

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

**Categorical Exclusion Determination and Decision Record
for the
2012 Historic Preservation Field School – Grants Pass Resource Area**

DOI-BLM-OR-M070-2012-021-CX

Project: Southern Oregon University Field School

Location: Medford District, Grants Pass Resource Areas, Josephine Counties. HUC-5 – West Fork Illinois fifth-field watershed

Applicant: Dr. Mark Tveskov of the Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology

Description of Proposed Action:

Dr. Mark Tveskov, of the Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology (SOULA), proposes to conduct an historic preservation field school on the Medford District in 2012, in collaboration with the Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM), through issuance of a permit for archaeological investigations permit, from the Oregon/Washington BLM State Office.

Recent monitoring by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) archaeologists found that an historic cemetery located on BLM-administered land is in need of upkeep and preservation work. The cemetery is located near areas that have seen a high increase in recreational use and the BLM is concerned that the historic cemetery is becoming more susceptible to vandalism and looting. Many graves in the cemetery date to the 1800s. Vehicle tracks were found across grave sites close to the parking area.

Some headstones in the cemetery are fashioned primarily from marble, some imported from Vermont and Italy. Other markers are wooden posts or small metal plaques. Cemetery records and previous documenting efforts of the cemetery indicate there are more graves than what is marked on the ground. There is not a fence surrounding the cemetery. Many of the graves do not have markers and numerous depressions in the area suggest there could be more unmarked graves.

To help identify and prioritize work needed at the historic cemetery the BLM, in partnership with Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology (SOULA), is seeking funding to conduct a three-to-five day field school at the historic cemetery. The objectives of the field school would be to document existing conditions at the cemetery, conduct additional research about the history and historical context of the cemetery, and ascertain if there are more unmarked graves. Knowing the locations of other unmarked graves would help define the cemetery

boundary and the area warranting protection/preservation measures and special management practices.

SOULA staff and students would accomplish the following tasks during the field school: 1) conduct a pedestrian survey of the property and map and GPS all surface features (headstones, artifacts, prominent natural features, depressions or other likely graves); 2) if practical, conduct Ground Penetrating Radar Survey (GPR) to determine if there are other possible graves and to help establish the cemetery boundary; 3) conduct additional background research into the history and historical context of the cemetery; and 4) complete a report to the standards of the Oregon SHPO office and the BLM that details the results of the pedestrian survey and mapping, GPR survey (if used), and background research. Work would include updating the cultural resource site records for the cemetery. The GPR survey would not require any digging or ground disturbance. No artifacts would be collected. The end product would be a report of the findings, updated maps and site records, plus GIS data that includes a shape file defining the outside boundary of the cemetery. This information would be used to help identify and prioritize the next steps the BLM and potential partners can take to protect, preserve, and manage this significant cultural resource site.

In addition, the field school would provide an opportunity for students to learn about archaeological recording methods and learn more about the early history of the area and the diversity of people who settled in the Waldo area.

The full results of the field school would be reported in a monograph due to the Medford District BLM by March 30, 2013 and shared with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and interested Tribes. Dr. Mark Tveskov and SOULA's staff have engaged students in various field schools on the Medford District for over 10 years and the results of their earlier field schools have been published in a major monograph (Tveskov and Cohen 2006).

Plan Conformance Review

The design for this project would conform and be consistent with the Medford District's 1995 RMP as well as with court orders relating to the 2011 Settlement Agreement in Litigation over the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure in *Conservation Northwest et al. v. Sherman et al.*, Case No. 08-1067-JCC (W.D. Wash.) that went into effect on July 21, 2011.

Categorical Exclusion Determination

The proposal action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under DM 2, Appendix 1 (1.6): "Non-destructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research and monitoring activities."

Before any action described in the list of categorical exclusions may be used, the "extraordinary circumstances," included in Code of Federal Regulations at CFR § 46.205 (c) requires that "any action that is normally categorically excluded must be evaluated to determine whether it meets any of the extraordinary circumstances in section 46.215 (See attachment).

NEPA Categorical Exclusion Review

1. *Have significant impacts on public health or safety.*
Yes No
() Remarks: All proposed activities follow established rules concerning health and safety.

2. *Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resource;, park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.*
Yes No
() Remarks: The proposed action would help preserve and protect significant cultural resources on BLM managed land.

3. *Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].*
Yes No
() Remarks: Ground disturbance would be limited to specific locations and to the use of hand tools (trowels and shovels). Archaeological testing methods would strictly confine ground disturbance. All test/excavation holes would be backfilled and contoured to blend in with the surrounding landscape.

4. *Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.*
Yes No
() Remarks: Past experience from this type of activity has shown no highly uncertain, potentially significant, unique or unknown risks.

5. *Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.*
Yes No
() Remarks: Similar actions have taken place on the Medford District and there is no evidence that this type of action would establish a precedent or decision for future action.

6. *Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.*
Yes No
() Remarks: The BLM has conducted this type of activity in the past with no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effects.

7. *Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.*
Yes No
() Remarks: The proposed action would help preserve and protect significant cultural resources on BLM managed land.

8. *Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.*

Plants Yes No

Remarks: The historic preservation field school would not involve any digging or ground disturbance. Therefore, there would be no effect to any Threatened, Endangered, or Bureau Special Status botanical species.

Animals Yes No

Remarks: The historic preservation field school would not involve any digging or ground disturbance. Therefore, there would be no effect to any Threatened, Endangered, or Bureau Special Status wildlife species.

Fish Yes No

() Remarks: The historic preservation field school would not involve any digging or ground disturbance. Therefore, there would be no effect to any Threatened, Endangered, or Bureau Special Status fish species.

9. *Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.*

Yes No

() Remarks: The Proposed Action would abide by the Antiquities Act of 1906; National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) 1966, including amendments 1992 and 2001; Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act (ARPA) 1979; Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) 1990; Executive Order 11593 (1971) - protection and enhancement of cultural resources on federal lands; and Executive Order No. 13007 (1996) - Protection of Religious Practices and Sacred Sites.

10. *Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).*

Yes No

() Remarks: The BLM is in consultation with all local federally recognized Native American tribes on this project. The Proposed Action is not expected to have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations. The field school provides educational opportunities for university students from diverse backgrounds to learn more about archaeology and the prehistory/history of southwestern Oregon.

11. *Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).*

Yes No

() Remarks: Local federally recognized Native American Tribes were contacted to and to ask them if the proposed field school location would harm places of religious or cultural importance to their tribes. No known sacred sites or concerns have been identified by the Tribes to this date regarding this Proposed Action. The Proposed Action would not limit access to these sites to Native American Tribes. The Proposed Action would not affect the physical integrity of sacred sites.

12. *Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).*

Yes No

() Remarks: The activities involved within these project areas would not affect current populations of noxious weeds or increase the risk of introducing new sites.

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2011 Historic Preservation Field School – Grants Pass Resource Area**

DOI-BLM-OR-M070-2012-021-CX

Decision and Rationale

It is my decision to authorize Dr. Mark Tveskov of SOULA to conduct a historic preservation field school on the Medford District in 2012, in collaboration with the Medford District BLM, through issuance of an Archaeological Resource Protection Act permit, from the Oregon/Washington BLM State Office. The project is planned for implementation October 2012.

The proposed action has been reviewed by the Grants Pass Resource Area staff as specified above. Based on the attached NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) Categorical Exclusion Review, I have determined the Proposed Action involves no significant impact to the environment and no further environmental analysis is required.

Administrative Review

This decision is a forest management decision. Administrative remedies are available to persons who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. The protest period will be open for formal protest starting September 17, 2012. To protest a forest management decision, a person must submit a written and signed protest to the Grants Pass Field Manager, 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, OR 97526 by the close of business (4:30 p.m.) not more than 15 days after September 17, 2012. The protest must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being protested and why it is believed to be in error, as well as cite applicable regulations. Faxed or emailed protests will not be considered.

For additional information concerning this decision contact Michelle Calvert, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, telephone (541) 471-6505, 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526.

Implementation Date

If no protest is received by the close of business (4:30 P.M.) of September 25, 2012, this decision would become final and may be implemented immediately. If a timely protest is received, this decision will be reconsidered in light of the statements of reasons for the protest and other

pertinent information available and a final decision will be issued which will be implemented in accordance with regulation.



Allen Bollschweiler, Field Manager
Grants Pass Resource Area

9/13/12

Date