

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Outdoor Guide School on State Lands
Proposed Implementation Date:	April, 2014
Proponent:	William DeShaw
Location:	Sections 16, in T 2 South – R 6 West, T 3 South – R 7 West, and T 4 South – R 8 West
County:	Madison County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

William DeShaw of Whitehall Montana has proposed the use of three sections of state land in Madison County for an outdoor Professional Guide School. The use of the land will be for instructional purposes only. The curriculum will include, Advanced Land Navigation in rough varied terrain, American Red Cross Wilderness and Remote First Aid certification, and in field safety. Use of state land will be for approximately 8 days per month for 4 students and an instructor between the months of March through September. There will be no off road travel and no stock use allowed on the state land with this proposal. The Land Use License will be issued for one year to make sure it is working for all parties involved including Mr. DeShaw, the lessees, and the DNRC. If everything is working well the license can be renewed for a ten year time period with opportunity for renewal. Price of license may be adjusted up depending on the number of students attending the school.

II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

MT FWP Biologist, Dean Waltee & Vanna Boccadori
MT FWP Wardens, Kerry Wahl, Shane Brozovich, & Regan Dean
MT DNRC Archeologist, Patrick Rennie

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

No other government agencies are involved with this license proposal that the DNRC is aware of.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

A. No Action Alternative: MT DNRC would deny this request and proponent would need to find another location for his school.

B. Action Alternative: MT DNRC would grant William Deshaw the right to use three sections of state land in Madison County for an Outdoor Guide School.

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.

Section 16 Township 2 South – Range 6 West: There are three major soil types identified on this section, Nuley-Rock outcrop complex, (Parent material is Loamy residuum weathered from gneiss) Sebud-Hapgood complex (Parent material, Colluvium and or till derived from igneous and metamorphic rock.) and Sebud-Hapgood Rock outcrop complex. (Parent material is Colluvium and or till derived from igneous and metamorphic rock.) none of these soils have good land capability ratings 6e, 7s, & 6e ratings respectively. They are a mixture of sandy or rocky loams that are for the most part well drained.

Section 16, Township 3 South – Range 7 West: There are three major soil types identified on this section, Hurley-Rentsac-Rock outcrop complex (Parent material is Sandy and gravelly colluviums derived from granite and gneiss) Trimad-Kalsted complex (Parent material, Gravelly alluvium) and Kalsted sandy loam (Parent material Coarse-loamy alluvium.) Land capability classifications for these soils are 7e, 7e, & 4e. These three soil types are classified as well drained and the soil profile is course sandy loams, sandy loams and cobbly loams.

Section 16, Township 4 South – Range 8 West: There are three major soil types identified on this section, Pensore-Crago, cool Rock outcrop complex, (Parent material, Residuum weathered from limestone) Rentsac-Varney complex (Parent material weathered from calcareous sandstone) and Rensac very channery loam (Parent material, residuum weathered from calcareous sandstone). All three soils have a land capability rating of 7e. All three soils are rated as well drained. The typical soils profile are very channery loam soils.

All three sections have an existing open road that accesses the sections for recreational use and the roads are designated as being open on the Southwest Montana Interagency Travel Plan. None of these access roads are maintained or in great condition. However they do provide limited access. If the Action Alternative is chosen no off road travel would be allowed with the issuance of the license. All instruction of students would be done by foot travel so little disturbance of the soils is for seen. The proponent wanted to have more than one area to instruct in so if road conditions didn't allow access due to weather, he would have more than one option for his school on that particular day.

Both the "No Action" and "Action Alternative" should have no long term or cumulative impacts to the soils on these three sections of state land.

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.

The three sections being considered for this proposal don't have any significant surface water running through them. Section 16, T4S – R8W doesn't have any perennial streams running through it. Section 16, T3S – R 7W has Rochester Creek a perennial stream that runs through the NE NE ¼ of the section. Section 16, T2S – R6W has First Creek a perennial stream that runs through the W1/2 W1/2 of the section.

Because the proposal will not affect the surface flow of the streams no long term or cumulative effects or degradation of water quality are anticipated from either alternative.

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.

Neither of the alternatives, "Action" or "No Action" would have any long term or cumulative effect on air quality in the proposal area.

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.

All three sections are grazing sections that are currently being leased for grazing of livestock. All three sections receive low precipitation 9-10 inches of moisture/year. The sections are a mixture of native grasses and sage brush. Section 16, T2S – R6W (Bulldog Mountain) is high enough in elevation to support stands of scattered Douglas fir trees.

An NRIS search of the section didn't identify any rare plants or cover types on any of the sections. Because of the low impact of the action alternative which would include hiking over the terrain of these sections no long term or cumulative impacts from the licensed activity would be anticipated from the Action Alternative.

The No Action Alternative would not have any effect on the quality or quantity of vegetation cover types on any of the sections.

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.

These three sections support a variety of birds and wildlife both large and small. All three sections support large game animals that pass through the areas on a regular basis. The FWP biologists were not concerned with the proposed activity described in the Action Alternative. The sections have designated open roads or County roads running through them and because they are located on mid range slopes are accessed year round by lessees, and recreationists. If the proposal were licensed there may be a slight increase of use by people but it would not be a significant increase to the use that is already occurring. The access roads travel through the state sections and access larger tracts of public lands both BLM and Forest Service that are located near or adjacent to the state sections.

FWP Wildlife Biologist Vanna Boccadori was contacted concerning this proposed activity and was not concerned with any long term or cumulative impacts related to issuing a license for an Outdoor Professional Guide School.

Neither the "Action" nor "No Action Alternative" is anticipated to have any long term or cumulative impacts to bird or wildlife species or their habitat.

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.

Section 16, T 2 South – R 6 West: An NRIS search of this section was done by the state library and there weren't any sensitive species or species of special concern found or reported on this particular state section. No long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated from choosing either of the proposed alternatives for this proposal "No Action" or "Action Alternative".

Section 16, T 3 South – R 7 West: An NRIS search of the section revealed that there are three species of concern on this section; Greater Sage Grouse, Brewers Sparrow, and Sage Thrasher.

Greater Sage Grouse, (*Centrocercus urophasianus*) is considered a sensitive species rated S2 by the state of Montana and G3 - G4 globally. The bird is potentially at risk because of limited and or declining numbers,

range and or habitat, even though it may be abundant in some areas. This particular state section is not within a core sage grouse area and no lek's have been identified with in the state section. Sage Grouse probably use the section during periods of the year. This bird species is dependent on sage brush habitat for survival. The Action Alternative may cause light disturbance of the birds occasionally, but use of the section by people walking over the ground will not impact the sagebrush habitat and no long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated from either of the proposed alternatives.

Brewers Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*) this species is listed as a sensitive species by the BLM, and is listed as a S3B species by the state of Montana. The bird is at risk because of limited and or potentially declining numbers, range and or habitat even though it may be abundant in some areas. It is especially at risk during the breeding season. Brewers Sparrow has been sighted in the NW ¼ NW1/4 of this section in 1998. The area in which it roams in this location is approximately 772 acres. This bird species is dependent on sage brush habitat for survival. The action alternative has a small likelihood that disturbance of the bird could occur during the breeding season, however activity on the section from this proposal will be rare and no disturbance of sagebrush habitat will occur from either alternative. No long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated from either the "Action" or "No Action" alternative to Brewers sparrows.

Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*) this species is listed as a sensitive species by the BLM, and the state of Montana lists the species as a S3B. The bird is at risk because of limited and or potentially declining numbers, range and or habitat even though it may be abundant in some areas. It is especially at risk during the breeding season, but common in the winter. This bird species is dependent on sage brush habitat for survival and neither of the alternatives available for this proposal will have any long term or cumulative impacts to sage brush habitat or the bird species. The action alternative could result in occasional disturbance of the bird on occasion while participants are traveling through the sections or during instructional periods.

Section 16, Township 4 South – Range 8 West: An NRIS search of the section revealed that there are three species of concern on this section; Great Blue Heron, Ferruginous Hawk, Bald Eagle,

Great Blue Heron, (*Ardea Herodias*), & Bald Eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) are both listed as being sighted within this state section and rely on Riparian Habitat for their survival. This state section doesn't have the required habitat that is normally associated with these two bird species. The state section is approximately 2 miles away from the Big Hole River near Glen Montana. As described in the vegetation section of this checklist EA this section is made up of grassland and occasional sage brush habitat with rolling rough terrain. This habitat isn't normally associated with Bald Eagles and Great Blue Herron's. The birds have large home ranges and will occasionally be seen on this section but it lacks the necessary habitat for their survival. Because of this, neither of the proposed alternatives will have any long term or cumulative impacts on either the birds or their habitat.

Ferruginous Hawk, (*Buteo regalis*) this species is listed as a sensitive species by the BLM, and is listed as a S3B species by the state of Montana. The bird is at risk because of limited and or potentially declining numbers, range and or habitat even though it may be abundant in some areas. It is especially at risk during the breeding season. The general habitat that this species survives in is sagebrush grassland. The home range of a hawk in this area is described in the NRIS report as being approximately 3,090 acres. The hawks are quite mobile and use a large area for their survival. This proposal has a small footprint and no long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated from either alternative however the action alternative could cause minor disturbance of the hawk when the outdoor school is being operated on this section.

10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:

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

Patrick Renee, Archeologist for the DNRC was contacted concerning this proposed license and was not concerned with disturbance of any archaeological or paleontological resources being disturbed from either alternative. No recorded sites have been identified on any of the three state sections.

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.

Neither of the proposed alternatives would affect the aesthetics of these sections or the surrounding areas. If the "action" alternative was chosen there would be little disturbance to cause any long term or cumulative impacts to the aesthetic values of the licensed area. Neither the "No Action" nor the "Action" alternative would have any long term or cumulative affects to aesthetics on these state sections.

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.

Neither of the proposed alternatives would have any long term or cumulative effects on the environmental resources in this portion of Madison County.

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.

The MT DNRC, Dillon Unit is unaware of any or environmental documents being reviewed by other agencies at this time. A brief scoping period of three weeks was allotted to the people who were scoped and the Dillon Unit did not receive any comments

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.

The "Action Alternative" could present some safety risk due to increased use of the open rec-use roads that are located on the sections. This could cause possible traffic conflict with our surface lessees and the public. The "No Action" alternative would not create this safety concern.

15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

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

Neither alternative should change the agricultural and grazing use of the sections.

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 "Action" alternative will provide temporary employment for one instructor from March through September and provide possible employment for future outfitting guides who complete the school.

The "No Action" alternative will provide no employment opportunities to anyone

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 amount of tax revenue generated from the “Action” alternative would be small. There isn’t enough information to determine what that amount would be.

The “No Action” alternative would not generate any tax revenue.

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.

Neither alternative would increase the demand for government services.

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 aren’t any environmental plans or zoning requirements required on any of the three state sections involved in this proposal. Neither the “action” nor “no action” alternative will have any effect on locally adopted environmental plans and goals.

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 “Action” alternative should not affect recreational use activities on the three sections. The Outdoor Guide School will not be in operation during the hunting season so there will not be any conflict with hunters who may hunt on these state sections. The roads on the sections are open for travel so there will not be any new use except for a small group of people hiking around the sections at varied times from March through September.

The “No Action” alternative will have no impact on recreational use.

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.

Neither alternative will have any effect on density distributions of housing and population.

22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:

Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.

Neither alternative will affect social structures and mores.

23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:

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

The “Action” alternative should have little or no long term impacts or cumulative effects on cultural diversity or uniqueness.

The "No Action" alternative will have no effect on cultural uniqueness and diversity.

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.

If the "Action" alternative is chosen the license would generate \$500 for the common schools trust in 2014. The license will be issued for one year and the licensee will keep track of how much use he is generating from his school which will be shared with the Dillon Unit staff. Depending on the number of students taught and no conflicts arising after the first year the amount charged for the license may be adjusted in proportion to the money that it is generating for the licensee.

The "No Action" alternative will not generate any money for the common school trust.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Timothy Egan	Date: 3/25/14
	Title: Unit Manager	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Action Alternative

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

No significant potential impacts were identified in this EA.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Hoyt Richards	
	Title: CLO Area Manager	
Signature: /s/		Date: 6/12/14