

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BURNS DISTRICT OFFICE

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

CX Number: DOI-BLM-OR-B050-2010-0004-CX

Date: November 12, 2009

File Code (Project/Serial Number):

Preparer: Bill Dragt

Applicant: Three Rivers Field Office - BLM

Title of Proposed Action: Cave Gulch Emergency Road Stabilization and Closure

Description of Proposed Action: The Proposed Action is the emergency stabilization of several roads and trails to rehabilitate unauthorized levels of disturbance and the temporary emergency closure of the stabilized roads and trails to motorized vehicles to protect the treated areas and facilitate their recovery. This project is in the vicinity of Cave Gulch (see attached maps) approximately 11 air miles northwest of Burns, Oregon.

Stabilization activities are planned for fall/winter of 2009. The goals are to prevent accelerated erosion and initiate site rehabilitation. The objectives are to compact the soil and build water bars to control erosion and compact the soil and drill the seed to facilitate seed germination and establishment. The Silvies River, which contains redband trout, is within one mile of the affected area. The proposed recovery actions are filling in large holes using a backhoe. Rehabilitate the disturbed trails by packing the disturbed soil, water barring where necessary based on slope and soil texture, and seeding. This would be done using a caterpillar type tractor to pull a compactor and seed drill. Seeding with a mixture of desirable, native and non-native, aggressive germinators is necessary to stabilize the soil and compete with and prevent the spread of existing cheatgrass and establishment of other noxious or invasive weeds which could colonize bare ground. The total seeding rate would be about 15 pounds/acre. The seed mix would include native grasses (Idaho fescue, bottlebrush squirreltail, and bluebunch wheatgrass) a native forb (annual sunflower), a native shrub (antelope bitterbrush), and a non-native grass (crested wheatgrass). Because of the emergency nature of the proposed project, the identified seed mix is partly due to these are species that are currently available to the Burns BLM. Equipment would be cleaned prior to being brought to the site to remove noxious or invasive plant materials. The project area would be actively monitored for noxious weeds for 3 years post-project completion. Any weeds found would be treated using the most appropriate methods.

The temporary emergency road closure would be for the areas where surface disturbances occurred in order to prevent further resource damage and to facilitate the proposed stabilization. BLM would post signs at main entry points to the temporary closure area. Motorized vehicle use would be excluded from the area. Roads would be closed following the project area's 2009 big game hunting seasons, starting December 1, 2009.

Monitoring would be established to determine the success of stabilization activities, as well as determine when the area would be reopened to motorized vehicles. Monitoring would include:

- (1) Photo points at key areas.
- (2) Density. Three desirable perennial plants per square meter would be one criterion for ending the vehicle closure.
- (3) Asses the following rangeland health indicators at the photo points;
 - rills
 - water flow patterns
 - gullies
 - soil surface loss or degradation
 - plant community composition & distribution relative to infiltration & runoff.

The rangeland health indicators would be assessed according to the techniques in Technical Reference 1734-6 "Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health."

Legal Description (see Location Map): T. 21 S., R. 30 E., Section 29 SW1/4NW1/4 and W1/2SW1/4, Section 30 E1/2, and Section 32 N1/2NW1/4. See attached maps for closure area and specific stabilization locations within this area.

B. Conformance with Land Use Plan (LUP) (name): Three Rivers Resource Management Plan, ROD, and RPS

Date Approved/Amended: September, 1992.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following Soil Management LUP objectives:

SM 2: Rehabilitate areas with specific localized soil erosion problems and reduce accelerated (human influenced) sediment delivery to fluvial systems.

SM 2.2: Minimize erosion from roads, mines and other human activities by controlling runoff concentration and velocity.

BLM Categorical Exclusion Reference (516 DM, Chapter 11):

I (1) Planned actions in response to ... events ... that threaten public health or safety, property, and/or natural ... resources... necessary to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management-approved condition... . Such activities shall be limited to: ...repair of existing ... trails...; planting, seeding, and mulching; and removal of ... rocks, soils and other mobile debris from, on, or along roads, trails

G (3): Temporary closure of roads and trails.

DOI Categorical Exclusion Reference (516 DM 2, Appendix 1):

Screening for Exceptions: The following extraordinary circumstances (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) may apply to individual actions within the categorical exceptions. The indicated specialist recommends the proposed action does *not*:

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION	
2.1	Have significant impacts on public health or safety.
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	John Petty, Safety Officer <i>for</i>
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11/4/09
Rationale:	The proposed action would not cause significant 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); flood plains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.
<u>Migratory Birds</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Jason Brewer, Wildlife Biologist
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11/02/2009
Rationale:	Short-term disturbance or displacement may occur during restoration treatments for some migratory birds still in the area this fall. Disturbance would be limited to a brief period during operation of heavy equipment. Impacts would primarily be limited to roads, and would diminish as the distance from the roads increases.
<u>Historic and Cultural Resources</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Scott Thomas, District Archeologist
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11/4/09
Rationale:	No cultural/historical resources are located within the stabilization project area.
<u>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern/Research Natural Areas</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Doug Linn, Botanist
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11/1/09
Rationale:	There are no ACECs or Research Natural Areas in the vicinity of the proposed action.
<u>Water Resources/Flood Plains</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Lisa Grant, Natural Resources Specialist - Riparian
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 10/30/09
Rationale:	The Proposed Action does not involve occupancy and modification of floodplain, and would not increase the risk of flood loss.
<u>Soils, Biological Soil Crust, Prime Farmlands</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Doug Linn, Botanist
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11/1/09
Rationale:	The proposed action would help to prevent significant impacts to soils, biological soil crusts, and prime farmlands downstream of Silvies River.
<u>Recreation/ Visual Resources</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Brett Page, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 10/30/09
Rationale:	The temporary closure area is relatively small; therefore no significant impacts to recreation are expected. The proposed action is expected to improve visual resources of the area considering the current surface disturbances.
<u>Wilderness/Wild and Scenic River Resources</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Eric Haakenson, Wilderness Specialist
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11/2/09
Rationale:	There is no wilderness, WSA or WSR. The proposed project is within a citizens proposed WSA. BLM has not conducted recent wilderness inventories. However, the proposed action would have no affect on wilderness values.
2.3	Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Signature and Date:	<i>[Signature]</i> 11/2/09
Rationale:	There are no known highly controversial environmental effects or 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.
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Signature and Date:	There are no known uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. Rhonda Karges 11/2/09
Rationale:	
2.5	Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Signature and Date:	Rhonda Karges 11/2/09
Rationale:	Implementation of the proposal would not set a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. Seeding to stabilize soil and prevent incursion of invasive weeds is an ongoing effort within the District. Temporary closure of areas to allow rehabilitation to occur is also a common practice. Any permanent road closures would be analyzed in future, appropriate NEPA analysis.
2.6	Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Signature and Date:	Rhonda Karges 11/2/09
Rationale:	There are no known individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.
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.
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Scott Thomas, District Archeologist
Signature and Date:	Scott Thomas 11/4/09
Rationale:	No listed or National Register eligible properties are located within the proposed stabilization area.
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.
<u>Endangered or Threatened Species-Fauna</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Jason Brewer, Wildlife Biologist
Signature and Date:	Jason Brewer 11/2/2009
Rationale:	There are no known Federally Threatened or Endangered Species or Critical Habitat present in or near the treatment area.
<u>Endangered or Threatened Species-Aquatic</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Lisa Grant, Natural Resource Specialist - Riparian
Signature and Date:	Lisa Grant 10/30/09
Rationale:	There are no known Federally Threatened or Endangered Species or designated Critical Habitat present in or near the area of the proposed action.
<u>Endangered or Threatened Species-Flora</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Doug Linn, Botanist
Signature and Date:	Doug Linn 11/1/09
Rationale:	There are no known Federally Threatened or Endangered Species or designated Critical Habitat present in or near the area of the proposed action.
2.9	Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Signature and Date:	Rhonda Karges 11/2/09
Rationale:	No known laws or requirements for protection of the environment would be violated.
2.10	Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Signature and Date:	Rhonda Karges 11/2/09
Rationale:	Implementation of the proposal would not result in a disproportionately adverse effect on minority or economically disadvantaged populations as such populations do not occur in or near the Project Area.
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).
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Scott Thomas, District Archeologist
Signature and Date:	Scott Thomas 11/4/09
Rationale:	No sacred sites or access to sacred sites are known to occur within the stabilization project area.

2.12. 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).

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Lesley Richman, District Weed Coordinator *for*

Signature and Date: *Lesley Richman* 11/2/09

Rationale: Noxious weeds are known to be present in close proximity to this area. They are not present in sufficient quantity to be considered a significant impact at this time. The proposed actions would help restore competitive vegetation in the disturbed area, likely reducing opportunities for new weed establishment and spread.

Additional review (As determined by the Authorized Officer):

RMP conformance and CX review confirmation:

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

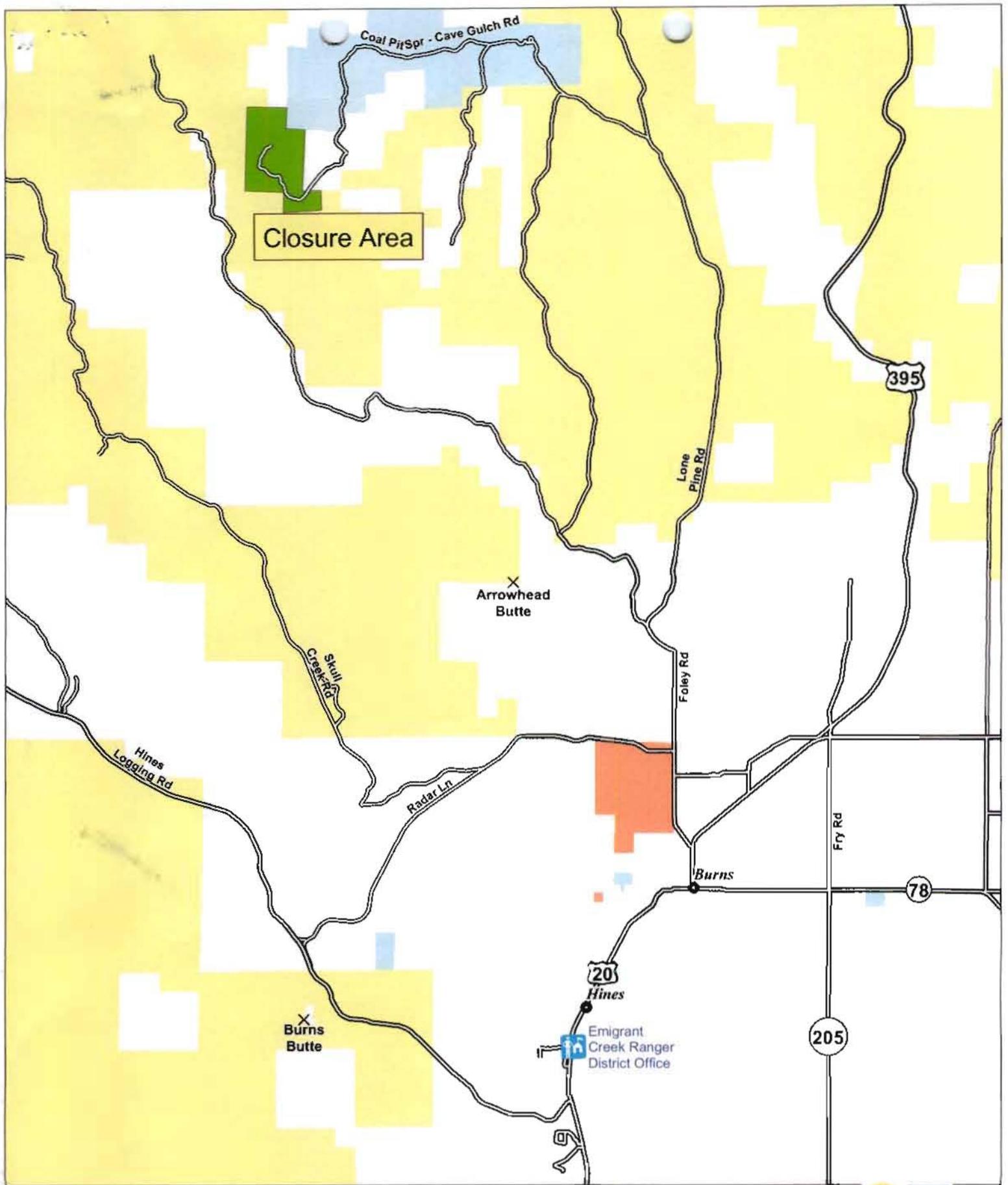
Signature and Date: *Rhonda Karges* 11/2/09

Management Determination: Based upon review of this proposal, I have determined the Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP, qualifies as a categorical exclusion and does not require further NEPA analysis.

Authorized Officer (Print Name and Title): Richard Roy, Field Manager - Three Rivers Resource Area

Signature and Date: *Richard Roy* 11/4/09

Note: A separate decision document would be prepared for the action covered by this Categorical Exclusion following program-specific guidance.



Cave Gulch Emergency Stabilization and Road Closures

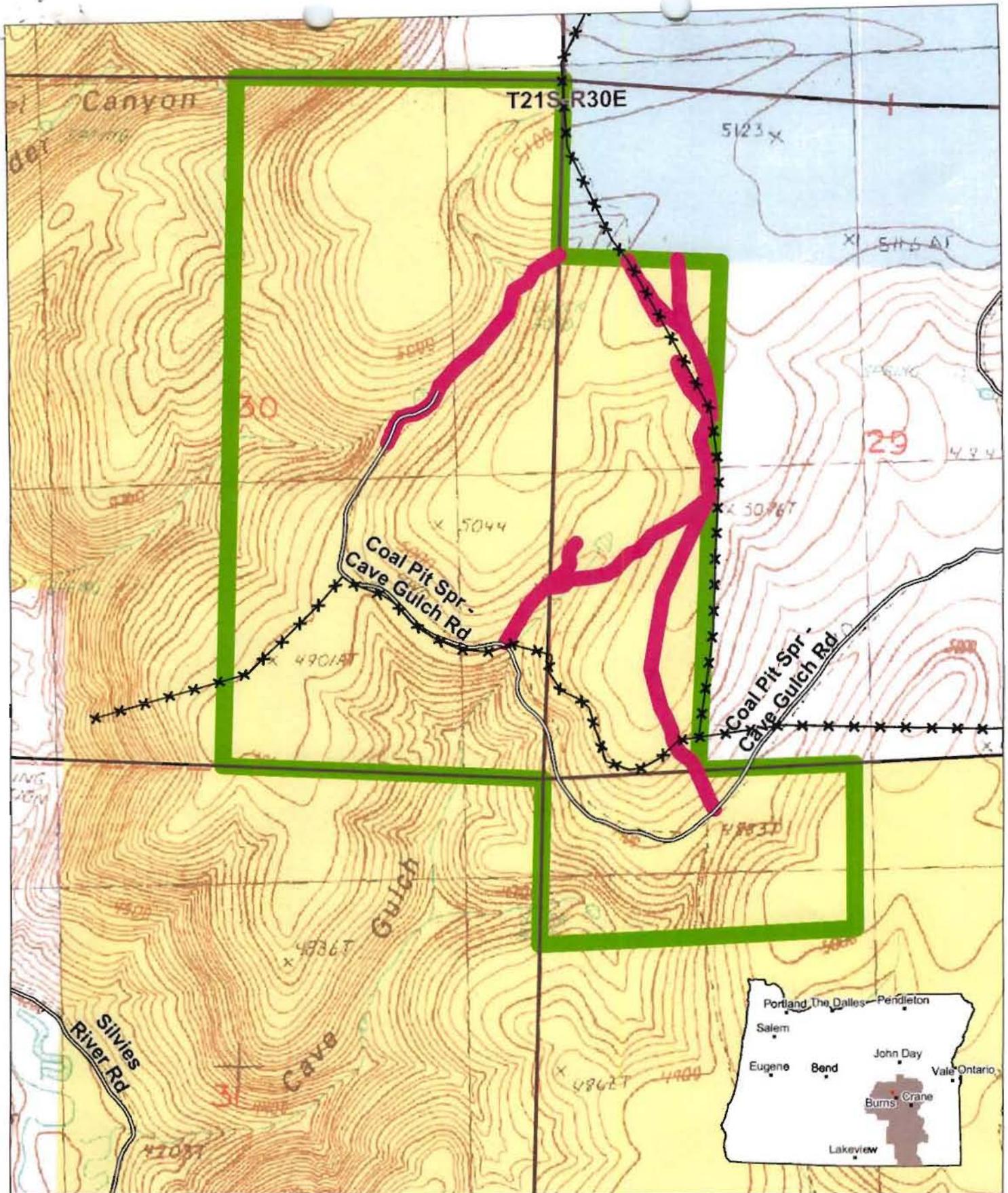
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|-----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Temporary Road Closure Area | Paved Road | Bureau of Land Management | U. S. Forest Service |
| Non-Paved Improved Road | Private (White) | Indian Reservation | |
| | State | | |



US Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Burns District, Oregon

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

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Cave Gulch Emergency Stabilization and Road Closures

- Temporary Road Closure Area
- Non-Paved Improved Road
- Bureau of Land Management
- Proposed Stabilization Areas
- Existing Fence (Location may be off)
- Private (White)
- State



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Oregon District Office
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