

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Klamath Falls Resource Area

DRAFT

Finding of No Significant Impact for the

Pitchlog Creek Road Crossing Improvement

Environmental Assessment (EA)

DOI-BLM-OR-L040-2009-0006-EA

Background:

The Interdisciplinary Team for the Klamath Falls Resource Area, Lakeview District, Bureau of Land Management has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and analyzed a proposal to conduct road crossing improvements and stream habitat restoration on Pitchlog Creek in the Barnes Valley Creek Watershed, near Bonanza, Oregon. The project will contribute to the restoration of streams and riparian areas for the benefit of fish and wildlife species including federally endangered shortnose suckers. These management objectives are outlined in the Klamath Falls Resource Management Plan (October, 2008). In addition, this project fully complies with the management objectives, actions, and direction of the resource management plan in place prior to December 30, 2008, which was the 1995 RMP, as amended (USDI 1995). The design of this project would not have differed under either the 2008 or the 1995 Plans.

The purpose of the project is to restore geomorphic and hydrologic function to Pitchlog Creek to improve the quality and amount of riparian and aquatic resources. Additionally, the project would be designed to improve habitat for native fish as well as federally listed fish species occupying Pitchlog Creek and Gerber Reservoir. The following objectives are set forth to meet this purpose:

- Initiate actions to change hydrologic conditions at the Pitchlog Bridge Mainhaul Road crossing to stop channel incision and promote stream channel/ riparian floodplain recovery.
- Restore the riparian area to properly functioning condition.
- Reduce bank erosion.

Alternatives Analyzed:

The two alternatives analyzed in detail include the Proposed Action Alternative, and the No Action Alternative.

Proposed Action Alternative - The objectives would be accomplished by adding culverts within the road fill prism to accommodate flood flows. Treatments included in the Proposed Action Alternative, described in detail in the EA, include:

- Excavation of trenches in the road grade and placement of three 4 foot diameter culverts at an elevation approximately equal to the floodplain elevation.
- Temporary storage of excavated material.
- Installation of stream channel grade control structures below the bridge to promote floodplain re-occupation and sediment deposition which will act to reverse channel incision over time.

- Breaching a floodplain levee constructed in the 1960s adjacent to the stream channel that cuts off flow to a historic channel would be breached at several locations to allow water to be reconnected to the stream channel.
- Construct the grade control structure with rocks collected along the Mainhaul roadway within about one mile in both directions from the Pitchlog Creek Bridge.

The issues addressed in the EA concern potential impacts to fish habitat, water quality, and other resources as they affect aquatic life and humans in the proposed project area. The design features of the Proposed Action and alternatives are described in the attached Wood River Wetland Restoration and Recreation Improvements EA.

Analysis of Potential Effects:

The proposed action, and no action alternatives were analyzed for significant effects as per the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations - 40 CFR § 1508.27. The following criteria listed under 40 CFR § 1508.27(b) were considered and found to be not applicable to this action: significant beneficial or adverse effects; significant effects on public health or safety; effects on the quality of the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial; anticipated cumulatively significant impacts; highly uncertain or unknown risks; and precedents for future actions with significant effects.

The following unique characteristics (Critical Elements of the Human Environment), listed in 40 CFR § 1508.27(b)(3), are not present and will not be affected: prime or unique farmlands; wilderness; solid or hazardous waste; and Wild and Scenic Rivers. The following unique characteristics are present but will not have significant direct or cumulative impacts: Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs) and floodplains.

In regard to 40 CFR § 1508.27 (b)(8), no adverse impacts are expected to cultural, scientific, or historical resources. The proposed area has been surveyed for cultural resources using BLM Class III survey methods. Surveys for cultural resources were conducted and known sites will be avoided. There are no sites, structures or objects listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

There will be no significant impacts to any special status species or habitat that has been proposed or designated critical under the Endangered Species Act [40 CFR § 1508.27 (b)(9)]. Direct and indirect effects to Threatened and Endangered species and special status species were analyzed and determined to meet Project Design Criteria for coverage under the Biological Opinion for Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management aquatic habitat restoration activities. Refer to the analysis on pages 7 through 17 of the EA for a discussion of impacts analysis, Appendix C of the EA for project design features designed to minimize impacts, Appendix D – USFWS Aquatic Programmatic Biological Opinion Consultation PDCs, CMs and Applicable Project Activity Categories, and Appendix E -- Oregon Division of State Lands General Permit #42104-RF ODCs for Applicable Project Activity Categories

As per 40 CFR § 1508.27(b)(10), this action conforms with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations.

The action is consistent with Executive Order 12898 which addresses Environmental Justice. No potential impacts to low-income or minority populations have been identified internally by the BLM or externally through public notification and involvement. Consultation with local tribal governments has not identified any unique or special resources providing religious, employment, subsistence or recreation

opportunities. Employment would involve local contractors who engage in similar types of work throughout Klamath County and the state of Oregon.

Pursuant to Executive Order 13212, the BLM must consider effects of this decision on National Energy Policy. There will be no known adverse effect on National Energy Policy. Within the project area there are no known energy resources with commercial potential and energy producing or processing facilities.

Plan Conformance:

The analysis in the Environmental Assessment (EA) supporting the decision is tiered to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management (2008 Final EIS), including the Klamath Falls Resource Area.

The project conforms to the 2008 RMP. Under the 2008 RMP, riparian management areas were established that include buffer areas around water bodies for conservation of special status fish and aquatic species, to supply stream channels with shade, sediment filtering, leaf litter and large wood, and streambank stability, to maintain and restore water quality, and to maintain and restore access to stream channels for all life stages of fish species.

The project also conforms to the 1995 RMP. The 1995 RMP management direction established riparian reserves for improving water quality and increasing desirable functions of wetland and riparian habitats for federally-listed fish and other wildlife. In essence there is little difference in the objectives for riparian management areas and the objectives of the two RMPs. This project incorporates applicable Best Management Practices (BMPs) designed to protect water quality, aquatic, and riparian resources. These BMPs are incorporated into the design of the proposed action and are found in Appendices C, D, and E of the attached EA.

Determination:

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the environmental assessment, it is my determination that none of the alternatives analyzed constitutes a significant impact affecting the quality of the human environment greater than those addressed in the following:

- Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management (October, 2008) including the Klamath Falls Resource Area.
- Klamath Falls Resource Area Integrated Weed Control Plan Environmental Assessment, July 21, 1993.

I have determined that this action will not have any significant impact on the human environment within the meaning of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and an environmental impact statement is not required. I have further determined that the proposed action conforms to management direction from the Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement, or a supplement to the existing RMP or Environmental Impact Statement, is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Donald J. Holmstrom
Field Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

Date