



IN REPLY REFER TO

United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT OFFICE
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Medford, Oregon 97504
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DECISION RECORD/RATIONALE/FONSI *BLM/Pacifica Interpretive Trail* (EA# OR110-48)

I. DECISION

The decision is to implement Alternative 2: Proposed Action for the BLM/ Pacifica Interpretive Trail project as described in the September 13, 2001 Environmental Assessment (EA# OR 110-01-48). Implementation will include all proposed actions and project design features described in the environmental assessment with the following modifications:

1) Trail head / parking - Utilize the parking area as described on Pacifica's land. Proceed with obtaining easements from Pacifica which are necessary to ensure future public access to the trail system on BLM land. (Pacifica has indicated a willingness, in concept, to grant such easements.) Review the public access status in 10-12 months of the date of this decision. If easements have not been completed, pursue the planning and assessment for the secondary trail head on BLM land as noted in the EA.

2) Trail Route - as described in the EA.

3) Trail standards - The trail grade within riparian reserves will be kept to an average of 3% or less, not with a maximum of 3% as stated in the EA. Where the trail is located in the 80 acre parcel, it will be constructed to a lower standard than where it is located in the 40 acre parcel. If easements can be obtained to ensure public access along the entire length of the trail into the future, the trail in the 80 acre parcel will be constructed to the higher standard with better quality surfacing.

4) Trail Construction and Signing - The seasonal limitation imposed on mechanical trail construction in the proposed action will be interpreted as a guideline only. Trail construction may occur outside of these dates if soil moisture levels are 20% or less.

5) Permitted Uses - no change from the EA.

6) Mine safety - Gating, grating and fencing of the mine adit and vent shaft has not yet been accomplished. It shall, however, be completed prior to allowing public use of the trail. Construction can take place prior to completion of this safety installation.

In Chapter 3 under “Wildlife Resource”, proposed Mitigating measure #1 is accepted in part. Surveys for the presence of the Great Gray Owl (GGO) will be completed in the 80 acre parcel to determine if the owl is currently using the location. These surveys will be done in partnership with Pacifica to the extent possible. If it is determined that GGOs do *not* currently use this parcel, construction of the trail there will proceed and the trail will be open for year around use. If it is determined that GGOs currently use the project area, trail construction will take place, however, both construction and use will be restricted to the September 1 through March 14 of the following year (*i.e.*, The trail would be closed from March 15 - August 30 of each year.) Informal monitoring would be conducted to determine if trail use had a discernable adverse impact on the owl’s use of the site.

II. DECISION RATIONALE

Alternative 1, the No Action Alternative, is rejected because it would not promote the BLM’s Strategic Planning Goal 1.01: “Provide opportunities for environmentally responsible recreation.” This alternative would also not be consistent with the Medford District’s RMP recreation management objectives which include providing for a wide range of developed and dispersed recreation opportunities.

Alternative 2, the proposed action alternative, as modified, is selected because it will promote meeting both the strategic plan and RMP recreation management objectives. This alternative will create a low elevation easily accessible interpretive trail on BLM lands in the Williams Valley and will do it in collaboration with Pacifica, an adjacent land owner. Alternative 2 will implement a project that is consistent with the objectives of the November 2000 MOU between the BLM and Pacifica Corporation. This MOU states that the BLM and Pacifica will create, in partnership, public information and awareness programs that interpret and disseminate information regarding BLM’s multiple use and sustained yield management mandate, and responsible stewardship of our natural resources. The MOU specifically identifies establishing recreational hiking trails, interpretive sites and interpretive materials as one of the ways of furthering the purposes of the agreement.

The modifications to the proposed action are being made for the following reasons:

Trail head / parking: Insuring long term public access to the trail where it is located on BLM lands is critical. Accepting and pursuing Pacifica’s willingness to grant such access through formal easements would accomplish this and is the preferred approach. If access cannot be obtained in the near future, pursuing the alternative parking / trail head will provide long term public access even though it will result in a greater environmental impact.

Trail standards - Using an average trail grade of 3% trail grade where it passes through a riparian reserve will allow the trail grade to fluctuate to better fit the topography and result in less disturbance. It will still be within the Universal Access to Outdoor Recreation Design Guidelines for a moderate trail. Retaining

the lower standard of trail in the 80 acre parcel until long term public access is ensured, will minimize the expenditure of monies on a trail that may, in the future, not be available to the public.

Trail construction - The modification made will provide greater flexibility in construction while providing acceptable levels of resource protection.

Mine safety - Completion of the mine fence / grate prior to opening the trail to the public will contribute to user safety.

Proposed mitigating measure #1 is modified and accepted because it will result in the determination of whether or not GGOs are using the 80 acre parcel and will mitigate potential adverse impacts that might occur if they are using the site. There has been considerable debate and a clear range of opinions about the potential for GGOs to be using this site. The mitigating measure will provide for the actual assessment of use and for minimizing the disturbance and impact on the species if it is found to occupy the site.

The project design features are all accepted as they include several elements which will minimize short and long term adverse effects of the actions to be implemented.

Opportunities for public review and comment of the Pacifica Trail Project were provided for in 2001. A formal comment period was held in September 2001. Two comments were received during the comment period. Both comments were very supportive of the project, one asked for clarification on some specific issues which were addressed above.

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. This decision is also consistent with the Endangered Species Act, The Native American Religious Freedom Act and cultural resource management laws and regulations.

This decision will not have any adverse impacts to energy development, production, supply and/or distribution (per Executive Order 13212).

III. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

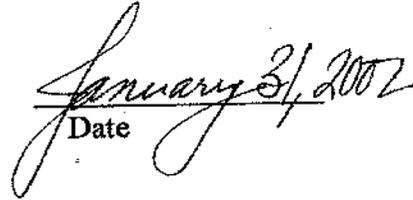
On the basis of the information contained in the environmental assessment for this project and the comments received regarding the project, it is my determination that the decision stated above does not constitute a significant effect to the quality of the human environment. It will not exceed the range of effects discussed in the EIS documents to which the project EA is tiered. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

In accordance with the BLM Forest Management Regulation 43 CFR 5003 - Administrative Remedies, the effective date of the decision will be the date of publication of the Notice of Decision and FONSI in The Grants Pass Daily Courier. Any protest must be made in accordance with 43 CFR 5003.3.



Abbie Jossie
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Grants Pass Resource Area
Medford District, Bureau of Land Management



Date