

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
for the
SPENCER GULCH ROAD RELOCATION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA No. OR-110-03-001

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

The Bureau of Land Management's Medford District has analyzed the Spencer Gulch Road Relocation Project, documented in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA). The Squires Peak Fire Emergency Stabilization Rehabilitation Plan (Squires Peak ESR Plan) identified that if the upper portion of the Spencer Gulch Road (Rd. #39-3-3.0) on BLM land remains in its present location, it would result in unacceptable disruption of ecological processes, unacceptable loss of riparian area soils and severe stream channel degradation, off-site damage to private property, possible threat to human life, and loss of access due to plugged culverts and a major road failure. The current riparian/channel condition is not able to withstand the additional flows and sediment load that may result from the effects of this fire. Emergency stabilization of this section of stream is necessary to minimize risk to human life and property downstream. Since the road provides legal access to private property, **BLM does not have the option of decommissioning this road without providing alternate access.** Decommissioning of this road and construction of an alternative road is recommended in the Squires Peak ESR Plan. However, the Squires Peak ESR Plan identified that the decommissioning cannot proceed until alternative access to private property is provided, and that the attached Environmental Assessment would address the new road construction. Both the decommissioning and the new construction are discussed since they are a connected action; however, this Environmental Assessment is focused on the new construction, as the associated road decommissioning is already included in the Squires Fire ESR Plan.

This FONSI and attached EA are in conformance with and tiered to the *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)* as amended by the Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines. The Medford District Resource Management Plan incorporates 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 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*. These documents are available at the Medford BLM office and the Medford BLM web site at <http://www.or.blm.gov/Medford/>.

Through the EA process, the interdisciplinary team reviewed the following critical elements of the human environment as they relate to this project: air quality, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), cultural resources, environmental justice, farmlands, floodplains, Native American religious concerns, invasive nonnative species, threatened and endangered species, hazardous/solid wastes, water quality, wetlands/riparian zones, Wild and Scenic Rivers, wilderness, and energy. No substantive site-specific environmental changes would result from implementing the proposed action or alternative as discussed in the associated EA (EA p. 14-25). Should cultural or paleontological resources be discovered during project layout or implementation, they would be protected.

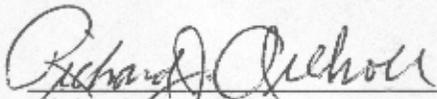
The estimation of impacts was based on research, professional judgment, and the experience of the interdisciplinary team. This method of estimating effects on the environment reduces the uncertainties to a level involving no highly unknown or unique risks.

A legal notice was published in Medford's *Mail Tribune*, initiating a 30-day public review period for the Spencer Gulch Road Relocation EA. This review provided the public with an opportunity to comment on the BLM's determination that there are no significant impacts associated with the proposed action beyond those impacts identified in the tiered Environmental Impact Statements, and that a project-specific environmental impact statement is not necessary.

One comment letter was received from the Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center. From comment review, no information was presented that changes BLM's determination that there are no significant impacts associated with the proposed action beyond those impacts identified in the tiered Environmental Impact Statements.

FONSI Determination

On the basis of the information contained in the attached EA and all other information available to me as summarized above, it is my determination that the proposed action alternative does not constitute a significant impact as defined by 40 CFR § 1508.27, beyond those previously identified in the tiered 1995 Medford District RMP and associated Environmental Impact Statements.


Richard J. Drehobl
Ashland Field Manager

03-10-03
Date

DECISION RECORD
for the
SPENCER GULCH ROAD RELOCATION EA

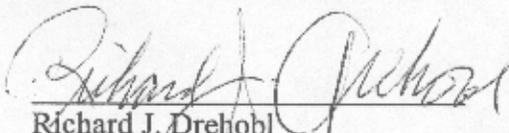
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Decision Record & Rationale

It is my decision to implement the Alternative to the Proposed Action as described in this decision and the attached Spencer Gulch Road Relocation EA No. OR-110-01-002. The Alternative to the Proposed Action is the same as the Proposed Action Alternative, except that the new access road would be relocated as a 2750' section of road accessing the private property from road 38-2-31.2 on the ridge above. This location would involve no new road construction within any Riparian Reserve; therefore there would be no crossings of any streams. The road would be as close in size as possible to the single lane road it is replacing, while meeting design and safety standards. At locations where the new road crossed dry draws (draws with no defined channel or annual scour and deposition), armored drainage dips (rather than culverts) would be used to allow flow and associated debris to pass during major flood events.

Implementation of this decision will improve ecological processes by minimizing the loss of riparian area soils and severe stream channel degradation. Stabilization of this section of stream is necessary to minimize risk to human life and property downstream.

Based on the analysis documented in the EA, I have determined this action is in conformance with the Medford District Resource Management Plan.


Richard J. Drehobl
Ashland Field Manager

03-10-03
Date