

**CITY OF IRRIGON
RECREATION & PUBLIC PURPOSES ACT CONVEYANCE
OR 55163
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT #OR-035-99-05
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

The referenced Environmental Assessment (EA) and its supporting materials analyze the expected impacts that would result from the conveyance of land to the City of Irrigon for the purpose of constructing and operating a wastewater treatment and disposal plant.

The EA provides a description of the resources that would be transferred into City ownership. Further, it provides a description of the expected impacts to the land and resources that would occur as a result of the City's Proposed Action and two alternatives.

I have evaluated the effects of the Proposed Action and alternatives, together with the proposed mitigating measures, against the tests of significance found at 40 CFR 1508.27. I find that:

1. The Proposed Action and alternatives would cause no significant impacts to resources except to certain historic resources. Most impacts would be minimal. See number 8 for further discussion on impacts to historic resources.
2. The Proposed Action and alternatives would enable the City of Irrigon to continue to provide wastewater disposal facilities that are acceptable for human health.
3. The Proposed Action and alternatives would have no effect on any unique natural characteristics of the geographic area. See number 8 for effects on historic resources.
4. The Proposed Action and alternatives would not have highly controversial effects. The EA examines four issues that have the potential to generate controversy. The proposed mitigation is expected to render any controversy not significant. Those issues are:
 - a. Possible objectionable odors noticeable to nearby residents and visitors. The EA indicates that the proposed facility, with its modern technology and available mitigation, would confine any odors to a very small area.
 - b. Unattractive view from nearby homes. The proposed landscaping should mitigate this concern, though not obscure the plant completely.
 - c. Possible decline in adjoining land values. The EA documents

conversations with county appraisers in the area that indicated land values in the vicinity of existing similar facilities showed no significant decline.

- d. Adverse effect on historic road traces across the subject land. See more at number 8.
5. The Proposed Action and alternatives would have no uncertain effects and would not involve unique or unknown risks.
6. The Proposed Action and alternatives would not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a principle about a future consideration.
7. The Proposed Action and alternatives is not related to any other action with cumulatively significant effects.
8. The Proposed Action and alternatives would have an adverse effect on two historic road traces running across the subject land. These road traces have been determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Certain mitigation measures would be applied, in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), that would be entered into by the City of Irrigon, Bureau of Land Management, and the State Historic Preservation Office to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act. Proposed mitigation measures include documenting and recording techniques, and mapping, marking and signing the route to preserve information regarding the road traces. Mitigation also includes avoiding the road traces as much as possible and planting native vegetation and landscaping to lessen the effect on the setting.

Under the Proposed Action, about 466 feet, out of a total of 541 feet, of the easterly road route would be obliterated. The more visible length of the westerly route, about 480 feet of a total of 715 feet, would be left undisturbed. The result would be a 57% loss of the total historic resource. The setting would be altered by the presence of the modern facilities and the change in use. This alternative would likely have a significant impact on the historic road traces.

Under Alternative C, a greater length, about 500 feet, of the visible portion of the westerly road route would be preserved. Essentially all of the visible portion of the easterly road route would be obliterated. The result would be a 61% loss of the total historic resource. The setting would be altered to a lesser extent than under Alternative A, with the mitigation contained in the MOA applied. This alternative would likely have a significant impact.

Under Alternative D, the most visible portions of both routes would be preserved. All of the eastern road trace and about 500 feet of the western road trace would be undisturbed. The result would be a 19% loss of the total historic resource. The setting would be altered, but with the mitigation in the MOA applied, the

historic property would still retain significance. The road traces would still be potentially eligible for listing on the National Register. The effects of this alternative are not likely to be significant.

9. The Proposed Action and alternatives have been determined to have No Effect on bald eagle, and Not Likely To Adversely Affect listed salmon and steelhead species in the Columbia River.
10. The Proposed Action and alternatives would not threaten a violation of any federal, state, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. It would enable the City of Irrigon to comply with state laws regarding disposal of wastewater.

DETERMINATION

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts and other information contained in the referenced EA, I have determined that the Proposed Action and Alternative C are major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment because of their effect on historic resources eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. If either of these alternatives is selected for implementation in the Decision Record, a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement would be filed.

I have further determined that Alternative D is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment (a Finding of No Significant Impact). If this alternative is selected for implementation in the Decision Record, an Environmental Impact Statement would not be required.

s/ Penelope Dunn-Woods
Field Manager

July 16, 2001
Date