

DECISION RECORD

EA LOG No. OR-2003-03

Project Name Lakeview Helitack Base Construction

Applicant BLM

1301 South G Street

Address Lakeview, Oregon 97630

County Lake

BLM Office Lakeview District

Phone No. 541-947-6200

DECISION RECORD

Decision: The following is the decision of the Bureau:

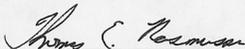
Construct a new helibase facility at the Lakeview Airport as described in Alternative 2 of EA# OR-2003-03. A 2400 square ft manufactured facility will be placed at a new site located South of the old Air Tanker Base, and at the West end of the Forest Service bone yard.

The Helibase Facility will meet the minimum requirements by the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide, and the Heliport Installation Handbook. The facility will be protected by an enclosure fence around the facility and gates at the East end of the entrance road. Surface disturbance will be minimized and reseeded with lawn grass, trees and shrubs.

Other alternatives considered were No Action, and Alternative 1 move SEAT and Helicopter operations to alternative site. The no action would limit expense in the short term, but would be expensive in the long run by compromising for safety, and neglecting guidance received through two National Fire Aviation Safety Reviews. This is not a viable option under existing Policy and Guidelines. Alternative 1 to move SEAT and Helicopter operations to alternative site. This was found to be non viable based on the National Fire Management Analysis System.

Project Completion:

The Lakeview Helibase facility construction is dependent upon future funding and will be completed by the BLM.



Manager

6/17/03

Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Lakeview Interagency Helitack Base Construction

EA# OR-010-2003-03

The Bureau of Land Management, South Central Oregon Fire Management Partnership, and the Lakeview Interagency Fire Center have analyzed a proposal and its alternatives to construct a 2400 square-foot helibase facility and helicopter landing pads located at the Lake County Airport. The objectives of this proposal are to provide better support for fire-fighting efforts on public lands and to meet the Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide requirements for a helibase facility.

There are no floodplains, aquatic resources, forest lands, areas of critical environmental concern, research natural areas, wilderness study areas, wildlife habitat, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, areas of religious concern, rangelands, wild horses, or prime or unique farmlands in the project area. The project does not qualify for potential wilderness designation. No adverse or beneficial significant impact is anticipated to fisheries, lands, and minerals. No threatened or endangered plants or cultural or paleontological resources are located in the area. No low income or minority populations would be affected.

On the basis of analysis contained in the attached environmental assessment and all other available information, it is my determination that none of the alternatives analyzed constitute a major federal action that would adversely impact the quality of human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is unnecessary and will not be prepared.



5/12/03
EA Number: OR-010-2003-03

PROJECT TITLE/TYPE:

Facility construction of the Lakeview Interagency Helibase

PROJECT LOCATION: (see attached map).

BLM OFFICE: South Central Oregon Interagency Fire Center, 1301 South G Street, Lakeview, OR 97630

LEASE/SERIAL/CASE FILE #: 57-04H1-5-0088P Lake County Airport

APPLICANT (if any): N/A

CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN: This proposed action is subject to one or more of the following land use plans.

NATIONAL FIRE PLAN AND POLICIES (1995) Lakeview District Fire Management Plan-Phase 1 (1998)

PURPOSE and NEED FOR ACTION: The Lakeview Interagency Helibase is located at the Lakeview Airport and consists of a small helipad and leased modular structure which is set up and removed each year. The Helibase facility is minimal; with few amenities and does not meet Interagency Helicopter Operation Guide standards by providing limited space for offices, bathrooms, pilot rest area, showers and ready room for the crew. Under the "Tanker Base Realignment Study" the heavy air tanker program was shutdown. In 1998 the Lakeview BLM National Fire Readiness Review found: "...Under the current **Fire Management Plan** a Single Engine Air Tanker (**SEAT**) Program was needed and was put in place in 2000 and was Co-Located with the Helicopter Program". The review also identified there needed to be a physical separation between the helicopter operation and the (SEAT) operation due to the BLM often hosting more than one helicopter at the base and placing even more restraints on the already crowded situation. A properly designed Helibase is needed to provide sufficient physical separation from the Seat Operation.

DESCRIPTION of PROPOSED ACTION:

PHASE 1

Development of the preferred alternative would include a minimum of a 2,400 square foot manufactured building that will incorporate offices, a ready room, kitchen and sanitary facilities. The plan also calls for the development of a new septic tank; drain field, lighted helipad and extension of underground utilities.

PHASE 2

Helibase facility construction and upgrade to provide vehicle and helicopter crew equipment storage, security for the base, additional helipad, communications and upgrade the existing well system and utilities

ALTERNATIVES:

NO ACTION - Leave the existing site as is.

The no action alternative is a plan for no future development. This option would limit expenses in the short term, but would be expensive in the long term by compromising safety and neglecting guidance received through two National Fire and Aviation Safety Reviews. This is not a viable option under existing Policy and Guidelines.

ALTERNATIVE 1 - Move the SEAT and Helicopter Operations to an alternative site.

This option was explored and found to be a nonviable alternative based on National Fire Management Analysis System (NFMAS) runs and the centralization of the helitack crew for Initial Attack. Other stumbling blocks under this consideration are limited fuel availability, driver's duty limitations for the

fuel truck driver and basic infrastructure for facilities. The cost associated with this alternative would be several million dollars. Therefore, this alternative was dropped from further consideration.

ALTERNATIVE 2 (PREFERRED PLAN) - Retain Helicopter Operations at the Lakeview County Airport by developing the existing site. Develop a Helibase design that models the National Helibase Standards. This design utilizes a manufactured building over a stick built design and provides for the safety and separation needed. It is less expensive than alternative number 1. This option is the Lakeview Districts preferred alternative.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT: The proposed site is within the Forest Service storage yard on the west end of the airport. Most of the ground has been disturbed previously by facility development activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The potential environmental impacts resulting from the alternatives relative to the following critical resource values were evaluated. The following is a summary of the results:

Critical Element/ Resource Value	Affected		Critical Element/ Resource Value	Affected	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality		X	T & E Species		X
ACEC/RNAs		X	Wilderness		X
Cultural Resources		X	Wild & Scenic Rivers		X
Farmlands, Prime/Unique		X	Hazardous Wastes		X
Floodplains		X	Water Quality		X
Native American Cultural/ Religious Concerns		X	Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X
Low Income/ Minority Populations		X	Noxious Weeds	X	

DESCRIPTION OF OTHER IMPACTS: The Forest Service has identified a HAZMAT issue at the Tanker Base area. The following Operation and Maintenance Plan has mitigated these issues with the following fixes.

DESCRIPTION OF MITIGATION MEASURES:

1. Visual inspections will be done annually prior to the start of base operations.

2. Ensure tarmac is sealed and repair all cracks to prevent retardant residue seepage.
3. Ensure that containment barrier is in tacked to prevent retardant residue entering the west field.
4. Ensure retardant pit drain system is capped off to prevent drainage into canal.

Measures taken:

1. Road crew will seal existing cracks in tarmac.
2. Will place a 3" high barrier on the west end of tarmac to prevent retardant residue from entering the field.
3. Will cap off the existing drain system both inside the retardant pit and on the canal side. Put in a new retardant pit at the west end of tarmac.
4. Will place HAXMAT rings around both drain grates at the North side of tarmac to prevent retardant entering the drain system.

Other impacts would be the removal of the Lakeview Interagency Partnership's arsenal of fire suppression aircraft. Even though aviation assets are considered an additional source of risk in the fire environment, it has been demonstrated that public and fire fighter safety would be compromised to a greater extent without aviation assets to draw upon.

NOXIOUS WEED CONSIDERATIONS:

Noxious weeds are known to occur in the vicinity of the project area.

Any noxious weed treatment will be done in accordance with the existing noxious weed treatment plan EA (1994) prior to construction.

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: ODEQ, Fremont National Forest, Lakeview BLM and Cascade Earth Sciences

PREPARER(S): Shad Sitz/ Clark Hammond

- ⊙ Brass Cap
- ⊙ Rod - Iron rod, pipe
3/8", 3/4", 1"
- FC - Fence Construction 2' x 30' long, 12" x 60mm,
w/2" Glass, Aluminum cap marked M.S. 2149
- ⊙ Wellhead
- ⊙ Monitoring Well
- New Concrete
- DP — Overhead Power
- UGP — Underground Power
- R — Rectifier
- W — Water
- PP - Power Pole
- PH - Phone
- PS - Property Boundary Corner

