

Categorical Exclusion Determination and Decision Record

Table Rocks Temporary Restrictions

DOI-BLM-OR-M050-2013-0006-CX

Description of Proposed Action

The Bureau of Land Management, Butte Falls Resource Area (BLM) is proposing to temporarily restrict the discharge of firearms, motorized vehicles and non-motorized mechanized vehicles, domestic animals, and metal detectors on existing and newly acquired BLM administered lands within the Table Rocks Management Area (TRMA). Most of the restrictions are not new, and were in place under the previous landowner and adjacent landowner. The restrictions would be in place for up to 24 months after posting in the Federal Register, or until permanent supplementary rules can be implemented. These restrictions would apply to public lands within Township 35S, Range 2W, Sections 26, 34, 35, and 36, and Township 36S, Range 2W, Sections 1, 2, 4 and 9 in Jackson County, Oregon. The Table Rock Management Area is located in the Shady Cove/Rogue River and Gold Hill/Rogue River fifth field watersheds.

In 1986 1,243 acres on Upper Table Rock and Lower Table Rock were designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). As of 2012, the BLM Medford District has acquired an additional 850 acres of land on Upper and Lower Table Rocks from The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Because the 850 acres are now in public ownership, and not yet under ACEC protection, motorized and non-motorized mechanized vehicles, domestic animals such as dogs and horses, and the use of firearms, paintball-type guns, and metal detectors are not restricted. Under previous TNC ownership, all of these activities were prohibited, and are currently prohibited on the adjacent TNC land.

The existing and recently acquired public lands have sensitive cultural, historical, botanical and wildlife habitat resources. On the recently acquired parcels are remnants of Camp White, a World War II training center that is eligible for inclusion in the National Historic Register. All that remains of the 1940's-era training range are 14 'pillboxes', concrete structures designed to simulate Nazi fortifications that were used to practice infantry drills. The Management Area has not yet been thoroughly surveyed for cultural resources, but information gleaned from historical accounts, agency archeologists, and tribal resource specialists indicate that there is a high probability for cultural sites in the area. The tops of the Table Rocks have vernal pool habitat with the federally endangered vernal pool fairy shrimp and state sensitive dwarf woolly meadowfoam. The open grasslands on the lower slopes have a very high density of Special Status plants in the seasonally wet drainages. The open grasslands are also home to a large herd of elk which is often visible to local residents and travelers on Antioch Road.

Located near the rapidly growing Medford urban area, the Table Rocks are one of the most highly visited recreational sites in the Rogue River Valley, with about 50,000 people hiking the trails to the tops of Upper and Lower Table Rock every year. The 1,243 acres of designated ACEC have been closed to off-highway vehicles since 1985. Because the hiking trails previously crossed both TNC and BLM lands, the trails have been signed as closed to dogs, horses, and firearms in keeping with TNC's rules, but with increasing use, these uses have been observed more often on the trails. Hunting is discouraged by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

(ODFW) due to the high recreational use on the hiking trails, but is not currently restricted on any of the public lands in the management area.

The presence of the historically significant pillboxes, T&E wildlife, sensitive plants, highly used recreational trails, and a high probability of Native American resources, coupled with a seasonal elk herd that is highly visible from a heavily travelled county road, make the public lands at risk for damage from gunfire and paintball activities, motorized and non-motorized mechanized vehicles, digging and the use of metal detectors, and domestic animals such as dogs and horses. Implementing temporary restrictions on these uses on public lands within the Management Area until supplementary rules are put into effect for the entire Management Area would prevent damage to suspected Native American cultural resources and remnants of a World War II training facility from possible digging, gunfire and paintball activities and the collection of artifacts using metal detectors, and damage to sensitive species and weed invasion from domestic animals and motorized and non-motorized mechanized vehicles.

The temporary restriction enforcement date would be from the date of posting in the Federal Register, approximately August of 2013. The intent of the August implementation date is to have the restriction in place prior to the start of the general hunting season. The restrictions would be in place for up to 24 months after posting in the Federal Register, or until supplementary rules can be implemented. During the summer of 2013 a number of educational outreach efforts would be implemented including: on-site signage informing visitors of the impending vehicle, animal, and firearms restrictions, press releases in local and regional newspapers, information on the BLM public website, and through visitor contact on-site.

Plan Conformance Review

During scoping and development of the Table Rock Management Plan, the BLM discussed hunting issues and options with representatives from TNC, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and Oregon Hunters Association. There was agreement that due to the high numbers of hikers using the area, proximity to residences, and the mixed ownership with TNC and private lands, that the Table Rocks area in general is not a destination for hunting activities, particularly with firearms.

This proposal is in conformance with objectives, land use allocations, and management direction of the 1995 *Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP)* and any plan amendments in effect at the time this document is published.

This project also conforms with the 1994 *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (Northwest Forest Plan)*

The proposed action was designed to be consistent with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Endangered Species Act of 1973, Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act of 1990 (as amended), and Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

This proposal is consistent with management direction in the Medford District 1995 ROD/RMP that directs the BLM to

“Maintain, protect, or restore relevant and important value(s) of areas of critical environmental concern. Provide for recreation uses and environmental education in outstanding natural areas. Manage uses to prevent loss of outstanding values.” (USDI 1995, p. 56); and

“Protect cultural resource values including information and significant sites for public and/or scientific use by present and future generations.” (USDI 1995, p. 71).

This proposal is consistent with direction for the management of lands administered by the Medford District and The Nature Conservancy in the Table Rocks Management Plan, to

“Protect and maintain the integrity of the relic features of Camp White and provide for their use as in interpretive resource.” and *“Locate, protect, and preserve the integrity of significant cultural resources.”* (USDI 2013, p. 57); and

“Provide for recreational opportunities that are compatible with the area’s designated values and conservation easement terms.”(USDI 2013, p.58).

Project Design Features

1. No discharge of firearms, or discharge of gas or air powered weapons or simulated weapons, including paintball and paintball-like weapons.
2. No motorized vehicles or non-motorized mechanized vehicles that are propelled or powered by any means.
3. No dogs or other domestic animals outside of the trailhead parking areas.
4. No metal detectors, or digging, scraping, disturbing, or removing natural land features for any purpose.
5. The following persons are exempt from this order: Federal, state, and local officers and employees in the performance of their official duties; members of organized rescue or fire-fighting forces in the performance of their official duties; and persons with written authorization from the BLM.

Categorical Exclusion Determination

This proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion as under 43 CFR 46.210(i). This section allows for “Policies, directives, regulations, and guidelines: that are of an administrative, financial, legal, technical, or procedural nature; or whose environmental effects are too broad, speculative, or conjectural to lend themselves to meaningful analysis and will later be subject to the NEPA process, either collectively or case-by-case.”

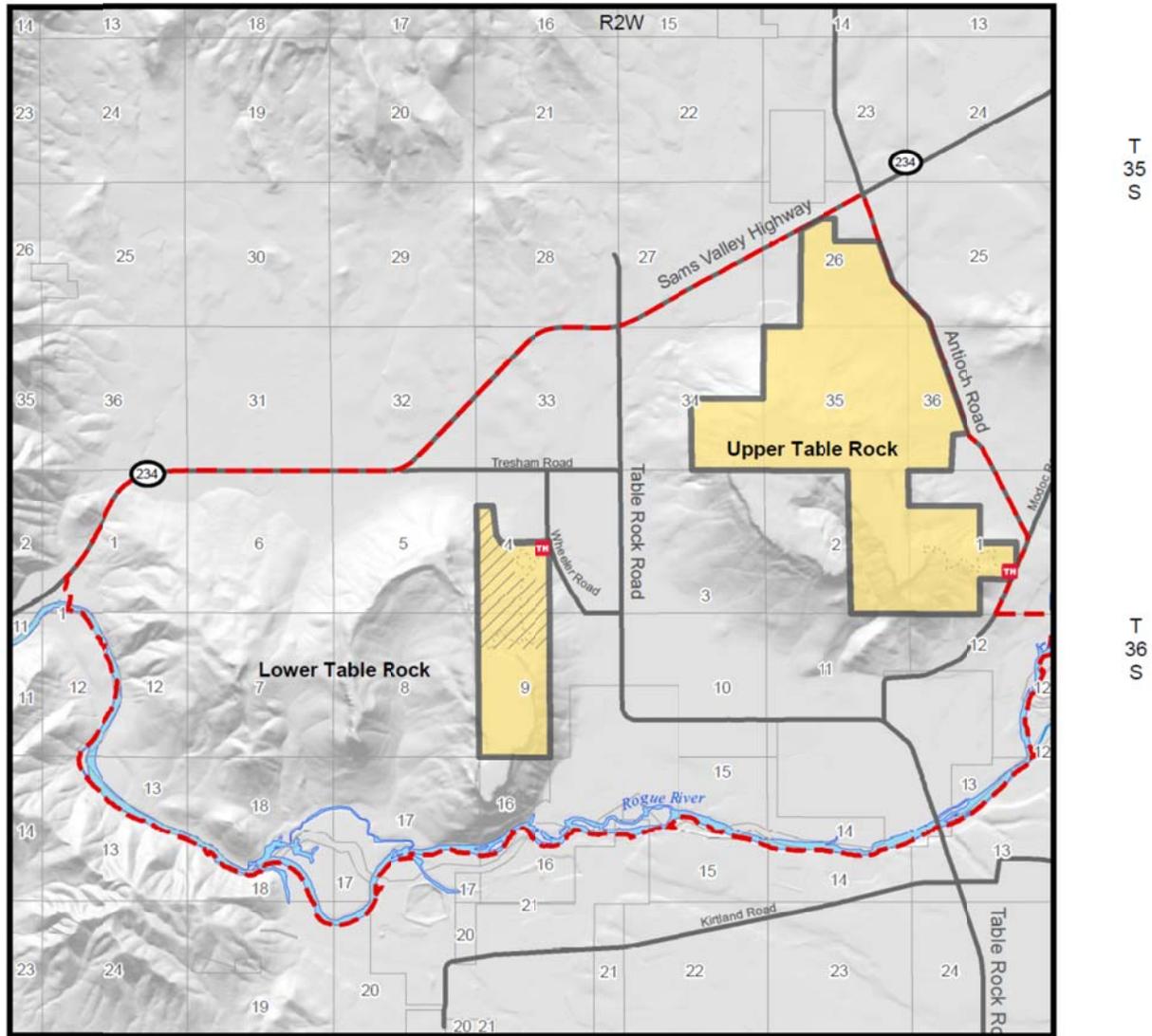
Before any action described in the list of categorical exclusions may be used, the “extraordinary circumstances,” included in 43 CFR 46.215, must be reviewed for applicability. After review, the

BLM determined no extraordinary circumstances exist that would cause the proposed action to have a significant environmental effect. The action will not require additional analysis.

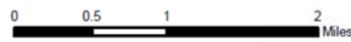
Contact Person

For additional information concerning this project, contact Trish Lindaman, Project Leader, at (541) 618-2266.

Notice of Temporary Restrictions on Public Lands in Jackson County, Oregon



-  BLM Lands to be Restricted
-  Parcel to be donated to BLM
-  Trailhead
-  Table Rocks Management Area



NEPA Categorical Exclusion Review

Proposed Action:

The BLM proposes to temporarily restrict the use of motorized and non-motorized mechanized vehicles, domestic animals, metal detectors, digging, and the discharge of firearms and paintball-like weapons on public lands within the Table Rocks Management Area, until supplementary rules can be implemented for the entire Management Area.

The Code of Federal Regulations at 43 CFR 46.205(c) requires that “any action that is normally categorically excluded must be evaluated to determine whether it meets any of the extraordinary circumstances in section 46.215” (listed below). Additional analysis and environmental documents must be completed for any normally categorically excluded action which may

1. *Have significant impacts on public health or safety.*

Yes No

Initial JW Remarks:

2. *Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.*

Yes No

Initial JW Remarks:

3. *Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].*

Yes No

Initial JW Remarks:

4. *Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.*

Yes No

Initial JW Remarks:

5. *Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.*

Yes No

Initial JW Remarks:

6. *Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.*

Yes No

Initial JS Remarks:

7. *Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.*

Yes No

Initial YR Remarks:

8. *Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.*

Plants Yes No

Initial mw Remarks:

Animals Yes No

Initial DR Remarks:

Fish Yes No

Initial JS Remarks:

9. *Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.*

Yes No

Initial JW Remarks:

10. *Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).*

Yes No

Initial JW Remarks:

11. *Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).*

Yes No

Initial JR Remarks:

12. *Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).*

Yes No

Initial mw Remarks:

Categorical Exclusion Reviewers:

Name	Title	Date	Initials
Jean Williams	NEPA Coordinator	5/30/13	JW
Marcia Wineteer	Botanist	5/30/13	mw
Dave Roelofs	Wildlife Biologist	5/21/13	DR
Jen Smith	Fisheries Biologist	5/21/13	JS
Amy Meredith	Soil Scientist	5/21/13	AM
Shawn Simpson	Hydrologist	5/30/13	SLS
Al Mason	Fire/Fuels Specialist	5/21/13	APM
Lisa Rice	Archaeologist	5/28/13	LR
Jeff Brown	Engineer	5/28/13	JB
Trish Lindaman	Outdoor Recreation Planner	5/21/13	TL