

**Myrtle Creek Watershed Restoration
Environmental Assessment
South River Field Office
EA # OR-105-02-05**

Date Prepared: June 19, 2003

**Culvert Replacement
Lee Creek Culverts No. 1 & 2
Decision Documentation**

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize the replacement of two large stream-crossing culverts on Lee Creek with single-span bridges. Both crossings are located on BLM Road No. 28-4-28, within easements on privately-owned lands. Culvert site 1 is located in T. 28 S., R. 4 W., SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 28, W.M. Culvert site 2 is located in T.28 S., R. 4 W., SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Section 21, W.M.

Field Office and District engineering personnel have identified a need for replacement of the culverts because of the risk of failure. This risk is associated with the undersized design of the culverts relative to their capacity to accommodate high-flow storm events.

Field Office hydrology and fishery personnel have identified the culverts as a source of sediment and an impediment to upstream and downstream passage by resident and anadromous fish, and other aquatic organisms.

Temporary bypass roads will be constructed to provide access to residential properties and private forest lands located above the project sites. These bypass roads will be removed upon project completion.

Bridge design and installation will incorporate recommendations from *The Oregon Road/Stream Crossing Restoration Guide* published by the Oregon Department of Forestry in 1999, and Best Management Practices from Appendix D (pp. 134-136) of the Roseburg District *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (ROD/RMP June, 1995). Project design features to be implemented include:

- Replacement of the existing culverts with bridges designed to pass a theoretical 100-year flood event and allow unobstructed stream flow. This will allow accumulation of streambed substrates (spawning gravels) and reduce flow velocities that impede upstream and downstream passage by juvenile fish, anadromous fish and other aquatic fauna.
- Pressure washing or steam cleaning of excavation and earth-moving equipment prior to move-in on the project site in order to minimize the risk of introducing soil from outside the project area that may be contaminated with noxious weed seed.

- Restriction of in-stream construction activities to the period between July 1 and September 15, during low summer stream flows, consistent with Best Management Practices contained in the Roseburg District ROD/RMP, and the Oregon Department of Forestry *Oregon Road/Stream Crossing Guide*.
- Prior to commencement of work, placement of absorbent booms downstream of the project sites to contain potential spillage of any petroleum products.
- Diversion of stream flow during construction activities, and minimization of in-stream equipment operation.
- Any resulting waste material will be endhauled to an authorized upland disposal site.
- Rock weirs will be placed instream to prevent channel incision upstream of the bridges, when the existing culverts are removed, and to provide grade control downstream to facilitate the passage of fish.
- Stream banks will be reinforced with riprap and bioengineered wattle and willow plantings to prevent bank sloughing and expedite reestablishment of riparian vegetation. Other areas of soil disturbance will be revegetated with native grasses, shrubs, and/or trees.

Rationale for the Decision:

This project was analyzed under Alternative 1, the proposed action, of the Myrtle Creek Watershed Restoration EA. Its implementation will meet the objectives of reducing sediment and restoring fish passage in Lee Creek. Alternative 2, the no action alternative, would not meet the identified objective or need.

The replacement of these culverts with bridges will not result in any undue environmental degradation. The project is consistent with Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives contained in the ROD/RMP (pp. 20-21). Specifically, the project will aid in the maintenance and restoration of in-stream flows; maintenance and restoration of spatial and temporal connectivity in the watershed; maintenance and restoration of the natural sediment regime; and maintenance and restoration of aquatic habitat. The project is also consistent with the management objective “To preclude stream crossings from being a direct source of sediment to streams thus minimizing water quality degradation and provide unobstructed movement for aquatic fauna.” (ROD/RMP, p. 134).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified an array of soil series within a set of geographic quadrangles that represent potentially suitable habitat for Kincaid’s lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus var. kincaidii*), which is listed as a Federally-threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The project area is within the identified geographic range, but the requisite soil types are absent. As a consequence, the site is not considered to be suitable habitat, the species is not expected to be present and surveys are not required.

The site is not suitable habitat for the northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), nor within ¼-mile of any owl activity center. As a consequence, the project would have no effect on the species with respect to disturbance or modification of suitable habitat.

Replacement of the culverts with bridges will restore access to more than 3 miles of spawning and rearing habitat for the Oregon Coast coho salmon, a Federally-threatened species. The effects of culvert replacement are primarily derived from sediment generated by stream bank disturbance and in-stream activities associated with project implementation.

These effects were determined “likely to adversely affect” listed fish and Essential Fish Habitat, consistent with those addressed in the National Marine Fisheries Service *Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion for Programmatic Activities Affecting SONC Coho Salmon, OC Coho Salmon, and OC Steelhead* (USDC 2002). The opinion sets forth Reasonable and Prudent Measures, and Terms and Conditions in conjunction with authorization of Incidental Take. This project incorporates the reasonable and prudent measures, and is consistent with the terms and conditions of the Programmatic Biological and Conference Opinion.

No issues were identified by any local or tribal governments, State agencies, or other Federal agencies. The EA and Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for public review from February 11, 2003, through March 13, 2003. Comments were received from two organizations. These comments did not constitute new information or identify any issues not already considered and addressed in the Myrtle Creek Watershed Restoration EA, the ROD/RMP, or the Roseburg District *Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement*.

Monitoring:

Monitoring would be done in accordance with the ROD/RMP, Appendix I (p. 84, 190, 193, & 195-199), with emphasis on assessing the effects of the restoration activities on the following resources: Riparian Reserves; Water and Soils; Wildlife Habitat; Fish Habitat; and Special Status and SEIS Special Attention Species Habitat.

Protest Procedures:

As outlined in 43 CFR § 5003 - Administrative Remedies, protests may be filed with the authorized officer within 15 days of the publication the Decision Notice in *The News-Review*, Roseburg, Oregon.

E. Dwight Fielder
Field Manager
South River Field Office

Date