

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

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. OR090-EA-96-31

Amazon Creek Enhancement Project - Creek Enhancement and  
Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

I. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

In December of 1981, the Bureau of Land Management received a right-of-way application from the City of Eugene to construct and operate a bicycle/pedestrian path across public land located in T. 17 S., R. 4 W., W.M., Sec. 33, S $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$ . Right-of-Way Grant OR 33888 was issued in February 1982. The bicycle path was never constructed due to the discovery of wetlands in the area. In 1991 with the initiation of the West Eugene Wetlands Plan a new plan for the bicycle/pedestrian path was developed, culminating in the Amazon Creek Enhancement (ACE) Project. In 1994, the City of Eugene began to provide information and opportunities for the public to comment on the ACE. Beginning in March of 1994, there have been a series of newsletters, public meetings, open houses, news releases, and public agency reviews of proposed project. Response from the public and other agencies involved was generally in support of the project. In August 1996, the Bureau of Land Management received a right-of-way application from the City of Eugene requesting a right-of-way to perform creek enhancement on Amazon Creek and to construct and operate a bicycle/pedestrian path along the northerly boundary of Amazon Creek. The new request includes that area initially authorized in Right-of-Way Grant OR33888 in addition to newly acquired public land located in T. 17 S., R. 4 W., W.M., Sections 28 and 29. The proposed right-of-way is described in detail in attached Exhibit A.

The proposed action and alternatives are in conformance with the "Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl" (April 1994), and the "Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan" (May 1995).

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

#### A. Proposed Action

The proposed action is the issuing of a right-of-way grant to the City of Eugene for a perpetual term pursuant to the authority of Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761), subject to the terms and conditions of 43 CFR 2800 and those additional stipulations in the attached Exhibit B. The right-of-way grant would authorize the construction, operation, and maintenance of a bicycle/pedestrian path over public domain land located within the West Eugene Wetlands Project. It would also allow widening of the Amazon Creek channel for the purposes of allowing the vegetation to grow unabated, while still maintaining the existing floodwater capacity. The requested right-of-way is approximately 5500 feet in length, varies in width from 30 feet to 200 feet, and occupies 9.2 acres, more or less, of public land.

#### B. No Action

The No Action Alternative would be to deny the application.

### III. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

#### A. General Setting

The subject tract is located in the City of Eugene, Lane County, Oregon. The surrounding area is primarily commercial/industrial interspersed with public land that is managed as the West Eugene Wetlands.

#### B. Existing Conditions

Amazon Creek flows westerly through the west side of Eugene in a deeply incised channel. The land base covered under the Proposed Action is primarily the banks of Amazon Creek, a channelized remnant of the historic creekbed. Much of the wetland within the channel is dominated by reed canarygrass. The slopes and adjacent uplands are dominated with non-native grasses and woody vegetation, although frequent mowing and periodic dredging have reduced the invasion of most woody species. Much of the upland banks are deposits of material left on-site when the original creekbed was excavated to handle higher flows. Seasonal wetlands are present along most of the outside edges of the upland banks but generally are not affected under this grant.

### IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

#### A. Proposed Action

All activities allowed under the right-of-way grant (Proposed Action) will be bound by the Additional Terms, Conditions, and Stipulations found in Exhibit B of the grant. The

following resources are either not present or not affected by the Proposed Action or the No-Action Alternative: Air quality; prime or unique farmlands; cultural resources; Native American religious concerns; hazardous wastes; Wild and Scenic rivers; and wilderness.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Resources: There are no irreversible or irretrievable resources affected by the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Effects: This proposal is not expected to result in negative cumulative effects. Issuance of the right-of-way grant for the bike path and creek enhancement project will allow construction and maintenance activities to occur. These activities may cause sedimentation and erosion, but effects are anticipated to be short-term and minor due to erosion control measures. However, this action would result in an increase in public use. It is also anticipated that the habitat changes proposed would result in an increase in the wetland acreage.

Cultural Resources: No cultural resources are expected to be affected by this Proposed Action.

Threatened and Endangered Species: The Proposed Action is considered to be "No Effect" on Federally listed (or proposed for listing) plant and animal species.

Vegetation: Some vegetation is expected to be significantly altered as a result of the Proposed Action, however it is not anticipated to adversely influence desirable plant communities. In general, the control of blackberries and other non-native species would facilitate maintenance and expansion of native species.

Soils: The Proposed Action would allow significant changes to soil resources across the area. In the route of the bikepath, a 12' wide concrete pad will cover a portion of the top of the bank. Another alteration would be the removal of imported fill material on historic wetland soils on the outside of the bike path. This removal would result in the exposure of native surface soil, primarily with hydric characteristics, and changes from an upland to a wetland type condition. In some areas the sideslopes of the creek channel will be re-contoured, exposing subsoils at surface grade. Work with heavy equipment would occur during periods of low soil moisture. Excavation work would not occur during periods of high risk for storm event runoff.

Wetlands/Water Quality: Under the proposed action, planned construction of the bike path and channel would impact wetlands and streambanks. These impacts are allowed under

the terms of permit #96-181 from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and permit #10519 from the Oregon Division of State Lands to comply with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and other regulations. No alterations of the wetland sites would occur without permit approval. There are no anticipated long term impacts to water quality from the Proposed Action. There may be some short term increases in sedimentation from erosion, however measures would be taken to minimize those effects. Most areas should be vegetated within 1-2 years of disturbance.

Air Quality: The Proposed Action would not allow activities that would exceed the DEQ ambient air pollution standards.

B. No Action

Denial of the application would prevent the construction project at this location, eliminating the potential for any adverse impacts from construction of the bicycle/pedestrian path and increased public use of the site. The City of Eugene would continue to clear woody vegetation from the Amazon Creek channel to maintain the current floodwater capacity. The value of the wetland habitat within the channel would remain diminished due to this maintenance practice.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The following BLM resource specialists have examined the proposed action and have provided either written or verbal input used in this assessment:

Jonathan Beall, BLM West Eugene Wetlands Project Manager

The following individuals from City of Eugene Public Works have also provided either written or verbal input used in this assessment:

Russ Royer	Real Property Officer
Louis Kroeck	Water Resources Team
Bud DeSantis	ACE Project Manager
Deborah Evans	Water Resources Team

A copy of this Environmental Assessment will be provided to the following individuals, agencies, and interest groups.

Jan Wroncy, Eugene OR  
Oregon Natural Resources Council, Eugene OR  
John Poynter, Lorane OR  
John Bianco, Creswell OR  
The Pacific Rivers Council, Eugene OR  
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Coos Bay OR

Coast Range Association, Corvallis OR  
Bruce Dawley, Veneta OR  
Jim Hutchison, Veneta OR  
Charles and Reida Kimmel, Eugene OR  
Harold Schroeder, Eugene OR  
Tenmile Creek Association, Yachats OR  
Linn and Ida Spaulding, Eugene OR  
Sierra Club - Many Rivers Group, Eugene OR  
Department of Environmental Quality, Portland OR  
Lane Council of Governments, Eugene OR  
Lane County, Eugene OR  
City of Eugene, Eugene OR  
Army Corps of Engineers, Portland OR  
Division of State Lands, Salem OR  
Oregon Department of Transportation, Salem OR  
Natural Resources Division, Salem OR

VI. ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit A - Legal Description  
Exhibit B - Right-of-Way Stipulations  
Vicinity Map

PREPARED BY:

Jonathan T. Beall

DATE:

10/1/96

ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR:

Mary Hoggue

DATE:

10/2/96

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

On the basis of the information contained in the attached Environmental Assessment and all other information available to me, it is my determination that completion of the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

AREA MANAGER:

Jonathan T. Beall

DATE:

10/2/96

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

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. OR090-EA-96-31

DECISION RECORD

Proposed Action: The proposed action is issuing a right-of-way grant to the City of Eugene for the construction and operation of the Fern Ridge Bicycle Path and enhancement of the Amazon Creek channel in west Eugene (referred to collectively as the ACE Project), subject to the terms and conditions of 43 CFR 2800 and those additional stipulations found in the attached Exhibit B. The proposed right-of-way is approximately 5500 feet in length, varies in width from 30 feet to 200 feet, and occupies 9.2 acres, more or less, of public land. The affected public lands are as follows:

T.17S., R4W., W.M., Sec 33, 28, 29  
City of Eugene  
Lane County, Oregon

The grant would authorize the construction, operation, and maintenance of a portion of the Fern Ridge Bicycle Path and the Amazon Creek channel. The grant would not require a bond or the payment of fair market rental.

Decision: It is my decision to approve the issuance of a perpetual right-of-way grant to the City of Eugene pursuant to the authority of Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761), subject to the terms and conditions of 43 CFR 2800 and those additional stipulations in the attached Exhibit B. The grant shall not require the posting of a bond nor the payment of fair market rental.

Rationale: The proposed action will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and is in conformance with the "Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl" (April 1994) and the "Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan" (May 1995).

Approval of the right-of-way application will enable the City of Eugene to extend the Fern Ridge Bicycle Path and enhance the riparian habitat conditions along Amazon Creek. The City of Eugene began public involvement in March 1994 and response was generally in favor of the project. These actions will provide a safe public recreation and transportation route through west Eugene and improve the wildlife habitat and water quality of Amazon Creek. The City of Eugene is exempt from rental payments pursuant to 43 CFR 2803.1-2(b)(1)(i).

Approved by:  Date: 10/3/96  
Coast Range Area Manager



