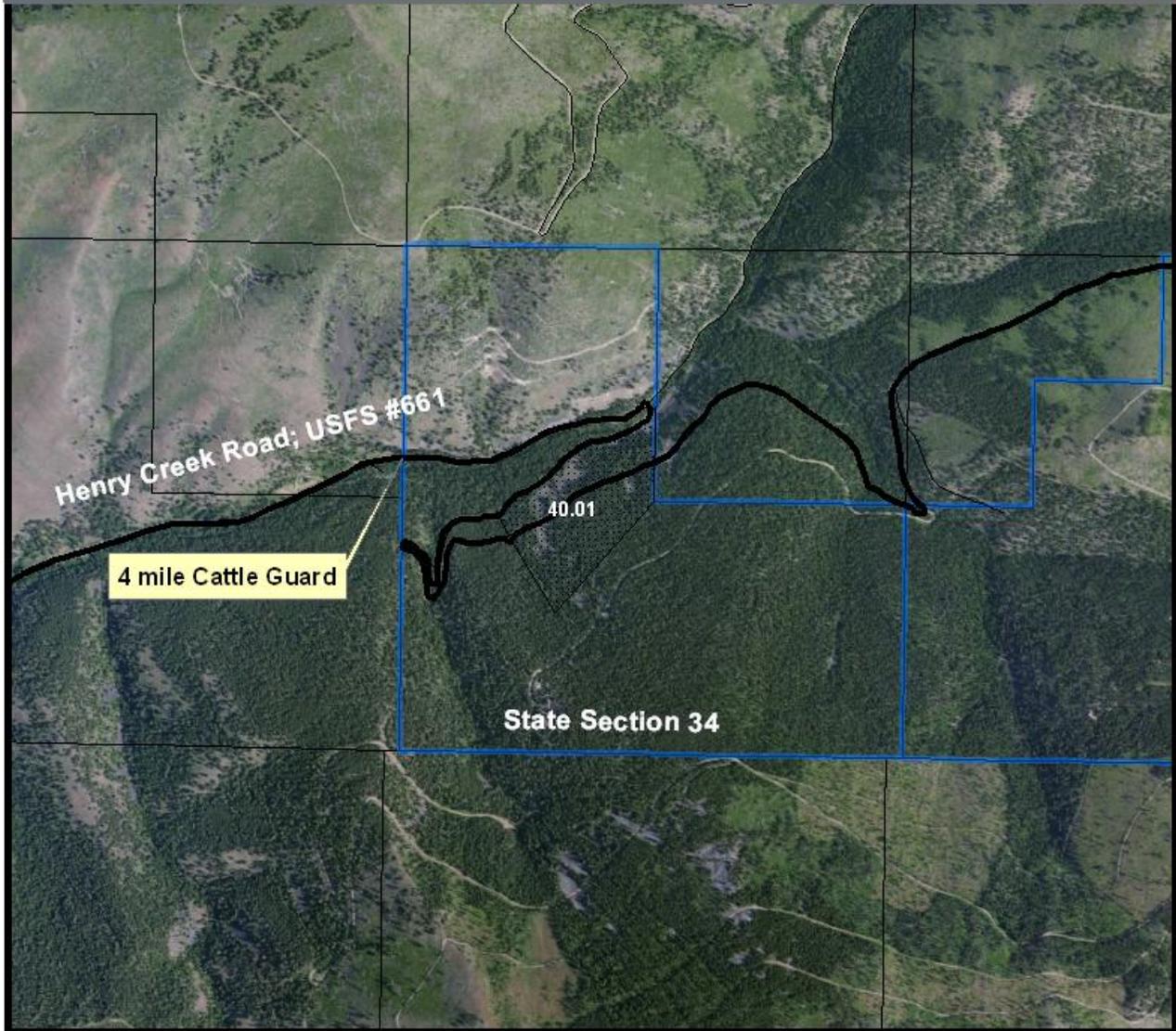
Legend

- Ownership Trust Lands
- Middle_Henry_Permit_Area

Montana DNRC
Trust Land Management Division
Northwestern Land Office
Plains Unit
dmp 4/13



Middle Henry Rock Permit Section 34, T20N R 25W



Legend

 Middle_Henry_Permit_Area

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Trust Land Management Division
Northwestern Land Office
Plains Unit
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