

Environmental Assessment OR-014-99-03
Clover Creek 99

NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

Clover Creek is an intermittent stream with perennial segments that are upstream of the proposed project area. Within the project area, Clover Creek flows mainly from March through June in response to snow melt. The flow then subsides and no surface flow is evident beginning normally in late July or August. The perennial segments above the proposed project site are occupied by resident redband trout. Clover Creek is a tributary to Spencer Creek that enters the Klamath River. Spencer Creek contains spawning habitat for redband trout and small-scale suckers. The proposed project area is assumed to be used by migrating redband trout during high flow periods in March and April. During the remainder of the year, Clover Creek is disconnected from Spencer Creek due to the lack of perennial surface flow.

The proposed project site is located in T38S, R6E, Section 35, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ (see attached map). Clover Creek flows through a culvert under a paved road at the north end of the project site. A gravel surfaced road parallels the creek for approximately 1300 feet and leads to an inactive rock quarry. Below the rock quarry there is a large tailings pile of crushed rock and fine sediments located approximately 20 feet from the existing stream bank of Clover Creek. This approximately 1800 cubic yard pile is contributing large amounts of fine sediment to the stream. In addition, the 1300 foot access road for the quarry was built in the natural floodplain along the east side of Clover Creek. This segment of road is also contributing sediment to the stream and constricting the natural channel configuration. This is causing excessive bank erosion and is limiting floodplain development, the lateral extent of riparian vegetation, and natural stream meandering. There is also an approximately 300' road that goes from the access road along the stream to the rock quarry which is approximately 50' above the stream. This is intercepting the natural overland water flow and routing sediment to the stream.

The area is presently used for undeveloped, primitive motorized camping and day use. Several rock campfire rings, ATV use, small rock stream dams and garbage associated with recreation use were noted in the project area.

Clover Creek and Spencer Creek watersheds were identified as key watersheds (Tier 2 and Tier 1, respectively) in the *Northwest Forest Plan, Record of Decision, 1994*. This

stretch of Clover Creek was rated as "Nonfunctional" by a team of resource specialists during an assessment of Proper Functioning Condition. The proposed project was identified as a restoration opportunity in the *Spencer Creek Pilot Watershed Analysis, August 1995*. The *Spencer Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan, 1994*, identifies roads as a primary sediment source affecting fisheries in Spencer Creek.

The proposed action is in conformance with the *Klamath Falls Resource Area Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan and Rangeland Program Summary, June 1995*.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

The proposed action would involve removal of the quarry tailings pile, obliteration of the existing roads, and restoration of the stream channel and riparian area.

The removal of the quarry tailings pile would involve the loading and hauling of approximately 1,800 cubic yards of crushed rock and fine sediments. The existing access road would be used to transport the material away from the site. This part of the project is covered under Categorical Exclusion KCER-99-14.

Following the removal of the tailings pile, the access road and the quarry road would be obliterated. This would involve the ripping and removal of the road fill and road surface materials.

The 300' quarry access road would then be recontoured to approximate the original slope of the hill. The 1300' access road area along the stream would then be reshaped and contoured to function as a floodplain for the stream. The streambank reconstruction would be designed to accommodate bankfull flows of approximately 12 cfs. A reference reach that is located down stream would be used as a guide in designing the new channel, streambank, and floodplain. The floodplain and stream banks would be planted with grasses, forbs, willows, and conifers to protect them from erosion and to promote the establishment of a functioning riparian area. Mulching of the planted areas would be done with natural fiber matting. The erosion protection practices would be designed to withstand an approximate 10 year flood event. Large boulders would then be placed at the upstream end of the project site to block vehicular access. A short section of the existing road where it connects with the paved road would be left to allow for vehicle parking and walk-in access.

To encourage proper channel evolution and riparian development, erosion control and gradient control structures would be placed in the stream channel and across the new floodplain. These would be constructed of large rocks and logs and would be designed to create meanders in the channel that would collect sediments and provide sites for vegetation establishment.

Monitoring of the stream channel, riparian area, water quality, and wildlife habitat would be done before and after project implementation.

Some livestock use has occurred in the area in past years. This use would be monitored to determine if additional measures such as fencing would be needed to protect the newly planted areas.

No Action Alternative

Under this alternative, the existing conditions would continue with associated negative impacts to the stream, riparian area, and fish habitat.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Impacts of the Proposed Action

The proposed action would provide long term positive impacts to water quality and fish and other water dependent vertebrates and invertebrates in Clover Creek, Spencer Creek, and the Klamath River. The elimination of the quarry tailings pile and the access roads would decrease the amount of fine sediments entering these drainages. There would be some short term negative impacts from sediments created during the restoration work. The vegetation plantings and installation of the mulch materials should minimize these impacts. The restoration work would be done during the time when there is no surface flow in Clover Creek. This should help minimize any erosion potential and allow for the installation of the protective measures prior to the return of surface flows.

There would be positive impacts to riparian dependent wildlife and vegetation species from the project. The restoration of the floodplain, riparian area, and stream channel would provide additional habitat and riparian corridor connectivity for many wildlife species.

Further information on the various management activities and their impacts to water resources can be found in the *Final Klamath Falls Resource Area Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, September 1994, Appendix P,*

Water Resources and Basic Hydrologic Principles.

There would be some negative impacts to recreationists through the closing of the road. There would no longer be access for motorized camping and associated activities. By providing a short section of the existing road for vehicle parking and walk-in access, some of these negative impacts would be mitigated.

A cultural resource survey has been previously completed for the project area. No cultural resources were encountered within the current project area. If any cultural resources are encountered during construction, the work would be stopped until appropriate mitigating measures are developed to protect the resources. This would be done in cooperation and consultation with the resource area archeologist or their representative.

A botanical survey has been previously completed for the project site. No additional surveys would be needed.

No special status animal species are known to exist in the project site area.

The following critical elements would not be affected by the proposed action: air quality, ACECs, hazardous or solid wastes, Native American religious concerns, prime or unique farmlands, floodplains, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or wilderness.

The proposed project meets the objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy from 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* from the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*, April 1994.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative

The No Action alternative would not change the existing conditions. The continued input of sediments from the tailings pile and the access road would cause negative short term and long term impacts to water quality, riparian resources, and fish and wildlife habitat in this section of Clover Creek and the downstream areas of Spencer Creek and the Klamath River. The access road would also negatively impact the stream channel, floodplain, and riparian area by restricting the natural meandering of the stream channel and the access to the floodplain. This would continue to limit the extent of riparian vegetation and associated wildlife habitat. An analysis of the effects of these types of existing conditions can be found in the *Spencer Creek Pilot*

Watershed Analysis, Part III - Riparian Ecosystem and Part IV - Aquatic Ecosystems.

The No Action alternative would not meet the objectives of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy from 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* from the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl, April 1994.*

Persons, Groups, and Agencies Consulted

Bureau of Land Management resource specialists

United States Fish and Wildlife Service resource specialists

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

for the
Rock Creek Allotment Waterholes
EA No. OR 014-99-02

FONSI DETERMINATION

On the basis of the information contained in the Rock Creek Allotment Waterholes Environmental Assessment (EA) and all other information available to me, it is my determination that the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Signed Teresa A. Raml

Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

Date 9/16/99

DECISION RECORD
for the
Clover Creek 99
Environmental Assessment No. OR014-99-03

DECISION

My decision is to implement the Proposed Action Alternative of the Clover Creek 99 Environmental Assessment, EA No. OR014-99-03.

DECISION RATIONALE

The decision is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Klamath Falls Resource Area Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan and Rangeland Program Summary, June 1995 and the Northwest Forest Plan, Record of Decision, 1994. The proposed action was also identified in the Spencer Creek Pilot Watershed Analysis, August 1995 and the Spencer Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan, 1994.

The impacts from this decision do not require further analysis as noted in the FONSI determination signed on August 2, 1999.

The proposed action will result in the removal of the quarry tailings pile, obliteration of the existing roads, and the restoration of the stream channel and riparian area. The potential loss of recreation opportunities will be partially mitigated by providing a small parking area at the current road intersection.

Signed Teresa A. Raml
Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

Date 12/17/99