

CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Name:	Strategic Mining & Exploration Wet Georgia Road LUL
Proposed Implementation Date:	Summer 2014
Proponent:	Strategic Mining & Exploration
Location:	Section 4 Township 4 South, Range 5 West & 33 Township 3 South, Range 5 West
County:	Madison County

I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The proponent has requested the DNRC to issue a Land Use License for the purpose of transporting waste rock from the Keynote and Georgia mining claims to the Golden Sunlight Mine in Whitehall, MT. A truck with a pup will carry a total of 28 tons of waste rock 4 times daily. The hauling is expected to last 30 to 40 days during the months of June through September.

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 Fish Wildlife & Parks
Dean Waltee, Wildlife Biologist
PO Box 758, Sheridan, Montana

Ed & Katherine Guinnane
PO Box 57
Alder, MT 59710

SRI River Holdings
PO Box 447
Twin Bridges, MT 59754

Bradley Livestock
PO Box 295
Twin Bridges, MT 59754

Joseph Witherspoon
280 Wet Georgia Rd
Twin Bridges, MT 59754

John Pollorena
PO Box 392
Twin Bridges, MT 59754

Madison County Commissioners
110 West Wallace
PO Box 278
Virginia City, MT 59755

Madison County Airport
Barbie Durham, Secretary
PO Box 278
Virginia City, MT 59755

The applicant for the Land Use License contacted the State grazing lessee, **Ed & Katherine Guinnane**, regarding this project and obtained a signed lessee settlement agreement.

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

The applicant has obtained permits to cross US Bureau of Land Management Lands.

3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

Proposed Alternative: Issue a Land Use License to Strategic Mining & Exploration to allow the use of 2,701 feet of road crossing State owned Lands in sections 4 Township 4 South Range 5 West and Section 33 Township 3 South Range 5 West.

No Action Alternative: Deny the request by Strategic Mining & Exploration to utilize the Wet Georgia Road across State Owned Lands.

III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

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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 any cumulative impacts to soils.

The existing road the proposed project would utilize is relatively level with less than a 5% grade. The proponent would be required to maintain the road to comply with Best Management Practices (BMP) standards by grading the road and maintaining proper drainage features. Minimal impacts 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.

The proponent would be required to maintain the road to comply with Best Management Practices (BMP) standards by grading the road and maintaining proper drainage features. The route would be inspected prior to project use to insure BMP compliance in order to minimize the potential for sedimentation into the adjacent stream reaches. Minimal impacts 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.

Increased dust from road use may occur, however, significant impacts to long term air quality are not anticipated. Reduced speeds from trucks may reduce the amount of dust produced.

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.

Due to the relatively flat terrain and the use of an existing established road, minimal impacts to the existing vegetative cover are anticipated. Increase motorized vehicle traffic would potentially carry noxious weed seed from other locations and would increase the likelihood of noxious weeds being introduced into the proposed project area. The proponent would monitor for weeds and spray where necessary for a period of two years after the project activities cease. Minimal impacts are expected.

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 variety of big game, small mammals, raptors, songbirds, and grouse use this area. Increased motorized travel in the proposed project area may alter wildlife movement and patterns. The Montana FWP identified the road is located in big game winter range. Project activities would occur only in the summer months. Minimal impacts are expected.

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 identified three vertebrate animals species of concern near the proposed project area. Townsend's big Eared Bat, Mountain Plover, and McCown's Longspur. Also identified were two vascular plants: Rocky Mountain Dandelion and Slender Indian Paintbrush.

The **Townsend's Big Eared Bat** is inferred to occupy the proposed project area. Due to the proposed project using existing roads and the short four-month duration, minimal impacts are expected.

Mountain Plover have been located approximately one-half mile to the north of the proposed project area. Due to the proposed project using existing roads and the short four-month duration, minimal impacts are expected.

McCown's Longspur have been located approximately two miles to the north of the proposed project area. Due to the proposed project using existing roads and the short four-month duration, minimal impacts are expected.

Rocky Mountain Dandelion is found within the proposed project area. Due to the proposed project using existing roads during one season, and the proponent spraying for noxious weeds for two years after the project activities cease, minimal impacts are expected.

Slender Indian Paintbrush is found within the proposed project area. Due to the proposed project using existing roads during one season, and the proponent spraying for noxious weeds for two years after the project activities cease, minimal impacts are expected.

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 results revealed that no cultural or paleontological resources have been identified in the APE on state land, and only a small portion has been inventoried to Class III standards.

Because the topographic setting and geology suggest a low to moderate likelihood of the presence of cultural or paleontological resources, no additional archaeological investigative work will be conducted. 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 proposed project area is not visible to any populated areas. Due to its remote location and four-month project duration, aesthetics should not be adversely affected.

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.

DNRC Range evaluations were conducted on Section 4 and 33 in 2004. A Northwestern Energy communications tower was installed on Section 4 in 2013.

IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION
<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>

14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.

Increased truck traffic could pose additional safety issues to recreational users driving on the road. Appropriate signage of the road to warn and alert recreational users would decrease the potential for possible accidents between the haul trucks and other vehicles. Minimal impacts are anticipated.

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.

None

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.

None

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.

The DNRC Administrative Rules for State Land Leasing ARM 36.25.101 through 36.25.141. Madison County does have an adopted Growth Policy that covers the entire County and the proposed action alternative does not conflict with any building or zoning laws in Madison County.

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.

Persons possessing a valid state lands recreational use license or FWP conservation license may conduct recreational activities in the proposed project area. The established existing road the proposed project would utilize is currently open to motorized vehicles. The proposed project would not affect the existing access for the general public.

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.

The proposed action has provided \$25 to the general fund in the form of an LUL application and would provide an additional \$478.50 for the common school trust LUL one-time rental fee.

EA Checklist Prepared By:	Name: Donald Copple	Date: July 8, 2014
	Title: Fire Supervisor, Dillon Unit	

V. FINDING

25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Proposed Alternative: Issue a Land Use License to Strategic Mining & Exploration to allow the use of 2,701 feet of road crossing State owned Lands in sections 4 Township 4 South Range 5 West and Section 33 Township 3 South Range 5 West.

26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

No long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated to state land by the issuing of this LUL. Mitigation measures include proponent keeping a record of the washing of every truck that uses the road for hauling purposes. A final blading of the road will assure that proper drainage and BMP's for road maintenance are followed. Proponent will spray the road for noxious weeds for two years after completion of the project.

27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

EA Checklist Approved By:	Name: Timothy Egan
	Title: Dillon Unit Manager
Signature: /S/ Timothy Egan	Date: July 8, 2014



Section 4 T4S, R5W & Section 33 T3S, R5W

**Strategic Mining & Exploration
Road Use Proposal**

- County Road
- Highway
- Open Road
- Proposed Road Use