

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

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
West Eugene Wetlands Threatened and Endangered Plant Augmentation
DOI-BLM-OR-E050-2011-0001-EA**

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOI-BLM-OR-E050-2011-0001-EA) which analyzed the effects of proposed augmentation of populations of threatened or endangered plant species in the West Eugene Wetlands. The BLM-administered lands in the West Eugene Wetlands contain populations of three federally threatened or endangered plants: Willamette daisy (*Erigeron decumbens* var. *decumbens*), Bradshaw's lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii*), and Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus oregonus* var. *kincaidii*). The proposed approach would be applied on BLM-administered lands in the West Eugene Wetlands. The EA analyzed in detail the effects of six alternatives, including the No Action Alternative.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (DOI-BLM-OR-E050-2011-0001-EA), and all other information available to me, it is my determination that the implementation of the proposed action would be consistent with the Eugene District Record of Decision/Resource Management Plan, as amended (EA, p. 2). The BLM designed this project to conform to both the 2008 Eugene District ROD and RMP and 1995 RMP. As a result, the project includes some design features not mentioned specifically in, but wholly consistent with the 2008 ROD and RMP. Consequently, this project will be consistent with the goals and objectives in both the 1995 RMP and 2008 ROD and RMP.

The implementation of any of the action alternatives would not have significant environmental effects and does not constitute a major federal action having significant effects on the human environment.

Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared. This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of the impacts described in the EA.

Context

The Proposed Action would occur on portions of the BLM-administered lands in the West Eugene Wetlands. The geographic scope of the reasonably foreseeable impacts of the proposed action is the Eugene West Recovery Zone, as described in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Plan for the Prairie Species of Western Oregon and Southwestern Washington (2010). The temporal scope of the reasonably foreseeable impacts of the proposed action is four years (EA, p. 2). Therefore, the potential impacts of the proposed action are of limited geographic extent and short duration.

Intensity

I have considered the potential intensity of the impacts that would result from the proposed action relative to each of the ten areas suggested for consideration by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). With regards to each:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. Both beneficial and adverse impacts have been considered in the EA. The proposed action would have beneficial effects on the abundance of listed plant populations and thus would contribute to recovery of these species (EA, pp. 9-13). The EA considered potential adverse effects of the proposed action on existing plants of the three listed plants and Fender's blue butterflies and concluded that any potential adverse effect was immeasurably small (EA, p. 5). The EA concluded that there would be no adverse effects of the proposed action on designated critical habitat (EA, p. 5). The EA considered potential adverse effects of the proposed action on the genetic diversity of the three listed plant species and concluded that the proposed action would be unlikely to pose a risk to the genetic diversity of the population because the plants or seeds used would be derived from within the population in the Eugene West Recovery Zone (EA, p. 5).

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety. No aspect of the Proposed Action would have an effect on public health and safety.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity of historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas. There are no known historic or cultural resource sites that would be affected by the Proposed Action. The proposed action would involve minimal soil disturbance that would not affect wetland function or ecologically critical areas. The augmentation of listed plant populations would be consistent with the protection and restoration of wetlands and ecologically critical areas in the project area.

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. The effects of augmentation of listed plant populations is not likely to be highly controversial and is specifically recommended by the numerous plans, including the City of Eugene's West Eugene Wetlands Plan (2004) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Recovery Plan for the Prairie Species of Western Oregon and Southwestern Washington (2010) (EA, p. 2). No unique or appreciable scientific controversy has been identified.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The analysis has not shown that there would be any unique or unknown risks to the human environment. Plant augmentation would involve minimal soil disturbance similar to, but of less intensity, than many routine management actions that have long been implemented in the planning area.

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. This project neither establishes a precedent nor represents a decision in principle about future actions.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. The environmental analysis analyzed the cumulative effect of the proposed action together with other related actions and did not identify any cumulatively significant impact (EA, pp. 9-14).

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources. There are no features within the planning area that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The EA concluded that the proposed action would have no adverse effect on endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat (EA, p. 5).

10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. The Proposed Action does not threaten to violate any Federal, State, local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. The Proposed

Action is consistent with the Eugene RMP, which provides direction for the protection of the environment on public lands and with the West Eugene Wetlands Plan prepared by the City of Eugene (EA, p. 2).

/s/ Alan D. Corbin
Alan Corbin
Field Manager
Siuslaw Resource Area

February 9, 2012
Date

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

**DECISION RECORD
DOI-BLM-OR-E050-2011-0001-EA
West Eugene Wetlands Threatened and Endangered Plant Augmentation**

Decision

It is my decision to select a combination of alternatives analyzed in the Environmental Assessment (EA). For augmentation of Kincaid's lupine, I select Alternative 6. For augmentation of Willamette daisy and Bradshaw's lomatium, I select Alternative 4, with the inclusion of some additional trial augmentation consistent with Alternatives 2 and 3. The attached map shows the potential augmentation locations. The EA and FONSI analyzed all of the alternatives and found no significant impacts for any of the alternatives.

Plan Conformance

The Eugene District initiated planning and design for this project to conform and be consistent with the Eugene District's 1995 Resource Management Plan (RMP). Following the March 31, 2011 decision by the United States District Court for the District of Columbia in Douglas Timber Operators et al. v. Salazar, which vacated and remanded the administrative withdrawal of the Eugene District's 2008 Record of Decision (ROD) and RMP, we evaluated this project for consistency with both the 1995 RMP and the 2008 ROD and RMP. Based upon this review, we have determined that the selected alternative is consistent with the Eugene District's 1995 RMP and the 2008 ROD/RMP. Although the selected alternative contains some design features not mentioned specifically in the 2008 ROD and RMP these design features are consistent with the ROD and RMP.

Alternatives

The EA analyzed six alternatives in detail, including the No Action alternative. The action alternatives vary in where within the project area the BLM would plant plugs or seeds of Willamette daisy, Bradshaw's lomatium, and Kincaid's lupine. Appendix A of the EA provides maps showing the location of plant augmentation under each action alternative.

Alternative 1: No action: no population augmentation

Alternative 2: Population augmentation only in sites (i.e., named portions of the West Eugene Wetlands) without existing populations of any of the target species

Alternative 3: Population augmentation within unoccupied habitat (>100 feet from existing plants) for target species in sites that have existing populations of any of the target species
Alternative 4: Population augmentation in currently small populations (<200 individuals for Willamette daisy or Bradshaw's lomatium, or <100 meter² cover of Kincaid's lupine)
Alternative 5: Population augmentation in currently large populations (≥200 individuals for Willamette daisy or Bradshaw's lomatium, or ≥100 meter² cover of Kincaid's lupine)
Alternative 6: Population augmentation based on site-by-site evaluation in both occupied and unoccupied habitat.

Rationale for Selection

The purpose of the action is to establish new plants of threatened and endangered plant species -- Willamette daisy, Bradshaw's lomatium, and Kincaid's lupine -- on suitable sites on BLM-administered lands in the West Eugene Wetlands. The need for the action is established in the Recovery Plan, which advises BLM to increase populations of these three species by planting seeds or propagules to assist in recovery (EA, p. 3). All of the action alternatives would meet the purpose and need. The analysis in the EA demonstrates that all of the action alternatives would result in plant numbers far beyond the recovery target for this recovery zone (EA, pp. 10-13). Therefore, the analysis shows that plant numbers calculated based on available habitat provide a poor discriminator among action alternatives. Instead, species connectivity is a more important factor in planning plant augmentation than plant numbers.

Alternative 6 would provide the greatest improvement in connectivity for Kincaid's lupine (EA, p. 14). For Willamette daisy and Bradshaw's lomatium, a hybrid alternative that would combine Alternative 4 with aspects of several alternatives would provide the most potential improvement in species connectivity. Including elements of Alternatives 2 and 3 in the selected alternative provides an effective means of identifying currently unoccupied habitat that could successfully support new plants. Establishing new patches of plants in currently unoccupied habitat has the potential to improve connectivity more than any of the individual alternatives.

Consultation and Coordination

Public involvement and coordination efforts for this action were detailed in the EA (pp. 15-16). External scoping for this project was initiated in January 2010, with a project-specific scoping letter sent out to an extensive mailing list. The BLM met repeatedly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the development of this EA. A description of the proposed action and an invitation to provide issues, concerns, or opportunities relative to the proposed action was included in the January 2011 Eugene District Planning Update, which is posted on the Eugene District. The EA and a preliminary FONSI were posted on the Eugene District website and mailed to local landowners, interest groups, tribes, state and government agencies, and other members of the public who have expressed interest in management of the West Eugene Wetlands for review and comment. Based on the comments received, some minor additions were made to the EA text, and a summary of the comments received and the BLM responses was added to the EA.

Pursuant to the Endangered Species Act, the BLM completed informal consultation with the USFWS on the effect of this proposed action on listed species and designated critical habitat, documented in a letter of concurrence from the USFWS to the BLM, dated February 8, 2012.

Implementation

As noted in comments on the EA, the availability of plant materials will likely limit augmentation more than availability of sites. Therefore, augmentation will be implemented as plant materials become available. For Willamette daisy and Bradshaw's lomatium, augmentation within currently small populations will be a higher priority than the trial augmentation in sites without existing populations or in currently unoccupied habitat (i.e., greater than 100 feet from existing plants). The attached map shows potential augmentation locations. Implementation will include a site-specific evaluation of habitat suitability.

Administrative Review Opportunities

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 at the physical address of the Eugene District BLM office within 30 days from the date of this decision. In an appeal the appellant has the burden of showing that the decision is in error.

If, pursuant to 43 CFR 4.21, an appellant wishes to file a petition (request) to stay (suspension) this decision during the time that an appeal is being reviewed by the IBLA, the petition for a stay must accompany the notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision, to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If a stay is requested, the applicant has the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted. Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulations, a petition for stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

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

/s/ Alan D. Corbin
Alan Corbin
Field Manager
Siuslaw Resource Area

February 9, 2012
Date