

DECISION RECORD

EA Number: OR 056-01-027

Title of Action: North Stearns Pipeline Extension Project

Serial/Case File Number: 4120

BLM Office: Prineville

I. Decision

It is my decision to authorize the installation of the proposed pipeline extension. Included in this decision will be the application of the following mitigation measures:

- If any cultural resources are discovered during the project activities, work would cease immediately and not resume until permission was obtained from the BLM Cultural Resource Specialist.
- If active burrows or nests are encountered during trench construction, work will cease until a wildlife biologist is consulted and permission to resume work is obtained.
- Vehicles/equipment will be checked for noxious weed plant or seed matter before entering the project area, and any such matter removed. Disturbed sites will be monitored over time for noxious weed presence; any of these plants will be removed.
- No juniper trees greater than 15 inches in diameter at breast height (dbh) will be disturbed or felled.
- Construction activities during saturated soil moisture and any cooperative ODFW/BLM vehicle travel closure periods will be prohibited. Road construction will be prohibited.
- The permittee will be required to return any sidecast material to the original soil surface contour; to slash in the pipeline corridor to the degree necessary to inhibit unwanted off highway vehicle traffic; and to monitor vegetation along the corridor for a period of three years. If evidence indicates that native vegetation is not becoming re-established during this period, then the corridor will be seeded with native species.

II. Alternatives

I considered a full range of alternatives, from not authorizing these projects, to constructing an earthen pond.

III. Rationale

The Brothers/LaPine Resource Management Plan (RMP) places the Stearns Allotment (#5134) into an "Improve" management category, and cites (on page 81) water developments as one of a number of range improvements to be applied in this allotment to reach rangeland improvement goals.

The "Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management for Public Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in the States of Oregon and Washington" cites (on page 17) water development installation as a practice appropriate for promoting the accomplishment of rangeland health goals. This decision is both consistent with and promotes the accomplishment of the goals and objectives stated in these documents.

On September 13, 2001 consultation with representatives of Tribal Governments was initiated. On November 21, 2001 copies of the EA (along with an invitation for review and comment) were sent to 20 individuals representing Tribal and State Governments; private organizations; and themselves. No comments were received from any of these people concerning this project. On November 22, a general notice inviting public review and comment of the EA was published in the Central Oregonian. The only thought received during the course of these efforts was that it was important that necessary cultural resource clearances be completed prior to project initiation.

IV. Compliance and Monitoring

Post-project monitoring will be conducted to ensure that the project and accompanying salting and other livestock management methods are leading to the achievement of allotment objectives for forage utilization amount and distribution, and rangeland health. Disturbed areas will be monitored over time for exotic invasive plant species such as noxious weeds. Any of these species will be treated upon discovery.

V. Terms and Conditions

The grazing permittee will be assigned responsibility for the maintenance of these improvements to standards acceptable to the Government.

Field Manager

Date

Attachments: FONSI

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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Based on an analysis of potential environmental impacts described in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that none of the alternatives constitute a major federal action; that impacts to the human environment are not expected to be significant; and an environmental impact analysis is therefore not required.

My reasons for this determination are:

There will be no significant irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources.
There will be no significant, adverse impacts to water quality or stream channel morphology.
Cultural resources will be protected during project implementation.
There will be no significant impacts to Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive plants or animals within the affected area.
There are no wetlands or prime or unique farmlands in the project area. Neither wetlands nor floodplains will be adversely affected.
There will be no significant, cumulative or avoidable adverse effects on the environment.
There are no highly uncertain or unique risks involved.
Known Native American religious sites would not be affected.
The alternatives do not violate federal, state or local law.

Robert Towne
Field Manager
Deschutes Resource Area
Prineville District
Bureau of Land Management

Date