CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Shipwheel Cattle Co Water Line and Tank
Proposed Implementation Date:	Spring 2027
Proponent:	Shipwheel Cattle Co
Location:	Section 36 T30N R18E
County:	Blaine
Trust:	Common Schools

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

This action would authorize the installation and operation of a water line and tank from an existing spring development on the NWSWSW corner of state lease AG-1387, including all associated construction, maintenance, and use activities.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)
Northeastern Land Office (NELO) & Lewistown Unit Office
Proponent: Shipwheel Cattle Co
Surface Lessees: Shipwheel Cattle Co
Other: None

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

The DNRC and its Northeastern Land Office (NELO) have jurisdiction over the proposed project.

The proponent is responsible for acquiring all necessary permits for the proposed project and settling all surface damage with the surface lessees.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A (No Action) – Under this alternative, the Department does not grant permission for construction maintenance and use of water line and tank.

Alternative B (the Proposed Action) – The Department would grant permission for the construction, maintenance, and use of a water line and tank.

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.

The soils in the project area are classified as being somewhat to very limited to shallow excavation. Attention and care will need to be given for trenching techniques for the water line, but no long-term soil degradation is expected. Soils show slight to moderate risk of erosion and slight to severe risk of rutting as well. Rutting risk is primarily associated with the use of heavy equipment under wet conditions. To minimize impacts, all construction activities will be scheduled during dry periods when soils are least susceptible to compaction and rutting, and equipment traffic will be confined to designated work areas. Reducing rutting and confining equipment to work areas will minimize erosion risk as well.

All disturbed areas will be reclaimed and reseeded using the seed mix specified in Appendix B. With these mitigation measures in place, no significant adverse effects to soils are anticipated.

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.

This project will improve the distribution of stock water in a dry area primarily used for cattle grazing. Additional water will be made available for use on State Trust Lands, improving livestock distribution and grazing management. No significant impacts to local or regional water resources are anticipated.

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.

No significant impacts to air quality are anticipated from this project.

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.

The project will result in minor disturbance to approximately 0.5 acre of vegetation. Disturbed areas will be reseeded using the seed mix specified in Appendix B. No rare plants or unique cover types are present within the project area. Therefore, no significant impacts to vegetation are anticipated.

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 project area supports a variety of wildlife, including resident and migratory species associated with grasslands, sagebrush, wetlands, riparian areas, and forested habitats. Key species observed or known to occur in the area include a range of migratory songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds species. The Iowa Darter (*Etheostoma* exile) is also present in the area, but no work will occur in or near aquatic habitat.

Potential habitat disturbance will be minimized by restricting construction to dry periods, limiting equipment to designated work areas, and reclaiming disturbed vegetation per Appendix B. No significant long-term impacts to terrestrial, avian, or aquatic habitats are anticipated.

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.

Several species of concern are present in the project area, mostly songbirds, raptors, and migratory shorebirds. Mitigation measures, including timing construction outside of the nesting season, minimizing soil disturbance, and restoring native vegetation, are expected to prevent significant impacts.

A complete species list, including habitat and distribution data, is provided in Appendix C. Temporary displacement of wildlife may occur during construction, but no significant long-term impacts to unique, endangered, or sensitive species are anticipated.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:
Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.

A Class I (literature review) level assessment was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the Area of Potential Effect (APE). This review included inspection of project maps, the DNRC sites/sites leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I assessment revealed that no antiquities have been identified within the APE. No additional archaeological investigations are planned in association with this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are discovered during project activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of the resources can be conducted.

No significant effects on historical, archaeological, or paleontological resources are anticipated.

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.

No significant impacts on visual or aesthetic qualities are anticipated.

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.

No limited environmental resources are expected to be significantly impacted by this project. Additionally, the project will not contribute to any significant cumulative demands on environmental resources.

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.

There are no other projects or plans currently being considered on the tracts identified in this EA Checklist.

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.

During construction, equipment operation may pose temporary hazards. The proponent will be responsible for implementing mitigation measures. No ongoing hazards are anticipated following construction.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:
Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.

The project will not alter existing industrial, agricultural, or commercial activities in the area.

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 project will not create or eliminate jobs. No significant effects on the employment market are anticipated.

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 will not have direct or cumulative effects 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 cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services

The project will not result in significant increases in traffic or demand for government services such as schools, fire, or police protection.

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 are no zoning regulations or agency management plans that would affect this project.

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.

The project will not significantly affect access to, or the quality of, recreation and wilderness activities.

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

The project will not affect population density or housing demand.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:
Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

The project will not significantly affect native, traditional, or community lifestyles.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:
How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?

The project will not significantly affect cultural uniqueness of the area.

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.

No significant cumulative economic or social effects are anticipated.

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Alternative B (Proposed Action): The Department will grant permission for construction, maintenance, and use of a stock water pipeline and tank.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

After evaluating potential environmental effects, it is determined that the project will not result in significant impacts to the environment.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

	EIS		More Detailed EA	X	No Further Analysis

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Signature:		**Date:** 11/17/26

EA Checklist Approved By:	**Name:**	Josh Stoychoff
	Title:	Lewistown Unit Manager
Signature:		**Date:** 11/17/26

Appendix A: Soil Ratings

Table – Shallow Excavations – Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Very limited	57.8	64.0%
Somewhat limited	32.6	36.0%
Totals for Area of Interest	**90.4**	**100.0%**

Table – Soil Rutting Hazard – Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Severe	83.8	92.7%
Slight	6.6	7.3%
Totals for Area of Interest	**90.4**	**100.0%**

Table – Erosion Hazard (Off-Road, Off-Trail) – Summary by Rating Value

Summary by Rating Value

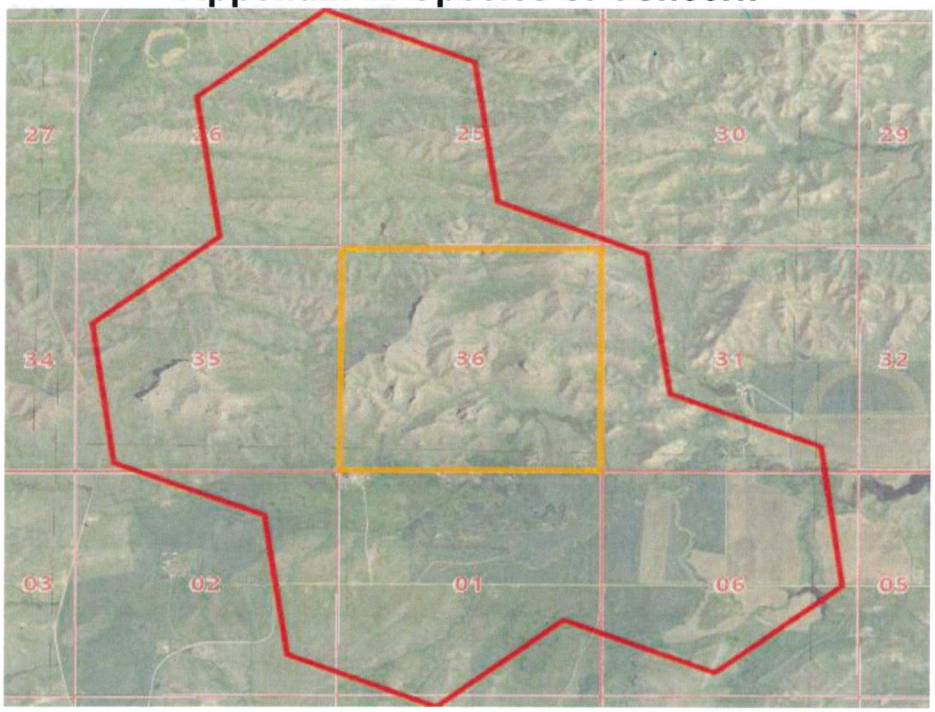
Summary by Rating Value

Rating	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
Moderate	57.8	64.0%
Slight	32.6	36.0%
Totals for Area of Interest	**90.4**	**100.0%**

Appendix B: Reclamation Seed Mix

Species	% of Seed mix	Pounds PLS/ac
Western Wheatgrass	35	2.8
Slender wheatgrass	35	2.8
Bluebunch Wheatgrass	15	1.2
Green Needlegrass	10	0.8
Lewis flax or purple prairie clover	5	0.4

Appendix C: Species of Concern



Species Occurrences

	Spec Regs	# SO	# Obs	Predicted Model	Range
F - Iowa Darter *(Etheostoma exile)* SOC		1	6		

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Species of Concern - Native Species Global: **G5** State: **S3** BLM: **SENSITIVE** FWP SWAP: **SGCN**

Delineation Criteria Stream reaches and standing water bodies where the species presence has been confirmed through direct capture or where they are believed to be present based on the professional judgement of a fisheries biologist due to confirmed presence in adjacent areas. In order to reflect the importance of adjacent terrestrial habitats to survival, stream reaches are buffered 100 meters, standing water bodies greater than 1 acre are buffered 50 meters, and standing water bodies less than 1 acre are buffered 30 meters into the terrestrial habitat based on PACFISH/INFISH Riparian Conservation Area standards. (Last Updated: Mar 15, 2024)

Predicted Models: N 20% Suitable (native range) (deductive)

B - Veery *(Catharus fuscescens)* SOC — 1

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Species of Concern - Native Species Global: **G5** State: **S3B** USFWS: **MBTA** BLM: **SENSITIVE** FWP SWAP: **SGCN** PIF: **2**

Delineation Criteria Observations with evidence of breeding activity buffered by a minimum distance of 300 meters in order to be conservative about encompassing home ranges and otherwise buffered by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 5,000 meters. (Last Updated: Jul 23, 2026)

Predicted Models: O 20% Optimal (inductive), M 40% Moderate (inductive), L 40% Low (inductive)

B - Bobolink *(Dolichonyx oryzivorus)* SOC — 2

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Species of Concern - Native Species Global: **G5** State: **S3B** USFWS: **MBTA; BCC10; BCC11; BCC17** FWP SWAP: **SGCN** PIF: **3**

Delineation Criteria Confirmed breeding area based on the presence of a nest, chicks, or territorial adults during the breeding season. Point observation location is buffered by a minimum distance of 150 meters in order to conservatively encompass male territory size reported for the species and otherwise is buffered by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 5,000 meters. (Last Updated: Mar 18, 2026)

Predicted Models: M 40% Moderate (inductive), L 60% Low (inductive)

B - Sprague's Pipit *(Anthus spragueii)* SOC — 7 — 2

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Species of Concern - Native Species Global: **G3G4** State: **S3B** USFWS: **MBTA; BCC11; BCC17** BLM: **SENSITIVE** FWP SWAP: **SGCN** PIF: **1**

Delineation Criteria Confirmed breeding area based on the presence of a nest, chicks, or territorial adults during the breeding season. Point observation location is buffered by a minimum distance of 115 meters in order to encompass the maximum breeding territory sizes reported for the species in Montana and otherwise is buffered by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 5,000 meters. (Last Updated: Jul 23, 2026)

Predicted Models: M 20% Moderate (inductive), L 80% Low (inductive)

B - Long-billed Curlew *(Numenius americanus)* **SOC**

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Species of Concern - Native Species — Global: **G4** State: **S3B** USFWS: **MBTA; BCC11** BLM: **SENSITIVE** FWP SWAP: **SGCN** PIF: **2**

Delineation Criteria Confirmed breeding area based on the presence of a nest, chicks, or territorial adults during the breeding season. Point observation location is buffered by a minimum distance of 200 meters in order to approximate the breeding territory size reported for the species in Idaho and otherwise is buffered by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 5,000 meters. (Last Updated: Jul 25, 2026)

Predicted Models: 1% Moderate (inductive), 99% Low (inductive)

B - Brewer's Sparrow *(Spizella breweri)* **SOC**

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Species of Concern - Native Species — Global: **G5** State: **S3B** USFWS: **MBTA** BLM: **SENSITIVE** FWP SWAP: **SGCN** PIF: **2**

Delineation Criteria Confirmed breeding area based on the presence of a nest, chicks, or territorial adults during the breeding season. Point observation location is buffered by a minimum distance of 100 meters in order to encompass the maximum territory size reported for the species and otherwise is buffered by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 5,000 meters. (Last Updated: Jul 22, 2026)

Predicted Models: 60% Low (inductive)

B - Baird's Sparrow *(Centronyx bairdii)* **SOC**

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Species of Concern - Native Species — Global: **G4** State: **S3B** USFWS: **MBTA; BCC11; BCC17** BLM: **SENSITIVE** FWP SWAP: **SGCN** PIF: **1**

Delineation Criteria Confirmed breeding area based on the presence of a nest, chicks, or territorial adults during the breeding season. Point observation location is buffered by a minimum distance of 100 meters in order to encompass the average breeding territory size of the species and otherwise is buffered by the locational uncertainty associated with the observation up to a maximum distance of 5,000 meters. (Last Updated: Mar 18, 2026)

Predicted Models: 40% Low (inductive)

	Spec Regs	# Obs	Predicted Model	Range
B - Golden Eagle *(Aquila chrysaetos)* **SOC**		1		

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Species of Concern - Native Species — Global: **G5** State: **S3** USFWS: **BGEPA; MBTA** BLM: **SENSITIVE** FWP SWAP: **SGCN**

Predicted Models: 40% Moderate (inductive), 40% Low (inductive)

B - American White Pelican *(Pelecanus erythrorhynchos)* **SOC** — 1

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Species of Concern - Native Species — Global: **G4** State: **S3B** USFWS: **MBTA** FWP SWAP: **SGCN** PIF: **3**

Predicted Models: 80% Low (inductive)

B - Ferruginous Hawk *(Buteo regalis)* **SOC** — 2

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Species of Concern - Native Species — Global: **G4** State: **S3B** USFWS: **MBTA; BCC17** BLM: **SENSITIVE** FWP SWAP: **SGCN** PIF: **2**

Predicted Models: 60% Low (inductive)

B - Loggerhead Shrike *(Lanius ludovicianus)* **SOC** — 1 — Not Assessed

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Species of Concern - Native Species — Global: **G4** State: **S3B** USFWS: **MBTA** BLM: **SENSITIVE** FWP SWAP: **SGCN** PIF: **2**