

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Montana Tunnels Mine, Inc SMZ Alternative Practice
Proposed Implementation Date:	August 15, 2022
Proponent:	James Lloyd, Lloyd Mining Services
Location:	Sec 7 & 8, T7N R4W
County:	Jefferson

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Montana Tunnels Mine is requesting an Alternative Practice to the Streamside Management Zone Law for Clancy Creek west of Jefferson City in Jefferson County, Montana. There are two requests. The first request is to remove trees >8 inches DBH below the minimum retention standards. The second request is to operate equipment within the SMZ to remove vegetation. Lineal extent along Clancy Creek is approximately 600 ft (see map attachment A2).

Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) completed an Environment Assessment in 2020 that analyzed the environmental impacts of an updated reclamation plan for the Montana Tunnels Mine area. The approved reclamation plan includes stabilizing the pit 'high wall' and relocating and restoring a stable, open channel for Clancy Creek. The existing Clancy Creek channel and SMZ would no longer exist in its current location. This alternative practice would allow the landowner to remove all vegetation using conventional logging equipment as part of the relocation and restoration of Clancy Creek.

This Alternative Practice EA is tiering to the DEQ *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

See Public Involvement section 1.8 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020.

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

See Table 1-1 of *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Alternative A – No Action

Do not issue the AP. The MTMI reclamation project could continue, but the timber within the existing SMZ would not be available for the landowner to sell.

Alternative B - Action

This alternative would allow for the timber removal and equipment operation actions outlined under *Type and Purpose of Action* above.

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.

A thorough discussion of impacts can be found in section 3.1 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020

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.

A thorough discussion of impacts can be found in section 3.2 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020

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.

A thorough discussion of impacts can be found in section 3.3 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020

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.

A thorough discussion of impacts can be found in section 3.4 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020

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.

A thorough discussion of impacts can be found in section 3.5 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020

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.

A thorough discussion of impacts can be found in section 3.6 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

A thorough discussion of impacts can be found in section 3.7 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020.

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.

A thorough discussion of impacts can be found in section 3.8 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020.

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.

None.

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.

Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update approved on July 24, 2020

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>RESOURCES</i> potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.• Explain <i>POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS</i> following each resource heading.• Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present. |
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14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

A thorough discussion of impacts can be found in section 3.11 of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTMI) Reclamation Plan Update* approved on July 24, 2020

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

None.

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 proposed project would provide employment for a small logging crew for a short period.

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.

Negligible effects with Action Alternative.

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

None.

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.

None. The project would be entirely on private lands.

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 is located on private property. Thus, recreation access to the public will not be affected.

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.

None.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

None.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

None.

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.

None.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Marc A. Vessar	Date: 8/10/2022
	Title: Forest Practice Program Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

The Action Alternative is selected. Issue an Alternative Practice that allows the operation of wheeled and tracked equipment in the SMZ and allows of all trees in the SMZ along the portion of Clancy Creek that is being relocated. The AP does not apply for areas of Clancy Creek that will remain in the current location.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:


Potential adverse impacts of this alternative practice are not significant. Potential direct, indirect and cumulative impacts were addressed by DEQ as part of the *Final Environmental Assessment, Montana Tunnels Mining (MTM) Reclamation Plan Update*. Mitigation measures required in the reclamation plan including the revegetation along Clancy Creek are sufficient.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS

More Detailed EA

No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Heidi Crum
	Title: Helena Unit Manager
Signature: 	Date: 8/11/22

Montana Tunnels Mine, LLC Alternative Practice Vicinity Map

Attachment A: Vicinity Map



Attachment A2: AP Site Map

