

SOUTH SLOPE FENCE PROJECT  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA-OR-025-00-10

BURNS DISTRICT OFFICE  
HINES, OREGON

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I. PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to mitigate the movement of livestock between two allotments. The Riverside Allotment and the W&C Blaylock Fenced Federal Range (FFR). The permittee in the Riverside Allotment has unfenced private land in the W&C Blaylock FFR. The adjacent landowner is proposing to fence along his private land. To prevent livestock from being trapped in a potential corner he would like to place the fence across 200 yards of public land.

The need for the fence is twofold. First, the landowner would like to include an 80-acre portion of his private land into the allotment in which he has permitted use. He has never had use of this parcel of land as it is within the other allotment. Secondly, the location of the fence across public land is needed to prevent livestock from the adjoining allotment from being trapped in a corner should he build the fence completely along the private land boundary (see attached map).

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action

The proposed action is to construct less than one-quarter mile of 3-strand barbed wire fence between the gap from the corner of private land and the rimrocks about 200 yards away. The old fence will be rolled up and removed.

B. Alternative A

Construct the fence entirely along the private land boundary.

C. Alternative B - No Action Alternative

There would be no fence constructed.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

The South Slope Fence would be located approximately 65 road miles east of the town of Burns, Oregon, at T. 23 S., R. 37 E., Section 33, NE¼NW¼ in Malheur County, Oregon. The project would be situated in the northeast corner of the South Slope Pasture of the Riverside Allotment at about 3,800 feet in elevation.

#### A. Vegetation

The dominant vegetation on the site is cheatgrass and bluebunch wheatgrass.

#### B. Wildlife

Antelope, deer, and chukar are commonly found in the vicinity of the proposed project location.

#### C. Soils

On the steeper slopes, the soils are moderately deep, somewhat poorly-drained, and heavy clay textured. There is moderate potential for water erosion and slight potential for wind erosion. Soils on the upper bench are shallow to basalt, moderately drained, loamy textured with cobble-size rock fragments throughout the soil profile. Erosion potential is the same.

Annual precipitation is less than 8 inches and snow pack is generally very light.

#### D. Cultural and Paleontological Resources

No American Indian use areas or paleontological localities are known to occur within the South Slope Fence vicinity.

#### E. Visual Resource Management

The area where the project would be located has been identified as a Class IV Visual Resource Management area where the existing character of the landscape can be modified.

#### F. Livestock

The proposed project is within the W&C Blaylock FFR grazing allotment. Currently, this is a winter livestock use area. Approximately 40 acres of this allotment would be fenced into the Riverside Allotment. This portion of the Riverside Allotment is used during the month of April each year.

G. Recreation

This area is only accessible by foot or horseback and the major recreation use is hunting in late fall.

H. T&E Species

There are populations of *Lupinus biddlei* in the project area.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The following critical elements are either not present or not affected by the proposed action or the alternative: Floodplains, Wild and Scenic Rivers, American Indian religious concerns, hazardous materials, and prime or unique farmlands. Medusahead grass is common in the area and would not be reduced in area or increased in area from the proposed actions.

A. Impacts of the Proposed Action

1. Vegetation

There may be a slight increase in utilization of grass species on the 40 acres that would become part of the Riverside Allotment. There would be a site-specific clearance for *Lupinus biddlei* so that if found, it could be avoided.

2. Wildlife

Wildlife such as deer and elk usually have little difficulty in negotiating these types of fences if they are placed on the level or spine of a ridge.

3. Soils

There would be no impact to the soils in the area in terms of either erosion or soil compaction.

4. Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Environmental consequences of this project are considered minimal in the construction phase. A post construction impact such as livestock trailing is somewhat more intense. A portion of the proposed fence line area would be inventoried prior to project implementation. Impacts to significant cultural resources would be mitigated through avoidance or other activities such as surface collecting or mapping.

5. Visual Resource Management

The addition of the fence would create an immediate and long-term visual intrusion to an area with a number of existing improvements.

6. Livestock

Movement of livestock in both allotments would be better facilitated by placing the proposed project across a small portion of public land rather than along the entire length of private land.

7. Recreation

Impacts to recreation such as hunting, backpacking, and hiking would be negligible due to the low number of recreation users in this remote area.

MITIGATION

- Fenceposts would be of a green color that would blend in best with the surrounding environment.
- The old fence would be rolled up and removed to prevent livestock and wildlife from becoming entangled in it as it deteriorates.

B. Impacts of Alternative A

1. Vegetation

Potential for heavy utilization on vegetation would be present if the fence was constructed entirely along the private land as livestock could become trapped and congregate in the narrow area between the private and BLM fences. The other possibility is that no use would ever occur on this 40 acres.

2. Wildlife

Wildlife would have to negotiate more length of fence in the area.

3. Soils

No additional impacts would occur from the proposed action.

4. Cultural and Paleontological Resources

A longer fence would create more potential to impact these resources.

5. Visual Resource Management

Same as proposed action.

6. Livestock

Livestock would possibly become trapped in the narrow area between fences, where there is no water. Potential death loss could occur.

7. Recreation

Visitation would be expected to stay within the current average visitor use now occurring.

C. Impacts of Alternative B - No Action

1. Vegetation

Light winter use would continue in the area.

2. Wildlife

Wildlife would not have more length of fence to negotiate in the area.

3. Soils

No additional impacts from the proposed action.

4. Cultural and Paleontological Resources

There would be potential impact to these resources if they exist.

5. Visual Resource Management

There would be no additional visual intrusions to the character of the area.

6. Livestock

The landowner would not be able to use the forage resources on his private land.

7. Recreation

Visitation would be expected to stay within the current average visitor use now occurring.

D. Cumulative Impacts

There would be no direct or indirect cumulative impacts from the proposed action or either of the alternatives.

V. AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

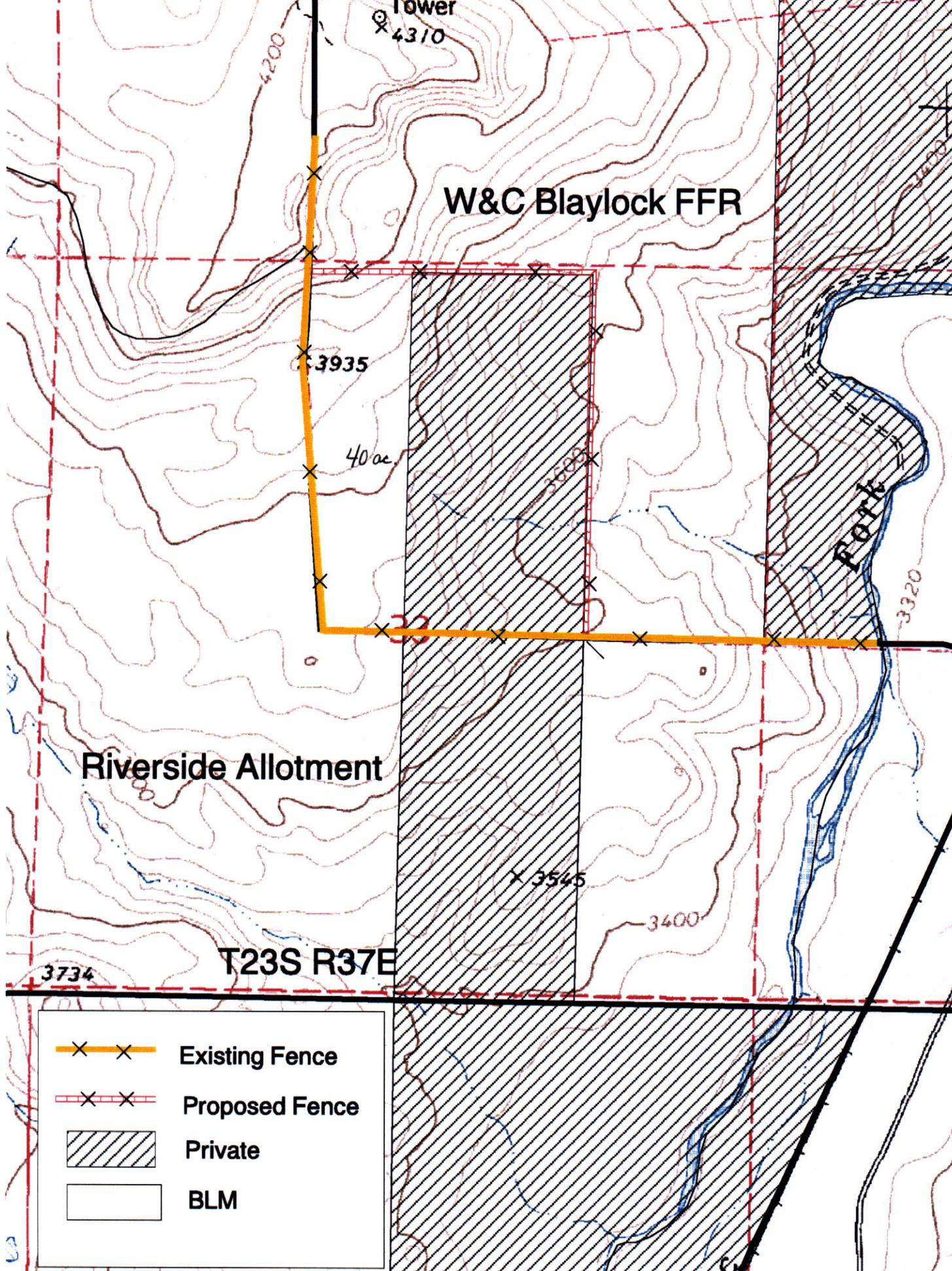
Wayne Blaylock, Permittee  
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Monte Seigner, Permittee

VI. INTENSITY OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Low interest.

VII. PARTICIPATING STAFF

Bill Andersen, Range Management Specialist  
Rudy Hefter, Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist  
Lesley Richman, Range Management Specialist  
Fred Taylor, Wildlife Biologist  
Nora Taylor, Botanist  
Scott Thomas, Archaeologist



	Existing Fence
	Proposed Fence
	Private
	BLM

USGS WINNEMUCCA CREEK QUAD, 7.5 1979