

DECISION RECORD
for
Tiller Cabin Abandoned Mined Land Remediation

EA OR-026-2000-31

INTRODUCTION: Following a 30-day comment period on the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Tiller Cabin Abandoned Mined Land Remediation Environmental Assessment (EA), EA OR-026-2000-31, the Andrews Resource Area of the Burns District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is issuing a decision for the remediation of Tiller Cabin and associated structures and miscellaneous property. The decision is to implement the proposed action of the EA.

DECISION: Having considered a range of alternatives and associated impacts and based on the analysis in the Tiller Cabin Abandoned Mined Land Remediation EA, it is my decision to implement the proposed action. The proposed action applies to Tiller Cabin and its contents, the shed located across Denio Creek from Tiller Cabin, the outhouse, mattress springs, plywood, metal "I" beam, and other miscellaneous material south of Tiller Cabin, and the old carpet, can dump, bed springs, and other miscellaneous material north of Tiller Cabin.

The proposed action is to remove nonburnable materials and those that will not burn completely (roofing felt, asphalt mineral paper, carpet, the sofa, mattresses, and metal), remove materials that may be hazardous when burned (painted wood that may contain lead, asbestos-containing asphalt mineral paper, adhesive), disperse the sediment samples that are in cardboard boxes in the shed across Denio Creek from Tiller Cabin, and burn the remaining material. The nonburnable materials will be properly disposed of at a landfill, taken to a scrap dealer, or disposed of through other administrative processes. Hazardous materials will be disposed of by the Burns District BLM hazardous materials coordinator in accordance with Oregon Department of Environmental Quality regulations. Wood and cardboard from the shed across Denio Creek from Tiller Cabin and wood from the vicinity of Tiller Cabin will be stacked on the Tiller Cabin floor for burning at one site. Burning is scheduled for late fall 2000 or spring 2001, during cool weather when there is low fire danger, and will be done by a BLM fire crew trained and equipped for fire suppression so there will be low likelihood that the fire will escape.

After burning, any apparent remaining debris will be removed. Compacted ground in the burned area will be loosened with pulaskis. The disturbed areas will be seeded with Basin wildrye and western wheatgrass, which are native plants, to discourage weed invasion. Adjacent established Basin big sagebrush is expected to naturally seed the area.

Rationale for Decision: I have selected the proposed action for the following reasons:

It provides for the safety of human health.

The nearby mining claims have lapsed, the cabin is not reasonably incident to mining, the claimant who built the cabin is deceased, and a quitclaim deed has been signed on the cabin and associated structures and miscellaneous property relinquishing them to the United States.

Because the structures are not 50 years old, they do not meet the criteria for eligibility as historic property. The structures have no associated unique architectural features or designs.

The decision does not result in undue or unnecessary environmental degradation.

Removal of the cabin, associated structures, and nearby miscellaneous property would enhance wilderness values of naturalness, solitude, and primitive and unconfined recreation. Removal would improve visual resource values of the area within one-half mile of the cabin site.

This project is in conformance with Section 7(a)1 of the Endangered Species Act.

It promotes and sustains healthy ecosystems.

It includes coordination with local government, tribal entities, private landowners, and other State and Federal agencies.

Public involvement consisted of direct mailing to 25 individuals, organizations, tribes, and agencies and notification in the local newspaper. I received three written comments during the FONSI/EA review period: two in support of the proposed action and one in support of Alternative A.

Implementation of the proposed action will not jeopardize or negatively affect Congress' ability to find that the Wilderness Study Area (WSA) has the necessary wilderness characteristics or impair their suitability for preservation as wilderness.

It is in compliance with the BLM's Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review.

It is in compliance with the Andrews Management Framework Plan.

It is in compliance with Federal laws that mandate the management of public land resources (Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976).

I considered alternatives to the proposed action including:

Alternative A - Removal: This alternative proposed that Tiller Cabin and associated structures would be dismantled using hand tools, and all of the materials and nearby miscellaneous items would be loaded into a truck and taken to a landfill, scrap dealer or disposed of through other administrative processes. I did not select this alternative because it is not as cost-effective as the proposed action.

Alternative B - No Action: This alternative proposed that Tiller Cabin and associated structures and miscellaneous property would be left as-is to deteriorate naturally. I did not select this alternative because the presence of Tiller Cabin may encourage someone to move in, and it would be difficult to evict someone if they move into the cabin in trespass. The government could be held liable for safety problems such as the decaying floorboards, potential diseases, lack of proper sanitation, and fire danger. The presence and character of the cabin, associated structures, and miscellaneous property detract from natural visual resources values when you are less than one-half mile from the cabin.

I also considered the alternative of upgrading and maintaining Tiller Cabin but did not develop this alternative because it is too expensive and does not meet land management objectives.

Mark W. Sherbourne, Acting - Signature on File

August 16, 2000

Miles R. Brown
Andrews Resource Area Field Manager

Date