

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	<b>Billmayer Water Development</b>
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	<b>Winter 2022 - Summer 2023</b>
<b>Proponent:</b>	<b>Lessee, Billmayer Ranch LLC</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>T12N R4W Section 36 Montana</b>
<b>Trust:</b>	<b>Common Schools</b>
<b>County:</b>	<b>Lewis &amp; Clark</b>

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Lessee, Billmayer Ranch, has submitted a proposal to place improvements on a section of Montana State Trust Land. DNRC grazing lease #282 includes Lots 1,2,3,4, N2S2, NW4 Section 36, T12N R4W. The portion of the improvement located on State Trust Land would include installing a new spring development. The proposed spring development would consist of a perforated pipe culvert collection tank, holding tank, a stock tank, and a buried pipe for runoff. An excavator would be used to dig a hole for the collection and holding tank and placement of the improvement. Ground disturbance would occur mainly where the proposed spring development would be located, while equipment traversing to the site should be minimal. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a DNRC approved seed mix. The proposed spring development would enable the lessee to utilize their grazing lease and provide water for livestock on the state trust land. Please see attached map for locations of existing and proposed infrastructure on State Trust Lands.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

Jenny Sika, Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks Biologist  
Patrick Rennie, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Archaeologist  
Montana Natural Heritage Program

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

No other agencies are known to have jurisdiction and permits on this section.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Alternative A:** No action alternative. The proposed project would not be approved.

**Alternative B:** Action Alternative: Allow the proponent to install a spring development on State Trust Lands.

### 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.*

**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 queried for information regarding sensitive or endangered species located in the vicinity of the project area. There are no species of concern point observations in Section 36. However, this section is within the polygons for Grizzly Bear, Spotted Bat, and the Black-tailed Prairie Dog. The Grizzly Bear polygons represent Recovery Zone Boundaries, monitoring areas, and known distribution. The Black-tailed Prairie Dog's polygons represent prior observations of 200 meters from known activity. The Spotted Bat's Polygon indicates known occurrence of species in area within 10,000 meters.

Construction practices used in the spring development would be a one-time, short duration occurrence to limit disturbance and will not lead to negative cumulative effects on these species of concern.

FWP Biologist, Jenny Sika, did not have any comments on this specific project.

**10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

A Class I (literature review) level review was conducted by the DNRC staff archaeologist for the area of potential effect (APE). This entailed inspection of project maps, DNRC's sites/site leads database, land use records, General Land Office Survey Plats, and control cards. The Class I search revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE. No additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted in response to this proposed development. However, if previously unknown cultural or paleontological materials are identified during project related activities, all work will cease until a professional assessment of such resources can be made.

**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 a residential part of Lewis & Clark County, approximately 3 miles north of Lincoln Rd and 1 mile west of Interstate 90. The disturbed areas would be reseeded. Spring developments are typical use of infrastructure in rural Montana and this project would only slightly alter aesthetics of the projected area.

**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 demands for additional environmental resources are required for this project. No cumulative effects to environmental resources should result from this project.

**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.*

No other studies, plans, or projects were identified during the scoping for this project.

**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.*

No effects on cultural uniqueness and diversity would be anticipated.

**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.*

The grazing lease for Section 36 (which includes a total of 444.68 acres) generates approximately \$1,200 a year of revenue to Common Schools Trust.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Dylan Craft	<b>Date:</b> 11/14/2022
	<b>Title:</b> Land Use Specialist	

**V. FINDING**

**25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

**Alternative B:** Action Alternative: Allow the proponent to install a spring development on State lands.

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**


Installation of the spring development to utilize livestock over the lease and help better utilize the available forage. Mitigations outlined in this analysis are appropriate and sufficient. No long term or cumulative, negative impacts are anticipated from the implementation of this proposal.

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

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Heidi Crum
	<b>Title:</b> Helena Unit Manager
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 11/22/22