

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Sheldon Flats Septage
Proposed Implementation Date:	October, 2015
Proponent:	JMF Services, Inc.
Location:	W ½ SE ¼, Section 16, Township 31 North, Range 31 West
County:	Lincoln

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is considering a request by JMF Services Inc., of Libby, MT to lease a 40 acre tract of state trust land located within the W ½, SE ¼, Section 16, Township 31 North, Range 31 West, Lincoln County. This lease would be for the development and operation of a septage land application site. The lease proposal includes clearing existing vegetation on the 40-acre site. Additionally, the site would be rotated on an annual basis, using approximately 20 acres per year for application, followed by seeding the following spring. A 10,000 gallon underground tank would be installed. All septage will be filtered to remove litter prior to land application. A carport style roof structure would be constructed for equipment storage. The leased area would be fenced, or otherwise posted as appropriate for the purpose of prohibiting unauthorized, public entry. Approximately 0.25 miles of new road would be constructed to access the site. The operation would be contingent upon the lessee's receiving approval for and remaining compliant with the regulations governing septage land application administered by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Approximately 91 Thousand Board Feet (MBF) of commercial timber would be harvested during vegetation clearing operations, associated with this tract.

The DNRC land classification on this tract would change from "forest" to "other".

Revenue generated from this lease and from the sale of forest products during vegetation clearing, would benefit the Common Schools trust.

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.

A public notice was published in the Western News on August 4, 11, 18, and 25, 2015, as well as September 1, 2015. Additionally, scoping letters were mailed to adjacent landowners, and to a local list of parties known to have interest in state trust land management activities.

Three written comments were received from public scoping. One of these is in favor of the proposal, and two of these are interested in additional information on the proposal.

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.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issues licenses for septic pumper operation businesses and will be responsible for approving the operation, and enforcing regulations governing septage land application. Another Montana Environmental Policy Act review will be conducted by DEQ relating the

proposal against Montana Septage Disposal and Licensure Law if the result of DNRC review is a decision to proceed with the lease proposal.

The Lincoln County Sanitarian is responsible for:

- Review of the "New Disposal Site Application Form;
- Inspect the proposed site to ensure that the Septage Disposal and Licensure Law will be met;
- Inspect the site to ensure that local ordinances and laws are met.

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.

No Action Alternative: A 40 acre septage land application site lease would not be awarded to JMF Services Inc. at this time. The DNRC land classification for this 40 acre tract would remain as timber. The 40 acres within this tract would not be cleared of vegetation, and the site would continue to be managed for timber production. No associated lease revenue, or timber harvest revenue would benefit the common schools trust, however the timber stand would continue to grow.

Action Alternative: A 40 acre septage land application site lease would be awarded to JMF Services Inc. at this time. The 40 acres within this tract would be cleared of existing vegetation. Approximately 91 MBF of commercial timber would be harvested during vegetation clearing operations. The leased area would be fenced, or otherwise posted as appropriate for the purpose of prohibiting un-authorized public entry. A 10,000 gallon underground storage tank would be installed. A carport style roof structure would be constructed. Approximately 0.25 miles of new road would be constructed to access the site. The DNRC land classification would change from "timber" to "other" on this 40 acre tract. Revenue would be generated for the common schools trust through both, commercial leasing, and commercial timber harvesting (See Sheldon Flats Septage Checklist Environmental Assessment, Item #24 for details on economics).

<h3>III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</h3>

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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.

EXISTING CONDITION

The proposed application site is located on landtype 108 in the Soil Survey Kootenai National Forest Area, Montana. This landtype consists of moderately well-drained to well-drained lacustrine terraces and glacial outwash terraces derived from silty glaciolacustrine deposits and stratified sandy/gravelly outwash. The upper 10 inches of the soil is silt loam or gravelly silt loam.

Slopes in the proposed application site are primarily flat with grades of 0 to 2%. Groundwater is listed as greater than 80 inches below the surface, however a search of well logs shows an average static water level of 230 feet at the Lincoln County Landfill approximately 1 miles south of the project area on a similar elevation of this terrace.

DIRECT, INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The proposed land use on the site would result in clearing of all existing vegetation, grubbing stumps and smoothing of the gentle terrain undulations. Approximately 0.25 miles of road would be constructed to access the site with various tank trucks. Wastewater/pumpings from residential and commercial septic tanks and portable toilet waste from residential, commercial and recreational uses would be applied with a diffuser after screening waste to remove non-putrescible material. All applied waste would be incorporated into the soil via disk within six hours of application. Grass seed would be applied annually to the rested portion of the project site to utilize the added nitrogen.

Due to the necessity to clear the site of vegetation, smooth the surface for application vehicles and routinely incorporate pumpings into the soil, the entire site will receive soil disturbance. Because the site would not have continual cover of vegetation to cover the surface soils, the risk of erosion from wind would be increased. Due to the gentle terrain, it is unlikely that erosion from water would move material offsite.

If the lessee is successful in obtaining approval from DEQ, the operation and maintenance would be governed by the Administrative Rules of Montana for solid waste management found in Chapter 50, subchapter 8. This oversight includes managing the application rate to avoid exceeding the agronomic rate of the site for nitrogen.

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.

EXISTING CONDITION

The proposed project is located in the Lower Pipe Creek 6th code watershed (170101010903). The main channel of this 19,038-acre watershed flows in a northeast-to-southwest direction to its confluence with the Kootenai River. Pipe Creek is a perennial, class 1, fish-bearing stream through the state parcel. Fish present in this portion of Pipe Creek include eastern brook trout (abundant), bull trout (rare), longnose dace (common), rainbow trout (common) and westslope cutthroat trout (unknown abundance). The proposed application site is located at least 1,000 feet from Pipe Creek and is on a terrace approximately 240 feet above Pipe Creek.

Within the state parcel, no other streams were identified on USGS topographic maps. A field visit to the proposed site confirmed no streams or tributaries to Pipe Creek, although a well-defined dry draw was identified. This dry draw is located no closer than 340 feet from the proposed project area.

No groundwater wells were found within approximately 3/4 mile of the proposed application site. Monitoring wells at the Lincoln County Landfill approximately one mile south of the project have an average static water level of approximately 230 feet.

DIRECT, INDIRECT AND CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Due to the gentle terrain found in the proposed project site, the moderately-well drained characteristics of the soils, and the distance from the application site to Pipe Creek, it is unlikely that any impact to surface water would result from this project. Impacts to groundwater would not be expected due to the estimated depth to static water level identified at the nearest wells.

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 project area is located in Montana Airshed 1. Smoke would be generated from the burning of slash generated from land clearing activities; however, adherence to the Montana/Idaho State Airshed Group regulations requires that burning occur during periods with adequate airshed ventilation. This would reduce the potential for detrimental contributions of associated air pollutants.

Septage does have an offensive odor to humans, however the project area does not directly border any residential areas.

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.

Existing Condition:

Current conditions for the majority of the 40 acre parcel are: Stand age is 20 years. The current cover type is Ponderosa pine. The stand size class is seedling / sapling. The species composition from greatest to least percentage is listed in the following order: Lodgepole pine, Ponderosa pine, Western Larch, and Douglas-fir. The habitat type is *Pseudotsuga menziesii* / *Vaccinium caespitosum* h.t. (PSME/VACA h.t). The tree stocking is medium.

A much lesser portion of the 40 acre parcel is made up of timber in the sawlog stand size class. Cover type, species composition, and stocking would be similar to the stand described above.

Affects of the action alternative:

The 40 acres within the lease site would be cleared of existing vegetation, and would be removed from timber production for the duration of the commercial lease. Approximately 91 MBF of commercial timber would be harvested during vegetation clearing operations.

The primary use of this 40 acre tract would shift from timber production to septage land application.

Over the 40 acre tract, septage would be applied to approximately 20 acres per year. At the end of the annual application season, grass seed would be applied to the treated area and allowed to rest in an inactive state for the following year, as septage is then applied to a separate 20 acres.

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.

Due the distance from Pipe Creek, the depth to groundwater and the gentle terrain of the proposed application site, it is unlikely that any measureable impact to aquatic life or habitat would be realized.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative, no septage application site would be developed and wildlife habitat would not be altered. Thus, no effects to wildlife would be anticipated.

Action Alternative: Under this alternative, approximately 40 acres of forested wildlife habitat would be removed and would be converted into an open field. This land conversion would remove approximately 34 acres of well-stocked regenerating forest (10-30 feet in height) and 6 acres of mature forest. Any wildlife species relying upon trees and vegetation other than grass would be displaced for the term of the lease in the cleared area. In addition, septage application activities would likely displace any wildlife that may use the open area during the day. Overall, wildlife use and habitat quality for most species in the lease area would be low for the duration of the lease. Approximately 462 acres of wildlife habitat in the project area would be unaffected and remain suitable for use by wildlife species preferring mature forested conditions.

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.

No wetlands were identified in the project area.

Habitat assessments and project effects assessments were conducted using DNRC's threatened, endangered, and sensitive species lists, which included the following species: Canada lynx, grizzly bear, bald eagle, black-backed woodpecker, Coeur d'Alene salamander, Columbian sharp-tailed grouse, common loon, fisher, flammulated owl, gray wolf, harlequin duck, northern bog lemming, peregrine falcon, pileated woodpecker, Townsend's big-eared bat, wolverine, and big game. Potential impacts under the Action Alternative warranted further analysis for: bald eagles, fishers, gray wolves, pileated woodpeckers, and big game (see below). For all

of the other species considered, either: 1) suitable habitat was not present in the project area, or 2) anticipated adverse effects would be negligible or absent.

No Action Alternative: Under this alternative, no septage application site would be developed and wildlife habitat would not be altered. Thus, no effects to wildlife would be anticipated.

Action Alternative: Direct, Indirect and Cumulative Effects

Grizzly and Black Bears

The proposed project area occurs outside of grizzly bear Recovery Areas and is situated adjacent to non-recovery occupied habitat (USFWS 1993, Wittinger 2002) associated with the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem. The project area contains preferred riparian habitat associated with Pipe Creek, however the 40-acre site proposed for activities does not contain riparian habitat, as it is over 1,000 feet from Pipe Creek. Hiding cover for bears is present throughout the project area. An 80-acre gravel pit operation directly adjacent to the proposed septage application site has been approved by DNRC but has not yet been developed. Additionally, Lincoln County operates a landfill site (Libby dump) approximately 1 mile south of the project area. Landfill personnel confirmed that the landfill is not completely fenced and that bears have been frequently observed entering the facility, although they could not say if grizzly bears had ever been present (pers. comm., September 2015). Some unauthorized motorized use of the project area occurs along existing restricted and abandoned roads. Private home sites are located approximately one mile to the northeast of the proposed septage site. Use of the project area by grizzly bears is unlikely due to distance from the Recovery Area, very low grizzly bear density within the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem, lack of preferred bear habitat throughout most of the project area, and proximity to open roads and human development/disturbance. Black bears are more common in the area and travel through the project area at times, most likely along the Pipe Creek riparian corridor.

Under the Action Alternative, approximately 40 acres of bear hiding cover would be removed and the site would be converted into an open field. Approximately 0.25 miles of new, restricted road would be constructed for access to the site. Disturbance associated with septage application activities and potential development of the adjacent gravel pit lease would likely displace bears in the area. Septage would be screened for larger debris. Septage applications would be made to approximately 20 acres of the over-all 40 acre site per year, and tilled into the soil within 6 hours of each application. At the end of each annual application season, grass seed would be applied to the treated area, and rested for approximately 1 year, while septage would then be applied to a separate 20 acres of the over-all 40 acre lease area. Occasionally this septage mix would contain a minor amount (typically less than 5% by volume) of grease trap pumpings. Human waste and grease can be attractants for bears. Land application of undiluted grease trap pumpings would not be permitted at the site. The screening, dilution of grease trap pumpings, and tilling of the septage solution into the soil after application would likely reduce the attractive qualities of these substances to bears. There would be a very low potential for any bears that might enter the site to receive a food reward. Should bears begin frequenting the septage application site, lease stipulations would require mitigations that would further reduce the potential for bears to be attracted to or enter the site (e.g. electrified bear-proof fencing, elimination of grease pumpings from the septage mix, etc.). The licensee would be required to store garbage, petroleum products, septage yet to be applied and other bear attractants in a bear-safe manner to reduce the risk of human-bear conflicts. Thus, minor direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to grizzly bears and black bears would be expected to occur as a result of the Action Alternative.

Bald Eagles

The project area is located within the home range of a bald eagle pair that nests on Pipe Creek; however, the project area is located outside of the primary use management zone (≤ 0.5 miles from nest), which is considered sensitive and would require timing restrictions. Additionally, the county landfill is located near the nest site and the birds are likely accustomed to high levels of human activity. Important bald eagle habitat attributes would not be affected since the project area is located outside of riparian habitat. Thus, negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to bald eagles would be expected to occur as a result of the Action Alternative.

Fishers

Approximately 296 acres of suitable fisher habitat are present in the project area. Recent fisher observations within 5 miles of the project area are lacking (MNHP 2015) and use of the area by fishers is unlikely given the areas proximity to human settlements, open roads, and associated disturbance. Under the Action Alternative

approximately 6 acres of suitable upland fisher habitat would be removed. The remaining 34 acres of vegetation removal would occur in unsuitable habitat types containing young forest. Suitable fisher habitat would remain along Pipe Creek and potential use of the project area by fishers would not be expected to appreciably change. Thus, minor direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to fishers would be expected to occur as a result of the Action Alternative.

Gray Wolves

Use of the project area by wolves is possible at any time. Disturbance at den and rendezvous locations can adversely affect wolves; however, timing restrictions would apply if den or rendezvous sites are identified (ARM 33.11.430(1)(a)(b)). Under the Action, 40 acres of vegetation providing hiding cover for wolves and their prey (big game) would be removed; creating an open field. Vegetation removal could increase the potential for wolves to be harvested during hunting season should any be moving through the area, however septage application activities would likely displace wolves and appreciable use of the area would not be expected. Thus, minor direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to gray wolves would be expected to occur as a result of the Action Alternative.

Pileated Woodpeckers

Approximately 462 acres of suitable pileated woodpecker habitat is present in the project area and use of the project area is likely. Under the Action Alternative approximately 6 acres of suitable pileated woodpecker habitat would be removed. The remaining 34 acres of vegetation removal would occur in young forest containing few large trees and no snags. Timber harvest and forest clearing activities on 40 acres during development of the site could disturb and displace pileated woodpeckers for a relatively short time period. Use of the project area by pileated woodpeckers would not be expected to appreciably change. Thus, minor direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to pileated woodpeckers would be expected to occur as a result of the Action Alternative.

Big Game

The entire project area consists of winter range for deer, elk and moose. Approximately 426 acres of the project area contain mature forest that provides thermal cover and snow intercept for wintering big game. The remaining 214 acres consists primarily of young, regenerating forest between 10 and 30 feet tall that provides only marginal thermal cover for big game. Year round use of the project area by deer was apparent during a site visit. Under the Action Alternative approximately 6 acres of forest providing high quality thermal cover and snow intercept would be removed. Big game may use rested and seeded portions of the septage application site for foraging, however it would no longer provide cover for big game during any season. The risk for big game mortality due to hunting may increase, however hunters would be discouraged from entering the 40-acre site (for health safety reasons) by signs and fencing. There is no indication that big game would be attracted to the septage, but should big game be attracted to freshly applied septage for some reason, lease stipulations would require mitigations that would reduce the potential for big game to be attracted to or enter the site (e.g. fencing, elimination of grease pumpings from the septage mix, etc.).

Literature Cited:

- MNHP. 2015. Natural Heritage Map Viewer data. Montana Natural Heritage Program online database query for the Sheldon Flats Septage Application Site Proposal retrieved on October 1, 2015. <http://mtnhp.org/MapView/>
- USFWS. 1993. Grizzly bear recovery plan. Missoula, Montana. 181 pp.
- Wittinger, W.T. 2002. Grizzly bear distribution outside of recovery zones. Unpublished memorandum on file at U.S. Forest Service, Region 1, Missoula, Montana.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

A Class III intensity level cultural and paleontological resources inventory was conducted adjacent to the current project area in 2014. Despite a detailed examination, no cultural or fossil resources were identified and no

additional archaeological or paleontological investigative work is recommended. The proposed project will have No Effect to Antiquities as defined under the Montana State Antiquities Act.

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.

There would be a low risk of the action alternative having negative direct, indirect, and cumulative affects to aesthetics. Septage does have an offensive odor to humans, however the project area does not directly border any residential areas.

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 impacts would be likely to 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.

A gravel pit is planned to be developed adjacent to the east of the proposed septage land application site commercial lease area (Sheldon Flats Gravel Environmental Assessment, signed December 24, 2014).

<p style="text-align: center;">IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION</p>

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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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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

The lease operation would be contingent upon the lessee receiving approval for, and remaining compliant with the regulations governing septage land application, administered by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The area of operations would be fenced or otherwise posted as appropriate for the purpose of prohibiting un-authorized public access.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

The primary use of this 40 acre tract would shift from timber production to septage land application. Commercial leasing would occur on this 40 acre tract, with an initial term of 30 years, and with renewal options for up to 99 years.

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.

JMF services Inc.is currently an established business in the area. There would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to the employment market.

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.

Due to the relatively small size of the proposed lease, there would be no measurable direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts from this proposed action on tax base or 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

There would be no measurable direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts related to demand for government services due to the relatively small size of the lease.

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.

The Sheldon Flats septage project area resides within the boundary of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Libby Asbestos Superfund Site. Therefore, Libby Amphibole Asbestos (LA) may exist in the soil, duff, and tree bark. DNRC has done no testing and has no knowledge of any presence of asbestos in the project area. The DNRC is hereby disclosing that naturally occurring asbestos has been found both inside and outside EPA's Libby Superfund site boundaries. Additionally, the superfund site boundaries are not based on the presence or absence of asbestos, therefore inclusion within the superfund site boundary is not indicative to the presence of asbestos.

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.

Trust lands in the area are currently used for hiking, hunting, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and general recreating as compatible with timber production. The proposal would reduce area available for general recreational use by 40 acres. The leased area would be fenced, or otherwise posted as appropriate for the purpose of prohibiting un-authorized, public entry.

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, and cumulative impacts related to population and housing due to the relatively small size of the lease area, 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.

The communities and lifestyles of this area have traditionally been and still are dependent upon forest management, agriculture, and other industrial land uses. The action alternative would be consistent with current and traditional lifestyles in this area.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

No 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.

The estimated stumpage value of \$186.00 / MBF is based on the average of Montana DNRC timber sales sold by stumpage over the last five years. The annual commercial lease fee would be 5% of the current appraised land value of the 40 acre parcel with a 2% escalator annually.

No Action Alternative:

Under the no action alternative, a septage land application site would not be developed and operated on 40 acres. Included affects are:

The Montana DNRC land classification for the 40 acre parcel would remain as "timber". The current stand value is estimated at \$34,372.80 (this includes the estimated volume of commercial timber (\$16,926.00), plus the estimated value of currently non-merchantable trees within the 20 year old stand, calculated by stand growth (\$17,446.80). No vegetation clearing operations would occur and no timber would be harvested at this time however, timber stand volume would be left to grow and the value of the stand at the end of 30 years would be estimated at \$65,620.80, which reflects the stumpage value applied to projected growth, at a rate of 140 bf / ac./ yr. for 30 years.

Action Alternative:

Under the action alternative, a septage land application site would be developed and operated on 40 acres. Included actions are:

The Montana DNRC land classification for the 40 acre parcel would be converted from "timber" to "other". Existing vegetation would be cleared on 40 acres, including harvesting approximately 91 MBF of commercial timber at this time, yielding an estimated value of \$16,926.00 (based on the estimated stumpage value) to the common schools trust. A commercial lease for septage land application would be implemented, yielding approximately \$ 245,913.00 by the end of the 30 year lease period. This value is the sum of the estimated annual lease fees received over the 30 year lease period. The cumulative total value to the common schools trust recognized over the 30 year lease period would be \$262,839.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Dave Marsh	Date: 10-14-2015
	Title: Forest Management Supervisor	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Upon review of the Checklist EA and appendices, I find the Action Alternative as proposed, meets the intent of the project objectives as stated on page 1, Type and Purpose of Action. It complies with all pertinent environmental laws, and a consensus of professional opinion on limits of acceptable environmental impact. The No Action Alternative does not meet the project objectives. For these reasons I have selected the Action Alternative for implementation on this project.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

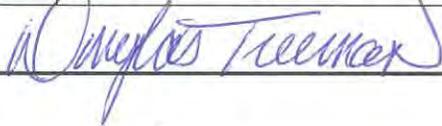
After a thorough review of the scoping documents, Department policies, standards, guidelines, I find all the identified resource management concerns have been fully addressed in this Checklist EA. The action alternative provides for income to the school trust. It also provides the opportunity to improve access within the project area. I find there will be no significant impacts to the human environment as a result of implementing the action alternative. Specific project design features and various resource management specialist recommendations have been implemented to ensure that this project will fall within the limits of acceptable environmental change and result in no significant effects.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Doug Turman
	Title: Libby Unit Manager
Signature: 	Date: 10/15/15