



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT OFFICE
3040 BIDDLE ROAD
MEDFORD, OREGON 97504

DECISION RECORD/RATIONALE/FONSI *2004 Culvert Replacement Project* (EA # OR117-04-09)

I. DECISION

The decision is to implement the proposed action for six culvert replacements as described in the environmental assessment (EA). Implementation of this decision will include all project design features as described in the EA.

II. RATIONALE

This action implements in part the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP p. 87) which directs replacing and upgrading road culverts that:

- pose a substantial risk to riparian conditions
- would not accommodate at least a 100-year flood event and
- do not provide and maintain fish passage at all road crossings of existing and potential fish-bearing streams.

Replacing these culverts will reduce the risk of damage to riparian systems by reducing the risk of road washout during high water flows. Upgraded culverts will improve salmonid access to upstream spawning and rearing habitat. Replacing rather than removing these road crossings will maintain road access to public and private lands.

This action incorporates project design features which minimize potential short and long term adverse effects of the actions to be implemented. No adverse cumulative effects have been identified for this project.

Three residents who will have reduced access to their homes during project activities were contacted individually to notify them of the proposal and to discuss alternate access during road closures. One resident expressed concern regarding egress in the case of wildfire. Oregon Department of Forestry has been approached regarding extra fire protection during the road closure for that resident.

One letter commenting on the Environmental Assessment was received during the 15 day public comment period. It noted that the condition of the Forest Creek Road was poor and was not a viable detour route for residents on North Fork of Thompson Creek. This detour route will be repaired to accommodate low clearance vehicles prior to closing of the Thompson Creek for culvert replacement (EA p. 4).

This decision is consistent with the *Medford District Resource Management Plan* and the *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and*

Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and their subsequent supplemental records of decision (EA p. 1). This decision is also consistent with the Endangered Species Act; the Native American Religious Freedom Act; other cultural resource management laws and regulations; Executive Order 12898 regarding Environmental Justice; and Executive Order 13212 regarding potential adverse impacts to energy development, production, supply and/or distribution.

This project is also consistent with the Bureau of Land Management's Strategic Plan for FY2000-2005, specifically mission goals 2.2 (Restore at-risk resources and maintain functioning systems) and 1.4 (Reduce threats to public health, safety and property).

III. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on information contained in the EA and the project's record, it is my determination that the proposed action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment. This project does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary and will not be prepared.

This conclusion is also based on a consideration of both the context and intensity of the impacts of the selected action(s) (40 CFR 1508.27). **Context** refers to analysis of environmental consequences at various social or geographic scales. For this project, impacts were assessed at both the site-specific and 5th field watershed scales. **Intensity** refers to the severity of impacts. Conclusions regarding intensity are supported by the following findings:

- 1) *Impacts can be both beneficial and adverse and a significant effect may exist regardless of the perceived balance of effects.* Adverse and beneficial impacts will result from the project. Both have been considered in concluding that there will be no impacts at the 5th field watershed scale and no significant impacts at the site-specific scale for the following issues: threatened fish species disturbance, sedimentation, loss of stream shade, noxious weed dispersal, habitat disturbance for two state listed sensitive frog species, and access to private land or residences.
- 2) *The degree of the impact on public health or safety.* No adverse effects to public health or safety have been identified. Appropriately sized culverts that prevent road washouts benefit public safety.
- 3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area.* None have been identified.
- 4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.* There is no indication of any highly controversial effects on the quality of the human environment.
- 5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are likely to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.* There is no indication that the effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.* The action is not precedent setting. Culvert replacement and upgrading is a typical activity.

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.* There is no indication that the actions will appreciably contribute to any cumulative impacts that would be judged significant at the site-specific or watershed scale.

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect National Historic Register listed or eligible to be listed sites or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.* There are no known cultural sites in the project area and the project is not expected to cause loss or destruction of any scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect ESA listed species or critical habitat.* There is no indication that the action will significantly adversely affect ESA listed species (coho salmon) or ESA identified critical habitat. Any adverse impacts will be localized, short term and negligible.

10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of environmental protection law or requirements.* There are no indications that the action will violate any environmental protection law or requirement.

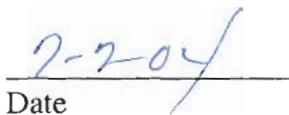
IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

This decision is a forest management decision. Administrative remedies are available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Administrative recourse is available in accordance with BLM regulation and must follow the procedures and requirements described in 43 CFR 5003, Administrative Remedies.

In accordance with BLM Forest Management Regulation 43 CFR 5003.2 (a&c), the effective date of the decision will be the date of publication of the Notice of Decision and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) in the Grants Pass Daily Courier. Publication of this notice will establish the date initiating the protest period provided for in accordance with 43 CFR 5003.3. While similar notices may be published in other newspapers, the date of publication in the Grants Pass Daily Courier will prevail as the effective date of this decision. Any contest of this decision should state specifically what portion or element of the decision is being protested and cite the applicable CFR regulations.



Abbie Jossie
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Grants Pass Resource Area
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Date