

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

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

OFFICE:

TRACKING NUMBER: DOI-BLM-OR-E000-2014-0001-CX

CASEFILE/PROJECT NUMBER:

PROJECT NAME: District Hazard Tree Removal

LOCATION/LLEGAL DESCRIPTION: District-wide

APPLICANT (if any):

A. Description of Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures

A hazard tree is any standing live or dead tree, including snags, with evidence of deterioration or physical damage to the root system, trunk, or stem, when a tree is in proximity to people, property, structures, or infrastructure. Examples of property, structures, and infrastructure include, but are not limited to: roads, landings, campgrounds, trails, right-of-ways, buildings, fences, and powerlines, on BLM lands, on BLM-maintained right-of-ways, or adjacent (non-BLM) lands.

On the Eugene District, hazard trees often result from typical weather events of heavy winter rains, combined with severe wind conditions, which cause blowdown or tree damage (e.g., snapped tops or limbs). Hazard trees also result from disease or pathogen infestations (e.g., root rot), or from tree growth that results in damage to infrastructure (e.g., root growth cracking building foundations or paved paths). Hazard trees present a safety threat to persons and/or property, but they can also interfere with local access needs when trees fall across roads restricting access to private homeowners, utility companies, road maintenance crews, and first responders. Continual maintenance and management of hazard trees is needed.

The proposed action is to remove, or fell and leave on site, trees which jeopardize human safety and/or pose hazards to people, property, structures, or infrastructure. Removal of hazard trees, whether blowdown that has blocked access or standing snags/diseased trees presenting a danger in a campground or adjacent to a powerline or facility, would occur expeditiously, as soon as the hazard is identified and resources are available to remove the tree(s). Where possible, these trees would be sold or used for other projects, to recover value from BLM lands throughout the Eugene District.

The proposed action described above is targeted for all BLM lands, and BLM-managed rights-of-ways, throughout the Eugene District. It would be carried out as necessary to mitigate safety concerns, and would include any needed road maintenance to accomplish. This proposed action would be accomplished for two years, during the calendar years 2014 and 2015.

B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance

LUP Name: Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP), as amended. Date Approved: June 1995.

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decisions: Remove hazard trees along utility rights-of-ways, along trails, in developed recreation areas, and in other developed areas. Pp. 31, 83, and 96.

C. Compliance with NEPA

Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 C2: "Sale and removal of individual trees or small groups of trees which are dead, diseased, injured, or which constitute a safety hazard, and where access for the removal requires no more than maintenance to existing roads."

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.

I considered the proposed action in accordance with the 12 "extraordinary circumstances" (attached), and have identified the need for the following mitigation measure to ensure there is no potential for significant impacts under this project:

1. Except for situations when public safety is an immediate concern, contact the unit Wildlife Biologist to ensure compliance with all current standards.

D. Signature

Signature of Project Lead:

/s/ Michael Hallinan
Michael Hallinan, District Cruiser

Date: 1/21/14

Signature of NEPA Coordinator:

/s/ Panchita Paulete
Panchita Paulete, District NEPA Planner

Date: 1/21/14

Signature of the Responsible Official:

/s/ Kristine M. Struck, for
William O'Sullivan, Upper Willamette Field Manager

Date: 1/21/14

Signature of the Responsible Official:

/s/ Michael J. Korn
Michael Korn, Suislaw Field Manager

Date: 1/21/14

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this Categorical Exclusion review, contact: Sarah Bickford, Eugene District Forester, (541) 683-6159.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES CHECKLIST

DOI-BLM-OR-E000-2014-0001-CX

District Hazard Tree Removal

Review the proposed action against each of the 12 “extraordinary circumstances” listed below. Any action that is normally categorically excluded must be subjected to sufficient environmental review to determine whether it meets any of the extraordinary circumstances, in which case, further analysis and environmental documents must be prepared for the action. If the criterion does not apply, indicate "Not Applicable." Any mitigation measures (such as contract stipulations or terms and conditions on permits) necessary to ensure that the proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion should be identified at the bottom of the page.

Extraordinary Circumstances	YES	NO
<p>1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety. <u>Rationale:</u> The proposed action is to remove dying, diseased, damaged, or collapsed trees that are a threat to safety.</p>		X
<p>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. <u>Rationale:</u> None of these areas are present within the area considered.</p>		X
<p>3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)]. <u>Rationale:</u> There are no controversial effects or unresolved conflicts for these actions. Where possible, felled hazard trees would be sold or used for other projects to recover value from BLM land.</p>		X
<p>4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. <u>Rationale:</u> The effects and risks of actions proposed are well known and do not present a potential for significant effects. Hazard tree removal has occurred year-round on the District to protect life and property. These actions proposed would continue already well-understood work.</p>		X
<p>5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. <u>Rationale:</u> It does not, because this action is only proposed for two years, and would not provide clearance for future management beyond the scope of the time considered. Hazard tree removal has occurred year-round on the District to protect life and property. These actions proposed would continue already well-understood work, and would not cause potential for significant environmental effects.</p>		X
<p>6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. <u>Rationale:</u> Effects of the actions proposed here include consideration of other known BLM actions for this timeframe as well as known work of adjacent landowners and BLM-lands users. There were no cumulative effects of this project when combined with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future work in the considered area (District-wide) for the timeframe considered (calendar years 2014 and 2015).</p>		X
<p>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. <u>Rationale:</u> No significant impacts on historic resources would occur under this proposed action. This project would, potentially, protect historic resources at risk for damage from hazard trees by felling and removing before damage to resources occurred.</p>		X
<p>8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, as an Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species. <u>Rationale:</u> There is no risk for significant impacts on species under this proposed action. To ensure this, a mitigation to coordinate with the unit area’s wildlife biologist is a part of this</p>		X

Extraordinary Circumstances	YES	NO
analysis and conclusions. This mitigation is in-place for all hazard tree management, excepting for situations where public safety is an immediate concern.		
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. <u>Rationale:</u> The proposed action does not violate any laws.		X
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 2898). <u>Rationale:</u> The proposed action would not adversely affect low income or minority populations as none are present in the area of consideration.		X
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). <u>Rationale:</u> The proposed action would not alter existing accesses.		X
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). <u>Rationale:</u> Actions proposed would not alter current access, working vehicle-types, or uses from currently occurring.		X

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

DECISION RECORD
DOI-BLM-OR-E000-2014-0001-CX
District Hazard Tree Removal

Decision

It is my decision to implement this action as described in the categorical exclusion documentation DOI-BLM-OR-E000-2014-0001-CX.

Decision Rationale

The proposed action has been reviewed by BLM staff. The Proposed Action is in conformance with the 1995 Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (as amended). Based on the 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

Any person adversely affected by this decision may appeal it to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4. If an appeal is taken, a notice of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days of this decision for transmittal to the Board. If a notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and with the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal was filed. A copy of a notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs, must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region, U.S. Department of the Interior, 805 SW Broadway, Suite 600, Portland, OR 97205.

Signature of the Responsible Official:

/s/ Virginia Grilley
Virginia Grilley
District Manager
Eugene District Office

Date: 1/21/14