

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for the

Ruben Sotelo Spring Development Right-of-Way

EA # OR110-01-026

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT
GRANTS PASS RESOURCE AREA

July 2001

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT

EA COVER SHEET

RESOURCE AREA: Grants Pass

FY & REPORT # EA Number OR-110-01-

ACTION/TITLE: Ruben Sotelo Spring Development Right-of-way

LOCATION: T. 36 S., R. 7 W., section 1, S1/2SW1/4NW1/4,
Willamette Meridian, Josephine Co., Oregon

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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INTERDISCIPLINARY PREPARERS	TITLE	RESOURCE VALUES ASSIGNED	INITIAL & DATE
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Kip Wright	Wildlife Biologist	Prime or Unique Lands, Wildlife, Grazing, and Fisheries	
Jon Raybourn	Fisheries Biologist	Fisheries	
Dave Maurer	Soil Scientist	Floodplains, Wetlands, Soils, Water	
Jim Roper	Engineer	Roads, Quarries, Road Agreements, Easements	
Linda Mazzu	Botanist	T&E Plants	
Doug Henry	Ecosystem Planner	Environmental Coordination	

Reviewing Official:

Grants Pass Field Manager

Chapter 1

Purpose and Need for Action and Alternatives

A. Introduction and Need for the Proposal

1. Introduction

The purpose of this environmental assessment (EA) is to assist in the decision-making process by assessing the environmental and human affects resulting from implementing the proposed project and/or alternatives. The EA will also assist in determining if an environmental impact statement (EIS) needs to be prepared or if a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

This EA tiers to: (1) the Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) dated June 1995 for the Medford District Resource Management Plan dated October 1994; (2) the Final Supplemental EIS on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl dated February 1994; (3) the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and its Attachment A entitled 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 dated April 13, 1994; and (4) Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (January 2001).

2. Need for the Proposal

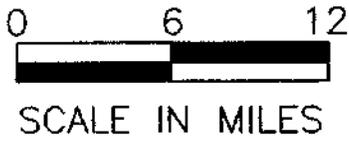
Ruben Sotelo owns private property adjacent to BLM administered lands located approximately seven miles west of Grants Pass, Oregon (see map #1). Mr. Sotelo has a private residence on his property and has applied for a right-of-way grant to develop a spring/seep on the BLM lands immediately west of his property. The spring development would supply a source of water for domestic use by Mr. Sotelo and his family. Mr. Sotelo and his family currently purchase water from a local off site vendor for their domestic use.

B. Scoping Issues Relevant to the Proposal

Mr. Sotelo submitted his application in December, 1998. BLM specialists reviewed Mr. Sotelo's original proposal over the next few years. Botanical and wildlife surveys were conducted to review the proposal and determine if there were major planning issues, to ascertain potential impacts, and to identify elements of the request/application that might warrant modification to reduce potential impacts.

A core team of members of the Grants Pass Resource Area staff was created to review the initial application submitted by Mr. Sotelo. The core team discussed Mr. Sotelo's proposal with him and suggested changes to his proposal to minimize potential environmental impacts and improve

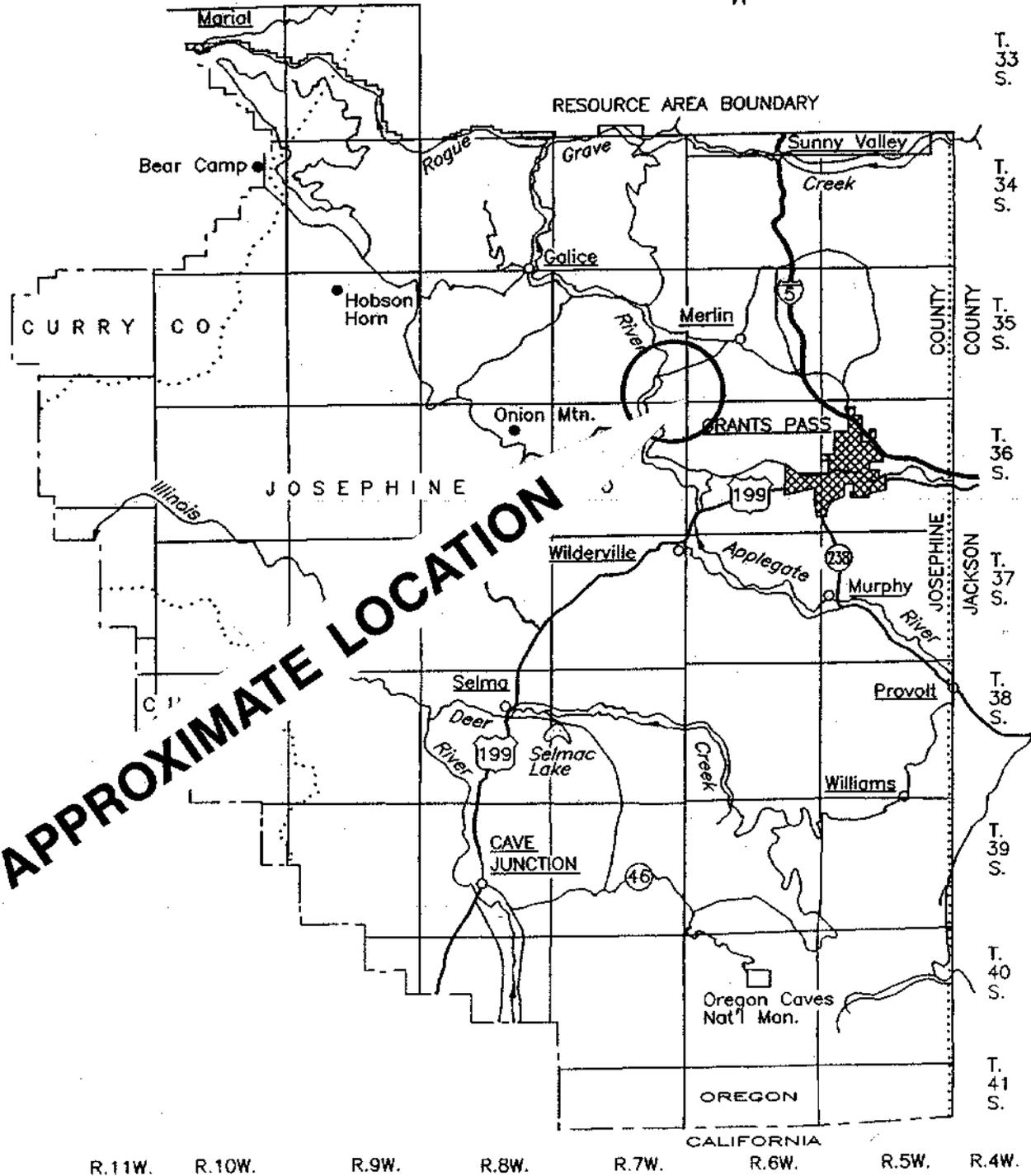
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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MEDFORD DISTRICT
GRANTS PASS RESOURCE AREA
VICINITY MAP



MAP #1



ALWAYS
THINK
SAFETY



the spring/seep development to ensure an overflow water source. Based on the issues discussed, Mr. Sotelo amended his application in the spring, 2001 requesting to place the pipeline on the surface rather than burying the line; moving the pipeline location from the riparian area to a location providing better gravity flow outside the riparian area; and proposing the use of non-mechanized construction techniques at the spring/seep instead of the use of an excavator and ditch witch.

A letter dated October 25, 1999 from the Oregon Water Resources Department states that the water from the spring/seep does not create a flow that leaves the BLM lands in a defined channel. Therefore, Mr. Sotelo does not need to acquire water rights from the State of Oregon. Water Resources mentions in the letter that the spring is actually a seepage emerging from the ground and the area below the spring is wetted for a distance of only fifteen feet (note that the spring/seep is approximately 1000 feet uphill from the adjacent private property). Water right is not, therefore an issue pertinent to the application.

No major issues other than those that resulted in the amendment of the proposed action by Mr. Sotelo have been identified.

C. Proposed Action and/or Alternatives

1. Proposed Action/Preferred Alternative

Ruben Sotelo proposes to develop a spring/seep on BLM lands to serve as a domestic water supply for his residence on private property he owns west of the spring/seep location (see Map #2). The development will include diverting the water into a collection box and piping the water to a storage tank on Mr. Sotelo's private property for subsequent use.

The BLM lands at the location of the proposed spring development project are described as follows:

T. 36 S., R. 7 W., section 1, S1/2SW1/4NW1/4,
W.M., Josephine County, Oregon.

The development of the spring would entail hand digging the spring/seep area to a depth of approximately four feet. Mr. Sotelo proposes to divert water from the spring/seep area into a collection box that would be approximately 3'x3'x3' in size. An outlet would be placed near the top of the collection box and connect to a two (2) inch PVC pipeline to transport the water by gravity flow for a distance of 1200 feet to Mr. Sotelo's private lands.

Mr. Sotelo plans to divert the water by placing a perforated pipe in the wet area and channeling the water downhill to the collection box. The collection box would be either wooden or plastic and, along with the diversion pipe, would be buried when the system is constructed. The lid on the top of the collection box would not be covered by soil so that the box and outlet pipe can be maintained.

When the storage tank is full and not being used, water will fill the 1200 feet of pipe and collection box and overflow on the ground at the spring/seep location.

The applicant proposes to place the pipeline on the surface rather than bury the 1200 feet of line. The applicant may sleeve the pipeline through a metal pipe to protect the pipeline from damage. Mr. Sotelo has stated that if the BLM plans management activities within the vicinity of the pipeline he would temporarily remove those portions of the pipeline necessary to facilitate the completion of those activities.

The proposed action is to grant the permit for a right-of-way width of five feet for the entire length of the 1200 feet of pipeline to allow room for Mr. Sotelo to place and to maintain the above ground pipeline and to place a collection pipe and spring box at the seep.

Project design features (PDFs) are included for the purpose of reducing anticipated adverse environmental impacts identified in the scoping process and which might stem from the implementation of the proposed action/preferred alternative, or other alternatives. The following PDFs/requirements would be included in any permit issued.

- a. No timber would be cut or removed by Mr. Sotelo in the performing of tasks related to implementation of the proposed action.
- b. The applicant would be required to obtain all State, local, and Federal permits, licenses, and other permission prior to the commencement of the spring development activities. This includes permits if activities occur during fire season.

2. No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would mean that the request for a spring development and the pipeline right-of-way would be denied. No right-of-way grant would be issued to Mr. Sotelo by the BLM to develop the spring/seep on the above described BLM lands.

Chapter 2 Environmental Consequences

A. Introduction

Only substantive site-specific environmental changes that would result from implementing the proposed action or alternatives are discussed in this chapter. If an ecological component is not discussed, it should be assumed that the resource specialists have considered affects to that component and found the proposed action or alternatives would have minimal or no affects. Similarly, unless addressed specifically, the following were found not to be affected by the proposed action or alternatives: air quality; areas of critical environmental concern (ACEC); cultural or historical resources; Native American religious sites; prime or unique farmlands; floodplains; endangered, threatened or sensitive plant, animal or fish species; water quality; wetlands/riparian zones; wild and scenic rivers; and wilderness areas. In addition, hazardous waste or materials are not directly involved in the proposed action or alternatives.

General or "typical" affects from projects similar in nature to the proposed action or alternatives are also described in the EISs and plans this EA is tiered to.

B. Affected Environment

The proposed action is located on lands which are within the available commercial timber base and is land within the matrix land allocation under the Northwest Forest Plan and Medford District Resource Management Plan.

The proposed water line follows the contour of a south facing slope above a small ephemeral creek. It passes through a white oak, white leaved manzanita woodland that transitions upslope into a Douglas-fir, black oak, poison oak plant association. The shrub layer under the Douglas-fir portion is sparse. The spring site is sparsely vegetated and has Himalayan blackberry, a noxious weed species, present.

The BLM lands at the location of the spring development have silt loam and very gravelly loam soils (Vannoy-Voorhies complex).

The BLM lands in the vicinity of the spring/seep are predominately south and west facing. The slopes vary between 10 to 35 percent. The spring/seep is approximately 1200 feet in elevation and the elevation at the point where the proposed waterline would enter Mr. Sotelo's private lands is approximately 1000 feet in elevation (a drop of approximately 200 feet).

There are a few intermittent streams west of the spring/seep area, however, most flow only following storm events.

The land within the project area provides potential habitat for a number of sensitive species including Northern Spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), Red tree vole (*Phenacomys*

longicaudus), Goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*), and other raptors as well as survey and manage mollusc species.

C. Site Specific and Cumulative Beneficial or Adverse Affects of the Alternatives

1. Proposed Action

a. Beneficial Impacts

A beneficial impact would occur as a result of the approval of the proposed action in that Mr. Sotelo would receive a source of water for his domestic use at his residence.

A beneficial impact could occur for wildlife at the location of the spring development during those times that there is overflow water from the system as it would be on the surface as a result of overflow of the collection box. Normally there is only an occasional wet area on the surface at the spring/seep location depending on the amount of subsurface flow.

b. Potential Adverse Impacts and Mitigating Measures

A potential adverse impact could occur if the flows at the spring/seep are low and the majority of the water collected is used by Mr. Sotelo. If this is the case little, or no, overflow of water onto the surface would occur.

Since development of the spring will be limited to hand digging, there should be minimal direct effects to the botanical resources in the vicinity. Since the water line will be laid on the surface instead of buried, there should also be minimal direct effects on these resources. A potential indirect effect of this action would be the spread of Himalayan blackberry in the event that surface water becomes available from spring overflow or leakage. Any leaks in the water line and overflow at the spring may encourage new plant growth, especially of weedy species and may lead to the establishment and spread of non-native species. The main non-native species of concern would be Himalayan blackberry.

Proposed Mitigation Measure #1: Since Himalayan blackberry could potentially reduce water supply if it takes over an area, the right-of-way holder would be required to keep the spring area clear of this species through cutting or hand pulling while the plants are small. The holder must monitor the location of the leaks along the pipeline to ensure no Himalayan blackberry plants are established.

In the development of the seep as proposed a small amount of vegetation would be removed from the immediate vicinity of the collection box. It is not anticipated that the amount of disturbance associated with these activities would alter the ability of the habitats in which the seep and pipeline passes through to function. Surveys for amphibian and mollusc have been conducted. No special status species were detected during surveys.

The only potentially affected habitat for wildlife is the seep area itself where it originates from a small rock bluff. Because of its small extent and subsurface nature, it is not anticipated that the proposed action would adversely impact any special status wildlife species including those listed as threatened or endangered.

This proposal would remove a small amount of water from a shallow aquifer. Effects on groundwater would be minimal during periods of recharge and accumulation. But during dry periods the proposed action would result in a slight reduction on the time when the spring/seep is moist. The proposed action would not impact fisheries since the flow does not support fisheries. The proposal will not affect the attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.

2. No Action Alternative

Implementation of this alternative would mean that Mr. Sotelo would be required to find an alternate source of water for his private domestic use or to continue to purchase it in town. No adverse environmental impacts would occur as a result of the implementation of the no action alternative. The seep area would remain the same and subsurface water would continue to flow into its current course.

Chapter 3

Agencies and Persons Consulted

A. Public Involvement

Scoping for the project was done within both the core and interdisciplinary teams. No outside public scoping was done since the proposed action would have little, or no, direct impact to adjacent landowners at the location of the proposed spring development. No scoping letters were sent by BLM to potential interested parties or adjacent landowners. It was determined that implementation of the proposed action would most likely have no direct impact on adjacent landowners.

B. Availability of Document and Comment Procedures

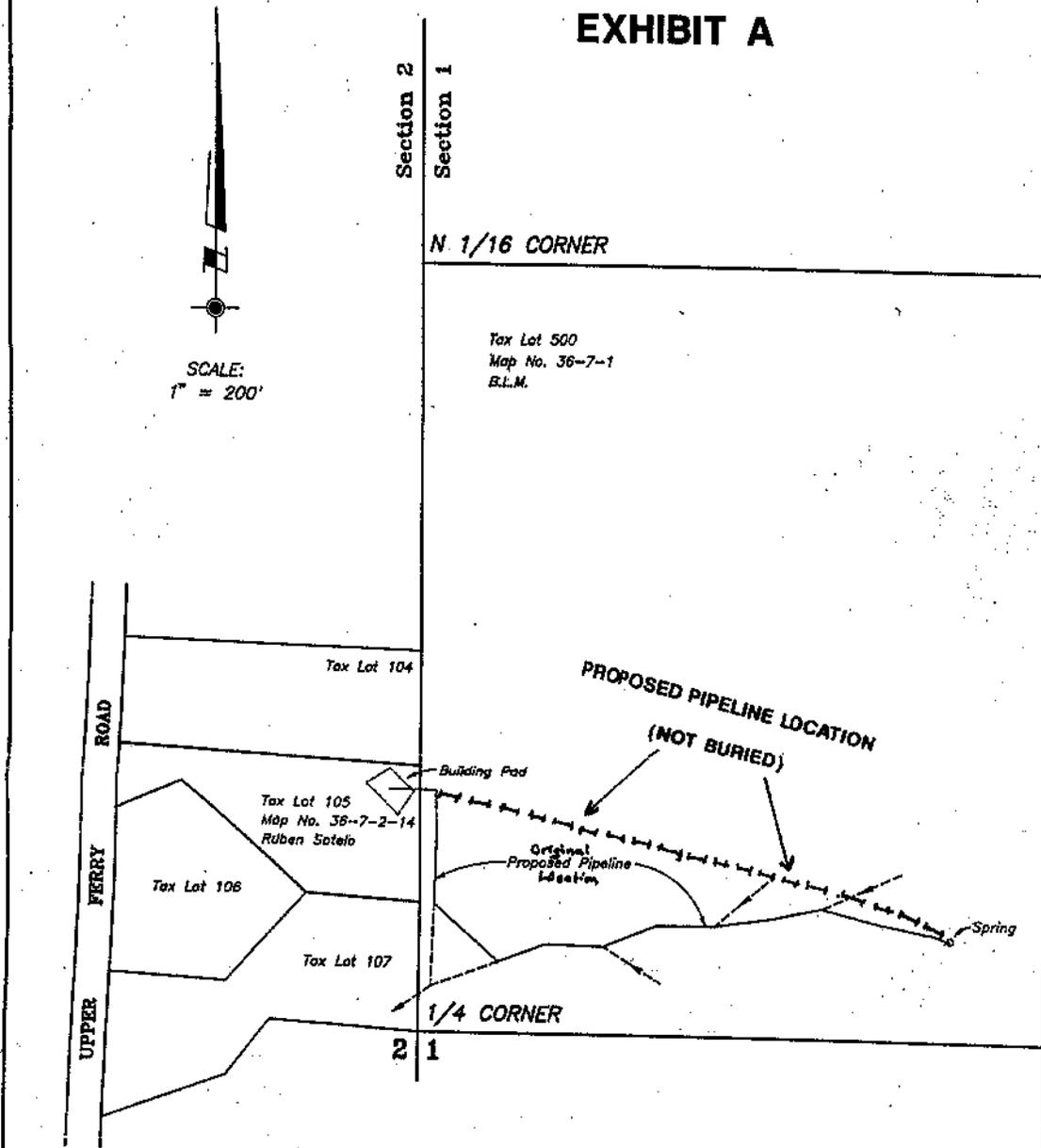
A fifteen day public comment period will be held upon completion of the EA. The EA document will be available for public review in the BLM Medford District Office. Notification of the availability of the EA will be made through the publication of a notice in the Grants Pass Courier newspaper.

Subsequently, the public will be informed of the decision with the publication of a Notice of Decision in the Grants Pass Courier.

MAP #2

SE1/4NE1/4 Sec. 2 & SW1/4NW1/4 Sec. 1, T.36 S.,R.7 W.,W.M.

EXHIBIT A



LEGEND:

----- Seasonal Creek
 Spring = 920'E & 170'N from SW cor. of NW1/4 Sec. 1 (1/4 Corner section 1)
 Note: The location of the features shown are based upon a hand compass survey and are subject to any error which may be disclosed by a more accurate survey.

PROJECT NO. 646-99-422
DRAWING NO. 71-11.17
DATE 11-24-99
SCALE 1" = 200'

REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL LAND SURVEYOR
Gary D. Wicks
 OREGON
 REG. NO. 1077
GARY D. WICKS
 1108
 EXPIRES: 8-30-00

PROPOSED DOMESTIC WATER LINE
 LOCATED IN
 SE1/4NE1/4 Sec. 2 & SW1/4NW1/4 Sec. 1, T.36 S.,R.7 W.,W.M.
 Josephine County, Oregon.

PREPARED FOR: MR. RUBEN SOTELO 1148 Ironwood Drive Grants Pass, OR 97526 Tel. (541) 479-9432	PREPARED BY: WICKS ENGINEERING & SURVEYING 311 N.E. "D" Street Grants Pass, Oregon 97526 Tel. (541) 479-9432
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