

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA Number: OR 128 - 0312

BLM Coos Bay District Office

Lease/Serial/Case file No.: N/A

Proposed Action Title/Type: River Access Trails at Sixes River Recreation Site

Location of Proposed Action: Sixes River Recreation Site, approximately 11 miles east on Sixes River County Road from Sixes, OR (T. 32 S., R. 14 W., Sec. 12, Will. Mer., Curry County).

Applicant (if any): N/A

Conformance With Applicable Land Use Plan: This proposed action is subject to the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan & Environmental Impact Statement* and its Record of Decision (BLM, 1995); which is in conformance with the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late Successional and Old Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* and its Record of Decision (Interagency, 1994). This plan has been reviewed to determine if the proposed action conforms with the land use plan's terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1601.5.

Remarks: The Proposed Action is in compliance with the *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan & Environmental Impact Statement* and its Record of Decision (BLM, 1995)(RMP); hereby incorporated by reference. The RMP has been determined to be consistent with the standards and guidelines for healthy lands at the land use plan scale and associated timelines. The direction to prepare an Project Plan/EA to manage the trails at Sixes River Recreation Site comes directly from the *Sixes River Special Recreation Management Area, Recreation Area Management Plan* and Decision Record (BLM, 2001) analyzed in EA # OR128-99-13 (BLM, 2000); both hereby incorporated by reference.

Need for Proposed Action: The Proposed Action was conceptually approved in Actions 6-5 and 6-7 in the *Sixes River Special Recreation Management Area, Recreation Area Management Plan* (BLM, 2001) as follows:

Action 6-5: Provide managed river access route (foot path) to the bank full mark in the existing developed day-use area by designing an access route and installing steps (terraced foot path) where necessary. Decommission non-designated routes.

Rationale: Access is not defined from the day-use area to the river. Visitors are cutting down the steep slope to the river from the day-use area at random, creating erosion problems and bank instability. A clearly designated route is needed to eliminate this problem.

Action 6-7: Manage point of access routes only. Do not connect existing pathways from existing day-use area to campsite #10 and discourage user-defined access routes.

Rationale: Same as above.

In addition to the above stated rationale, the proposed action is necessary to improve visitor safety. The current user-defined trails are steep and highly irregular, and in their present condition are a safety hazard to many users (especially senior citizens and persons with impaired mobility).

Description of Proposed Action: The Proposed Action consists of refurbishing approximately 445 feet of existing trail and constructing 55 feet of new trail (see attached sketch maps for location). The work will be performed by the Northwest Youth Corps and will follow guidelines and techniques found in *Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook* (USDA Forest Service, 2000) and/or *Lightly on the Land: the SCA Trail Building and Maintenance Manual* (the Student Conservation Association, Inc., 1996).

Trail surface (tread) width will average 30 inches with an additional 24 inches as a trail (travel) way and another 24 inches for clearing width. Total corridor width will not exceed 78 inches. No trees greater than 4 inches dbh will be removed unless authorized by the Field Manager. All steps, retaining walls, and water bars will be constructed of natural materials (rocks, boulders, logs) found on site or from an authorized nearby source. All structures will be approved by the project coordinator prior to installation.

In addition to the trail refurbishment and construction, two “user-defined” or “volunteer” trails from the day-use parking lot to the river will be decommissioned with measures (recontouring, obliteration, seeding, mulching; barriers such as: boulders, logs, vegetation, fencing, etc.) taken to discourage further use as access routes. Other non-designated access routes may also be evaluated and decommissioned as time and resources allow. Refurbished trails will be signed and promoted as river access routes.

Environmental Impacts to Critical Elements of the Human Environment:

<u>Critical Elements</u>	<u>Affected</u>		<u>Critical Elements</u>	<u>Affected</u>	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality	—	<u>X</u>	T & E Species	—	<u>X</u>
ACECs	—	<u>X</u>	Wastes, Hazardous/Solid	—	<u>X</u>
Cultural Resources	—	<u>X</u>	Water Quality	—	<u>X</u>
Farmlands, Prime/Unique	—	<u>X</u>	Wetlands/Riparian Zones/ACS	—	<u>X</u>
Floodplains	—	<u>X</u>	Wild & Scenic Rivers	—	<u>X</u>
Unresolved conflicts	—	<u>X</u>	Wilderness	—	<u>X</u>
Noxious Weed Management	—	<u>X</u>	Port Orford Cedar Management	—	<u>X</u>
Environmental Justice Concerns	—	<u>X</u>	Energy production, transmission	—	<u>X</u>
Native American religious concerns and/or Indian trust resources	—	<u>X</u>			

Description of Impacts to Specific Elements of the Human Environment:

Description of Mitigation Measures and Residual Impacts:

The following design features and mitigation measures were adopted in the Decision Record for the *Sixes River Special Recreation Management Area, Recreation Area Management Plan* (BLM, 2001):

- ▼ If any potential cultural resources are encountered during the course of project or other actions, all work in the vicinity should stop and the District Archeologist must be notified at once.
- ▼ Seed and mulch all bare and disturbed soil from construction activities.
- ▼ Surface layer of rock is recommended on exposed bare soil where seed and mulch is not a viable option. Limit surface rock to areas above the high water mark.
- ▼
- ▼ Control (reduce or eliminate) and annually monitor non-native plants, including Himalayan blackberry, to prevent their spread into neighboring sites.
- ▼ Use natural barriers to reduce traffic on the foot path adjacent to the pink fawn lily. This would reduce the risk of damaging the fence and/or plant.
- ▼ Waterbar or grade any steep trail, slope, or roadway which may erode or transport sediment to a stream channel.
- ▼ When stream channels may be influenced, limit soil and plant disturbance in site preparation and construction to minimize sediment production, protect bank stability, and maintain riparian species composition.
- ▼ Revegetate unutilized or disturbed locations with native species when possible, to protect soil, water, or plant and wildlife communities.
- ▼ Evaluate, based on future trends, whether other conservation practices need to be applied for the protection of soil and water resources. Examples include: A) heavy use of trail during the winter season, B) if user-defined access routes continue to be used or developed, or C) if increased runoff of water and sediment from road and parking improvements are adversely affecting the water quality of Edson Creek and Sixes River.
- ▼ Maintenance plans for the area should include mandatory removal of all noxious weeds when detected within the designated site.
- ▼ Pre-work meetings shall include the submission and review of required plans where applicable. Contract administration shall include compliance check for spill kits, and monitoring for releases. Storage and use of chemicals and petroleum products on site shall be in accordance with applicable federal and state standards and codes, in approved containers, and subject to spill plans.

SPECIALIST REPORTS SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES

For

River Access Trails at Sixes River Recreation Site

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In addition to the mitigation measures adopted in the Decision Record for the *Sixes River Special Recreation Management Area, Recreation Area Management Plan* (BLM 2001) which apply generally to all actions contained in the plan, the following recommendations have been made by the Resource Specialists specifically for this project:

1. Trail construction that extends beyond the “bankfull mark” is not recommended (M.R. Azhocar, Hydrologist).
2. No above ambient noise levels April 1 to August 5 of any year; also no above ambient noise levels until two hours after sunrise and not past two hours before sunset August 6 to September 15 of any year (S.J. Langenstein, Wildlife Biologist).
3. Do not clear vegetation higher than eight feet above the ground to avoid creation an enlarged corridor to encourage corvidae access in the area (S.J. Langenstein, Wildlife Biologist).
4. Logs used for trails will be acquired off-site and not removed from the riparian reserve (N. Moore, Fisheries Biologist).
5. Boulders and other material used for the trail will not be removed from within the bankfull width (N. Moore, Fisheries Biologist).