



UPLAND GAME BIRD HABITAT ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM PROJECT PROPOSAL AND EVALUATION

Proposal

Cooperator's Name: Veebaray Company **Date of Evaluation:** February 2016

Submit 2 aerial projects maps that depict (1) the detailed proposed project and access areas with TRS and (2) a BLM map that shows the project indicated and the nearest major town.

- 1. Describe the current habitat components (e.g., winter cover, food, CRP or other nesting cover) in the project area and, if appropriate, adjacent lands that provide upland game bird habitat. Are wetlands or other special habitat features located on or near this property?**

The Veebaray Company Ranch is located in Enid, Montana. The ranch consists of 15,995.62 total acres made up of 13,964.65 deeded acres, 1,912.65 DNRC acres, and 118.32 BLM acres. See Exhibit A for project location map.

The ranch comprises native range interspersed with woody draws. Topography ranges from flat/rolling hills to badlands. Dominant woody species include elm, ash, juniper, chokecherry, skunkbush sumac, rose, buffaloberry, hawthorn, and western snowberry. The flatter areas are mostly native range, but do contain some cropland that has been converted to tame grass pastures. The property also includes well established shelterbelts which contain blue spruce, chokecherry, cottonwood, green ash, buffaloberry, plum, Russian olive, ponderosa pine, and lilac. Neighboring lands are enrolled in FWP habitat and access programs that include CRP, food plots, and block management areas. See Exhibit B for hunter access surrounding the Veebaray project area.

- 2. Describe the proposed project and attach proposed species list, if relevant. What habitat feature is most limited and how will this project address this limitation?**

The ranch has recently changed managers. In the past, the ranch was not overstocked and was rotated in a deferred manner, but rotation was based on convenience rather than timing. The previous management resulted in uneven pasture use. The property owners and new ranch manager would like to implement rest-rotational grazing to better distribute cattle and enhance rangeland health. The project is proposing to implement three 3 pasture rest-rotational systems. Systems are labeled as Heifer system, A system, and B system. See Exhibit C for project design and Exhibit D for map of pasture use. Fencing and water will need to be developed in order to implement each rest-rotational system. Total project costs for the summer grazing systems are \$369,130, total project costs are based off actual bids. The UGBHEP portion is \$179,565 and the cooperator portion is \$179,565, and the American Bird Conservancy portion is \$10,000. See Exhibit E for cost estimates. Property legal description: 22N 54E Sections 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36 21N 54E Sections 2, 3, 4, 5.

Nest cover is the primary limiting factor; brood rearing and winter cover components, although not limiting, would benefit from better grazing management . Basic vegetation diversity and the necessary habitat components are present to support abundant upland bird populations. Under the current grazing prescription little residual cover exists and some winter cover components (brush species) are over-utilized. Institution of 3 pasture rest rotation grazing will improve native plant communities which will enhance nesting, brood rearing, and winter cover for upland birds. This will be accomplished by providing needed residual cover in rested pastures and provide the necessary rest for a more acceptable level of utilization of winter cover components. Wildlife and livestock will both benefit from improvement in the overall health and carrying capacity of the range.

3. How does this project fulfill regional priority needs? Will this project contribute to other habitat projects in the area?

This project fulfills two regional priority needs:

Grasslands and sagebrush grasslands are a regional focus area. As stated in the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program Strategic Plan, *Region 7 is primarily noted for native prairie grouse populations. The large tracts of relatively undisturbed native grasslands and sagebrush grasslands are the main reason large, sustainable populations of native grouse species exist in the Region. Regional Goal: Develop and maintain grazing management projects to improve and/or maintain productive nesting and brood rearing cover. Enhance or provide critical winter habitat.*

Richland, Dawson, Wibaux, Fallon, and Prairie Counties are regional focus counties. As stated in the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program Strategic Plan, *These counties encompass the most ideal pheasant habitat in Region 7. Primary factors to limiting pheasant populations are old nesting cover/CRP stands that lack productivity and food sources. Secondary limiting factor is lack of suitable winter habitat important in carrying over pheasants. Regional Goal: Maintain productive nesting cover while also providing critical winter habitat and expanded hunting opportunities. Where appropriate, improve winter food source availability.*

The proposed project is located in both Richland and Dawson Counties. These rotational systems improve nesting cover, brood rearing cover, and winter cover, which are expected to benefit all upland game birds in the area.

4. What upland game bird species are present in the local area? Which upland game bird species will benefit from this project?

Sharp-tailed grouse, ring-necked pheasant, and gray partridge and Merriam's Turkey are all present in the local area and can all be expected to benefit from the project. Sixteen unconfirmed sharp-tailed grouse leks occur on or within 3 miles of the property.

5. Does the landowner have a history of providing hunter access and/or habitat enhancement? What is the estimated annual hunter-day?

Historically, the Veebaray Ranch has been closed to the public for hunting and was outfitted for the last 7 years. Recently, the ranch terminated their outfitting lease. Both the new manager and the landowner are interested in block management and currently working with the Region 7 Block Management Program Coordinator on enrollment. The ranch manager has experience with block management and is a proponent of the program. The cooperators are aware of the UGBEP's access requirements and are comfortable with these terms. The property could provide 200+ hunter-days for upland game birds, and accommodate more when enrolled in block management.

6. How will this project be established and maintained? What is the likelihood of long term success (e.g., cooperator commitment, moisture requirements, soils, etc.)?

The Veebaray Company has already has already started working with NRCS soil conservationists, engineers, and geologists to design water development and fencing plans. They have received actual bids on project related development. The time they have spent working with NRCS, their eagerness to work with MFWP, and their personal financial investment in this project demonstrates both commitment and a high likelihood of success.

7. Cost estimates and timeline.

Proposed project startup date(s) Begin development in summer of 2016 and implement rest-rotational system in spring of 2017

Total project acres: 12,145

Total access acres: approximately 15,995.62

Total project cost: \$369,130

- ◆ UGBEP Cost: This is a native range enhancement project. Haying and cultivating is not permitted on the habitat site. Native rangeland restoration will occur on 12,145 acres, with an UGBHEP cost of \$179,565, and a contract length of 21 years. Cost per acre is \$.72 per acre per year. Agreement length is 21 years. This term will begin once infrastructure is in place and implementation of the 3 pasture-rest rotational systems occurs.
- ◆ Cooperator Cost: \$179,565
- ◆ Other Cost (include organization): American Bird Conservancy (ABC) \$10,000

Biologist's Additional Information:

If an application is not submitted, document the cooperator's preference for hunter contact below. Refer to the application for exact details needed for the contract and access guide. If enrolled in Block Management, provide BMA #, County, and Type.

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I ☒ support ☐ do not support enrolling this proposed project in the UGBEP.

SIGNATURE:

Biologist _____

Date _____

Submit original application, evaluation, and relevant maps to your Wildlife Manager

Regional Endorsement:

Regional Wildlife Manager _____

Date _____

Regional Supervisor _____

Date _____

Return application, evaluation, and maps to Helena

Helena HQ Ranking Scores: (0 – Negligible, 1 - 3 = Poor; 4 - 6 = Fair; 7 – 8 = Good; 9 – 10 = Excellent)

Project potential to increase UGB production: _____

Project strategic based on Regional plan: _____

Project complements existing projects/habitats: _____

Overall project costs are leveraged or cost-effective: _____

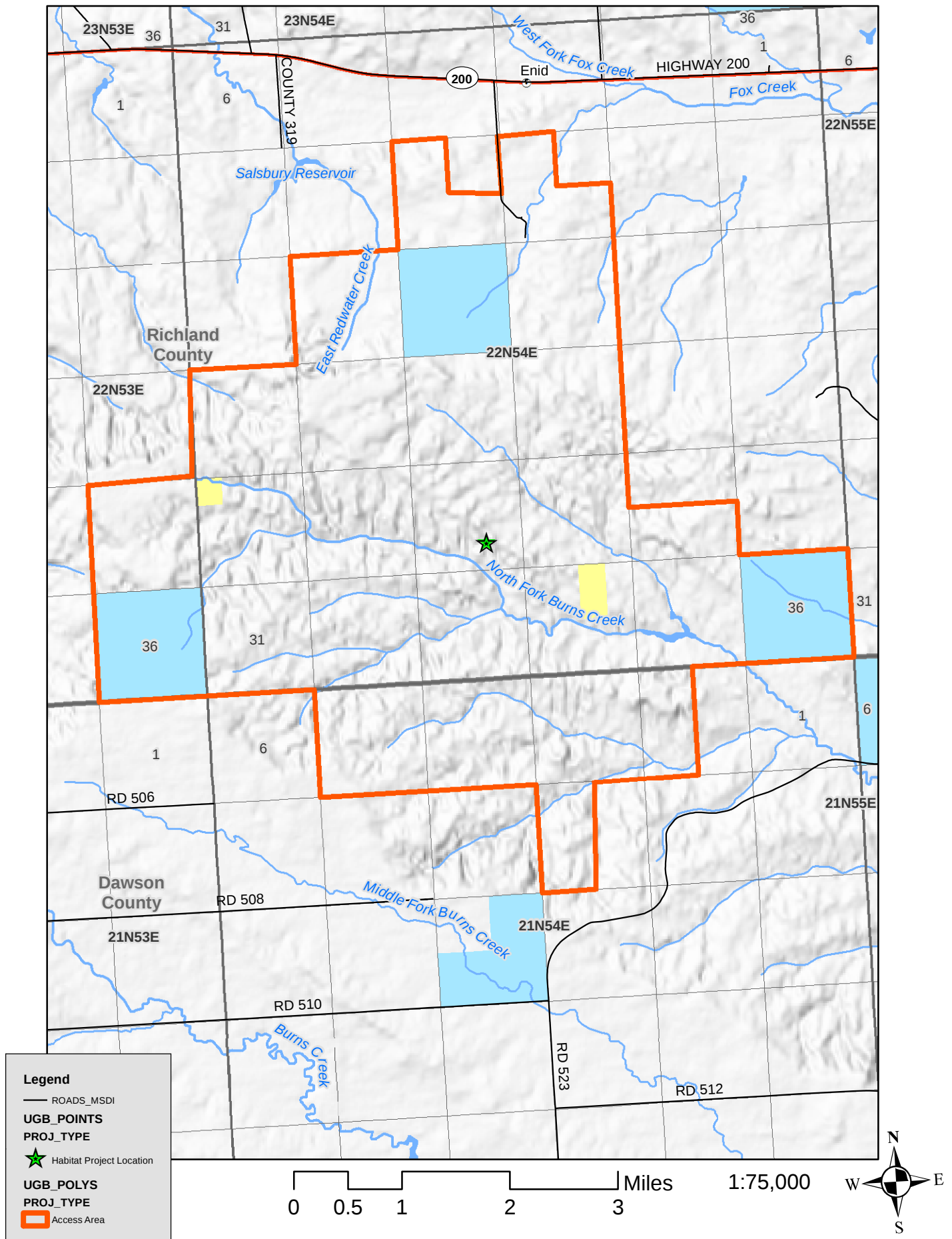
Public Access: _____

A score of 25 or less may not be considered a priority for UGBEP funding.

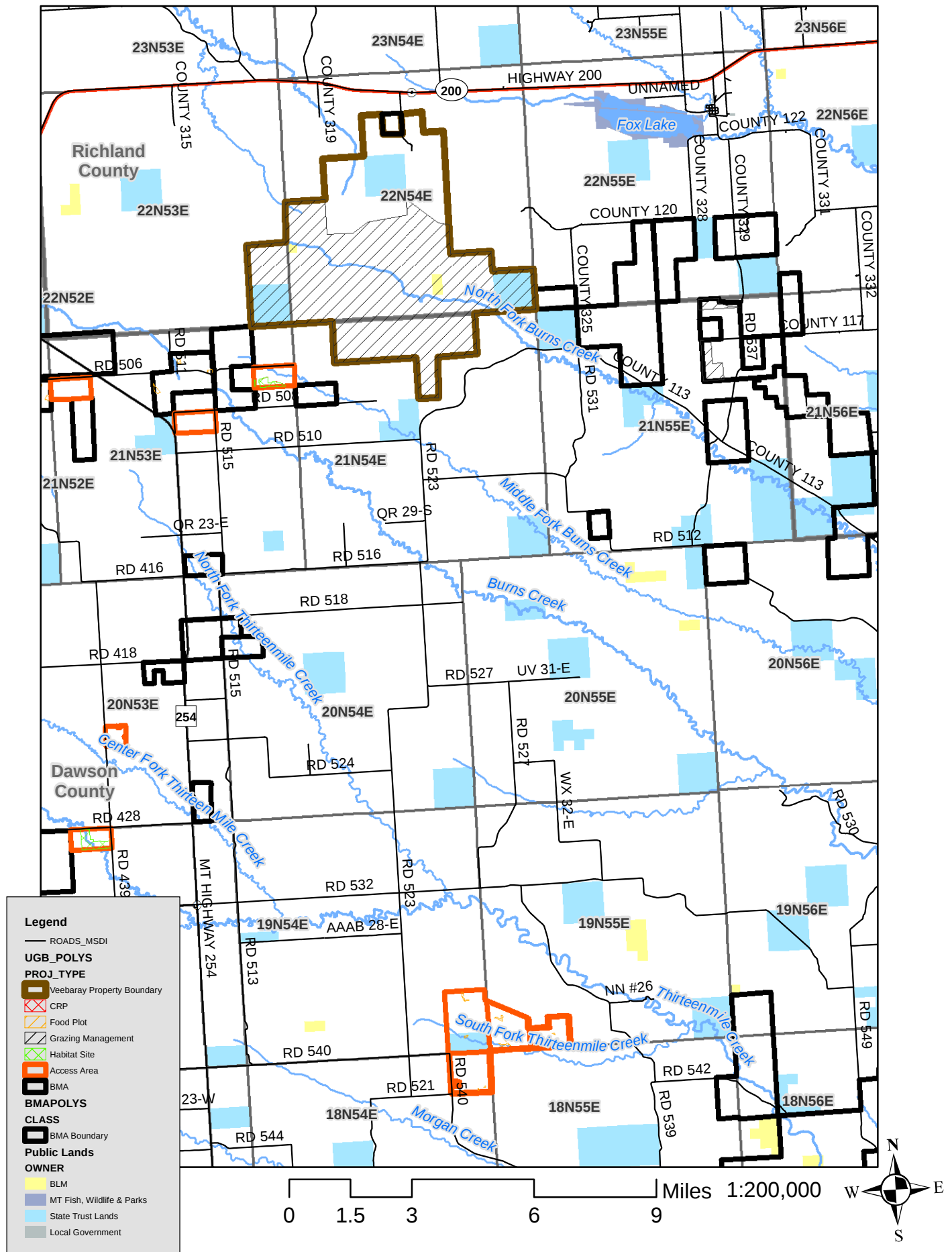
Total Score

/50

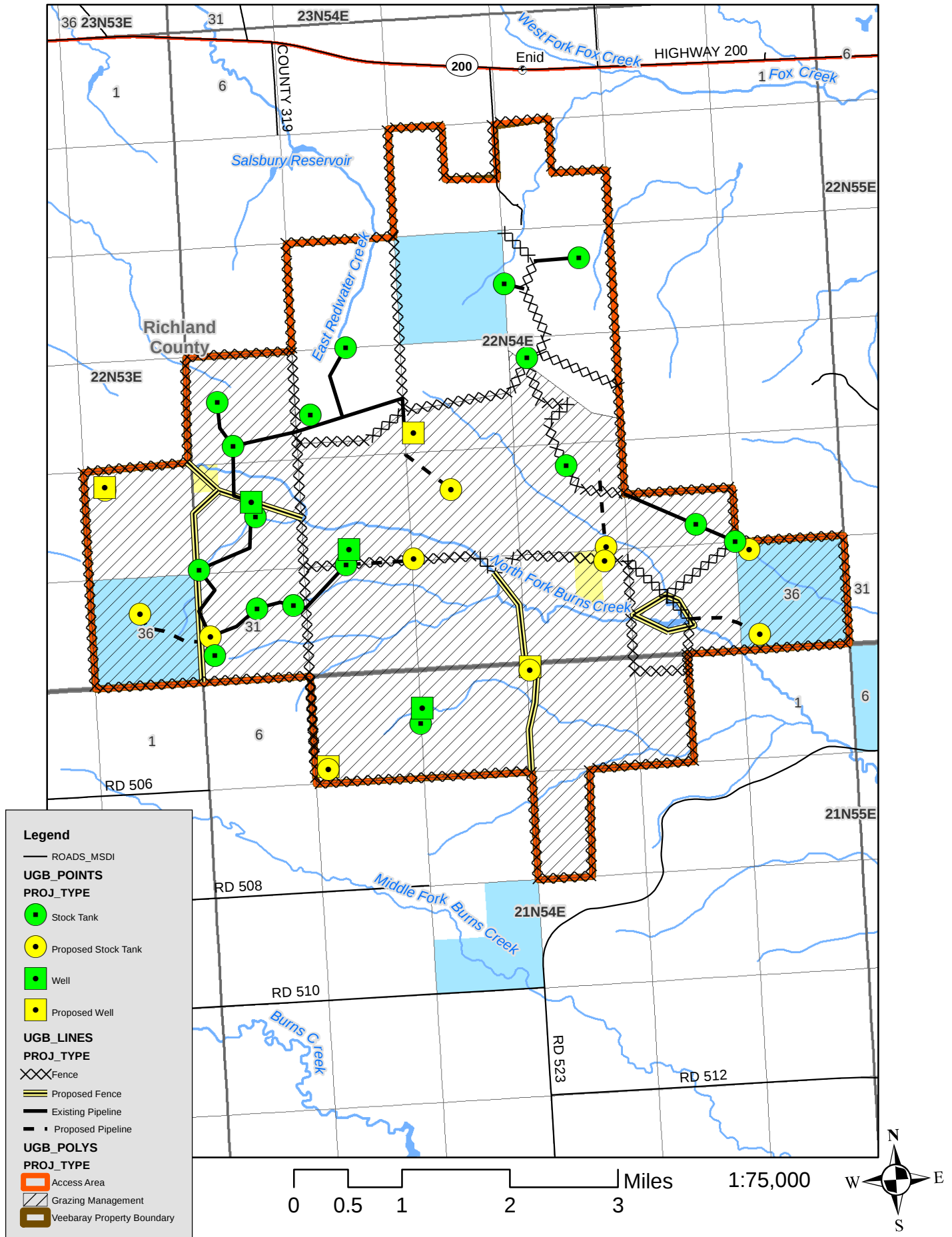
Veebaray Company Project Location



Hunter Access Surrounding Veebaray Project Area



Veebaray Company Project Design



Cooperator: Veebaray Company
Richland and Dawson Counties
Exhibit D

FWP Office: Miles City
FWP Specialist: Jackie Tooke
Date: May 2016

Veebaray Company Pasture Layout

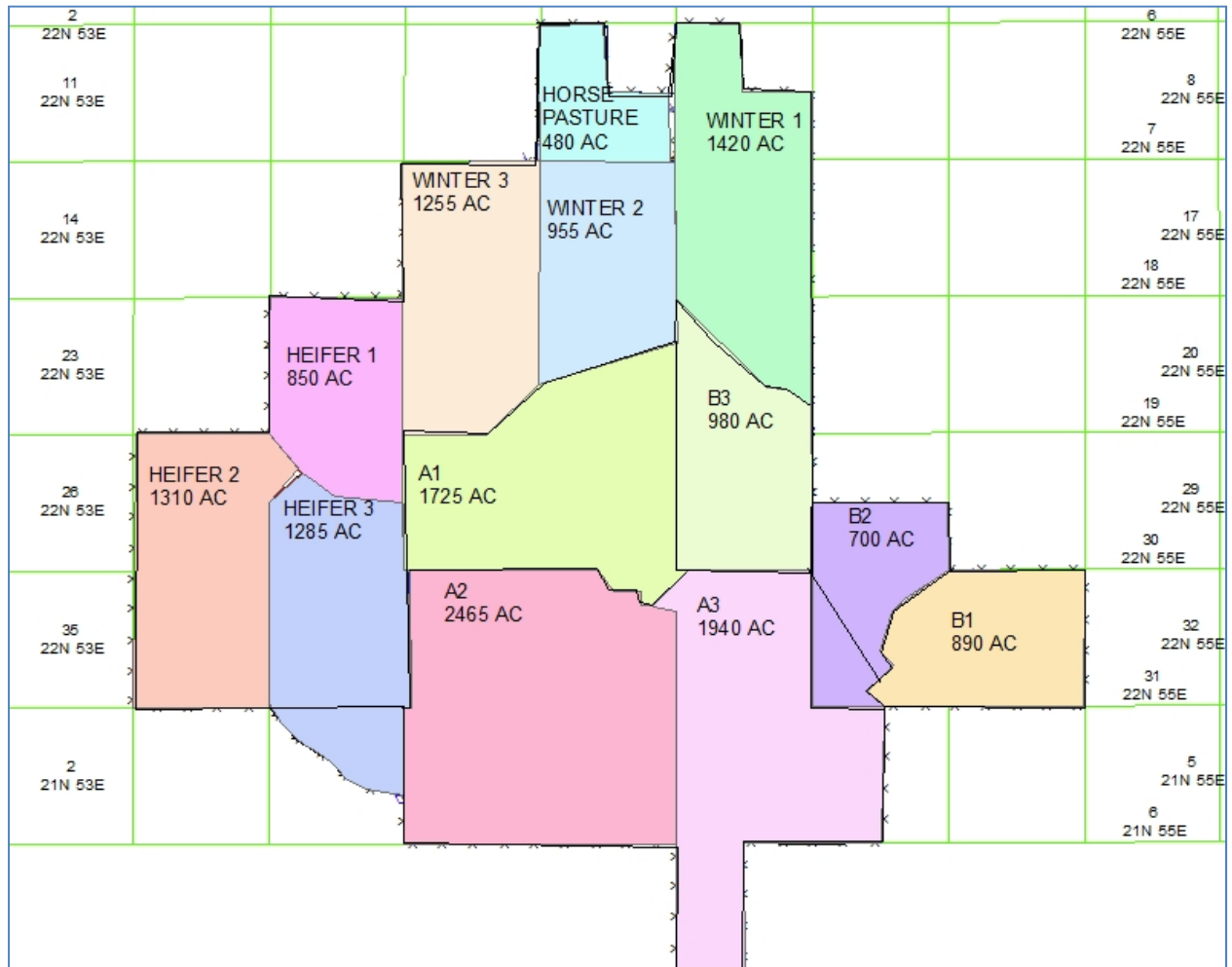


Exhibit E: UGBEP Construction Outline-Cost Estimate							Estimated Costs			
Project Component	Components Description(s)	Location (Map ID)	Installation Date (Month-	Unit	Unit Cost	Total Amount	FWP	Cooperator	Other	Total Cost
Well	A System	22N 54E Section 21	Jun-16	1,400 ft	\$40/ft	56000	\$23,000.00	\$23,000.00	\$10,000	\$56,000
Pump House	A System	22N 54E Section 21	Jun-16	1 system	\$14,000	14000	\$7,000.00	\$7,000.00		\$14,000
Stock Tank	Heifer System	22N 53E Section 36	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Pipeline	Heifer System	22N 53E Section 36	Jun-16	5,250	\$2.40/ft	12600	\$6,300.00	\$6,300.00		\$12,600
Stock Tank	Heifer System	22N 53E Section 36	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Stock Tank	A System	22N 54E Section 28	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Pipeline	A System	22N 54E Section 28	Jun-16	5,250	\$2.40/ft	12600	\$6,300.00	\$6,300.00		\$12,600
Stock Tank	A System	22N 54E Section 28	Jun-16	2000 gal	\$2.64/gal	5280	\$2,640.00	\$2,640.00		\$5,280
Pipeline	A System	22N 54E Section 32	Jun-16	2,250	\$2.40/ft	5400	\$2,700.00	\$2,700.00		\$5,400
Well	A System	21N 54E Section 3	Jun-16	300 ft	\$45.51/ft	13653	\$6,826.50	\$6,826.50		\$13,653
Stock Tank	A System	21N 54E Section 3	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Solar System w/pump	A System	21N 54E Section 3	Jun-16	1 system	\$7,000	7000	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00		\$7,000
Pipeline	B System	22N 54E Section 27	Jun-16	3,600	\$2.40/ft	8640	\$4,320.00	\$4,320.00		\$8,640
Stock Tank	B System	22N 54E Section27	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Stock Tank	A System	22N 54E Section 34	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Pipeline	B System	22N 54E Section 36	Jun-16	950	\$2.40/ft	2280	\$1,140.00	\$1,140.00		\$2,280
Stock Tank	B System	22N 54E Section 36	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Pipeline	B System	22N 54E Section 35	Jun-16	1,050	\$2.40/ft	2520	\$1,260.00	\$1,260.00		\$2,520
Stock Tank	B System	22N 54E Section 36	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Solar System w/pump	B System	22N 54E Section 35	Jun-16	1 system	\$7,500	7500	\$3,750.00	\$3,750.00		\$7,500
Complete Spring Installation	B System	22N 54E Section 35	Jun-16	1 system	\$4,000	4000	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00		\$4,000
Barbed Wire Fence	B System	22N 54E Section 35	Jun-16	10,498 ft	\$2.15/ft	22570.7	\$11,285.35	\$11,285.35		\$22,571
Stock Tank	B System	22N 54E Section 22	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Well	Heifer System	22N 53E Section 25	Jun-16	300 ft	\$45.51/ft	13653	\$6,826.50	\$6,826.50		\$13,653
Stock Tank	Heifer System	22N 53E Section 25	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Solar System w/pump	Heifer System	22N 53E Section 25	Jun-16	1 system	\$7,000	7000	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00		\$7,000
Well	A System	21N 54E Section 5	Jun-16	300 ft	\$45.51/ft	13653	\$6,826.50	\$6,826.50		\$13,653
Stock Tank	A System	21N 54E Section 5	Jun-16	4,000 gal	\$2.64/gal	10560	\$5,280.00	\$5,280.00		\$10,560
Solar System w/pump	A System	21N 54E Section 5	Jun-16	1 system	\$7,000	7000	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00		\$7,000
Electric Fence	Heifer System	22N 53E 25&36 22N 54E 30&31	Jun-16	15,840 ft	\$1.50/ft	23760	\$11,880.00	\$11,880.00		\$23,760
Electric Fence	A System	22N 54E 33&34 21N 54E 3 & 4	Jun-16	9,240ft	\$1.50/ft	13860	\$6,930.00	\$6,930.00		\$13,860
UGBEP to pay up to 50% of the total actual cost of wells and pipelines (including labor and parts).							\$179,564.85	\$179,564.85	\$10,000	\$369,130

Images of the Veebaray Ranch – UGBHEP Grazing System Proposal





