

Cline Buttes Recreation Area Plan and Environmental Assessment

Executive Summary

The Cline Buttes Recreation Area Plan Environmental Assessment (EA) is now available for public comment. The document and maps can be viewed or downloaded from this website, or you can request a CD and map packet, or a print version of the EA by contacting the BLM at the address below. If you already requested a copy, you will be receiving it shortly.

Alternative 2 is the proposed action, which our interdisciplinary team feels best resolves the identified issues. If you feel the proposed action should be changed, please tell us specifically how you would change it and why.

The public comment period closes December 4, 2009. Public comments should be mailed to the Prineville BLM at the address below or emailed to: clinebuttes@blm.gov

For further information, please contact:

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Introduction

The Cline Buttes Recreation Area Plan (CBRA) analyzed four alternatives for managing 32,000 acres (50 square miles) of land administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Deschutes County, located between Bend, Redmond and Sisters. Each of the alternatives is an implementation level decision tiered to, and consistent with the Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan (UDRMP), which was completed in 2005. The primary decisions made in the CBRA plan are the designation of roads and trails, decommissioning of undesignated routes, access controls, granting of ROW roads for property access, identification of future ROW corridors, and the use of an adaptive management approach for vegetation management. All alternatives provide for road and trail systems based on UDRMP direction, but vary in the extent and location of different types of trail and road use.

The CBRA Plan and Environmental Assessment (EA) is presented in a single volume, with a separate map packet, to allow for easier viewing of road and trail design decisions. Chapter 1 of the EA includes a description of the Purpose and Need for the Action and the issues that drove the development of alternatives. Chapter 2 describes the range of alternatives and identifies the proposed action (Alternative 2). Chapter 3 describes the affected environment. Chapter 4 analyzes the environmental consequences of the alternatives. Chapter 5 describes the collaboration involved in the creation of the plan alternatives. Appendices to the EA contain supplemental material referenced in the EA.

Issues

Based on input from the public and the Prineville BLM interdisciplinary planning team, as well as UDRMP direction, the issues listed below were identified:

- To what degree will the transportation plan reduce conflicts between users, and enhance the amount, diversity, and quality of the recreation experience?
- How would private landowners be affected by the designated transportation system, access points, and recreation management and development?
- How would recreation activities affect wildlife?
- How will transportation, recreation, and access management affect public health and safety?
- How will vegetation management treatments address fire hazards and risks while protecting the environment and natural setting in Cline Buttes?

Overview of the Alternatives

There are four alternatives considered in detail. This section provides a brief overview of each of those alternatives, including one “No-Action” Alternative and three “Action” Alternatives that reflect various measures to implement UDRMP direction. The “Action” Alternatives strive to develop a balance of uses, and provide for a detailed set of on-the-ground implementation

actions for the 50 square mile area therefore it is difficult to briefly characterize them. In many cases, if a use is limited in one specific part of the CBRA in a particular alternative, there may be an increase in this use elsewhere in the CBRA in the same alternative to achieve a balance of uses as identified in the UDRMP.

Alternative 1 – Current Management (No/Action/No Change)

This alternative is the current management direction provided by the UDRMP and other decisions applicable to the CBRA ([View Alternative 1 Map](#)). Alternative 1 provides for a designated trail system of approximately 164 miles for motorized use, but does not provide for a designated, non-motorized trail system for pedestrian, equestrian or bicycle use. These non-motorized uses could use the motorized use trails and could also travel on undesignated routes or cross-country. The sound limit for OHVs would be 99db, the current State limit. No designated trailheads or fencing would be constructed to manage access or separate uses. No ROW grants would be issued under this alternative. The No-Action does not include any vegetation management actions for fuels treatments or ecosystem health.

Elements Common to Alternatives 2 through 4

Some common decisions and design elements would be adopted in all the action alternatives. The greatest commonality for Alternatives 2 – 4 is the adaptive management approach for vegetation management and the presence of designated trail systems for both motorized and non-motorized uses. For vegetation management, all action alternatives propose to thin young junipers and woody shrubs to reduce fire fuel loads/hazards and improve ecological conditions. Plant community inventory, treatment design steps, potential treatment methods/ mitigation measures and monitoring strategy are included.

All action alternatives limit motorized, mechanized and equestrian/pack stock use to designated trails. Separate trails are provided for horses and mountain bicycles in the Maston and Buttes areas (i.e., CBRA east of Barr Road). All action alternatives provide designated trails for equestrian/pedestrian use in the plateau between McKenzie Canyon and Deep Canyon and non-motorized trail use in the Tumalo Canal ACEC. Trails on the buttes are primarily for non-motorized uses in all action alternatives. All action alternatives provide for OHV trails in the majority of the CBRA north of State Highway 126 and south of State Highway 126 to the large CEC powerline and provide technical rock crawling opportunities in several locations near the Barr Road cinder pit and CEC powerline, at a minimum. All action alternatives provide for lower noise thresholds (96db) for OHV use. All action alternatives provide alternatives for ROW grants and future ROW corridors as part of the transportation system.

Alternative 2 (Proposed Action)

Alternative 2 provides for a mix of designated trails for motorized and non-motorized uses ([View Alternative 2 Map](#)). The extent of the OHV system is greater than Alternative 4, but less than

Alternative 3, and includes additional areas for challenging, technical rock crawling routes. OHV trailheads are located in the northern portion of the recreation area, at Buckhorn and Barr Road. Alternative 2 provides for 3 areas of technical, challenging rock crawling routes. The proposed action relies on shared use non-motorized trails (horses, mountain bikes and pedestrians) in the southern and western portions of the CBRA. Alternative 2 incorporates several seasonal area closures for cross-country pedestrian use, in areas near raptor nest sites.

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 provides for a mix of designated trails for motorized and non-motorized uses ([View Alternative 3 Map](#)). The extent or dispersal of the OHV system is greatest for this alternative, although this alternative provides the least number of challenging, technical rock crawling routes. There are few OHV trails proposed in Buckhorn Canyon under this alternative. OHV trailheads are located in the north and south ends of the recreation area. There is less mileage of mountain bike trails in this alternative, due to most trails in the southern and western portion of the CBRA being allocated for equestrian use.

Alternative 4

Provides for a mix of designated trails for motorized and non-motorized uses ([View Alternative 4 Map](#)). The extent of the OHV trail system is smallest for this alternative, but provides similar opportunities for challenging, technical rock crawling routes as Alternative 2. OHV trailheads are located in the northern portion of the CBRA, at Barr Road and Buckhorn Road. There is less mileage of mountain bike trails in this alternative, due to most trails in the southern and western portion of the CBRA being allocated for equestrian use. Alternative 4 provides for greater amounts of pedestrian trails on the east face of the buttes, with a corresponding decrease in equestrian trails in this same area.

Guide to Maps

The following maps are referenced in the EA. Maps 3 through 12, and Map 17 show CBRA plan decisions. The remaining maps provide information on the existing environment and previous decisions made in the 2005 Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan. As a visualization tool, files showing information on UDRMP direction, existing features and general road and trail layouts for the Proposed Action (Alternative 2) are provided which can be exported into Google Earth. These are visualization tools only, please use CBRA Plan Maps 1 – 17 when providing comments on the plan.

Map 1: Cline Buttes Vicinity

Shows the location of the CBRA in relation to cities and other public lands in Central Oregon

Map 2: Cline Buttes Planning Area

Shows the CBRA project area, surrounding roads, and BLM designated Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.

Map 3: Cline Buttes Recreation Area Transportation Map – Alternative 1

This map shows the current designated OHV/motorized use trail system that was identified in the Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan (UDRMP, 2005). The remaining existing, undesignated routes not available to motorized use are also shown on this map. Five areas of relatively few motorized use routes are identified on this map and referenced in the EA. Map 3 also shows existing fences. An inset map shows areas of highest route density, regardless of user type.

Map 4: Cline Buttes Wildland Urban Interface and Fire Plan Boundaries

Map 4 shows Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zones in the CBRA, as defined by the Healthy Forests Restoration Act. An inset map shows the three Community Wildfire Protection Plan areas that include portions of the CBRA.

Map 5: Cline Buttes Recreation Area Taxlots and Rights of Way

This map shows the location and types of existing Rights of Way (e.g., roads, utility lines, mineral material sites) located in the CBRA. Road and material site ROWs area identified with an identification number which is referenced in the EA. The various private, state, or county parcels identified in the EA text are also given an identification number on this map.

Map 6: Cline Buttes Recreation Area Transportation – Alternative 2

This map shows the proposed action decision for roads, trails, trailheads, and fences in the CBRA. Trail corridors are identified by user type and difficulty levels. Trails closed seasonally are highlighted, and areas closed to cross-country pedestrian use are also shown.

Map 7: Cline Buttes Area Transportation – Alternative 3

Shows the decisions for roads, trails, trailheads and fences for Alternative 3

Map 8: Cline Buttes Area Transportation – Alternative 4

Shows the decisions for roads, trails, trailheads and fences for Alternative 4

Map 9: Cline Buttes Recreation Area Rights of Way Grants, Corridors and Amendments

This map shows ROW Grants, Amended ROWs, and ROW corridors that are generally common to all Action Alternatives. It also shows Right of Way maintenance responsibility decisions proposed for each Alternative.

Map 10: Cline Buttes Rights of Way, Parcels 28 – 32

This map shows existing and proposed Rights of Way that vary by Alternative for access to private parcels in the southwest corner of the CBRA, near State Highway 20, Innes Market Road, and Dusty Loop Road.

Map 11: Cline Buttes Rights of Way, Parcels 48 – 49

Map 11 shows existing and proposed Rights of Way that vary by Alternative for access to private parcels north of State Highway 126.

Map 12: Cline Buttes Rights of Way, Parcels 39 – 42

Map 12 shows existing and proposed Rights of Way that vary by Alternative for access to private parcels north and south of State Highway 126 near Deep Canyon.

Map 13: Cline Buttes Recreation and Travel Management Emphasis

This map shows the 2005 Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan decisions for travel management and recreation emphasis that apply to all alternatives.

Map 14: Cline Buttes Wildlife Emphasis and Winter Range

This map shows the 2005 Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan decisions for Wildlife Emphasis that apply to all alternatives. This map also shows areas generally considered as winter range for deer and elk, based on consultation with ODFW.

Map 15: Cline Buttes Vegetation Types

Map 15 depicts the major vegetation types in the CBRA, including old growth juniper, shrub-steppe, shrub-steppe dominated by young juniper, and riparian vegetation.

Map 16: Cline Buttes Grazing Allotments

This map shows the existing grazing allotments found in the CBRA

Map 17: Cline Buttes Initial Motorized /Shared Use Trails – Alternative 2

Map 17 shows the initial OHV trail system that may be signed and managed as further route development and undesignated route closures occur during plan implementation.