

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

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

CX Number: DOI-BLM-OR-B050-2013-0030-CX

File Code: 9113-2

Date: March 20, 2013

Project Number: 2013 Road Maintenance Files – Riddle Mountain Lookout Road 8222-G0, FAMS ID L1381401/L1513603, L1836772
(Copy in NEPA Central Files)

Preparer: Connie Pettyjohn, Program Analyst, Engineering

Title of Proposed Action: Riddle Mountain Lookout Road Maintenance

Description of Proposed Action and Project Design Elements (if applicable):

The purpose of the proposed action is to perform road maintenance activities on Riddle Mountain Lookout Road. The need for the proposed action is to provide safe passage for administrative and visitor traffic to and from Riddle Mountain Fire Lookout. The Fire Lookout is a vital BLM administrative facility that enhances the success of fire suppression efforts for over five million acres of public lands. The Riddle Mountain Lookout Road is approximately 7.6 miles long and traverses BLM (1.4 miles), private (3.8 miles), and State lands (2.4 miles) and is the primary access road to the Fire Lookout facility. The access road is within the Three Rivers Resource Management Area, Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The Riddle Mountain Lookout Road (Maintenance Intensity 3) was subject to a comprehensive condition assessment in June 2007 by a contract engineering firm that reported ruts of medium severity during its inspection. Over the past five years, the combination of weather, snow runoff, and steep topography have caused the ruts to become excessively eroded resulting in severe damage to the road bed surface in many locations. Drainage features, including ditches, have become plugged from sediment flow due to erosion; large rocks have slid onto the roadbed in places; large “potholes” have developed on the level surfaces and resource damage has occurred where traffic has attempted to drive around the “potholes”, which are filled with water during wet weather conditions and form 6-8 inch-deep dust bowls during dry conditions.

The road would be maintained consistent with the assigned Maintenance Intensity 3 management objectives as described in BLM Manual 9113 – Roads which states, “Maintenance Intensities provide 1) consistent objectives and standards for the care and maintenance of BLM routes, 2) operational guidance to field personnel on the appropriate intensity, frequency, and type of maintenance activities that should be undertaken to keep the route in acceptable condition and, 3) provide guidance for the minimum standards of care for the annual maintenance of a route. Maintenance Intensities do not describe route geometry, route types, types of use or other physical or managerial characteristic of the route; but does provide a range of management objectives and standards.”

In accordance with BLM Manual 9113 Maintenance Intensity 3 description; drainages would be maintained as needed, surface maintenance would be conducted to provide a reasonable level of riding comfort at prudent speeds for the route conditions and intended use, brushing would be conducted as needed, landslides adversely affecting drainage would receive high priority for removal. Planned maintenance activities could include, 1) perform annual maintenance necessary to protect adjacent lands and resource values, 2) perform preventative maintenance as required to generally keep the route in acceptable condition and, 3) planned maintenance activities would include environmental and resource protection efforts. Route surface and other physical features would be maintained for regular traffic.

Specifically, the proposed project would repair and re-establish the road surface and drainage features (crowning, ditches, and culverts) in a manner to mitigate erosion damage. The travel surface would be crowned or sloped as necessary to direct surface water off the road. Ditches, including lead-off ditches that may extend up to 17 feet from centerline on either side, would be cleaned of all sediment accumulations. Roadside brushing would occur and would consist of removing sagebrush and juniper in areas where vegetation is encroaching on the roadsides and ditches, contributing to inadequate drainage. Brush removal would be accomplished during the process of re-establishing drainage ditches and road surface crown and where feasible, encroaching trees would be limbed to a height of 12 feet above the road shoulder elevation to allow passage of traffic. The proposed vegetation removal would occur prior to April 15 or after July 15. Areas where extensive roadbed erosion has occurred would be graded and reinforced where necessary with fill material consisting of dirt or gravel and would be compacted to prevent future erosion.

Generally, the type of equipment used would include; a road grader, dump truck, backhoe, dozer and grid roller. The maintenance work would be completed by the BLM Operations crew involving 3-4 people and is anticipated to be completed in 10 days.

The proposed road maintenance would provide a road surface that would allow for safe vehicle travel and dependable access for fire lookout staff, firefighting personnel, and public land visitors, as well as expedite general administration of the facility and adjacent public lands.

Equipment involved with the maintenance activity would be cleaned prior to beginning work on the road to minimize the potential of spreading noxious weeds by seeds or other plant parts. Certified weed-free materials would be used as necessary for armoring culverts or stabilizing road surface where erosion is recurrent.

In addition, the proposed maintenance activity would utilize the guidelines within the Low-Volume Roads Engineering Best Management Practices Field Guide, July 2003, as endorsed by USDI-BLM (<http://www.blm.gov/bmp/field%20guide.htm>). "Best Management Practices are a significant tool in the BLM's pursuit of enhancing quality of life for all citizens through balanced stewardship of America's public lands and resources."

Legal Description: See attached Proposed Road Maintenance Map.

B. Conformance with Land Use Plan (LUP):

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 LUP decision(s) (*objectives, terms, and conditions*):

Three Rivers ROD/RMP September 1992, Grazing Management Program Objective and Rationale, GM 1.3, (page 2-36). Utilize rangeland improvements, as needed, to support achievement of multiple-use management objectives for each allotment as shown in Appendix 9 and Map RM-3. Range improvements will be constrained by Standard and Procedures and design elements shown in Appendix 12.

Three Rivers ROD/RMP September 1992, General Best Forest Management Practices – Road System Appendix 1, (Appendices 3-4). "... Best Forest Management Practices (BFMP) are taken from the Oregon Statewide Planning Manuals, the Oregon Forest Practice Rules (Oregon Department of Forestry, 1980) and the Guidelines for Stream Protection (Oregon State Game Commission). Generally, BFMP applications were selected to avoid rather than mitigate impacts. In addition, all road standards and designs will correspond to BLM Manual 9113."

"Design drainage ditches, waterbars, drain dips, culvert placement, etc., in a manner that will disperse runoff and minimize cut-and-fill erosion. Install drainage ditches, waterbars, drain dips, culvert placement, etc., in a manner that will disperse runoff and minimize cut-and-fill erosion. When installing culverts and drain dips, avoid changes in channel orientation and place these structures to conform to the natural channel gradient. Design culverts for maximum stream flow (e.g., 25-year discharge). Provide rock or other basin at the outlet of culverts and rock the drain dips if economically feasible. Grade the primary road surfaces as often as necessary to retain the original surface drainage (either insloped or outsloped). Control roadside brush only to the extent required for good road maintenance and safety."

Three Rivers ROD/RMP September 1992, Summary of Recommended Practices for Stream Protection, Appendix 2, (Appendices 7-10). "Install culverts at crossings of all drainage ways except small streams and seeps which can be safely diverted to ditches. Use culverts with sufficient capacity to carry the largest flow expected. Route the road drainage (whether from culverts, cross drainage or ditches) onto the forest floor, preferably on benches so that sediment can settle out . . .). Culverts should be properly installed in the stream channel allowing for suitable bed, adequate size, frequency and grade. Inlets and outlets should be protected. Aprons should be installed where needed. Ditches should be adequate depth and side slope to carry all water and to prevent sloughage. Keep roads well crowned ahead of wet weather so they will drain properly and not become waterways. During current operations, roads should be graded and ditched to avoid interruption to drainage from road centers to the ditches. Provide frequent cross-drains . . . to prevent erosion of road and fill. In using graders to clean out drainage ditches, avoid undercutting the side slopes."

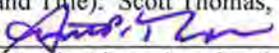
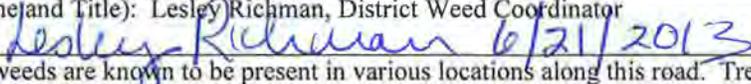
DOI Categorical Exclusion Reference (516 DM, Chapter 11, G.1. and G.2.): G. Transportation. (1) Incorporation of eligible roads and trails in any transportation plan when no new construction or upgrading is needed. (2) Installation of routine signs, markers, culverts, ditches, waterbars, gates, or cattleguards on/or adjacent to roads and trails identified in any land use or transportation plan, or eligible for incorporation in such plan.

DOI Categorical Exclusion Reference (516 DM 2, Appendix 1): 1.7 "Routine and continuing government business, including such things as...maintenance...and replacement activities..."

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
Signature and Date:	<i>John Petty</i> 6/24/12
Rationale: No 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):	Tomas Kamienski, Wildlife Biologist
Signature and Date:	<i>Tomas Kamienski</i> 6/24/13
Rationale: The project would take place in a previously disturbed area (existing road way). The timing of the road maintenance would occur out of the critical migratory birds nesting period (after July 15 th). Part of the ditch maintenance will require removal of young juniper trees and sage brush; however, these provide little structural or vegetative diversity for most migratory birds. The project may displace some migratory birds foraging immediately next to the road; however, this disturbance would be short in duration and low in intensity. The road is currently used for recreation, permittee use, and BLM administrative use.	
<u>Historic and Cultural Resources</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Scott Thomas, District Archaeologist
Signature and Date:	<i>Scott Thomas</i> 6/24/13
Rationale: No historic or cultural resources would be affected by the proposed road maintenance.	
<u>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern/Research Natural Areas</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Caryn Meinicke, NRS - Botany
Signature and Date:	<i>Caryn Meinicke</i> 6-24-13
Rationale: There are no ACEC/RNAs within the proposed project area.	
<u>Water Resources/Flood Plains</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Lindsay Davies, Natural Resource Specialist/Riparian
Signature and Date:	<i>Lindsay Davies</i> 6/24/2013
Rationale: Improving road drainage will ultimately benefit watershed health and function as less sediment will be supplied downslope to drainages. The proposed road improvements do not cross perennial streams. No additional impacts to floodplain or water resources are expected, other than reduced sediment inputs.	
<u>Soils, Biological Soil Crust, Prime Farmlands</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Caryn Meinicke, NRS - Botany
Signature and Date:	<i>Caryn Meinicke</i> 6-24-13
Rationale: Soils and biological soil crusts may be disturbed by road maintenance activities. Activities within the current road bed will not have an effect; however, the area outside of the roadbed for up to 17 feet from centerline either way may be used as a temporary work area randomly along the roadway which will impact soils and BSCs due to the potential removal of vegetation which can lead to exposure of soils to water and wind erosion and the removal of biological soil crusts. As vegetation re-establishes, soils will stabilize and BSCs can re-establish. The affected area will be less than one acre. There are no Prime Farmlands within the proposed project area.	
<u>Recreation/ Visual Resources</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	John Bethea, Outdoor Recreation Planner
Signature and Date:	<i>John P. Bethea</i> 6-24-13
Rationale: The proposed action is within VRM Class IV which allows for major modification of the existing character of the landscape. Any effects to visual resource management or recreation would be short term and minimal.	
<u>Wilderness/Wild and Scenic River Resources</u>	
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Tom Wilcox, Wilderness Specialist
Signature and Date:	<i>Tom Wilcox</i> 6/21/2013
Rationale: There is no wilderness, WSR, WSA or LWC within the project area.	
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):	Holly Orr, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i>	03/20/2013
Rationale: There are no highly controversial environmental effects or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. The road is an existing feature on the landscape; assigned a Maintenance Intensity 3 maintenance objective. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on an existing road which provides the only access to a fire look-out facility.		
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Holly Orr, Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i>	03/20/2013
Rationale: There are no known highly uncertain or potentially significant environment effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. The road is an existing feature on the landscape; assigned a Maintenance Intensity 3 maintenance objective. The action is to perform routine and continuing maintenance on an existing road which provides the only access to a fire look-out facility.		
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):	Holly Orr, Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i>	03/20/2013
Rationale: Implementation would not set precedence for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. The BLM routinely performs maintenance activities on Maintenance Intensity 3 maintenance objective roads, this road currently exists on the landscape, and this road provides the only access to a fire look-out facility.		
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Holly Orr, Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i>	03/20/2013
Rationale: Implementation does not have any known direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulative significant environmental effects. The BLM routinely performs maintenance activities on Maintenance Intensity 3 maintenance objective roads, this road currently exists on the landscape, and this road provides the only access to a fire look-out facility.		
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 Archaeologist	
Signature and Date:	<i>Scott Thomas</i>	6/24/13
Rationale: National Register eligible or listed properties would not be affected by the proposed road maintenance.		
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):	Tomas Kamienski, Wildlife Biologist	
Signature and Date:	<i>Tomas Kamienski</i>	6/24/13
Rationale: There are no known Threatened or Endangered species or Designated Critical Habitat in the area around the road, and none would be affected off-site by the road maintenance activities.		
<u>Endangered or Threatened Species-Aquatic</u>		
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Lindsay Davies, Natural Resource Specialist/Riparian	
Signature and Date:	<i>Lindsay Davies</i>	6/24/2013
Rationale: There are no Aquatic T&E Species or Critical Habitat in the watershed of the Proposed Action.		
<u>Endangered or Threatened Species-Flora</u>		
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Caryn Meinicke, NRS - Botany	
Signature and Date:	<i>Caryn Meinicke</i>	6-24-13
Rationale: There are no T & E or Special Status plant species or critical habitat within the proposed project area.		
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):	Holly Orr, Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i>	03/20/2013
Rationale: Implementation would not violate any known law or regulation imposed for the protection of the environment. The BLM routinely performs maintenance activities on Maintenance Intensity 3 maintenance objective roads, this road currently exists on the landscape, and this road provides the only access to a fire lookout facility.		
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		
Specialist (Print Name and Title):	Holly Orr, Planning and Environmental Coordinator	
Signature and Date:	<i>Holly Orr</i>	03/20/2013

Rationale: Implementation would not have a disproportionately high or adverse effect on low income or minority populations as such populations do not exist within 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 Archaeologist
Signature and Date:  6/21/13
Rationale: Access to or physical integrity of Indian sacred sites would not be affected by the proposed road maintenance.
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
Signature and Date:  6/21/2013
Rationale: Noxious weeds are known to be present in various locations along this road. Treatments are on-going. The weeds are not present in sufficient quantity to be considered a significant impact at this time.

Additional review (As determined by the Authorized Officer): None

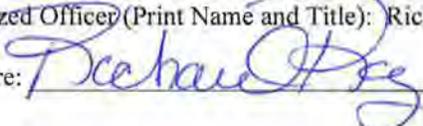
RMP conformance and CX review confirmation:

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Holly Orr, District Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature:  Date: 4/25/13

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, Three Rivers Resource Area Manager

Signature:  Date: 6/25/13

Decision: It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action as described above.

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), Office of the Secretary, in accordance with regulations contained in 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 4 and Form 1842-1. If an appeal is filed, your notice of appeal should be mailed to the Burns District Office, 28910 Highway 20 West, Hines, Oregon 97738, within 30 days of receipt of the decision. The appellant has the burden of showing the decision appealed is in error.

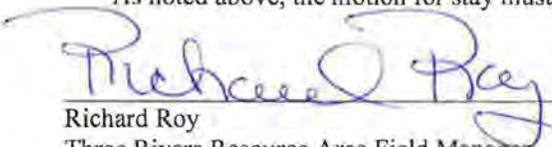
A copy of the appeal, statement of reasons, and all other supporting documents should also be sent to the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 805 SW Broadway, Suite 600, Portland, Oregon 97205. If the notice of appeal did not include a statement of reasons for the appeal, it must be sent to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, 801 North Quincy Street, Arlington, Virginia 22203. It is suggested appeals be sent certified mail, return receipt requested.

Request for Stay

Should you wish to file a motion for stay pending the outcome of an appeal of this decision, you must show sufficient justification based on the following standards under 43 CFR 4.21:

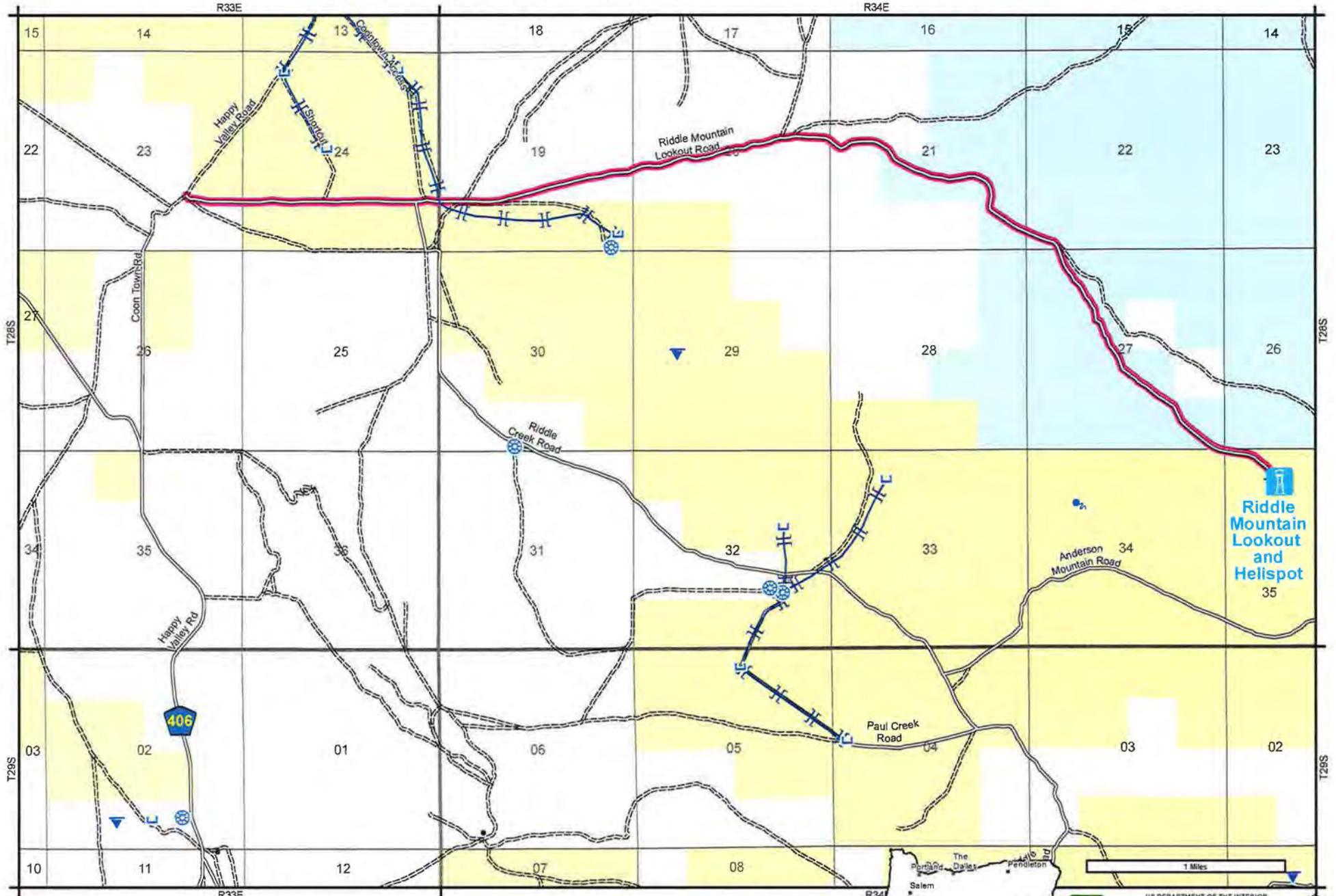
- The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied.
- The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
- The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted.
- Whether or not the public interest favors granting the stay.

As noted above, the motion for stay must be filed in the office of the authorized officer.


 Richard Roy
 Three Rivers Resource Area Field Manager


 Date

Riddle Mountain Lookout Road Maintenance



Road Maintenance Approx. 7.6 Miles

- Non-Paved Improved Road
- Natural/Unknown Road Surface

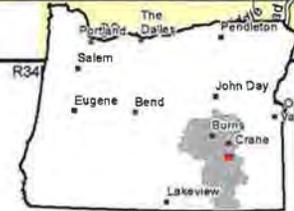
- Bureau of Land Management
- State
- Private/Unknown

- Well
- Spring Development
- ▼ Reservoir
- └ Trough
- └ Water Pipeline

BLM Road No. 8222-G0

FAMS ID L1381401/L1513603/L1836772

Maintenance Intensity 3



US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Bureau District, Oregon

Note: 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 was compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

6/25/2013 sfm/lan
W:\MXD\CX_EAMaps\RiddleMountainLookoutRoadMaintenance\CX.mxd
DOI-BLM-OR-8050-2013-0030-CX