

**Decision Record**  
**For**  
**Wood River Channel Restoration and Recreation Improvements**  
**EA #OR-014-08-10**

**INTRODUCTION**

Major restoration of the floodplain, delta and river channel of the lower Wood River began in 1996. These efforts were guided by the goals and objectives outlined in the Upper Klamath Basin and Wood River Wetland Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, 1996 (Wood River RMP). The overarching goals of that plan were to improve habitat for endangered species, improve water quality entering Agency and Upper Klamath Lakes, and provide for increased quality and quantity of recreation opportunities consistent with meeting resource goals. In general, the objectives set forth in the Wood River RMP were to restore the functionality of the Wood River and adjacent floodplains to increase channel complexity, increase floodplain connectivity, and restore wetland and riparian habitat. The Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Oregon Bureau of Land Management, completed in 2008, incorporated the Upper Klamath Basin and Wood River RMP/EIS with no changes in management direction for the Wood River Wetland.

The purpose of this project is to make progress toward achieving land use plan goals and objectives. Primary among these objectives is to restore fish habitat by restoring the hydrologic connection to one of several distributary (or secondary) river channels in the Wood River delta near the confluence with Agency Lake.

The Klamath Falls Resource Area (KFRA) has identified the need to:

- Provide improved fish migration conditions from Agency Lake into the lower Wood River. The current mouth of the river enters Agency Lake in a relatively shallow part of the lake. The cold water from the Wood River is currently dispersed upon entering Agency Lake in a relatively shallow part of the lake and may not be providing the best use of this valuable cold water resource. Sediments washed out of the river channel after excavation of the historic delta channel in 2000 have accumulated near the current river mouth exacerbating shallow conditions for boating and fish migrations in late summer and fall. The proposed remedy to this problem is to restore one of the historic channels which enters a deeper area of Agency Lake. It is expected that this will provide a deep, high quality holding area for migratory fish staging or over-summering in Agency Lake.
- Complete channel narrowing and floodplain restoration in the dredged channel upstream of the Wood River Dike Road Bridge. Channel narrowing and floodplain restoration began in 1998 between the confluence of Crooked Creek and the bridge at the Wood River Dike Road. Due to past funding shortfalls and lack of fill material, the lower 200 yards of stream channel was not restored and remains overly wide and shallow. Because the channel is too wide in the area from historic dredging, this area does not transport the normal sediment load from upstream sources.

The area is therefore filling with sediment creating boating obstacles and poor quality fish and riparian habitat.

- Provide for improved visitor services in the vicinity of the restoration work. Currently, no boat landing facility exists in the vicinity of the Wood River Wetland day use area near the Wood River Dike Bridge. A graded landing area and pathway would provide improved access for boaters from the Wood River, Petric Park and Agency Lake to the Wood River Wetland Day use area and its associated facilities. This project would also benefit the area because it could be accomplished in concert with the channel narrowing upstream of Dike Bridge and existing shoreline bank erosion could be stabilized.
- Improve the aesthetic and natural habitat values of areas where previous restoration work resulted in exposed rock boulders. Large angular boulders are not a natural component of the Wood River delta landscape. A rock weir installed in 2000 left exposed boulders which lack vegetation cover and is a potential boating hazard.

### **DECISION**

It is my decision to authorize the implementation of the proposed action analyzed in **EA #OR-014-08-10**. Specifically, this decision will result in:

- Excavate a historic secondary channel in the vicinity of the current mouth to provide for a deeper channel and improved boater access.
- Narrow and deepen channel and restore floodplain immediately upstream of the Wood River Dike Road Bridge.
- Install transitional graded landing and pathway from the Wood River to facilities in the vicinity of the Wood River Wetland bridge day use area.
- Cover rock boulders left exposed after previous restoration activities with block of wetland vegetation transplanted from the immediate adjacent floodplain.

Implementation of proposed actions will adhere to the Best Management Practices, Project Design Features, Conservation Measures (CMs) and Project Design Criteria (PDC) (see Appendix A in EA#OR—14-08-10. These measures are applicable to the proposed project type and will minimize environmental impacts due to construction activities. The attached maps show treatments authorized by this decision.

### **DECISION RATIONALE**

Implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative, as described, meets the purpose and need identified in the EA and would be consistent with objectives and potential impacts analyzed in the EA and the Wood River RMP. The No Action Alternative is rejected because it does not meet the purpose and need for action identified in the EA.

#### **Consultation and Coordination**

This project would have no effect on any terrestrial species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The proposed project area is within the current range of the Lost River sucker (*Deltistes luxatus*) and shortnose sucker (*Chasmistes brevirostris*), both fish listed as endangered under the ESA. The area is also within Proposed Critical Habitat Unit #4 for the Lost River sucker and shortnose sucker.

Section 7 consultation for the proposed activities effects to suckers and critical habitat are covered through the Biological Opinion and Letter of Concurrence, USDA Forest Service, USDI Bureau of Land Management and the Coquille Indian Tribe for Programmatic Aquatic Habitat Restoration Activities in Oregon and Washington That Affect ESA-listed Fish, Wildlife and Plant Species and their Critical Habitats, US Fish and Wildlife Service, June 14, 2007 (ARBO). No take is anticipated due to the timing of the project and the absence of sensitive/vulnerable life stages of listing fish (all work will be completed during September-October). All applicable general and activity specific Conservation Measures (CMs) and Project Design Criteria (PDCs) shall be implemented as outlined in the ARBO.

The proposed project area is within the historic range of the bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), listed as threatened under the ESA. Although bull trout have not been documented within or adjacent to the project area since early in the 20th century, the Wood River and Agency Lake are within the Upper Klamath Core Area of Bull Trout Critical Habitat. A “No Affect” determination for bull trout and a “May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect” determination for Bull Trout Critical Habitat has been made by the BLM. Section 7 consultation for the proposed activities effects to Bull Trout Critical Habitat are also covered by the ARBO. All applicable general and activity specific CMs and PDCs shall be implemented as outlined in the ARBO.

This project would benefit aquatic habitat conditions for federally listed fish by increasing the amount of deep, cool water refugia at the mouth of the Wood River in Agency Lake, increasing the amount of riverine wetland fringe habitat, and increasing the total amount and quality of riparian habitat within the project area.

The Klamath Tribes have been consulted regarding this project, and no substantial issues arose during this discussion.

### **Finding of No Significant Impact**

No significant impacts were identified. No impacts beyond those anticipated in the Wood River RMP Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would occur. (Refer to the attached Finding of No Significant Impact.)

### **Public Involvement**

#### Scoping

This project received substantial internal and external scoping. A letter was mailed or e-mailed on May 1, 2008 to approximately eighty individuals, agencies, and organizations who had expressed interest in public land management in general or the Wood River Wetland in particular. An open house public meeting was advertised through a press release and held on June 19<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was attended by nine individuals including five BLM employees from the Klamath Falls Resource Area. Three written comments were received in response to the scoping letter and press release. All three were generally supportive of the proposed project. Specific recommendations received orally at the public meeting and in writing, including oral comments from the Klamath County Guides Association and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, were considered in development of analysis alternatives and in the design of the proposed action.

#### Public Review

A legal notice was published in the Klamath Falls Herald and News newspaper on April 17, 2009 announcing the availability of the Wood River Channel Restoration and Recreation Improvements

Environmental Assessment (**EA #OR-014-08-10**) for review and the start of a 30-day public comment period. Also, availability notification was mailed or e-mailed to the same list of individuals, agencies, and organizations contacted during scoping and several others who provided comments during the scoping period. No additional comments were received during the 30-day review of the EA.

### **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 analysis in the 2008 Final EIS fully incorporated the Upper Klamath Basin and Wood River RMP (1996). Since no changes in management direction were made for the Wood River wetland, this project is in conformance with the Lakeview District, Klamath Falls Resource Area 2008 Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (2008 ROD/RMP).

Revision of a resource management plan necessarily involves a transition from the application of the old resource management plan to the application of the new resource management plan. This transition avoids disruption of the management of BLM-administered lands and allows the BLM to utilize work already begun on the planning and analysis of projects.

Since the planning and design for this project was initiated prior to the 2008 ROD, it contains certain project design features that are not consistent with the management direction contained in the 2008 RMP, including the width of the riparian area buffers. The 1996 RMP did not have specific riparian buffer widths around riparian areas. 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. In essence there is little difference in the objectives for riparian management areas and the objectives of the 1996 RMP which are to restore the Wood River property to its previous function as a wetland community, make long-term improvements in water quality entering Agency Lake, and emphasize improving and increasing wetland and riparian habitats for federally-listed fish and other wildlife.

The 2008 ROD anticipated these inconsistencies and projected they would not alter the analysis of effects in the associated final environmental impact statement.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the information in the EA and project record, I conclude that this Decision Record is consistent with the Upper Klamath Basin and Wood River Wetland Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (February 1996).

This decision is consistent with the Endangered Species Act, The Native American Religious Freedom Act, and cultural resource management laws and regulations. It is also consistent with Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice and will not have any adverse impacts to energy development, production, supply and/or distribution per Executive Order 13212.

The implementation of this project will not have significant environmental effects beyond those already identified in the 2008 Final EIS/Proposed RMP. The proposed action does not constitute a major federal action having significant effects on the human environment; therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES**

Any party adversely affected by this decision may appeal within 30 days after notice of the decision (Legal Notice in *The Klamath Falls Herald and News*, Klamath Falls, Oregon) in accordance with the provisions of 43 CFR Part 4. The notice of appeal must include a statement of reasons or file a separate statement of reasons within 30 days of filing the notice of appeal. The notice of appeal must state if a stay of the decision is being requested and must be filed with:

Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area  
Bureau of Land Management  
2795 Anderson Ave, Building 25  
Klamath Falls, OR 97603

A copy of the notice of appeal, statement of reasons, and other documents should be sent to the:

Regional Solicitor, Pacific Northwest Region  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Office of the Regional Solicitor  
805 SW Broadway, Suite 600  
Portland, OR 97205

If the statement of reasons is filed separately is must be sent to the:

Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearing and Appeals  
4015 Wilson Boulevard  
Arlington, VA 22203

It is suggested that any notice of appeal be sent certified mail, return receipt requested.

Before deciding to file an appeal, I encourage you to contact me to determine if your concerns might be met in some other way, or to assist you in the appeal process if it is appropriate. Thank you for your continued interest in the multiple use management of your public lands.

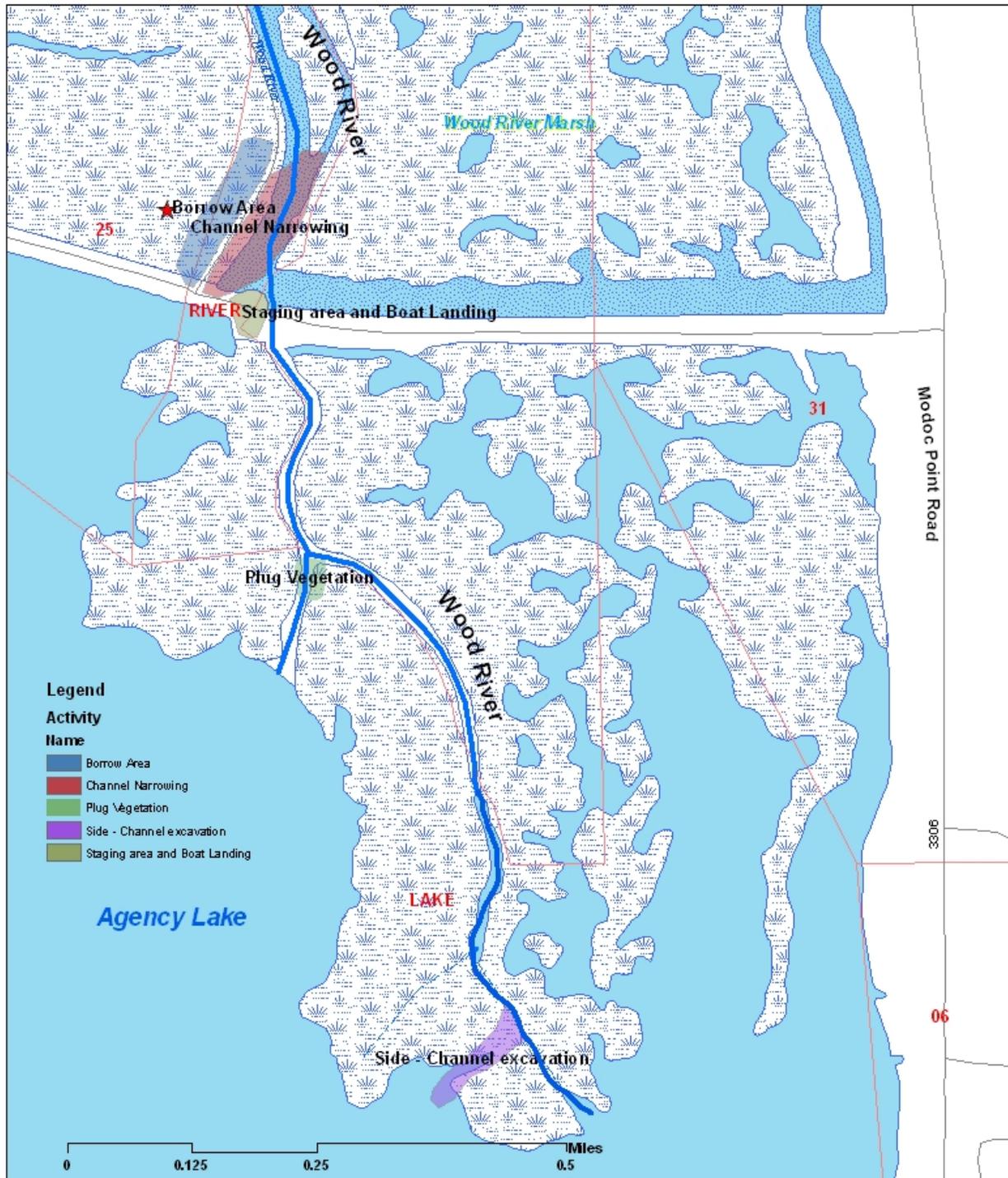
/s/ Donald J. Holmstrom  
Donald J. Holmstrom  
Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

6/10/2009  
Date

# Wood River Channel Restoration



Petric County Park



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
**Klamath Falls Resource Area**

**Finding of No Significant Impact for the**  
**WOOD RIVER CHANNEL RESTORATION AND RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS**  
**EA #OR-014-08-10**

**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 river and wetland restoration and recreation improvements in the Wood River wetland, adjacent to Agency Lake in the Upper Klamath Lake watershed. The project will contribute to meeting the goals and objectives of the Upper Klamath Basin and Wood River Wetland Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS) (1995) and is being carried out under the direction provided by that Plan. The proposed project area is located in the Wood River and Wood River Delta where the Wood River enters Agency Lake.

The purpose of this project is to implement a combination of related projects which help achieve goals and objectives outlined in the Upper Klamath Basin and Wood River Wetland RMP/EIS (1995) and its Record of Decision (RMP/ROD, February 1996). This project is a continuation of stream channel restoration activities that were implemented between 1997 and 2002. Primary among these objectives is to restore fish habitat by restoring the hydrologic connection to one of several distributary (or secondary) river channels in the Wood River Delta near the confluence with Agency Lake. The two alternatives analyzed in detail include the Proposed Action Alternative, and the No Action Alternative.

**Proposed Action Alternative** - Treatments included in the Proposed Action Alternative, described in detail in the EA, are summarized as follows:

- Restore Secondary Channel Outlet - Excavate a historic secondary channel in the vicinity of the current mouth to provide for a deeper channel and improved boater access.
- Narrow and deepen channel and restore floodplain - Channel narrowing and deepening and floodplain restoration immediately upstream of the Wood River Dike Road Bridge.
- Install a transitional boat dock - Installation of a transitional boat dock on the Wood River in the vicinity of the Wood River Wetland bridge day use area to improve boater access to recreational facilities.
- Cover Exposed Boulders - Fill and re-vegetate over rock boulders left exposed after previous restoration activities.

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); 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 affects 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 17 through 19 of the EA for a discussion of impacts analysis, Appendix A of the EA for project design features designed to minimize impacts, and Appendix B– USFWS Aquatic Programmatic Biological Opinion Consultation PDCs, CMs and 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 analysis in the 2008 Final EIS fully incorporated the Upper Klamath Basin and Wood River RMP (1996). Since no changes in management direction were made for the Wood River wetland, this project

is in conformance with the Lakeview District, Klamath Falls Resource Area 2008 Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (2008 ROD/RMP).

Revision of a resource management plan necessarily involves a transition from the application of the old resource management plan to the application of the new resource management plan. This transition avoids disruption of the management of BLM-administered lands and allows the BLM to utilize work already begun on the planning and analysis of projects.

Since the planning and design for this project was initiated prior to the 2008 ROD, it contains certain project design features that are not consistent with the management direction contained in the 2008 RMP, including the width of the riparian area buffers. The 1996 RMP did not have specific riparian buffer widths around riparian areas. 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. In essence there is little difference in the objectives for riparian management areas and the objectives of the 1996 RMP which are to restore the Wood River property to its previous function as a wetland community, make long-term improvements in water quality entering Agency Lake, and emphasize improving and increasing wetland and riparian habitats for federally-listed fish and other wildlife. The 2008 ROD anticipated these inconsistencies and projected they would not alter the analysis of effects in the associated final environmental impact statement.

### **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.

/s/ Donald J. Holmstrom  
Donald J. Holmstrom  
Field Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

6/10/2009  
Date