

Categorical Exclusion Documentation

A. Background

BLM Office: Prineville Field Office

NEPA Log #: DOI - BLM - OR – P060 – 2012 - 0050 - CX

Proposed Action Title: Issuance of Special Recreation Permit for ONDA's Desert Conference Hikes

Location: There are four proposed hike locations on BLM:

1. Scout Camp Trail (Middle Deschutes River). T 12 S, R 12 E. 15 air miles northwest of Redmond, Oregon.
2. Horse Ridge. T 19 S, R 14 E. 10 air miles southeast of Bend, Oregon.
3. Skeleton Fire Area, west of Horse Ridge. T 18&19S, R 13 E. 5 air miles southeast of Bend, Oregon.
4. Dry River Canyon, east of the Oregon Badlands Wilderness. T 19 S, R 14 E. 15 air miles southeast of Bend, Oregon.

Description of the Proposed Action: The proposed action is to grant a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for commercial, guided hikes associated with Oregon Natural Desert Association's Desert Conference. The permits would allow for hikes led by ONDA staff and/or volunteers to take place at four separate locations on September 22, 2012 in the Deschutes Resource Area of the Prineville District. ONDA received a permit for similar activities in 2010 and were rated by BLM as Acceptable in their performance evaluation. The proposed hike locations provide opportunities to view and engage in conversation about proposed Wilderness, recently designated Wilderness, and areas with wilderness characteristics. None of the hikes would occur in designated Wilderness. No overnight use would be authorized. No staging areas would be used; hikes would begin at established trailheads.

The Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan of 2005 (UDRMP) set group size limits for commercial and organized groups;

The Scout Camp Loop is in the Steelhead Falls area, and would have a maximum of 12 people and six parked cars per group on the day of the event. Participants would need to remain on the designated trail as directed by guidance from the UDRMP, pages 110 and 111:

- 6. The Steelhead Falls area will have the following restrictions for organized group (commercial and non-commercial):*
 - c. 12 people/group maximum (including commercial groups).*
 - d. 6 cars/group maximum*
- 3. For hiking/foot traffic use, emphasize authorizing commercial annual use on designated trails, then consider non-designated routes (in areas where no trail systems have been designated) through the SRP process if these routes are mapped and do not present resource or social concerns. In areas where a designated trail system is implemented after the ROD, manage trail dependent commercial use (including hiking) through this system to avoid creation of additional routes.*

Larger groups of 15 would be allowed in the Horse Ridge, Skeleton Fire and Dry River Canyon areas in conformance with the following guidance from the UDRMP, page 109 and 110:

8. *In the Horse Ridge area, organized groups use will have the following restrictions:*

a. *Group use authorizations are required for all organized group activities involving 12 or more participants.*

b. *Trail dependent special recreation events (trail rides, races, etc.) are allowed on designated roads and trails.*

These hikes would not be trail dependent and there is no designated trail system, so off trail and route hiking is allowed in these areas. A special stipulation would be included in the permit to encourage hikers to spread out when not on a trail to minimize impact and avoid creation of new trails.

All guides would be certified in First Aid and CPR.

Participants would not be permitted to damage or remove vegetation, rocks, or historical and cultural artifacts. To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, permittees would be required to ensure participants check and clean footwear and clothing of seeds and plant material before and after each activity. Should any seasonal wildlife restrictions occur permittees would strictly adhere to closure guidelines.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan

Date approved (ROD): September, 2005

The proposed action is in conformance with the above plan, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following land use plan decisions, objectives, terms, or conditions:

- *Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) are required for all commercial and competitive uses on BLM administered lands. (Page 109)*
- *Provide for projects, programs, and permits that promote a diverse range of recreation opportunities. Provide for individual, group, and competitive event recreational use that could not be reasonably accommodated on private land. (Page 109)*

C. Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, Effective Date June 21, 2005., H. Recreation Management., (1) Issuance of special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails or in areas authorized in a land use plan. This CX cannot be used for commercial boating permits along Wild and Scenic Rivers. This CX cannot be used for the establishment or issuance of Special Recreation Permits for "Special Area" management (43 CFR 2932.5)

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply. See attached CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation checklist. The cultural, T&E plant and T&E animal specialists have indicated they expect no unacceptable impacts to resources.

D. Signature

I considered many social and environmental effects to the land and experience by allowing this Special Recreation Permit activity. With the guidance from the UDRMP, I determined that issuance of this permit would have no significant impact on the land or the social experience and help further the goals of creating a partnership with our local wilderness advocacy organization and educating the public on public land issues such as Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, and areas with wilderness characteristics.

Authorizing official: Molly Brown
 Molly Brown, Deschutes Resource Area Field Manager

8/15/12
 Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this review, contact: Jim Beaupre, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Prineville Field Office, 3050 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, OR 97754, (541) 416-6776, jbeaupre@blm.gov.

CX EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION		YES	NO
The proposed categorical exclusion action will:			
2.1	Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		x
Rationale: There would be no impacts on public health or safety.			
2.2	Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; 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.		x
Rationale: Foot based educational activities have no significant impact on any of the listed areas or values. The Scout Camp Loop trail is within the Steelhead Falls Wilderness Study Area, but the UDRMP allows for one commercial group per day of 12 or less and participants would remain on the designated trail. Other than the WSA mentioned, the hikes would not be in or affect special areas or areas with unique resources.			
2.3	Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section		x

102(2)(E)].		
Rationale: There are no known controversial environmental effects and this action does not involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		x
Rationale: There is no evidence that this action has potentially significant environmental effects. The action does not include any unique or unknown environmental risks.		
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		x
Rationale: Authorizing a Special Recreation Permit would not set any precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. Special Recreation Permits are issued at the manager's discretion and could be revoked for violations of the permit.		
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		x
Rationale: Similar past activities had no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effect.		
2.7 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.		x
Rationale: The project area does not include any property listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.		
2.8 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.		x
Rationale: Consultation with a district wildlife biologist has occurred on this project. The scope of the proposed action would not affect any Endangered or Threatened Species or have significant impacts or result in the loss of critical habitat.		
2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		x
Rationale: The proposed action conforms to the direction given for the management of public lands in the Prineville District which complies with all applicable laws, such as the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and others.		
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		x
Rationale: The proposed action would have no effect on any low income or minority population.		
2.11 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).		x
Rationale: No sacred sites exist on the routes or access trails.		
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native 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).		x
Rationale: The proposed activity would not measurably change the rate of introduction, continued existence or spread of noxious weeds or invasive species. Participants would be asked to inspect footwear and clothing for traveling seeds and clean them before and after the activity.		

Legend

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Private
-  Approved Hike Area

ONDA Desert Conference Hikes Special Recreation Permit Skeleton Fire Area Hike

DOI-BLM-OR-P060-2012-0050-CX

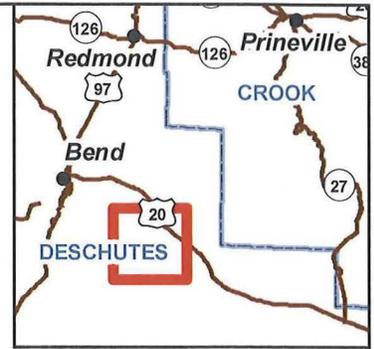


Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Prineville District
3050 NE Third Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754
Phone: 541-416-6700

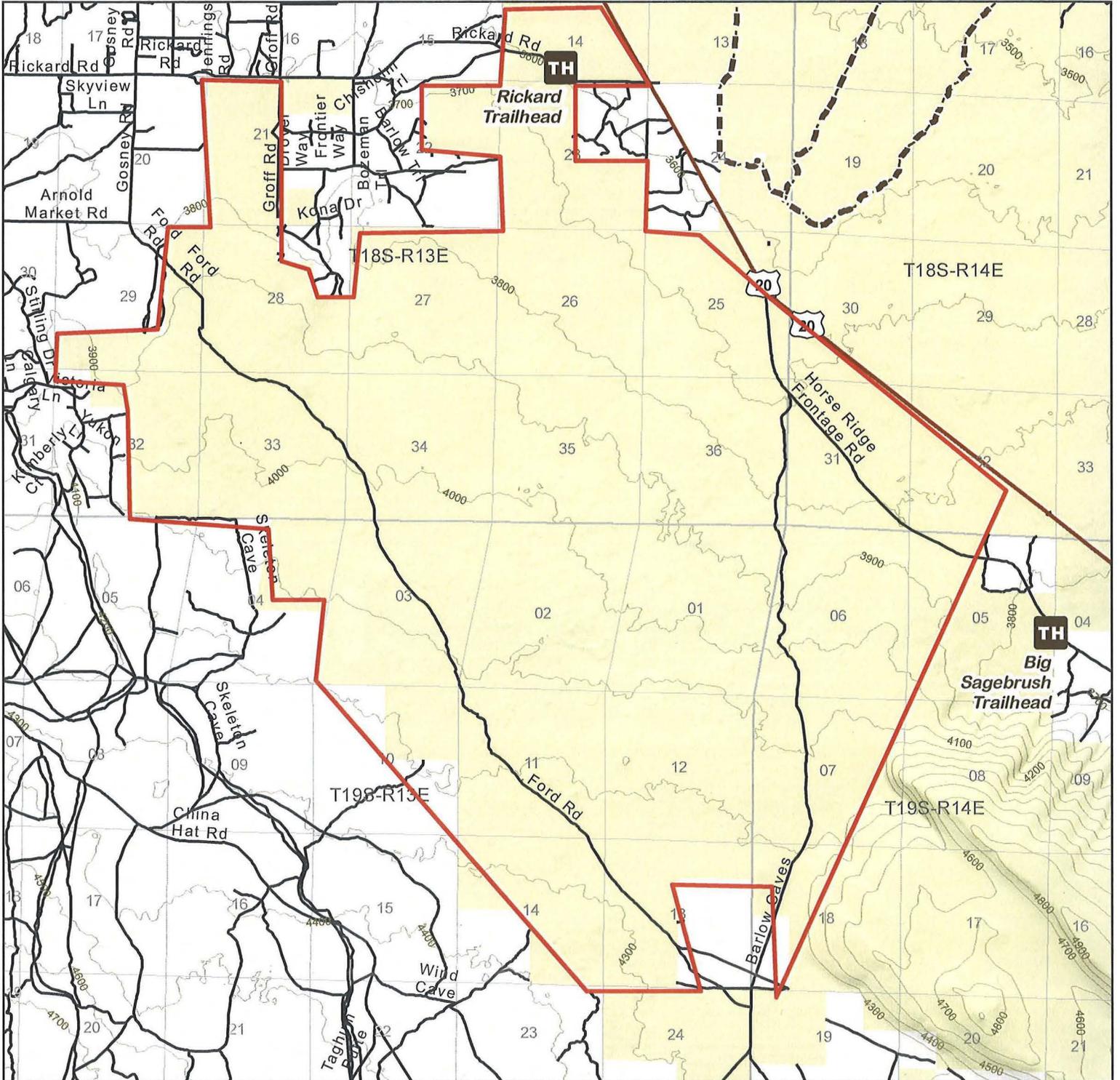


No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

MXD: P:\prigris_projects\recreation\Special_Recreation_Permits
Individual_SRPs\ONDA_SRPMXD
ONDA_Horse_Ridge.mxd
Last Modified Date: 8/22/12 10:01 PM



0 0.5 1 Miles



Legend

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Private
-  Approved Hike

ONDA Desert Conference Hikes Special Recreation Permit Scout Camp Hike

DOI-BLM-OR-P060-2012-0050-CX

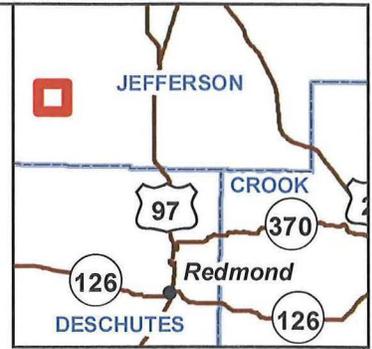


Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Prineville District
3050 NE Third Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754
Phone: 541-416-6700

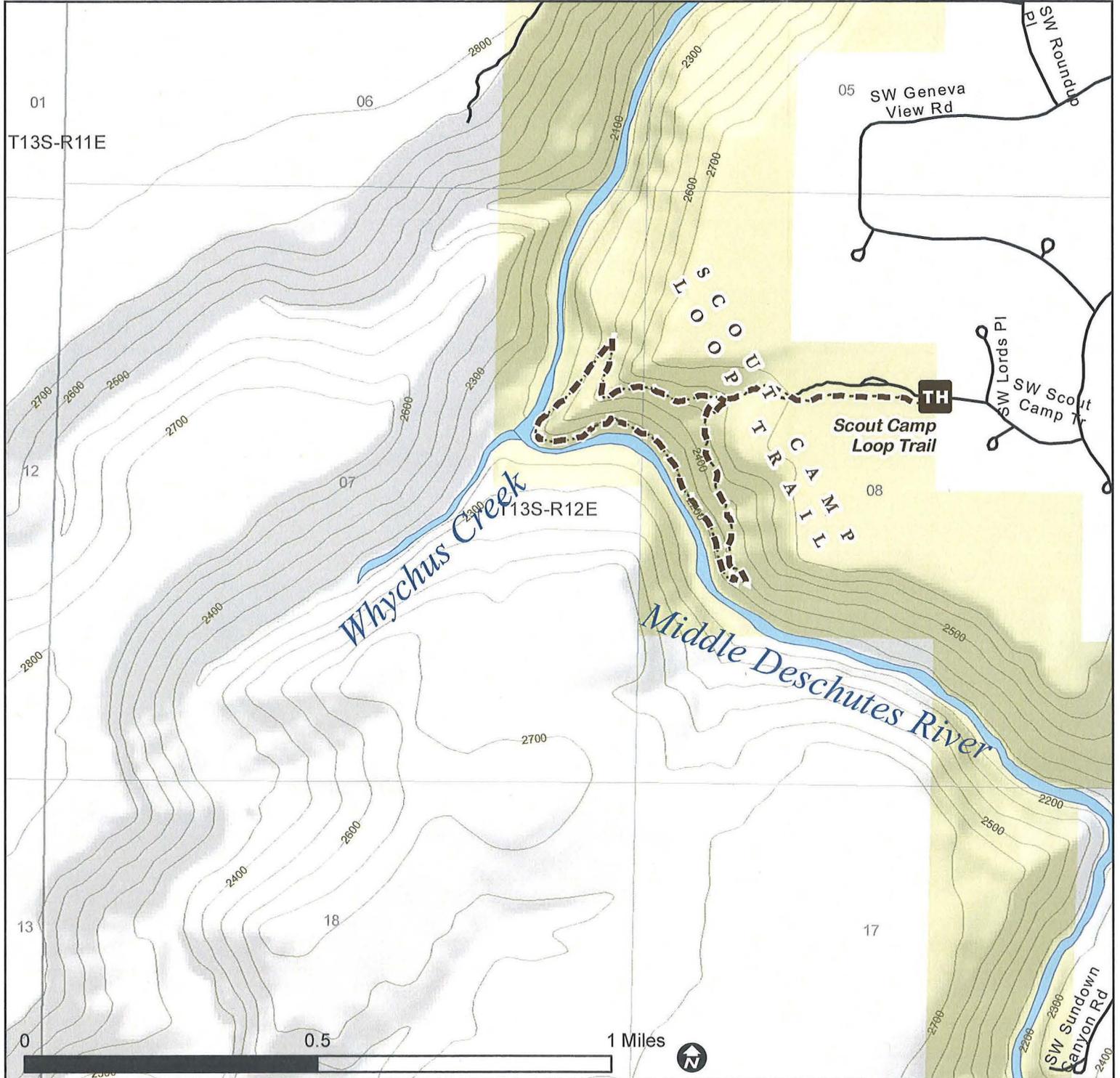


No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

MXD: P:\prigris_projects\recreation\Special Recreation Permits
Individual_SRP\ONDA_SRP\IM.xd
ONDA_Scout_Camp_Hike.mxd
Last Modified Date: 8/21/12 10:09 AM



Contour interval 100 feet (shown in brown)



Legend

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Private
-  Approved Hike Area

ONDA Desert Conference Hikes Special Recreation Permit Horse Ridge Hike

DOI-BLM-OR-P060-2012-0050-CX

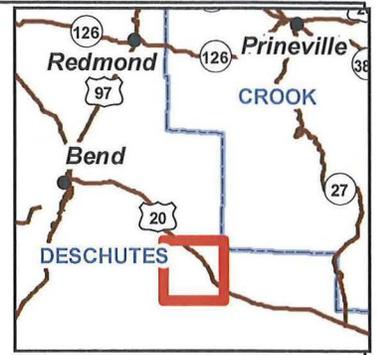


Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Prineville District
3050 NE Third Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754
Phone: 541-416-6700

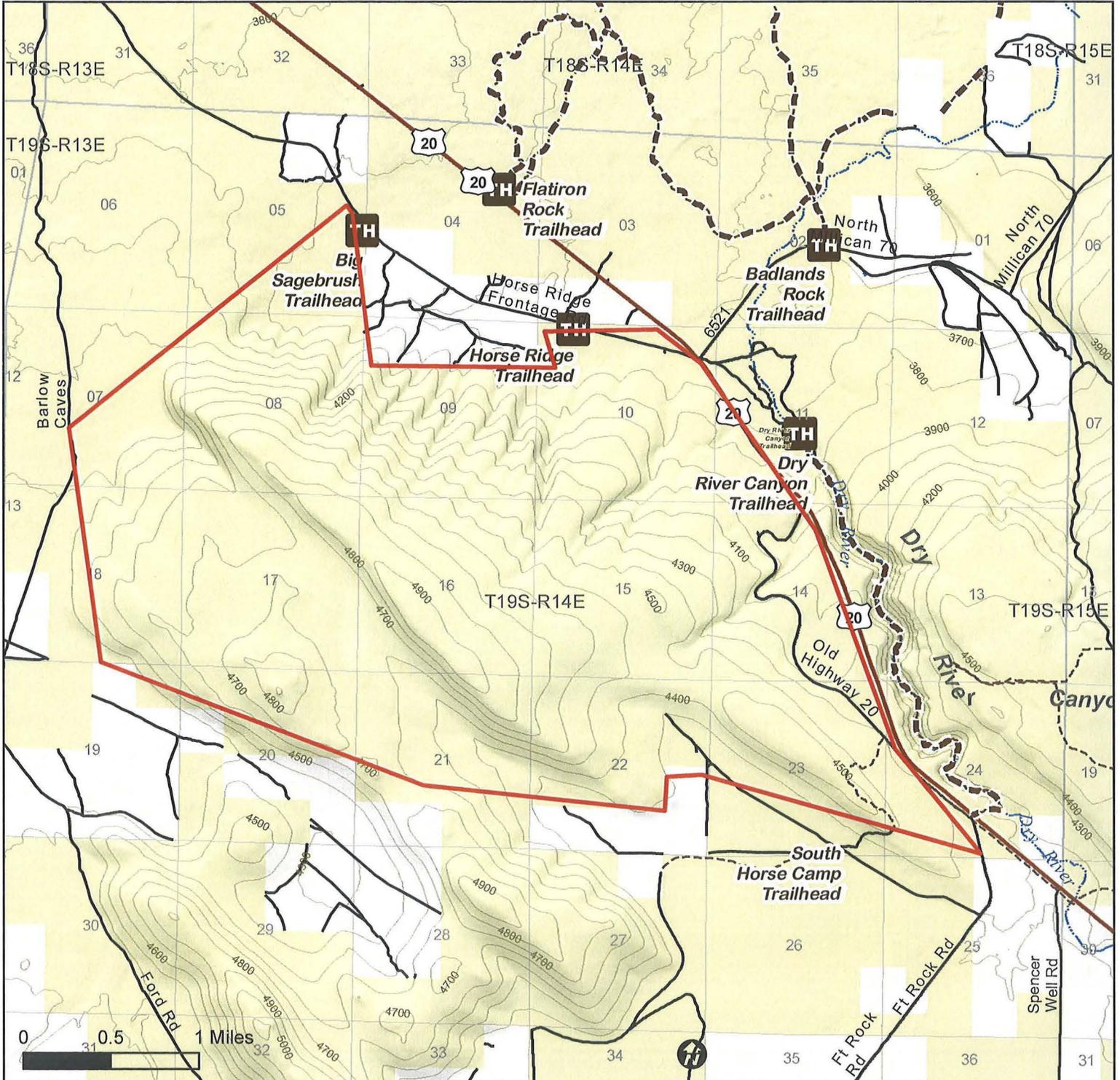


No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

MXD: P:\prigs_projects\recreation\Special_Recreation_Permits
Individual_SRPs\ONDA_SRPM\sd
ONDA_Horse_Ridge.mxd
Last Modified Date: 8/20/12 2:20 PM



Contour interval 100 feet (shown in brown)



Legend

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Private
-  Approved Hike

ONDA Desert Conference Hikes Special Recreation Permit Dry River Canyon Hike

DOI-BLM-OR-P060-2012-0050-CX

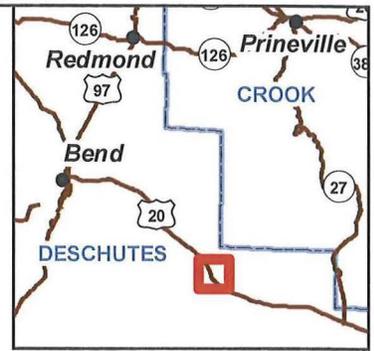


Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Prineville District
3050 NE Third Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754
Phone: 541-416-6700



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

MXD: P:\prigis_projects\recreation\Special Recreation Permits
Individual SRPs\ONDA_SRPM\mxd
ONDA_Dry_River_Canyon.mxd
Last Modified Date: 8/21/12 10:20 AM



Contour interval 100 feet (shown in brown)

