

**United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Coos Bay District**

Categorical Exclusion Review (CX)

DOI-BLM-OR-C030-2012-0002-CX

Date: 2/28/2012

A. Background

Project: Southern Oregon University Archaeological Field School.

Location: North Spit of Coos Bay. T. 25 S., R. 14 W., Section 13, Willamette Meridian.

Project Description:

Dr. Mark Tveskov of the Southern Oregon University Laboratory of Anthropology (SOULA) proposes to conduct an archaeological field school on Coos Bay District lands in 2012, in collaboration with the Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management (BLM), through issuance of an Archaeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA) permit from the Oregon/Washington BLM State Office, for the excavation and removal of archaeological artifacts. The survey area is thought to contain evidence of Camp Castaway, the first known Euro American encampment in the Coos Bay vicinity during early 1852. A previous survey and testing of the locality indicated this possibility, as materials were recovered consistent with that period. The site has not been fully recorded or formally evaluated for significance and eligibility to the National register of Historic Places.

The field school project involves surface survey and excavation of possible materials. SOULA students and project staff would conduct pedestrian, ground-penetrating radar (GPR), and metal detector surveys of the possible location. Areas thought to contain artifacts would be excavated in 2-meter x 2-meter units; the depth generally would not exceed three feet. Excavated materials (dune sand) would be screened through 1/8" mesh and unit locations would be recorded on a GPS system. Excavation units would be refilled with sand at the conclusion of the excavations. All identified diagnostic artifacts would be collected and their locations recorded on an appropriate Geographic Positioning System (GPS) unit. All recovered artifacts from the survey and excavation will be returned to SOULA, where they will be catalogued, analyzed and permanently curated.

Ground disturbance would be limited to the sand dune / beach grass terrain; the survey area is outside of neighboring riparian areas. The exact location is not provided in this document to prevent unauthorized excavation prior to the field school work.

The project area is within the North Spit Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), but not within the Snowy Plover portion of that ACEC. The relevant and important values of the North Spit ACEC are: habitat for special status species, habitat diversity (salt marsh to freshwater deflation plains and open sand dunes), and historic sites. These values would be maintained following project implementation.

A final report would be prepared by SOULA, which describes the survey and excavation procedures, results and interpretations of the site. This report will be due to the BLM on 12/31/2013, and will be shared with the Oregon SHPO office and federally-recognized Native American tribes with interests in the North Spit area.

In the event that human remains or potential grave goods are discovered during ground disturbance activities, any work at the discovery location would stop and the Coos Bay District archaeologist would be

immediately notified. Measures would be taken to protect the discovery until such time that BLM officials have examined the discovery, notified and consulted with Tribes, and provided directions for protection/treatment.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance Review

This project is designed to conform to both the 2008 *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management* (2008 FEIS) and its *Record of Decision* (2008 ROD/RMP) and the 1994 *Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement* (USDI 1994) and its *Record of Decision* (1995 ROD/RMP), as supplemented and amended. Consequently, this project will be consistent with the goals and objectives in both the 1995 and 2008 RODs and RMPs.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable resource management plan because it is specifically provided for in the following resource management plan decision(s):

2008 Resource Management Plan (RMP) Management Direction:

Excavate and recover the data where warranted by the scientific importance of the cultural and paleontological sites threatened by natural processes or human activity (pg. 41).

Conserve scientific, traditional use, heritage, educational, public and recreational values of cultural and paleontological resource sites (pg. 41).

1995 Resource Management Plan (RMP) Management Actions / Direction:

Evaluate cultural resource sites to determine their potential for contributing to public, cultural heritage and/or scientific purposes (pg. 40).

Identify cultural resource localities and manage them for public, scientific, and cultural heritage purposes (pg. 40).

Continue to fulfill government-to-government and trust responsibilities to appropriate American Indian tribes regarding heritage and religious concerns (pg. 40).

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 (1.6):

Non-destructive data collection, inventory (including field, aerial and satellite surveying and mapping), study, research and monitoring activities.

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 Appendix 2 apply.

<u>Extraordinary Circumstances</u>	<u>Applies (Yes/No)</u>	<u>Comments and Source</u>	<u>Initials</u>	<u>Date</u>
(1) Health & Safety	No	Reviewed by Hazardous Materials Coordinator;	<u>jj</u>	<u>3/15/2012</u>
Hazardous Materials	No			
(2) Unique Resources	No	Reviewed by Port-Orford Cedar Coordinator	<u>ra</u>	<u>3/15/2012</u>
(3) Controversial Effects	No			
(4) Risks	No			
(5) Precedent	No			
(6) Cumulative	No			
(7) Cultural & Historic	No	Reviewed by Archaeologist	<u>srs</u>	<u>3/6/2012</u>
(8) T & E Species	No	Reviewed by Wildlife Biologists, Fisheries, and Botanist	<u>sjl</u> <u>jf</u> <u>js</u>	<u>3/13/2012</u> <u>3/15/2012</u> <u>3/15/2012</u>
(9) Violate Laws	No			
(10) Environmental Justice	No	Reviewed by Environmental Justice Coordinator	<u>srs</u>	<u>3/6/2012</u>
(11) Native American Religious Concerns	No	Reviewed by District Native American Coordinator	<u>srs</u>	<u>3/6/2012</u>
(12) Noxious Weeds	No	Reviewed by Noxious Weed Coordinator	<u>js</u>	<u>3/19/2012</u>

A summary of the extraordinary circumstances is listed below. The action must have a significant or a disproportional adverse effect on the listed categories to warrant further analysis and environmental review.

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
Rationale: The proposed activity would be in a remote, sand-dune location, outside of population centers. All proposed activities follow established Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules concerning health and 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 principle drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
Rationale: The project site does not contain refuge lands, wilderness areas, national natural landmarks, prime farmlands, wild or scenic rivers, wetlands, or national monuments. The removal of dune grass vegetation and the minor excavation of archaeological units would not significantly affect recreation lands, sole or principle drinking water aquifers, or migratory birds. The project area is within the North Spit Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), however the proposed activity would not affect the relevant and important values for which the ACEC was established.		
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102 (2)(E)]		X
Rationale: The proposed project is based on established archeological procedures for investigating cultural sites and has not been highly controversial. The ROD/RMP establishes the land use allocation and goals for the affected lands; as such, there are no unresolved conflicts regarding other uses of these resources.		
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks		X
Rationale: The proposed project is based on established archeological procedures for investigating cultural sites. Experience has shown no highly uncertain, potentially significant, unique or unknown risks.		
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in		X

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		
Rationale: The proposed project is based on established archeological procedures for investigating cultural sites. There is no evidence that this type of activity has potential for precedent setting for future actions with significant environmental risks involved with this project.		
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects		X
Rationale: This project has no relationship with other actions that, cumulatively, would have 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.		X
Rationale: The proposed project is based on established archeological procedures for investigating cultural sites. If significant cultural resources are located during this project, they would be excavated, reported and curated in accordance with laws, regulations, the Oregon SHPO Protocol and the BLM 8100 Manual specifications.		
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Threatened or Endangered Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
Rationale: This type of activity does not remove suitable habitat nor is within critical habitat for western snowy plover.		
2.9 Violate a Federal, 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 ROD/RMP, which complies with all applicable Federal, State, local and tribal laws.		
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
Rationale: This project would not have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		
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: This project would not act to limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners or significantly affect the physical integrity of a sacred site.		
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 project utilizes hand tools; this type of activity does not introduce new avenues of introduction. Crew vehicles accessing the project area would stay on existing roads. In the event that equipment is used, preventative measures such as vehicle washing prior to entry on BLM lands would occur.		

D. Signature

Authorizing Official:

Field Manager: /s/ A. Dennis Turowski

Date: 3/19/2012

E. Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Dr. Stephan R. Samuels, Coos Bay District Archaeologist – ssamuels@blm.gov or (541)751-4244.

United States Department of Interior
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Coos Bay District

Decision Record for Categorical Exclusion DOI-BLM-OR-C030-2012-0002-CX

Decision:

It is my decision to implement the 2012 Southern Oregon University Archaeological Field School as described in DOI-BLM-OR- C030-2012-0002-CX.

Decision Rationale:

The proposed action has been reviewed by Resource Area Staff and appropriate project Design Features as specified will be incorporated into the proposal. Based on the NEPA Categorical Exclusion Review, I have determined that the proposed action involves no significant impact to the human environment and no further analysis is required.

Administrative Remedies:

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), Office of the Secretary, in accordance with regulations contained in 43 CFR Part 4. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed with the Umpqua Field Office, Coos Bay BLM, 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend OR, 97459 (43 CFR 4.411 and 4.413). A copy of the Notice of Appeal must also be sent to the BLM Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, 500 NE Multnomah St. Suite 607, Portland, OR 97232.

The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision being appealed is in error.

For further information, contact Dr. Stephan R. Samuels, Project Lead, at 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend, OR 97459 or (541) 756-0100.

Decision Approved by:

/s/ A. Dennis Turowski

A. Dennis Turowski
Umpqua Field Manager

3/19/2012

Date