

Edson Creek Boat Ramp

EA: OR128-01-14

Summary

This Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzes environmental consequences of hardening the boat ramp and adjacent parking area at Edson Creek Recreation Site as identified in Action 5-5 of the *Sixes River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP)* (BLM, 2001) and of taking no action. The means of mitigating impacts resulting from hardening the boat ramp and adjacent parking area are also presented in this EA.

Chapter 1.0 Purpose of and Need for Action

The existing Edson Creek boat ramp/day use area offers one of only three public boating access points with parking along Sixes River. Periodically, the boat ramp becomes severely rutted making it difficult to use by vehicles launching boats. In its current state, resource damage occurs due to improperly channeled runoff, steep grades, and inadequate surfacing. The purpose of this Project Plan/EA is to harden the boat ramp and parking area to eliminate rutting, reduce sedimentation into the river, and improve access.

1.1 Applicable Resource Management Plan

The direction to prepare a Project Plan/EA to harden the boat ramp at Edson Creek Recreation Site comes directly from action 5-5 in the *Sixes River SRMA Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP)* (BLM, 2001) which is tiered to the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan (RMP)*, *Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)*, and its *Record of Decision (ROD)* (BLM, 1995). Both plans include analysis files and are hereby incorporated into this EA by reference.

1.2 Relevant Watershed Analysis

In 1997, the United States Forest Service (USFS) completed a watershed analysis for the Sixes River Watershed. Several management actions in the Sixes River SRMA RAMP (BLM, 2001) analyzed in EA # *OR128-99-13* (BLM, 2000), complement *The Sixes River Watershed Analysis* and are intended to be in conformance with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives described in the *Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan) (Interagency, 1994).

The *Sixes River Watershed Analysis* includes comments specific to patterns of recreation use along Sixes River, and particular activities such as recreational gold mining, fishing, camping, and growing trends in other dispersed activities (USFS, 1997, pp. S-8 to S-17). The watershed analysis indicates that current and future developed recreation is limited by terrain, topography, and land management designation (USFS, 1997, page S-9). Developed recreation opportunities, which are provided at Edson Creek and Sixes River Recreation Sites, are unlikely to be replaced elsewhere in the watershed. The watershed analysis projects an expected increase in demand for biking, hiking and interpretation (USFS, 1997, page S-10). Recreation use including guided sport fishing was reported to have increased in the watershed analysis and is expected to continue to increase (USFS, 1997, page S-16). The *Sixes River Watershed Analysis* (USFS, 1997) is hereby incorporated in this EA by reference.

1.3 Decision Needed

The decisions to be made are:

- 1) Which action (the Proposed Action or the No Action alternative) will the BLM adopt?
- 2) Which recommendations, suggested design features, and/or mitigation measures will accompany the selected action?

The decision(s) are directly related to the scope of the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) decisions and the environmental consequences of the Proposed Action and No Action. The *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) decisions were limited to management actions that both resolved the planning issues and enhanced recreational opportunities within the planning area.

1.4 Relevant Issues

Summary of Scoping

The scoping process for hardening the boat ramp and parking area at Edson Creek Recreation Site began with BLM Recreation Staff identifying issues and concerns related to proposed improvements to the site. An interdisciplinary team of resource specialists was formed to identify potential and substantive environmental issues. Members of this team were involved in the early stages of planning as well as preparing this Environmental Assessment.

The public was invited to offer input to this Environmental Assessment during a public scoping period (February 19, 2001 to March 21, 2001) advertised in *The World*, a regional newspaper published in Coos Bay, Oregon. The public is also invited to review this draft Project Plan/Environmental Assessment and comment on the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Issues Identified

The issues below were identified as key. Other issues were considered but not analyzed for reasons described under *Issues Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study* in Appendix B.

Key Issues

What can be done to reduce or eliminate the rutting and erosion of the boat ramp resulting in sedimentation into the river and limited boat launching access?

Resolution:

This issue is addressed in the “Proposed Action” alternative.

Will runoff from the parking area or use of the boat ramp affect the water quality of the Sixes River over the long term?

Resolution:

This issue is addressed in the Watershed Resources section (4.3.6) under the “Proposed Action”.

Because of the location of the boat ramp on the outside bend of Sixes River at the mouth of Edson Creek, will the hydrologic effects of the river and creek (scouring and sediment deposition) damage the boat ramp over time?

Resolution:

This issue is addressed in the Watershed Resources section (4.3.6) under the “Proposed Action”.

What can be done to make the boat ramp/day use area (including parking along the county road) safer for users pulling in and out of the boat ramp/day use area and local residents and others using Sixes River Road?

Resolution:

The safety issues are identified and addressed with recommended mitigation measures in the Recreation Resources section (4.2.7) under the “No Action” alternative as well as section 4.3.7 under the “Proposed Action”.

What can be done to minimize noise above the ambient level during Marbled Murrelet nesting season (April 1 - September 15) when improving the boat ramp and parking area?

Resolution:

Mitigation measures are recommended for this issue in the Wildlife section (4.3.3) under the “Proposed Action” alternative.

1.5 Necessary Permits / State and County Conformance

No permits are required if the structure is being “maintained” to the original dimensions. Existing rip-rap can also be maintained if there is no increase in original dimensions. (McCabe, M., 2001)

Chapter 2.0 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

This chapter describes the “No Action” and “Proposed Action” alternatives. The “Proposed Action” alternative along with the corresponding design features and mitigation measures are intended to resolve issues identified by BLM resource specialists during the scoping process.

2.1 Description of Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

No Action

No project will be planned. The boat ramp will continue to erode creating rutting, sediment delivery to the river, and impeded user access.

Proposed Action

Improve the existing boat ramp by installing cable-concrete matting from the parking area to one foot below Design Low Water. Adjust the grade of the ramp to as close to 15% as possible without affecting the county road approach and the parking area. Grade the parking area to allow for drainage and resurface with crushed aggregate. Refer to the Engineering Report (McLeod, 2001) in the Analysis File for detailed engineering specifications.

2.2 Alternatives Eliminated from Detailed Study

Reconstruct the boat ramp so that it faces downstream. In this alternative the location of the boat ramp would be moved to the east end of the Day Use parking area and the ramp oriented 15 degrees downstream from a line perpendicular to the centerline of the river.

Rationale:

This alternative was eliminated due to the estimated cost of the project (\$75,000 - which is 3 times the cost of the Proposed Action) and the high level of disturbance to the site it would cause.

Construct a pole slide.

Rationale:

Pole slides are designed primarily for use by drift boats. While the majority of ramp use is by drift boats during fishing season, use by other types of watercraft (e.g., rafts, canoes, kayaks, etc.) has also been observed and is expected to increase over time. Pole slides require annual maintenance and would be susceptible to damage. Not all visitors would be familiar with how they function thus becoming a hindrance rather than an aid to boat launching. A

Pole Slide would also not by itself solve the rutting and sedimentation problem.

Close boat ramp.

Rationale:

The decision to improve the boat ramp was made in the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* Decision Record (BLM, 2001) to which this Project Plan/EA is tiered. Closure of the boat ramp was not an alternative considered in the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) and is therefore not considered in this Project Plan/EA.

Purchase adjacent property that is more suitable for a boat ramp.

Rationale:

Land acquisition is a complex and time consuming process and generally take several years to accomplish given a suitable piece of property is found with a willing seller. This may be a viable alternative in future planning efforts, but it is well beyond the scope of this EA and was considered but eliminated from detailed study in the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) and therefore not considered in this Project Plan/EA.

Look at other BLM parcels upstream as alternative sites for a boat ramp.

Rationale:

Two boat ramp sites on BLM parcels were proposed in the *Final Coos Bay District Proposed Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement* (Vol. 1, pg. 3-92) (BLM, 1994). After receiving unfavorable public comment, the proposed sites were further analyzed and found to be unsuitable for development as boat launch sites and were dropped (ibid., Vol. 3, pg. 129).

Chapter 3.0 Affected Environment

This section describes the environmental components that may be affected by the Alternatives being analyzed. This section does not address the environmental consequences, but rather acts as the baseline for comparisons in Chapter 4.0, Environmental Consequences.

Chapter 3 is tiered to the Affected Environment description in Part 1 under the Physical and Biological Resources in the Management Area section of the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001). Additional information is provided here on Fisheries/Aquatic Habitat/Riparian Resources, Soils, and Geology in greater detail for the purposes of this project.

3.1 Fisheries, Aquatic Habitat and Riparian Resources

Both anadromous and resident fish populations extend throughout the SRMA.

The aquatic habitats within the SRMA show evidence of adverse modification from past management practices; including logging, mining, and manipulation of the riparian vegetation. Stream temperatures throughout the SRMA tend to be higher than optimal for salmonids in the summer.

Both the Edson Creek and Sixes River Recreation Sites are within the Oregon Coast coho salmon Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU) (listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act), the Oregon Coast steelhead trout ESU (federal candidate), and the Oregon Coastal cutthroat trout ESU (federal candidate). The SRMA includes critical habitat for coho salmon (as identified in the Endangered Species Act) and essential fish habitat (as identified in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act).

The condition of the aquatic habitat and salmonid fish populations in Edson Creek are described in the Sixes River Watershed Analysis (1997) on pp. A-32 to A-34. Additional habitat inventory work was completed by ODFW during the summer of 2000. In summary, this information indicates that the lower reach of Edson Creek (which includes the BLM Recreation Site) was heavily inundated by sediments during the 1964 flood, and has been in a very gradual recovery [cutting through the sediment deposits to establish a stable meander pattern] since 1980. Aquatic habitat within the BLM Recreation site is characterized by deep gravel/cobble substrates, wide low-gradient riffles, moderately deep pools and shallow glides with sparse large woody debris cover. Edson Creek supports populations of fall chinook, coho, winter steelhead, resident rainbow trout, and cutthroat trout, in addition to pacific lamprey, three-spine stickleback, and sculpins. Anadromous fish habitat is limited to the lower 2.5 miles; the highest quality spawning habitat occurs within the lower mile (including the recreation site). The portion of Edson Creek which flows through the Recreation Site offers excellent over-wintering habitat and high-water refugia in the form of side channels, meander cutoffs, and vegetated flood plains (willow, alder and myrtle). Successive pass/removal electro-fishing conducted in conjunction with the erosion-control project during the summer of 1999 indicates that the portion of Edson Creek within the Recreation Site supports very high densities of young-of-the-year steelhead.

Edson Creek is not currently listed (303d) as water-quality limited. However, the Sixes River Watershed Analysis (1997) cites Southcoast Watershed Council monitoring data from 1995 indicating a 7-day average maximum water temperature of 67.3° F. Although a definitive long-term trend cannot be established because the historic temperature data is limited, evidence from the Sixes River Watershed Analysis (1997) suggests that summertime water temperatures in Edson Creek may still be recovering from logging upstream which removed “all vegetation down to the stream.”

3.2 Geology

The Edson Creek Recreation Site is underlain by the younger Otter Point Formation, a complex

association of variable rocks from diverse origins. The Otter Point Formation consists of a highly disrupted and sheared melange of mudstone, sandstone, subordinate chert, volcanic rock, serpentinite, and blueshist (USFS, 1997).

3.3 Soils

The Soil Survey of Curry County identified the Logsdon soil series (167A) to encompass the Edson Creek Recreation Site. The Logsdon silt loam is a very deep, well-drained soil formed in alluvium. Permeability is moderate to moderately rapid (0.6 to 6.0 inches per hour) going from the top layer of the profile to the bottom layer at 44-60 inches. This soil type is located on the low stream terrace of Edson Creek at 0-3% slopes where it is subject to rare periods of flooding. The suitability of this soil for recreation use is limited by duration, intensity, and season of flooding.

3.4 Wildlife

Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons occur within the range of the recreation site, although neither of these species is known to nest or regularly occupy the area. A more complete list of potential vertebrate wildlife can be found in Appendix D of the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001). Generally the recreation site consists of habitats with a long history of habitat disturbances (aerial photos from the 1930's). The general area has small pockets of suitable Marbled Murrelet habitat and some Del Norte salamander, Blue-grey tail-dropper, Populace tail-dropper and Megomphix habitats throughout.

Marbled murrelet habitat on the east edge of the BLM lands which include Edson Creek Recreation Site was surveyed to protocol in 1999 and 2000. There were 8 visual detections of murrelets which indicated presence but not occupancy (occupancy is currently the best indicator of nesting). In 1998 a single survey for murrelets was conducted in 40 acres of murrelet habitat south of the campground. Two audio detections of murrelets occurred, but occupancy has neither been confirmed nor ruled out for the stand. Additional surveys are not currently scheduled for this stand.

The current condition of the riparian area adjacent to the boat ramp is highly degraded and non-native plant species predominate, which decreases wildlife diversity. Signs of American beaver and river otter are present in the area. A few native trees, willows, shrubs, and herbaceous plant species currently provide habitat for these and other riparian associated species of wildlife and birds.

Chapter 4.0 Environmental Consequences

This section describes the scientific and analytical basis for the comparison of the Proposed Action and the No Action alternatives, and the probable consequences as they relate to the alternatives. The

means of mitigating impacts resulting from implementation of the Proposed Action is also presented in this section. Environmental consequences are based on specialist reports and additional analysis documents contained in the analysis file, which is reasonably available for inspection within the time allowed for comment.

4.1 Impacts on Critical Elements of the Human Environment

The environmental consequences to critical elements of the human environment are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Critical Elements of the Human Environment

Critical Element of the Human Environment	Applicable to the Project Area	Affected by No Action	Affected by the Proposed Action
Air Quality	Yes	No	No
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern	No	N/A	N/A
Cultural Resources	Yes	No	No
Farm Lands, Prime or Unique	No	N/A	N/A
Flood Plain	Yes	No	No
Native American Religious Concerns	No	N/A	N/A
Solid/hazardous Waste	No	N/A	N/A
Threatened & Endangered Species (Fish and Wildlife)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Threatened & Endangered Species (Botanical)	No	N/A	N/A
Water Quality	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wetlands and Riparian Zones	Yes	Yes	Yes
Wild and Scenic Rivers	No	N/A	N/A
Wilderness Values	No	N/A	N/A

Noxious Weeds	Yes	No	No
Port Orford Cedar	Yes	No	No
Environmental Justice	Yes	No	No
Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives	Yes	No	No

4.2 Impacts on Non-critical Elements of the Human Environment

No Action Alternative

4.2.1 Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources

Results from previous surveys indicate there will be no effect on cultural resources if the No Action alternative is adopted.

4.2.2 Effects on Soils

On site investigation revealed evidence of considerable erosion and sediment runoff from the graveled surfaces of both the existing boat ramp and the adjacent parking area just above. As a result some gravel and sediment delivery is occurring to the stream of light to moderately heavy amounts, depending on runoff and stream flows. This will continue to occur with continued vehicle use on the poorly graded graveled surfaces and with the continued erosion action of high stream flows. It is likely that with the continuation of erosion of gravel surfaces and sediment runoff to the stream, channel deposition may be built up beyond what is expected for a “natural” disturbance regime.

4.2.3 Effects on Wildlife, Including T&E Species

The Wildlife Resource Specialist report (including Threatened and Endangered Species) is summarized below. The full text of the report is contained in the analysis file and (Witt, 2001).

Negative impacts of the No Action Alternative on wildlife would occur from continued erosion and sedimentation into Edson Creek and Sixes River. Expansion of exotic species of vegetation could displace native vegetation. However, these negative impacts would be negligible because they are seasonal and minimal. Also, soil compaction at the boat ramp and parking area will limit vegetation expansion.

The eventual decrease in river traffic as the site degrades to prevent most boat launching is a beneficial impact. The decreased traffic and disturbance would benefit bald eagles, nesting birds, riparian and

aquatic amphibians, herptiles and mammals (beaver and river otter). Subsequent expansion of riparian vegetation would be beneficial, especially if native vegetation colonize the area.

4.2.4 Effects on Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries, Including T&E Species

The Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries Resource Specialist report (including Threatened and Endangered Species) is summarized below. The full text of the report is contained in the analysis file (Lightcap, 2001).

In its current condition (native surface with some crushed gravel, and a gradient of around 19%), use of the boat ramp during the wetter months is resulting in chronic rutting and erosion. The surface materials on the boat ramp tend to become loose and disturbed as vehicles spin their wheels when trying to gain traction on the steep slope of the ramp itself. This loose soil mix is easily entrained and mobilized by the rainwater runoff that drains directly down the steep boat ramp slope. The combination of loose soil material, concentrated runoff, and steep slopes is resulting in the development of gullies, and direct contribution of sediment to the lower Sixes River. The no-action alternative is likely to perpetuate this process.

4.2.5 Effects on Vegetation, Including T&E Species

The boat ramp area consists of a small parking area with a narrow, relatively steep, hard-packed dirt ramp leading down to the river. This area has been partially disturbed by vehicular and human traffic. No Survey and Manage or other special status plants were identified as occurring in the boat ramp area. With no action, the vegetation would continue to be trampled, the soil compacted on the ramp and parking surfaces and eroded along the bank. The disturbed area would continue to provide good habitat for the establishment of non-native vegetation; thus, native vegetation abundance and diversity would remain minimal or decline further. Himalayan blackberry grows densely along the ramp. This is a non-native species that is quite invasive and could potentially increase not only here but around the entire recreation site. By not developing this site further, no vegetation would be removed which would promote continual loss of native species through the expansion of the non-native Himalayan blackberry population.

4.2.6 Effects on Watershed Resources (Hydrology, Flood plain, and Water Quality)

Evidence in the field suggests, due to somewhat impervious conditions of the boat ramp and adjacent parking area, there has been a resulting increase in turbidity and sediment delivery to the stream. The channelization of surface runoff from erosional processes related to the boat ramp has increased the routing of precipitation to the stream. The additional surface runoff increases the potential for adverse effects of common pollutants associated with motorized vehicles such as: motor oil, gasoline, and various other fluids. If a leak were to occur and transport to a stream, there could be an effect on

water quality. The boat ramp is in a location that is inundated regularly by the stream during peak flow events. The creation of an eddy current at the base of the ramp allows for the aggradation of sediment to accumulate, including bar formation, particularly during recession flows.

Upon various field observations, it is evident that there is existing sediment delivery to the Sixes River by means of erosional rilling due to the concentration of overland flow. The process of rilling over the gravel substrate has contributed towards routing of runoff downward through the existing boat ramp. The continuous erosion, although small, has a chronic effect on the water quality and sediment deposition over time.

4.2.7 Effects on Recreation Resources

Currently, the boat ramp is in poor condition. The severe rutting, loose gravel, and steep slope make it unuseable except for 4-wheel drive vehicles or by carrying boats down the ramp by hand to the river. The condition of the parking area is also in poor condition with an uneven surface and inadequate channeling of water which results in pooling of water in low spots and rutting of the ramp. In addition to inaccessibility by some users, the current condition of the ramp also poses a tripping hazard since it is the primary access route for visitors walking down to the river.

Another important concern is the appearance of the boat ramp/day use area and the image it conveys to the public. Prior to BLM management, the site was considered a less than desirable atmosphere for family camping, picnicking and day use. For the past six years the BLM has systematically improved and reestablished the site as a safe, healthy, and fun place for families to recreate. Critical to the continuation of this objective is improvement of the boat ramp/day use area.

Implementation of the “No Action” alternative would continue to promote use by only a select group, continue to allow degradation of the site, and send the wrong message to the public.

There have been several safety issues raised related to the location of the boat ramp/day use area, which need to be addressed to ensure public health and safety, they are:

1. Parking along the county road adjacent to the boat ramp/day use area may pose a safety hazard due to overcrowding and reduced vision of oncoming traffic.
2. The boat ramp/day use area entrance is located on an inside curve of the road and is blocked by thick vegetation with no clear view of oncoming traffic or vehicles turning into the boat ramp/day use area.
3. Currently there are no signs identifying: the boat ramp/day use area, pedestrians on roadway, or congestion, to oncoming traffic.

Recommended mitigation measures:

1. Low spots and rutted areas in the boat ramp/day use area parking should be filled with crushed rock to reduce the tripping hazard. To the extent possible without major reconstruction, runoff should be channeled to avoid pooling of water in the parking area and rutting of the ramp.
2. Coordinate with Curry County on the safe usage of county right-of-way for vehicle and boat trailer parking. Determine appropriate amount of parking and designate “parking” and “no parking” areas by installing signs.
3. Improve visibility of oncoming traffic, pedestrians, and vehicles turning into the boat ramp entrance by reducing the amount of tall vegetation to the extent possible while still maintaining the aesthetic character of the site and replacing with low-growing native plant species.
4. Install appropriate signage warning approaching vehicles of the boat ramp entrance, pedestrians on roadway, congested area, etc.
5. Consider requesting the county install a pedestrian crosswalk on Sixes River Road near the boat ramp/day use area entrance.

4.2.8 Effects on Noxious Weed Management

No additional effects beyond those listed in Chap. 4.9 (pg. 32) of *EA # OR128-99-13* (BLM, 2000) which analyzes the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) to which this Project Plan/EA is tiered.

4.2.9 Effects on Hazardous Materials and Solid Wastes Management

No additional effects beyond those listed in Chap. 4.9 (pp. 32 & 33) of *EA # OR128-99-13* (BLM, 2000) which analyzes the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) to which this Project Plan/EA is tiered.

Additional recommended mitigation measures:

An Oil Spill Contingency Plan should be written for the boat ramp and a spill kit (whose contents are defined in the District’s Oil Spill Plan for Riparian Operations) should be placed at Edson Creek Recreation Site.

4.2.10 Effects on Port Orford Cedar/Forest Management

No additional effects beyond those listed in Chap. 4.11 (pg. 33) of *EA # OR128-99-13* (BLM, 2000) which analyzes the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) to which this Project Plan/EA is tiered.

4.2.11 Unavoidable Adverse Effects

No unavoidable adverse effects have been identified.

Proposed Action Alternative

4.3.1 Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources

The lack of recorded cultural resources and negative results from previous surveys indicate intact cultural resources will not be affected by the Proposed Action.

If potential cultural resources are encountered during this project, all work in the vicinity should stop and the District Archeologist must be notified at once.

4.3.2 Effects on Soils

The design features of the proposed action will significantly reduce the potential for erosion and sediment runoff of both the parking surface and the boat ramp as compared to the “No Action” alternative. Grading of the parking area to provide for sheet drainage and a new lift of crushed rock will reduce potential for concentrated flows onto the ramp and thus reduce direct runoff into the stream. Cabled concrete mats with rip rap placed along both sides and across the lower end will provide virtually complete protection to the ramp from erosion due to runoff, vehicle traction and high stream flows. Some short-term erosion and sediment delivery will occur until disturbed soils are revegetated in the site area. With the application of all the design features of the Proposed Action, cumulative effects on soil erosion and the potential for sediment delivery to the stream will be slight or insignificant.

4.3.3 Effects on Wildlife, Including T&E Species

The Wildlife Resource Specialist report (including Threatened and Endangered Species) is summarized below. The full text of the report is contained in the analysis file (Witt, 2001).

Negative impacts of the Proposed Action on marbled murrelets, bald eagles, and other wildlife include a minimal increase in boat traffic, short-term construction noise, and loss of native vegetation. A net reduction of sediment to the streams and removal of exotic vegetation are beneficial impacts.

Because boat ramp improvements will be minimal and parking is the limiting factor at the ramp, boat

traffic is expected to increase only marginally. This project is not likely to adversely affect bald eagles because there is no known bald eagle nest on Sixes River and it is not a major eagle area. In any case, application of the project design criteria of the District's Biological Opinion (#1-7-98-F-079) for bald eagles will minimize disturbance from construction activities. Work activities that cause disturbance would not take place within 1312 feet (400 m) of active nests or roosts or within 2625 feet (800 m) line-of-sight from nests/ roosts during periods of eagle use. No known bald eagle nest trees, perch trees, or roost trees would be cut.

Unsurveyed, suitable marbled murrelet habitat occurs 0.15 miles from the project site. To minimize the impacts of construction noise on nesting marbled murrelets, follow the daily timing restrictions as outlined in the District's Biological Opinion (#1-7-98-F-079). Between 1 April and 5 August work will be scheduled no earlier than 2 hours after sunrise and no later than 2 hours before sunset.

Constructing outside of the summer nesting season (May-August) can lessen impacts to native (including neo-tropical) birds and mammals. Constructing during the dry season (July-October) and using appropriate erosion control techniques can lessen impacts to amphibians and other aquatic wildlife species due to sedimentation. No removal of native vegetation, the removal of exotic vegetation, and planting with native species (willow, alder, grasses, riparian species) after construction will increase forage, cover and nesting habitat for native birds, mammals, amphibians, and herptiles.

4.3.4 Effects on Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries, Including T&E Species

The Aquatic Habitat/Fisheries Resource Specialist report (including Threatened and Endangered Species) is summarized below. The full text of the report is contained in the analysis file (Lightcap, 2001).

It is likely that a small amount of turbidity would be generated during the first rain event, as the dust and soil particles are washed out of the newly placed crushed aggregate and the small amount of disturbed soil that may still be exposed following completion of the project. This turbidity is expected to be negligible.

All potential impacts that may occur at this site are small in nature, and would be of short (1-2 days) duration. Therefore, construction of this project is not expected to contribute to longer-term cumulative sediment effects within the Sixes River Watershed. Installation of the cabled concrete block boat ramp would likely eliminate the chronic gullying and erosion that is occurring on a yearly basis at this site. Therefore, on a small scale, this project would result in beneficial cumulative effects to sediment and turbidity within the Sixes River Watershed.

4.3.5 Effects on Vegetation, Including T&E Species

The parking area and boat ramp are hard packed dirt and have little or no plant cover although the

ramp is bordered by a dense clump of Himalayan blackberry, a non-native invasive species. No Survey & Manage or other special status plants were identified as occurring in this area. Surfacing the parking area and improving the boat ramp would result in the removal or disturbance of some vegetation, primarily the Himalayan blackberry adjacent to the ramp. The benefit of greatly reducing or eliminating the Himalayan blackberry would outweigh the small loss of habitat resulting from the improving these areas. In addition, the surfacing of the ramp and parking area may help to channelize use, resulting in less disturbance away from the parking area making it possible for the native plant cover to reestablish itself in areas where it is currently suffering from trampling.

Recommended mitigation measures:

Himalayan blackberry would be the primary vegetation to be removed during the boat ramp/day use area improvements. The benefit of greatly reducing or eliminating the Himalayan blackberry would outweigh the slight loss of habitat resulting from improvement of the ramp and surfacing the parking area. Native plant species should be used to re-vegetate areas disturbed during this process. The area would need to be periodically monitored so that Himalayan blackberry did not reestablish itself and dominate the flora in this area as it currently does.

4.3.6 Effects on Watershed Resources (Hydrology, Flood plain, and Water Quality)

Replacing the existing gravel substrate of the ramp with a cabled concrete system should alleviate the rilling and down cutting upon the ramp surface. This will alleviate but not eliminate the erosional sediment and increased surface flow routing of the boat ramp. The recommended block size and design criteria for the cabled concrete system would be adequate to withstand the calculated shear stress due to increased stream flow during a 100 year flood event (personal comm. Tom Croskey, Armortek, 6/21/01). Resurfacing the staging and parking area should increase infiltration of precipitation and allow for proper drainage. Grading the slope toward existing vegetation should help reduce the sediment delivery to the stream due to surface runoff.

The location of the recreation site and boat ramp within its current proximity to the stream increases the potential for adverse effects to water quality from motor vehicle influence. The improvements to the current condition of the site should alleviate that influence when design features are implemented to improve drainage and structural integrity. There are no foreseen risks of decreasing the water quality and bank stability due to improvements to the boat ramp and staging/parking area.

4.3.7 Effects on Recreation Resources

Implementation of the “Proposed Action” would allow for a greater variety of visitor use (not just 4-wheel drive vehicles with boat trailers), reduce the erosional damage to the site, make the site safer to use and make a positive impression on the public. It is expected there will be a slight increase in use of the boat ramp as a result of improvements made, however, the boat ramp/day use area is to some

extent self-limiting due to the small amount of available parking.

Recommended mitigation measures:

1. Coordinate with Curry County on the safe usage of county right-of-way for vehicle and boat trailer parking. Determine appropriate amount of parking and designate “parking” and “no parking” areas by installing signs.
2. Improve visibility of oncoming traffic, pedestrians, and vehicles turning into the boat ramp entrance by reducing the amount of tall vegetation to the extent possible and replacing with low-growing native plant species while still maintaining the aesthetic character of the site.
3. Install appropriate signage warning approaching vehicles of the boat ramp entrance, pedestrians on roadway, congested area, etc.
4. Consider requesting the county install a pedestrian crosswalk on Sixes River Road near the boat ramp/day use area entrance.
5. Install a traffic counter to determine the amount of use at the boat ramp/day use area.

4.3.8 Effects on Noxious Weed Management

No additional effects beyond those listed in Chap. 4.9 (pg. 32) of *EA # OR128-99-13* (BLM, 2000) which analyzes the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) to which this Project Plan/EA is tiered.

4.3.9 Effects on Hazardous Materials and Solid Wastes Management

No additional effects beyond those listed in Chap. 4.9 (pg. 32 & 33) of *EA # OR128-99-13* (BLM, 2000) which analyzes the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) to which this Project Plan/EA is tiered.

Additional recommended mitigation measures:

An Oil Spill Contingency Plan should be written for the boat ramp and a spill kit (whose contents are defined in the District’s Oil Spill Plan for Riparian Operations) should be placed at Edson Creek Recreation Site.

4.3.10 Effects on Port Orford Cedar/Forest Management

No additional effects beyond those listed in Chap. 4.11 (pg. 33) of *EA # OR128-99-13* (BLM, 2000) which analyzes the *Sixes River SRMA RAMP* (BLM, 2001) to which this Project Plan/EA is tiered.

4.3.11 Unavoidable Adverse Effects

No unavoidable adverse effects have been identified.

Chapter 5.0 List of Participants and Contributors

The following individuals are acknowledged for their contributions to the preparation of this Environmental Assessment:

Tom Sill	Team Lead and Outdoor Recreation Planner-Myrtlewood FO
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Matt Azhocar	Hydrologist-Myrtlewood FO
Stephan Samuels	District Archeologist
Bob Raper	District Noxious Weed Coordinator
Steve Morris	District Environmental Coordinator
Tim Votaw	District Hazardous Materials Coordinator

Chapter 6.0 List of Agencies and Organizations Contacted

The following agencies and organizations were sent copies of the initial planning announcement and this EA.

Agencies

National Marine Fisheries Service	Oregon State Marine Board
Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Oregon Division of State Lands	U.S. Forest Service, Powers Ranger District

Organizations

Kalmiopsis Audubon

Port Orford Chamber of Commerce

City and Tribal Government

Curry County Commissioners
City of Port Orford

Confed. Tribes of Siletz Indians of Ore.
Coquille Indian Tribe

Appendices

Appendix A - Literature Cited

Lightcap, S., Fisheries Specialist Report for EA: OR128-01-14, Bureau of Land Management, Coos Bay District, North Bend, Oregon.

McCabe, M., E-mail communication on April 19, 2001. Oregon Division of State Lands, Salem, Oregon.

McLeod, D., Preliminary Engineering Report for proposed boat ramp improvements at Edson Creek Recreation Site, for EA: OR128-10-14, Bureau of Land Management, Coos Bay District, North Bend, Oregon.

USDA, Forest Service, 1997. Sixes River Watershed Analysis, Siskiyou National Forest, Powers Ranger District, Powers, Oregon.

USDI, Bureau of Land Management 1994. Final Coos Bay District Proposed Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement, Coos Bay District, North Bend, Oregon.

USDI, Bureau of Land Management, 1995. Coos Bay District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, Coos Bay District, North Bend, Oregon.

USDI, Bureau of Land Management, 2001. Sixes River Special Recreation Management Area, Recreation Area Management Plan, Coos Bay District, North Bend, Oregon.

USDI, Bureau of Land Management, 1999. Sixes River Special Recreation Management Area, Recreation Area Management Plan, Environmental Assessment: OR128-99-13, Coos Bay District, North Bend, Oregon.

Witt, H., Wildlife Specialist Report for EA: OR128-01-14, Bureau of Land Management, Coos Bay District, North Bend, Oregon.

Appendix B - Issues Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study

Facilitating a sport fishery that causes by-catch of a federally listed endangered species (Coho Salmon).

Rationale:

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is the agency responsible for administration of the sport fishing regulations in the state of Oregon. The BLM consults with the ODFW, National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on all management practices that may affect endangered species. To date, the boat ramp at Edson Creek Recreation Site has not been identified as adversely affecting the Coho Salmon population on the Sixes River.

Removal of stream side vegetation.

Rationale:

The proposed action involves minimal removal of streamside vegetation, primarily Himalayan blackberry which is an invasive, non-native species. The specialist's report for vegetation, recommends removal of the Himalayan blackberry and re-vegetation with native species (refer to section 4.3.5).

Encouraging use of an already crowded river.

Rationale:

Neither quantitative use nor visitor capacity of the Sixes River has been determined by any of the managing agencies, therefore, the assertion that the river is crowded is a subjective one with no supporting documentation. The boat ramp at Edson Creek Recreation Site is the only public boat launching facility east of Highway 101 and for that reason, receives periodic heavy use especially during fishing season. The boat ramp/day use area, is however, self-limiting due to the small amount of available parking.