

Decision Record

EA Log Number: OR-010-2001-06

Project Name: Crack-in-the-Ground Fence Replacement- Lakeview Resource Area

Applicant: USDI-BLM-Lakeview Resource Area

Project Location: Crack-in-the-Ground Parking lot and 3 miles north and south of the parking lot on BLM road 6109.

County: Lake

Address: HC 10 Box 337, Lakeview, OR. 97630

Phone: (541) 947-2177

BLM Office: Lakeview District

Decision: The following is the decision of the Bureau:

To replace a wooden fence located at the entrance and parking lot to the Crack-in-the-Ground and Four Craters Lava Bed Wilderness Study Area (WSA) with a rock wall.

Rationale:

There were no comments made on the EA or FONSI by the public within the 30 days of the review. The replacement of the wooden post and rail-fence with a more durable, natural looking rock wall will enhance the protection of wilderness values long term. Replacement of the existing wooden fence with a rock wall would limit the amount of vandalism, more adequately control off-road use within the vicinity of the Crack-in-the-Ground, and reduce maintenance costs associated with the existing wooden fence. A rock wall would be more difficult to knock down and/or create a large enough opening to allow vehicles off-road. Aesthetically, the rock wall would blend better with the landscape than the lumber-wood fence, since naturally occurring basalt rock is found throughout the area

Scott R. Florence
Scott R. Florence, Manager
Lakeview Resource Area

7/16/01
Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

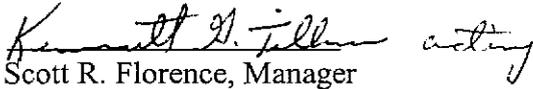
Crack-in-the-Ground Fence Replacement

EA# OR-010-2001-06

The Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District, Lakeview Resource Area, has analyzed a proposal and its alternative to replace a wooden fence located at the entrance and parking lot to the Crack-in-the-Ground and the Four Craters Lava Bed Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The objective of this proposal is to remove the wooden post- and rail-fence and replace it with a more durable, natural looking rock fence in order to enhance the protection of wilderness values. This project is in conformance with the High Desert Management Framework Plan, Integrated Noxious Weed Control Program EA, and the Wilderness Interim Management Policy.

There are no ACECs, RNAs, wetlands, floodplains, wild or scenic rivers, known hazardous waste areas, areas of religious concern, or prime or unique farmlands in the immediate project area. No adverse or beneficial significant impact is anticipated to fisheries, lands, minerals, air quality, or low income/minority populations

On the basis of the analysis contained in the attached EA, and all other available information, it is my determination that the alternative analyzed constitute a major federal action that would not adversely impact the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is unnecessary and will not be prepared.


Scott R. Florence, Manager
Lakeview Resource Area


Date

PROJECT TITLE/TYPE: Crack-in-the-Ground Fence Replacement

PROJECT LOCATION: Crack-in-the-Ground Parking lot and 3 miles north and south of the parking lot on BLM Road 6109.

BLM OFFICE: Lakeview Resource Area, Lakeview District

LEASE/SERIAL/CASE FILE #:

APPLICANT (if any): N/A

CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN: This proposed action is subject to one or more of the following land use plans.

Name of Plans: High Desert Framework Plans (MFPs), as amended (1982, 1983, 1989, and 1995), Lakeview Grazing Management FEIS and ROD (1982), Oregon Wilderness FEIS and ROD (1989 and 1991), Wilderness Interim Management Policy (1995), Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States FEIS and ROD (1991), Supplement to the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program FEIS and ROD (1987), Integrated Noxious Weed Control Program EA #OR-013-93-03 (1994), Lakeview District Fire Management Plan - Phase 1 (1998), Rangeland Reform '94 FEIS and ROD (1995), and 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 (1997).

Remarks: The proposed action is in conformance with the above plans, in particular, the Wilderness Interim Management Policy.

PURPOSE and NEED FOR ACTION: The Wilderness IMP requires the BLM to maintain wilderness values, which include roadlessness, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and supplemental values. The existing wooden fence located at the entrance to the Crack-in-the-Ground and the Four Craters Lava Bed Wilderness Study Area (WSA) was constructed for the purpose of confining traffic to designated roads and ways within the WSA. This fence has been breached on a number of occasions and a permanent stone wall would more efficiently prevent motorized access and thereby prevent the degradation of wilderness values.

The current 500 feet of (160 ft. for the parking lot; 340 ft. for the entrance to the Crack-in-the-Ground) wooden fence around the entrance and parking lot at the Crack-in-the-Ground is vandalized on a recurring basis. The fence has been driven into, shot, and cut for firewood, creating openings in the fence. These openings in the fence invite and allow vehicles to explore off road, both within the WSA and on public lands adjacent to the parking lot. Replacement of the existing wooden fence with a rock wall would limit the amount of vandalism, more adequately control off-road use within the vicinity of the Crack-in-the-Ground, and reduce maintenance costs associated with the existing wooden fence. A rock wall would be more difficult to knock down and/or create a large enough opening to allow vehicles off-road. Aesthetically, the rock wall would blend better with the landscape than the lumber-wood fence, since naturally occurring basalt rock is found throughout the area.

DESCRIPTION of PROPOSED ACTION: Five hundred feet of the two-feet high wood

fence would be removed using hand tools, removed from the area, and hauled away via pickup truck for use in other areas. Before any work begins, signs warning drivers of workers ahead will be placed a certain distance before the work site.

Construction of the rock wall would be completed in two phases. Replacement of the wooden fence around the parking lot would be completed in phase one, while phase two would entail replacing the wooden fence at the entrance to the Crack-in-the-Ground. Rock for the construction of the wall(s) would be obtained from several sources: 1) for approximately 3 miles north and south of the parking lot and entrance to the Crack-in-the-Ground on either side of the BLM Road 6109, rock would be collected from within the road right-of-way (outside of the WSA on the east side of the road); 2) from several rock outcrops, one located approximately 1 mile north of the parking lot area and the second one located approximately 3 miles north of the parking lot area, both of which are outside of the Four Craters Lava Bed WSA; and, 3) from existing rock quarry sources. Refer to the attached map which depicts the project location and the rock outcrop sites. It is anticipated that up to 250 cubic yards or less of rock would be required to complete construction of both rock walls.

For phase one (parking lot rock wall, approximately 160 feet in length), rock within the road right-of-way, and if necessary from the rock outcrops, would be gathered by hand and loaded on to pickup trucks and/or small trailers and hauled to the parking lot area. The rock wall would be assembled by hand and using hand tools. Dimensions of the rock wall would be approximately 3 feet high and 3 feet wide. Actual dimensions could vary based on the varying rock size/shape used in the construction.

Phase two (entrance to Crack-in-the-Ground, approximately 340 feet in length) would be started when the rock wall at the parking lot is completed. It is anticipated that phase two would be initiated and completed sometime in the spring or summer of 2002 dependent on funding. If necessary, rock will be hauled in (up to 16 dump truck loads) from a rock quarry to complete phase two of the rock wall.

ALTERNATIVES:

#1) NO ACTION - Retain existing wooden fence.

#2) ALTERNATIVE 1 - Replace the wooden fence (160 feet for the parking lot; 340 feet for the entrance to Crack-in-the-Ground) with a rock wall, as described under the proposed action section above.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT: The parking lot and entrance to the Crack-in-the-Ground is located in the southwest part of the Four Craters Lava Bed Wilderness Study Area, about 1/4 mile west of Crack-in-the-Ground (fissure). The project area is located mostly in sagebrush/juniper and sagebrush/grassland flats with basalt outcrops scattered throughout the area. The Crack-in-the-Ground is a popular destination point and visitor use to the area is moderate to high because of the unique volcanic feature which provides educational opportunities, hiking, photographic, and sightseeing activities. The sandy, alkaline soils in the area recover quickly from any disturbance, and are less noticeable with sufficient weathering. Rock that is obtained from borrow sites would be from existing sites only-no new sites would be considered.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The potential environmental impacts resulting from the

alternatives relative to the following critical resource values were evaluated. The following is a summary of the results:

Critical Element/ Resource Value	Affected		Critical Element/ Resource Value	Affected	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
Air Quality		X	T & E Species		X
ACEC/RNAs		X	Wilderness	X	
Cultural Resources		X	Wild & Scenic Rivers		X
Farmlands, Prime/Unique		X	Hazardous Wastes		X
Floodplains		X	Water Quality		X
Native American Cultural/ Religious Concerns		X	Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X
Low Income/ Minority Populations		X	Noxious Weeds	X	

DESCRIPTION of OTHER IMPACTS:

#1) NO ACTION

The wooden fence would be retained at the parking lot and entrance to the Crack-in-the-Ground. It is anticipated that vandalism of the wooden fence would continue which would result in high maintenance costs and impacts to wilderness values, i.e., off-road vehicle use would occur causing negative impacts to solitude and naturalness of the WSA, impacts to vegetation, increased risk of introducing noxious weeds, and conflicts with non-motorized uses.

#2) ALTERNATIVE 1 (PROPOSED PLAN)

The wooden fence would be replaced with a more aesthetically pleasing, stronger rock wall which would be less prone to vandalism. The rock wall would provide a greater obstacle to off-highway vehicle use and result in a higher level of protection for wilderness values, and a reduction in existing impacts to vegetation and conflicts with non-motorized use. The risk of noxious weed introduction would be reduced compared to the no action alternative.

During construction activities, estimated to be approximately one week for phase one and two weeks for phase two, visitors would be negatively impacted within the area of the parking lot and entrance to the Crack-in-the-Ground. Activity within the project area would not impact visitors when they are actually in the Crack-in-the-Ground. There would be no impacts to wilderness values from the collection of rocks along the roadside or from the rock outcrops. Rock obtained from any borrow sites would not cause any additional impacts because surface disturbance would be limited to the foot print of existing sites.

The Northwest Youth Crops camping should have minimal impact to the campsite located on west side of BLM 6109 (see map).

DESCRIPTION of MITIGATION MEASURES and RESIDUAL IMPACTS:

Normally, the type of replacement project described in this proposal is categorically excluded from further analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). However, since the project is adjacent to a WSA, the Wilderness IMP requires an environmental assessment be prepared to assess potential impacts to wilderness values, and mitigate any negative impacts.

Replacement of the wooden fence, as proposed, is in compliance with the nonimpairment criteria of the IMP. The proposed action would protect wilderness values within the Four Craters Lava Bed WSA in the vicinity of the Crack-in-the-Ground.

Any depressions or voids left from the collection of rocks within the road right-of-way and/or rock outcrops would be filled using hand tools.

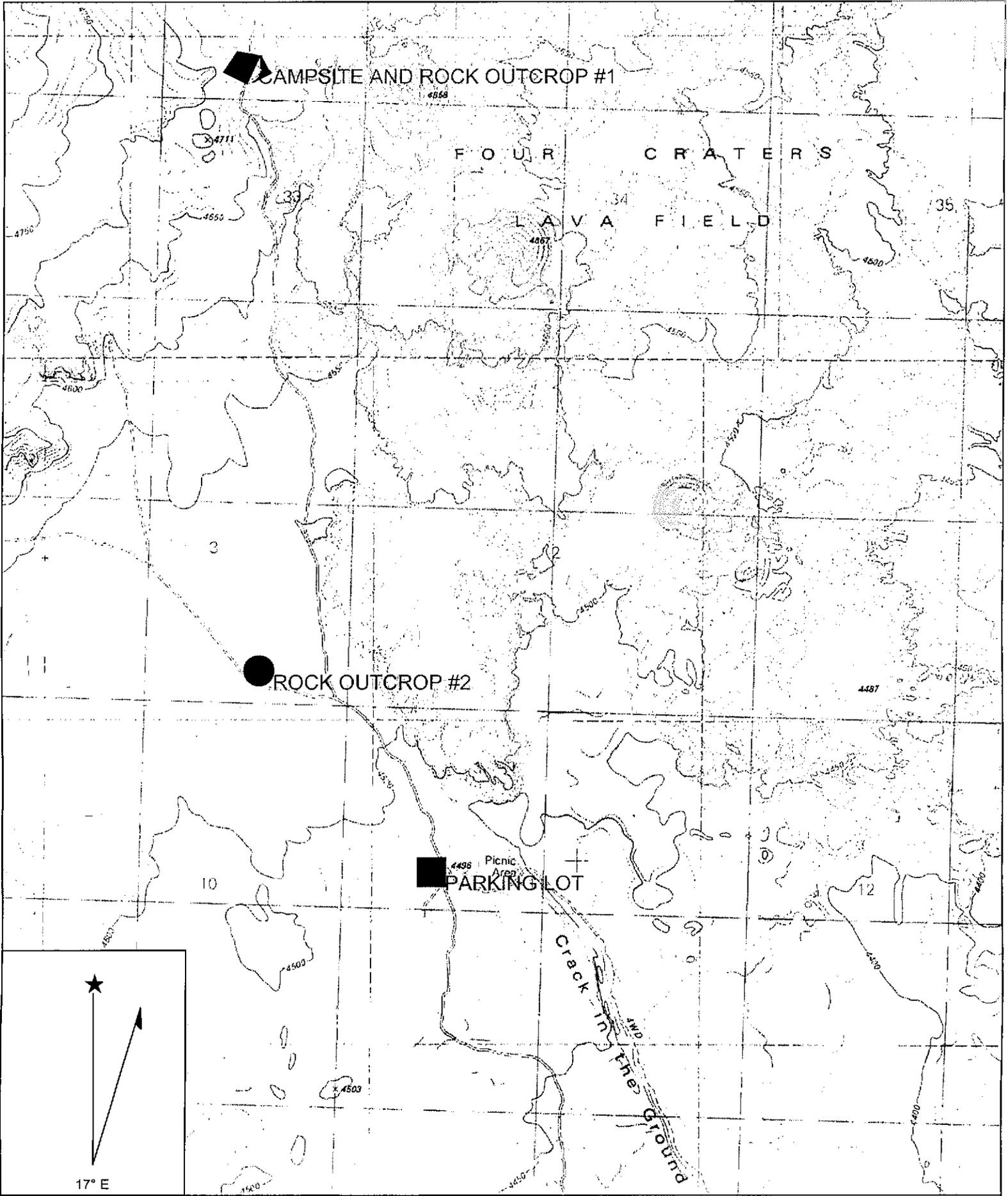
Any borrow pit used as a source a of rock will be inspected for noxious weeds prior to hauling any rock from the site.

The undercarriage of all vehicles (i.e., pick-up trucks and/or vans for transporting the work crew) will be inspected prior to arrival at the project site to prevent weed seeds from being brought into the area.

Each spring for two years following completion of the rock wall the project area will be inspected to determine if any weed seeds may have germinated, and if so, appropriate control actions would be implemented.

PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED: A list of all persons, agencies, and organizations contacted is on file at the Lakeview District Office.

PREPARER(S): Christopher Carusona, Geologist
Dan Hollenkamp, Outdoor Recreation Planner



Name: CRACK-IN-THE-GROUND
Date: 6/12/2001
Scale: 1 inch equals 2000 feet

Location: 043° 20' 41.9" N 120° 40' 09.7" W