

## Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)

### U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management

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**Office:** Medford District, Ashland Resource Area

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Ashland RA Road Decommissioning

**Project Number:** DOI-BLM-OR-M060-2012-0010-DNA

**Location/Legal Description:** T 39 S, R 1 W, Sec 28, Rd 39-1-28.1 (2<sup>nd</sup> Water Gulch)  
T 39 S, R 2 E, Sec 3, Rd 38-2E-34.1 B2, OHV riparian (Cove)  
T 37 S, R 2 E, Sec 25, Rd 37-2E-25.4, (Little Butte - Deer)  
T 38 S, R 2 E, Sec 1, Rd 38-2E-1.2 (Little Butte – Lost)  
T 37 S, R 3 E, Sec 31, Rd's 37-3E-31.2, 31.5 (Little Butte – Soda)  
T 39 S, R 4 W, Sec 32, Rd 39-5-32.0 (Thompson – Ninemile)

#### **A. Description of the Proposed Action and any applicable mitigation measures.**

The BLM is proposing to decommission six additional roads totaling approximately 3.8 miles utilizing a variety of treatments. Four roads (37-2E-25.4, 38-2E-1.2, 37-3E-31.2, 37-3E-31.5) are located within the Little Butte Creek watershed which is designated a Tier 1 Key Watershed (Medford District ROD and RMP, 1995). One road (39-1-28.1) is located in the Little Applegate River Tier 1 Key Watershed (39-5-32.0) is located in Ninemile Creek, which is a tributary of Thompson Creek in the Applegate River Watershed.

Where a road template exists (travel-way with cut and fill) the feature may be out-sloped or re-contoured to match the existing topography. The entrances to these routes would be scarified and blocked using boulders, slash, logs and other native materials. Where necessary, native seed and straw mulch would be applied and planting with trees and shrubs would occur. All of these routes are dead end spurs that lack connectivity to other roads and are partially located within riparian reserves. In addition, BLM road 37-2E-25.4 has two high risk crossings, one of which the culvert and the road has been buried by a debris torrent that originated upslope. As evidenced by the debris torrent, this road is located in unstable geomorphic terrain. The Ninemile road has numerous high risk stream crossings and is located primarily within a riparian reserve. The proposed action is consistent with the recommendations of the Watershed Analysis and management direction for these areas that includes reducing existing system and non-system road mileage. A watershed analysis has been completed for both Tier 1 Key Watersheds (see Section C below).

In an effort to restrict unauthorized routes and minimize impacts to soil, water, and wildlife the BLM proposes to install a gate (year-round closure) on BLM road 34-2E-34.1 B2. This road is a dead end spur; however it is un-surfaced and provides access to a meadow area where OHV routes are expanding. The entire area is currently closed year-round to public access with the exception of deer rifle season (approximately 30 days) in the fall. In addition, several nearby short (less than 0.1 miles) unauthorized

OHV routes through a riparian reserve would be blocked by camouflaging the entrance and scattering boulders and large wood and other native material.

## **B. Land Use Plan (LUP) Conformance**

LUP Name: Medford District Resource Management Plan Date Approved: August 1995

The proposed action is in compliance with the 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan, which incorporated the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (Northwest Forest Plan) (USDA and USDI 1994). The 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan was later amended by the 2001 *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines*.

This proposed action is consistent with the 2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (2001 ROD), as modified by the 2011 Settlement Agreement.

The proposed action is also in conformance with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937 (O&C Act), Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as Amended (NHPA).

The 1995 ROD/RMP (p. 23) states, “Watershed restoration will be an integral part of a program to aid recovery of fish habitat, riparian habitat, and water quality. The most important components of a restoration program are control and prevention of road-related runoff and sediment production, restoration of the condition of riparian vegetation, and restoration of in-stream habitat complexity.”

- Decommissioning, restricting access through gate installation and closing unauthorized routes are consistent with RMP objectives. The Riparian Reserves management direction for roads states “Meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy and Riparian Reserve objectives by closing and stabilizing, or obliterating and stabilizing roads based on the ongoing and potential effects to Aquatic Conservation Strategy and riparian reserve objectives and considering short-term and long-term transportation needs.” (1995 RMP, p. 28). The RMP Watershed Restoration direction recommends to “Focus watershed restoration on removing and upgrading roads.” (1995 RMP, p. 23). RMP action recommendations include, “Roads would avoid special habitats and minimize effects to wetlands and riparian areas. Off-highway vehicle closure. Meadows and wetlands would be closed to off-highway vehicle use.” (1995 RMP, p. 45).

Project design features included in the proposed action incorporate Best Management Practices for road decommissioning (1995 RMP, Appendix D, p. 165).

Objective: To reduce soil compaction, minimize or reduce sedimentation, and improve site productivity by decommissioning roads and landings and rehabilitating the land.

Practices: Return roads or landing not needed for future resource management to resource production by re-vegetating with native species. Apply mulch and fertilizer where appropriate (1995 RMP, p. 165).

Decommissioning of roads 37-2E-25.4 and 39-1-28.1 would not occur prior to June 30 as both roads are located within designated northern spotted owl cores.

**C. Identify applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other related documents that cover the proposed action.**

- Revised Environmental Assessment for Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Enhancement, DOI-BLM-OR-M000-2009-0004-EA, June 2010
- Decision Record for the Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Enhancement Environmental Assessment, DOI-BLM-OR-M000-2009-0004-EA, June 9, 2010
- Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Enhancement Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), May 2009
- Little Butte Creek Watershed Analysis, November 1997
- North and South Forks Little Butte Creek Water Quality Restoration Plan, May 2006
- Applegate Sub-basin Water Quality Restoration Plan, January 2005
- Little Applegate River Watershed Analysis, May 1995
- National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Endangered Species Act – Section 7 Programmatic Consultation Biological and Conference Opinion (BO # 2008/03506)
- USFWS - Section 7 Programmatic Consultation Biological and Conference Opinion (BO#2007-F-0055)
- USFWS – Letter of Concurrence (LOC# 13420-2009-1-0045), Plant Letter of Concurrence (LOC# 13420-2008-1-0136)

**D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria**

1. **Is the new proposed action a feature of, or essentially similar to, an alternative analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? Is the project within the same analysis area, or if the project location is different, are the geographic and resource conditions sufficiently similar to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)? If there are differences, can you explain why they are not substantial?**

The *Aquatic and Riparian Habitat Enhancement Revised EA*, listed above, analyzed programmatically a suite of activities for maintaining and restoring watershed conditions, including decommissioning roads located in meadows and riparian reserves across the Medford District BLM. This site-specific project proposes to decommission up 1.7 miles of these roads and project design features under the above referenced EA are included in this project.

The *Little Butte Creek Watershed Analysis*, *Little Applegate River Watershed Analysis*, *North and South Forks Little Butte Creek Water Quality Restoration Plan* and the *Applegate Subbasin Water Quality Restoration Plan* attribute degraded water quality and aquatic habitat conditions to road and OHV use. To comply with State and Federal statutes, in addition to BLM management direction (RMP), it is recommended that road densities be decreased through road decommissioning and other measures within these areas.

**2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the new proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values?**

The range of alternatives analyzed in the NEPA documents is appropriate with respect to the current proposed action because it meets the specific purposes discussed, which includes; improve water infiltration, reduce sedimentation, reduce road densities, and improve soil productivity. The current environmental concerns, interests, and resource values are the same as in the referenced documents.

**3. Is the existing analysis valid in light of any new information or circumstances (such as, rangeland health standard assessment, recent endangered species listings, updated lists of BLM-sensitive species)? Can you reasonably conclude that new information and new circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action?**

The existing analysis remains valid because there has been no new information or circumstances that would change the analysis. Road decommissioning is a common mitigation measure and restoration tool and new information or circumstances would not substantially change the analysis of the new proposed action.

**4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from implementation of the new proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document?**

The direct, indirect, and cumulative effects that would result from the proposed road decommissioning are positive in effect, particularly for soil/water, botany, and wildlife resources. Although there will be minor impacts to recreational resources, including limited OHV use, this use is causing resource damage that is negatively impacting both public and private lands and is inconsistent with current management direction and State and Federal laws.

**5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequate for the current proposed action?**

The Aquatic Restoration EA was made available for public review on BLM's Medford District Website in April of 2009. Also, the Medford District Resource Management Plan, Little Butte Creek Watershed Analysis Watershed Analysis and the Little Applegate River Watershed Analysis which addresses elements of the proposed action were distributed to the public and appropriate agencies. All the routes are either currently closed or receive little traffic during all or most of the year and lack connectivity to other road and trail systems.

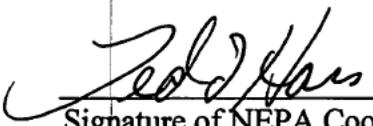
**E. BLM Staff Consulted**

Name	Title	Resource
Chamise Kramer	Botanist	Botany, Noxious Weeds
Steve Godwin	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife
Greg Chandler	Fuels Specialist	Fire and Fuels, Air Quality
Chris Volpe	Fisheries Biologist	Fisheries
Ted Hass	Environmental Specialist	NEPA
Michael Derrig	Hydrologist	Water Resources
Lisa Rice	Archeologist	Cultural Resources
Kristi Mastrofini	Forest Manager	Vegetation Mgt. and Silviculture
John McNeel	Engineer	Transportation Systems
Amy Meredith	Soil Scientist	Soils
Dennis Byrd	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Recreation
Steve Slavik	Range Conservationist	Range

**Conclusion**

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of the NEPA.

  
 Signature of Project Lead 6/12/12  
Date

  
 Signature of NEPA Coordinator 6/12/12  
Date

  
 Signature of the Responsible Official 6/12/12  
Date

**Note:** The signed *Conclusion* on this Worksheet is part of an interim step in the BLM's internal decision process and does not constitute an appealable decision. However, the lease, permit, or other authorization based on this DNA is subject to protest or appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 and the program-specific regulations.