

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Drummond Land Banking
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	Summer 2015
<b>Proponent:</b>	Washington Limestone Inc.
<b>Location:</b>	Southwest ¼ Section 36, Township 11 North, Range 13 West
<b>County:</b>	Granite County
<b>Sale #</b>	758

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

The Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) is proposing to offer for Sale at Public Auction, 160 acres of State Land currently held in Trust for the benefit of Common Schools (see Exhibit A – Map). Revenue generated from the sale of this parcel would be deposited into a special account for purchasing replacement lands meeting acquisition criteria related to legal access, productivity, potential income generation and potential for multiple uses. Replacement lands would then be held in Trust for the benefit of the Common School Trust. This proposed sale is being initiated through the Land Banking program (Montana Code Annotated 77-2-361 through 77-2-367) that was approved by the Legislature in 2003. The purpose of this program is to allow the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation to dispose, primarily, of parcels that are isolated and produce low income relative to similarly classified tracts and to allow the Department to purchase land with legal public access that can support multiple uses and will provide a rate of return equal to or greater than the land that were sold. Additionally, this program allows for the Trust land portfolio to be diversified, by disposing of grazing parcels that make up a majority of the Trust land holdings and acquire other types of land, such as cropland or timberlands, which typically produce greater return on investment.

The state grazing lessee, Washington Limestone LLC has nominated this parcel for sale. Washington Limestone has indicated they are considering a proposal to develop a limestone quarry on their private lands to the west of the nominated parcel. Should this quarry be developed, there is a possibility that a haul road would be constructed across the state land proposed for sale. The potential environmental impacts of development of a limestone quarry are speculative and are outside the scope of this analysis.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

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

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

A letter requesting input from the general public, special interest groups and other agencies was distributed on March 18<sup>th</sup> 2015, by DNRC's Southwestern Land Office. All input was to be provided back to Liz Mullins, SWLO planner, by April 20<sup>th</sup> 2015. Exhibit B, of this document, identifies individuals and groups who were contacted for their input. In addition, advertisements were placed in the Missoulian and Philipsburg Mail newspapers requesting input on the proposed action from any interested parties.

Two public comments were received in response to public scoping:

- A Native American Consultation Request Form was received from the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. DNRC provided a response to this inquiry.
- Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks asked if the state parcel bounded on the Clark Fork River. An individual from the DNRC Anaconda Unit Office conducted a field evaluation of the property and determined that the Clark Fork River did not touch the state parcel.

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

None

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### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**No Action Alternative:** Defer inclusion of this parcel in the Land Banking Program at this time. Maintain state ownership and continue to manage the property for revenue to the Common School Trust. Deferring the proposed sale at this time would not preclude this tract from being nominated for sale in the future.

**Action Alternative:** Offer approximately 160 acres of State administered School Trust Land for sale at Public Auction and subject to statutes addressing the Sale of State Land found in Title 77, Chapter 2, Part 3 of the Montana Codes Annotated. Proceeds from the sale would be deposited in the Land Bank Fund to be used in conjunction with proceeds from other sales for the purchase of other state land, easements, or improvements for the beneficiaries of the respective trusts, in this case Common Schools. However, per M.C.A. 77-2-304 the State would retain mineral rights.

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### 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.*
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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.*

#### **No Action/Action**

The parcel is underlain by bedrock geology of Madison limestone that has commercial mineral value and quartzite formations. Mineral rights would be retained by the State. The parcel has low oil and gas potential (Monte Mason, Minerals Bureau) Shallow bedrock is common on steeper slopes along a small ridge that forms east to west through the parcel. No MT DEQ remediation sites or mines were noted in the MTNRIS database search for these parcels. There are two roads across the parcel, one has some gravel surfacing, and the other is a low standard two-track road across rangeland.

The 160 acre state parcel supports mainly dry grassland with two small patches of mixed conifers/junipers. The rangeland soils are dryland sites, with shallow to moderately deep gravelly and cobbly clay loam soils on moderate foot-slopes of (5-40%). The northern boundary of the section is a high terrace of alluvium associated with the Clark Fork River. The alluvial soils are gravelly clay loams and sandy loams. Erosion potential is moderate and increases to moderately high on steeper slopes up to 40%. Soils in the parcel are droughty, supporting mainly dryland range.

No soil disturbance activities are planned as part of this action. There would be low risk of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts to geology and soil quality or stability as a result of implementing the proposed action or no-action alternatives.

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### 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.*

#### **No Action/Action**

The parcel is located in the Clark Fork River drainage about 1 ½ miles SW of Drummond, Montana. There are no natural surface waters or wetlands on the parcel. The section drains towards the north but there are no surface drainages to the Clark Fork River. This is a low precipitation site that receives about 13" of average precipitation during the year. Surface runoff on these well-drained soils is rare and mainly in the spring. Two irrigation ditches flow across the parcel. An irrigation ditch crosses the SE corner of the parcel and an irrigation ditch crosses the north end of the property along an upper alluvial terrace of the Clark Fork River.

We would expect continued land management uses of grazing similar to recent activities in compliance with Best Management Practices. Any proposed water rights uses would require an application for a beneficial water

use through the permit process administered by the DNRC Water Rights Bureau. Thus, there is low risk of direct, indirect or cumulative effects to water quality or beneficial uses anticipated with both the action and no-action alternative on these parcels of the proposed actions.

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**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 Action/Action:**

The parcel is located approximately 1 ½ miles SW of Drummond, MT in Granite County. Air quality is currently good. This tract has historically been used for cattle grazing and hay production. The parcel comprises a very small percentage of the Drummond area air shed. Sale of the property will have no effect on air quality.

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**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 last range inspection for this tract identified 4 separate range sites. Approximately 15 acres were historically irrigated hay ground. The remainder of the ownership is native grass range. Excessive grazing has caused deterioration of the plant community to the point of dominance by increaser grasses. The last grazing inspection for this tract was conducted in August of 2014. Forage production for the total 160 acres was estimated at 49 AUM's or .306 AUM's/ac. With decreaser grasses being dominated by increaser grasses, such as western wheat grass and assorted blue grasses.

**No Action:** This alternative would leave the ownership with the State Common School Trust and the Land Management with DNRC. Vegetation management would be anticipated to continue as it has in the recent past. Noxious weeds, principally Spotted Knapweed occurs in the area across ownerships, and also on the DNRC parcel. Control of State listed noxious weeds would continue to be emphasized. There would be minimal if any change in noxious weeds under the no action alternative.

**Action:** The tract would be sold at public auction, allowing anyone who is a qualified bidder to bid. The vegetative management would vary depending on the goals of the new owner. We would expect continued land management uses of grazing similar to recent activities in compliance with Best Management Practices. Weed control would be expected to continue to meet requirements of the Montana Weed Control Act and Granite County Weed District. We don't expect any direct or cumulative effects would occur to vegetation as a result of the proposed sale of this parcel.

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**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.*

**Terrestrial Wildlife Resources**

The 160 acre project area is largely a native sagebrush-grassland plant community. Past activities in the project area have included livestock grazing. The project area is surrounded by private lands, which have also experienced livestock grazing.

**No Action Alternative: Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects**

The project area would remain in DNRC ownership and the foreseeable predominant land use would be livestock grazing. No changes to the existing habitats would be anticipated. Wildlife use of the project area would be expected to be similar to present levels. No changes in recreational use would be anticipated; existing levels of human disturbance would not appreciably change. No appreciable changes to the existing big game winter range, summer range, or security habitats would be anticipated. No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to wildlife would be anticipated since: 1) no appreciable changes to existing habitats would occur; 2) human

disturbance levels would not be anticipated to change; and 3) no changes in wildlife use would be expected to occur.

**Action Alternative: Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects**

DNRC would relinquish ownership of the project area under the Land Banking process and a private party would purchase the property. Beyond this expectation, one must speculate on further outcomes regarding future land uses that would occur outside of DNRC control following purchase by a buyer. Transferring ownership of the parcel to another party would not have any direct or indirect effects on any wildlife species or habitats, however, under the action alternative continued management, and/or future development that may erode wildlife habitat values could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.

Should traditional management (i.e., livestock grazing) continue in the project area, minor direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to wildlife would be anticipated. Should more intensive activities, such as development or subdivision, occur, this alternative could have more effects to wildlife by contributing to temporary loss of and/or more permanent habitat loss for a number of wildlife species in the future, most of which are currently relatively common in Montana. Any activities that may occur on the project area would be additive to other cumulative effects that may be associated with historic land uses on nearby properties (e.g. livestock grazing, logging, and existing human developments etc.). Wildlife use of the project area would not immediately change, but could be subject to additional disturbance and/or displacement depending on the ultimate uses of the parcel by the new owners.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to wildlife would be anticipated since: 1) no appreciable changes to existing habitats would occur immediately, however long-term management objectives would be unknown and persistence of any given habitat condition would not be certain; 2) human disturbance levels would not be anticipated to change in the immediate future, however uncertainty associated with future use could introduce additional human disturbance and displacement; and 3) no appreciable changes in wildlife use would be expected to occur unless major changes in land use were to undertaken by the new owner.

**Aquatic Life**

There are no surface waters within the parcel that support fish, based on field reviews and biologist assessment. There would be no direct, in-direct or cumulative effects to aquatic life or fish with implementation of the action or o-action alternatives.

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**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.*

**Terrestrial Wildlife Resources**

The 160 acre project area is largely a native sagebrush-grassland plant community. Past activities in the project area have included livestock grazing. The project area is surrounded by private lands, which have also experienced livestock grazing. See table below for a full review of existing habitats for terrestrial threatened, endangered, and sensitive wildlife species.

**No Action Alternative: Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects**

The project area would remain in DNRC ownership and the foreseeable predominant land use would be livestock grazing. No further habitat-altering land uses would occur with this alternative, thus no changes to the existing habitats or levels of use by any of the terrestrial threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife species would be anticipated. Existing levels of human disturbance would not appreciably change. No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to terrestrial threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife species would be anticipated since: 1) no appreciable changes to existing habitats would occur; 2) human disturbance levels would not be anticipated to change; and 3) no changes in wildlife use would be expected to occur.

**Action Alternative: Direct, Indirect, and Cumulative Effects**

DNRC would relinquish ownership of the project area under the Land Banking process and a private party would purchase the property. Beyond this expectation, one must speculate on further outcomes regarding future land uses that would occur outside of DNRC control following the disposal. Transferring ownership of the parcel to another party would not have any direct or indirect effects on any terrestrial endangered, threatened, or

sensitive wildlife species or habitats, however, under the action alternative continued management, and/or future development that may erode wildlife habitat values could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.

Should traditional management (i.e., livestock grazing) continue in the project area, minor direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to terrestrial threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife species would be anticipated. Should more intensive activities, such as development or subdivision, occur, this alternative could have slightly more effects to terrestrial threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife species by contributing to temporary loss of and/or more permanent habitat loss for a number of wildlife species in the future. Any activities that may occur on the project area would be additive to other cumulative effects that may be associated with historic land uses on nearby properties (e.g. livestock grazing, logging, and existing human developments etc.). Wildlife use of the project area would not immediately change, but could be subject to additional disturbance and/or displacement depending on the ultimate uses of the parcel by the new owners.

No direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to terrestrial threatened, endangered, or sensitive wildlife species would be anticipated since: 1) no appreciable changes to existing habitats would occur immediately, however long-term management objectives would be unknown and persistence of any given habitat condition would not be certain; 2) human disturbance levels would not be anticipated to change in the immediate future, however uncertainty associated with future use could introduce additional human disturbance and displacement; and 3) no appreciable changes in wildlife use would be expected to occur unless major changes in land use were to undertaken by the new owner.

#### Threatened Endangered and Sensitive Species:

The Natural Heritage Program was queried for species of concern which may inhabit this tract. The results of this query are listed in the table below. It is unlikely that any of these animals and plants occupy the tract involved in this proposal due to a lack of habitat.

Threatened and Endangered Species	[Y/N] Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures N = Not Present or No Impact is Likely to Occur Y = Impacts May Occur (Explain Below)
<b>THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES</b>	
Grizzly bear ( <i>Ursus arctos</i> ) Habitat: Recovery areas, security from human activity	[ N ] The project area is approximately 27 miles south of the NCDE Recovery Area (USFWS 1993), and 5 miles south of occupied grizzly bear habitat (Wittinger et al. 2002). However, grizzly bears are increasingly being documented south of the recovery zone (J. Jonkel, MT FWP, personal communication, 2013). Transferring ownership of the parcel would not have any direct or immediate indirect effect on any wildlife species or their habitat. Should traditional uses (i.e., livestock grazing) continue, negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to grizzly bears would be anticipated. However, the proposed action could allow for greater future cumulative risk of development and loss of wildlife habitat that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.
Canada lynx ( <i>Felis lynx</i> ) Habitat: Subalpine fir habitat types, dense sapling, old forest, deep snow zone	[ N ] No lynx habitats occur in the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects would be anticipated to lynx.
<b>DNRC Sensitive Species</b>	[Y/N] Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures N = Not Present or No Impact is Likely to Occur Y = Impacts May Occur (Explain Below)

<p>Bald eagle (<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>) Habitat: Late-successional forest less than 1 mile from open water</p>	<p>[ N ] The project area is roughly 1.6 miles from the Flint Creek bald eagle territory on the Clark Fork River. Incidental use during the winter could be possible while foraging on carrion. Transferring ownership of the parcel would not have any direct or immediate indirect effect on any wildlife species or their habitat. Should traditional uses (i.e., livestock grazing) continue, negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to bald eagles would be anticipated. However, the proposed action could allow for greater future cumulative risk of development and loss of wildlife habitat that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.</p>
<p>Black-backed woodpecker (<i>Picoides arcticus</i>) Habitat: Mature to old burned or beetle-infested forest</p>	<p>[ N ] No recently (less than 5 years) burned areas are in the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to black-backed woodpeckers would be expected to occur as a result of either alternative.</p>
<p>Coeur d'Alene salamander (<i>Plethodon idahoensis</i>) Habitat: Waterfall spray zones, talus near cascading streams</p>	<p>[ N ] No moist talus or streamside talus habitat occurs in the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to Coeur d'Alene salamanders would be expected to occur as a result of either alternative.</p>
<p>Columbian sharp-tailed grouse (<i>Tympanuchus phasianellus columbianus</i>) Habitat: Grassland, shrubland, riparian, agriculture</p>	<p>[ N ] Although grassland/shrubland communities occur in the project area, recent research indicates Columbian sharp-tailed grouse likely never inhabited western Montana (Montana Natural Heritage Program and Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, 2015). Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to Columbian sharp-tailed grouse would be expected to occur as a result of either alternative.</p>
<p>Common loon (<i>Gavia immer</i>) Habitat: Cold mountain lakes, nest in emergent vegetation</p>	<p>[ N ] No suitable lakes occur in the project area. Thus no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to common loons would be expected under either alternative.</p>
<p>Fisher (<i>Martes pennanti</i>) Habitat: Dense mature to old forest less than 6,000 feet in elevation and riparian</p>	<p>[ N ] No suitable fisher cover types exist in the project area. Given the lack of habitat, the limited area, the proximity to human developments, and the surrounding landscape, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to fisher would be anticipated.</p>
<p>Flammulated owl (<i>Otus flammeolus</i>) Habitat: Late-successional ponderosa pine and Douglas-fir forest</p>	<p>[ N ] No suitable flammulated owl habitats occur in the project area. Thus no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to flammulated owls would be expected under either alternative.</p>
<p>Gray Wolf (<i>Canis lupus</i>) Habitat: Ample big game populations, security from human activities</p>	<p>[ N ] Wolves have not been documented in the project area and the nearest known wolf pack is roughly 14 miles away. Little or no use of the project area would be anticipated. Transferring ownership of the parcel would not have any direct or immediate indirect effect on any wildlife species or their habitat. Should traditional uses (i.e., livestock grazing) continue, negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to gray wolves would be anticipated. However, the proposed action could allow for greater future cumulative risk of development and loss of wildlife habitat that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.</p>
<p>Harlequin duck (<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>) Habitat: White-water streams, boulder and cobble substrates</p>	<p>[ N ] No suitable high-gradient stream or river habitats occur in the project area. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to harlequin ducks would be expected to occur as a result of either alternative.</p>

Mountain Plover ( <i>Charadrius montanus</i> ) Habitat: Short-grass prairie, alkaline flats, and prairie dog towns	[ N ] No prairie dog colonies or other suitable shortgrass prairie habitats occur in the project area. The project area is not within the known range of Mountain plovers in Montana. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to mountain plovers would be anticipated to occur as a result of either alternative.
Northern bog lemming ( <i>Synaptomys borealis</i> ) Habitat: Sphagnum meadows, bogs, fens with thick moss mats	[ N ] No suitable sphagnum bogs or fens occur in the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to northern bog lemmings would be expected to occur as a result of either alternative.
Peregrine falcon ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> ) Habitat: Cliff features near open foraging areas and/or wetlands	[ N ] No preferred cliff features suitable for use by peregrine falcons occur in the project area, but peregrine falcons have nested a couple of miles upstream from the project area on the Clark Fork River. Transferring ownership of the parcel would not have any direct or immediate indirect effect on any wildlife species or their habitat. Should traditional uses (i.e., livestock grazing) continue, negligible direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to peregrine falcons would be anticipated. However, the proposed action could allow for greater future cumulative risk of development and loss of wildlife habitat that could occur outside of the DNRC's public environmental review process.
Pileated woodpecker ( <i>Dryocopus pileatus</i> ) Habitat: Late-successional ponderosa pine and larch-fir forest	[ N ] No suitable pileated woodpecker habitat exists in the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to pileated woodpeckers would be expected to occur as a result of either alternative.
Townsend's big-eared bat ( <i>Plecotus townsendii</i> ) Habitat: Caves, caverns, old mines	[ N ] DNRC is unaware of any mines or caves within the project area or close vicinity that would be suitable for use by Townsend's big-eared bats. Thus, no direct, indirect or cumulative effects to Townsend's big-eared bats would be expected to occur as a result of either alternative.
Wolverine ( <i>Gulo gulo</i> ) Habitat: Alpine tundra and high-elevation boreal forests, areas with persistent spring snow.	[ N ] No suitable wolverine habitats occur in the project area. Thus, no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects to wolverines would be expected to occur as a result of either alternative.

#### **Fish and Wetlands**

No sensitive fish species, sensitive wetlands or sensitive plants are known to occur on the DNRC parcel. No wetlands occur on this ownership. There would be no direct, in-direct or cumulative effects to aquatic life or fish with implementation of the action or no-action alternatives.

#### **10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

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

#### **No Action/Action:**

Two Class III inventories for Antiquities have been conducted. Both of these inventories are available upon request and are contained in the project file. A single cultural resource (Lororensen ditch) was formally documented and evaluated.

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**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 Action/Action:**

There are no prominent topographic features on the state land. It does not provide any unique scenic quality that is not also provided on adjacent lands. There is a good view of the Clark Fork River and Flint mountain range from this tract. It is located within one mile of Interstate 90 and .25 miles of the Clark Fork River. No direct or cumulative impact to aesthetics is anticipated under either alternative.

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**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.*

This 160 acre parcel is part of the Common School Trust of which there are more than 4,628,133 acres within the state. The potential sale of this parcel would affect an extremely small percentage of the Common School Trust land.

**No Action:** Existing land management activities would likely continue as they did in 2015, under either alternative.

**Action:** The potential transfer of ownership would not have any impact or demands on environmental resources of land, water, air or energy.

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**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 Action/Action Alternative:**

No impacts are anticipated under either alternative.

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**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.*

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**14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

**No Action/Action Alternative:**

It is unlikely that either alternative would impact human health and safety

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**15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:**

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

This parcel is currently leased for livestock grazing purposes with an estimated annual carrying capacity of 49 AUM's. The current lessee, Washington Limestone Inc., owns property, surrounding this 1/4 section on all four sides. As mentioned above there is a possibility that industrial use of this tract for transportation may occur under the action alternative. This tract has not been leased for any other purposes then grazing and past hay production.

Commercial mineral potential is low.

The Land Board is prohibited by both State and Federal Statutes from selling school trust mineral estates. Selling the surface estate therefore leaves the Department with retained ownership of the split mineral estate. If sold, the transfer deed would contain the standard mineral reservation clause, including the right to access and utilize the sub-surface estate.



**No Action Alternative:**

It is anticipated that if this tract is not sold it would continue to be used for grazing by the lessee. Current revenue from grazing use is approximately \$706/year. This is .306 AUM's/ac. which is slightly above the statewide average for grazing productivity.

**Action:**

The 160 acres would be appraised by a professional land appraiser to determine full market value. This value would be the minimum acceptable bid. The land would be advertised for sale at a public auction. The Department estimates the value of this tract at approximately \$1,200/acre (based upon prior land banking sales in this vicinity) with an estimated value of \$192,000 ( $160 \times \$1,200/\text{ac} = \$192,000$ ), with the revenues being deposited in the land banking account for future purchase of property by the land board. Any future change in land use would be subject to review under state and local regulations intended to address impacts to local industrial, commercial and agricultural activities. No direct or cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposal. Per M.C.A. 77-2-304 the State would retain the subsurface mineral rights.

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**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.*

**No Action/Action:**

Neither alternative would produce an impact on the quantity and distribution of employment.

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**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.*

**No Action;**

The land would not be taxed because it would continue to be held by the State of Montana in Trust for Montana's Educational System. Lessee owned Improvements, such as center pivots, would be taxed, as they currently are.

**Action Alternative:**

Selling the Trust Land to a private individual would make this tract subject to all local and State property taxes. This would put new land on the county tax base, thus increasing revenue to Granite County and the State

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**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*

**No Action/Action:**

Neither alternative would have an impact on government services.

Any future uses including development of the parcel would be subject to applicable local and state regulations.

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**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.*

**No Action**

This piece of ground would remain in agricultural production for the foreseeable future.

**Action:**

The parcel is un-zoned and is characterized by open rangelands and agricultural uses. There is a subdivision approximately one (1) mile from the parcel, Antelope Springs which is comprised of 36 lots.

The DNRC manages State Trust Lands for residential development under the Real Estate Management Plan 2005. The Plan defines residential development as a density of one (1) residential unit per 25 acres or less or by allowing development on more than 25% of the parent parcel. If the density exceeds 25% of the parcel or is

denser than 1 dwelling unit per 25 acres, then the development counts towards the threshold caps for development in the Real Estate Management Plan.

This piece of ground would likely remain in grazing production for the foreseeable future. Any proposal to develop these properties would be subject to review and approval under state and local regulations applicable to Granite County.

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**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.*

This 160 acre tract of Trust land is not legally accessible to the public. The private land has not historically been available to the general public for recreational use.

**No Action Alternative:**

No change from existing conditions is anticipated

**Action Alternative:**

The action alternative would sell this tract to the highest bidder. It would be up to the new owner to determine the access they are willing to authorize.

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**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.*

**No Action/Action:**

The potential sale of this parcel would not require additional housing or change the population. It is unknown what land uses would occur under new ownership. Any future proposal to develop the property would be subject to review under State and local regulations.

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**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

**No Action /Action Alternative:**

There are no native, unique or traditional lifestyles or communities in the vicinity that would be impacted by either alternative.

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**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

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

**No Action/Action:**

The potential sale of the state land would not directly or cumulatively impact cultural uniqueness or 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.*

**No Action Alternative:**

The State is not committed to any particular action under the no action alternative. It is likely that leasing this tract for grazing would continue under this alternative. If Washington Limestone were to propose hauling limestone ore across this tract, an application and associated environmental analysis would be required.

**Action**

The 160 acres would be sold for an estimated value of \$192,000, with the revenues being deposited in the land banking account for future acquisitions of land with higher revenue generating potential.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Fred Staedler	<b>Date:</b> 6-26-15
	<b>Title:</b> Anaconda Unit Manager	

**V. FINDING****25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:**

I select the Action Alternative. I recommend the parcel be submitted for preliminary Land Board approval for sale under the land banking program.

**26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:**

Sale of this property will not result in significant environmental impacts.

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

☐ EIS      ☐ More Detailed EA      ☒ No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Robert H. Storer
	<b>Title:</b> Trust Lands Program Manager Southwestern Land Office
<b>Signature:</b> <i>Robert H. Storer</i>	<b>Date:</b> <i>June 29, 2015</i>



## Exhibit B

Business	Name	Address	Town	State	Zip
Montana Environmental Information Center	Anne Hedges	PO Box 1184	Helena	MT	59624
Montana Wildlife Federation	Bill Orsello/Stan Prasier	PO Box 1175	Helena	MT	59624
Montana School Boards Association	Bob Vogel	863 Great Northern Blvd., Ste 201	Helena	MT	59601-3398
	Daniel Berube	27 Cedar Lake Dr.	Butte	MT	59701
Montana Wood Products	Julia Alamus	PO Box 1967	Missoula	MT	59805
Montana Association Of Counties	Harold Blattle	2715 Skyway Dr.	Helena	MT	59601
	Jack Atcheson, Jr.	3210 Ottawa	Gusta	MT	59701
	Janet Ellis	PO Box 595	Helena	MT	59624
Montana Audubon	Leslie Taylor	P.O. Box 172440	Bozeman	MT	59717-0001
Mtu Boatsmen	John Cuzumins	502 S 19th, SUITE 204	Bozeman	MT	59714
Mt Farm Bureau Federation	Ryle Hardin	9500 Blacktail Rd.	Dillon	MT	59725
Metador Castle Co.	Roni Keller	32 Campus Dr.	Missoula	MT	59812-0001
University Of Montana	Danika James	80X 202501	Helena	MT	59620-2501
Office Of Public Instruction	Attn: Darlene Edge	PO Box 200701	Helena	MT	59620-0701
Dept Of Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Attn: Sharon Rose	2201 Spough Road	Missoula	MT	59804
Dept Of Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Attn: Bonnie Lovelace	PO Box 200901	Helena	MT	59620-0901
Dept. Of Environmental Quality	Attn: Carla Haas	PO Box 201001	Helena	MT	59620-1001
Dept Of Transportation		PO BOX 925	Philipsburg	MT	59654
Granite County Commissioners			Missoula	MT	59801
Usda Forest Service	Northern Regional Headquarters	308 East 6th St.	Anaconda Montana	MT	59711
	Kathy Swanson	1205 West 3rd St.	Anaconda Montana	MT	59711
	Gene Vaccovich	101 International Road	Missoula	MT	59808
Washington Limestone	Yad Dale	600 Shields Ave	Butte	MT	59701
	Davis Rode	PO BOX 286	Drummond	MT	59632-0286
	Palmer Larry Alan & Mickey Lee	96 OLD US HIGHWAY 10A	Drummond	MT	59632-0738
Montana Wildlife Federation	Craig Sharpe And Larry Copenhaver	PO Box 1175	Helena	MT	59624
Montana Association Of Land Trust (Malt)	Stan Malt	PO Box 675	Whitehall	MT	59759
Tribal Historic Preservation Office	Darlene Conrad	PO Box 396	Fl. Washable	WY	82514
Eastern Shoshone Tribe Of The Wind River Reservation	Wilfred Ferns	P.O. Box 633	Fl. Washable	WY	82514
The Blackfoot Nation Tribal Historic Preservation	John Murray	PO Box 2809	Browning	MT	59417
Chippewa Cree Tribe Of The Rocky Boy's Reservation	Alvin Windy Boy	RR 1 #544	Box Elder	MT	59521
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Of The Flathead Reservation	Francis Acid	PO Box 278	Pablo	MT	59832
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Of The Flathead Reservation	ira Malt	PO Box 278	Pablo	MT	59835
The Crow Tribe Of Indians	Hubert Two Leggins	PO Box 159	Crow Agency	MT	59022
Northern Cheyenne	Conrad Fisher	PO Box 128	Lame Deer	MT	59043
Fort Belknap Tribal Office	Monty Balgarde	RR 1 Box 66	Harlem	MT	59516
Fort Peck Tribes	Curley Youpee	POB 1027	Poplar	MT	59235
Florn Creek Timber Company Lp	Jerry Swenson	PO BOX 1990	Columbia Falls	MT	59917
Montana Wilderness Assoc.		205 EWBNS	Helena	MT	59601
Montrust		PO BOX 1111	Missoula	MT	59805
Five Valley'S Land Trust		PO BOX 8953	Missoula	MT	59807
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation		PO BOX 8349	Missoula	MT	59807-8249
Friends Of The Wild Swan		PO BOX 5109	Swan Lake	MT	59911
Wildwest Institute	Jeff Jazl, Ecosystems Defense	PO BOX 7998	Missoula	MT	59807
Alliance For The Wild Rockies		PO BOX 505	Helena	MT	59624
Mt Stockgrowers Association	Jay Bodner	420 N CALIFORNIA	Helena	MT	59601
Montana Smart Growth Coalition	Betsy Hands	114 W. Pine Street, Suite 1	Missoula	MT	59802
Montana Trout Unlimited	Bruce Farling	PO BOX 7186	Missoula	MT	59807
Montana River Action Network	Donald Kern	PO BOX 383	Helena	MT	59634
Montana Wildlife Federation	Dave Majors	3289 WOOD DUCK LAKE	Stevensville	MT	59870
Western Mt Fish & Game Assoc.	Jay Erickson	PO Box 4294	Missoula	MT	59805
Missoula Land Reliance	Bruce Bagbee	PO BOX 255	Helena	MT	59624
American Public Land Exchange	John Gibson	125 BANK ST, SUITE 610	Missoula	MT	59802
Lewin	Jack Jones	615 3RD AVE N	Great Falls	MT	59401
Public Lands Access Assoc. Inc.		3028 AVE E	Billings	MT	59102
Montana Coalition For Appropriate Mgmt Of State Lands		3014 WINE ST	Butte	MT	59701
Hellgate Hunters & Anglers		PO BOX 7792	Missoula	MT	59807
Greater Yellowstone Coalition		PO BOX 1874	Bozeman	MT	59711
Foundation For North American Wild Sheep		720 ALLI N AVE	Cody	WY	82414
National Wildlife Federation	Rich Day	240 N HIGGINS AVE	Missoula	MT	59802
Defenders Of Wildlife		140 S 4TH ST W	Missoula	MT	59801
Montana Bowhunters Assoc		4503 BARBARA LAKE	Missoula	MT	59803
Anaconda Sportsman Club	Lorry Thomas	#2 CHERRY	Anaconda	MT	59711
Skyline Sportsmans Association		PO Box 173	Butte	MT	59701
	Robert P & Sherilee Lund	100 Lennox Road	Hall	MT	59837-9616
	Town Of Drummond	P.O. Box 195	Drummond	MT	59832-0195
	Larry & Rhonda Brown	P.O. Box 224	Drummond	MT	59832-0224
	Roger Cousineau	P.O. Box 22	Drummond	MT	59832-0022
	John & Dolores Pender	11 Hoover Road	Drummond	MT	59832-0712
	Bryon & Doyle Hill	5 Hoover Road	Drummond	MT	59832-0712
	Lawrence & Frankie Fiddler	P.O. Box 160	Drummond	MT	59832-0160
	Richard Ballinger	P.O. Box 444	Drummond	MT	59832-0444
	Lori Nelson	241 Lennox Road	Hall	MT	59837-0618
	Robert Weaver	P.O. Box 376	Drummond	MT	59832-0376
	Shelby Alane	P.O. Box 1107	Seeley Lake	MT	59868-1107
	Randy Dejong	4640 Bailey	Missoula	MT	59808
	Jonathan & Mary Knight	11876 Frenchtown Frontage Road	Missoula	MT	59808-5324
	Tanzer Cochran	4404 Expressway Suite 201	Missoula	MT	59808-1485
	Dale & Robin Cochran	P.O. Box 802	Drummond	MT	59832-0902
	Kenny & Kathie Kane	P.O. Box 238	Drummond	MT	59832-0502
	Uss Jesse	78 Old US Highway 10A	Drummond	MT	59832-0738
	Calvin Wight	5284 Mt. Highway 1	Hall	MT	59837-0705
	Richard & Cheryl Robinson	P.O. Box 276	Drummond	MT	59832-0276
	Palmer Electrical Contracting Inc.	96 Old US Highway 10A	Drummond	MT	59832-0738
	Richard & Marion Skaggs	P.O. Box 203	Hall	MT	59837-0203
	Alven & Violet Bergman	6245 Mt. Highway 1	Drummond	MT	59832-0720
	William Wengler	3340 Darnall Lane	Missoula	MT	59809-2727
	Susan & Randy Peterson	PO Box 427	Drummond	MT	59832-0427
	Sheldon & Corine Bradshaw	3403 Alabam Ave.	Alexandria	VA	22305-1796
	Colin & Harriet Mentzer	P.O. Box 372	Drummond	MT	59832-0372