

Decision Record

EA Number: OR-056-01-007

Title of Action: Trout Creek O.H.V. Fence and Rehabilitation

Project File Number: 73208

BLM. Office: Prineville District, Deschutes Resource Area

Decision

It is my decision to implement the proposed fence and rehabilitation project located at T.9S.; R.14E.; Section 9 NW and NE quarters. Unauthorized off highway vehicle (OHV) use on public lands along the main access road to Trout Creek Campground has increased dramatically, and as a result, resources have deteriorated. The deterioration leaves approximately ten acres at risk of soil erosion, shift in vegetative composition and invasion of noxious weeds. Also, the Lower Deschutes River Management Plan (RMP), Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Record of Decision (ROD), May 1991 (LDRMP) doesn't recognize OHV's as an accepted use within the Wild and Scenic River corridor. In order to reverse the damage to resources from OHV use, implementation of the project is necessary. The project will involve building .4 miles of barbed wire fence, seeding approximately three acres of bare soil with native grass seed, then signing so the closure can be enforced. The fence will be constructed of all metal posts and structures where possible, however it may be necessary to incorporate some juniper trees into the fence line by running wire through eye screws attached to the tree trunks. The fence will be constructed with special wire heights (38" on top and 18" on the bottom) and with smooth wire on top and bottom to ease passage for wildlife. The seeding will be accomplished using an ATV with broadcast seeder and harrow. Seeding will take place in late fall or winter of 2001/2002 to allow optimum moisture availability for seedling establishment.

Alternatives Considered

Only no action was considered as an alternative to this proposal. This alternative was not selected because it would allow for continued deterioration of public lands from OHV use which is not consistent with the LDRMP or Wild and Scenic River values for the area. If no action were taken the area would continue to experience degradation through erosion and loss of natural vegetation.

Rationale for Decision

Implementation of the project is necessary to restore more natural vegetation and ecological processes within a portion of the Deschutes Wild and Scenic River Corridor while gaining compliance with the LDRMP.

One comment was received from Tyler Knapp of Blue Mountain Biodiversity Project.

Mr. Knapp thought that the project "is a great idea and highly necessary to reduce further impacts to the area from OHV's." However, Mr. Knapp also had concerns with the effects of

drilling large metal screws into the juniper trees for fencing. Mr. Knapp suggested not attaching the fence to any trees, or harming the trees in any way. Instead he suggested to “make the fence go beside the trees using regular green metal posts for supports, the health of these trees far outweighs the hope that the fence will be less obtrusive.”

Response: The project was planned with the intention of having as little impact possible to remaining vegetation on site. In order to effectively fence the entire closure area, the fence will need to be as close as possible to the main road, which is where a portion of the trees are located. Also, for structural integrity it is imperative that the fence line be as straight as possible. It is not possible to move the fence back and forth beside the trees and meet those objectives. The screws that would be put in the cambium of the trees would not harm the biological processes of those trees. The effects of using this method of fencing are much less detrimental to them than other options available, which include cutting limbs off or removing the entire tree. Proceeding with the project as proposed would cause the least impact and most improvement to the total resource base.

Compliance and Monitoring

After completion of the project, the area will be monitored by Lower Deschutes River Staff and Law Enforcement to assure the closure is effective. The fence will require routine maintenance to ensure the effectiveness of the closure, this will be done on a “when needed” basis.

Terms / Conditions / Stipulations

The fence will be constructed as described above to mitigate its obstruction to wildlife passage and minimize impacts to other resource values.

During implementation of the project, if any human remains or cultural/paleontological resources are discovered, work will be suspended. An evaluation of the discovery will be made by a qualified Cultural Resource Specialist to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values.

Robert Towne
Field Manager
Deschutes Field Manager

Date