

**Finding of No Significant Impact  
for  
Table Rocks Temporary Restrictions  
DOI-BLM-OR-M050-2013-0006-EA**

**INTRODUCTION**

On August 2, 2013, the Medford District Bureau of Land Management, Butte Falls Resource Area (BLM) released the *Table Rocks Temporary Restrictions Environmental Assessment* (EA). The EA analyzed implementation of the following temporary restrictions on BLM land in the Table Rocks Management Area (project area), which includes the Table Rocks Area of Critical Environmental Concern:

- No person shall discharge a firearm from or across BLM lands within the Table Rocks Management Area. This includes gas- or air-powered weapons or simulated weapons such as paintball and paintball-like weapons.
- Motorized and nonmotorized mechanized vehicle use is prohibited outside of designated trailhead parking areas.
- Domestic animals, including dogs and horses, are prohibited outside of designated trailhead parking areas.
- The use of metal detectors, as well as digging, scraping, disturbing, or removing natural lands features for any purpose, is not allowed.

Restrictions would not apply to Federal, state, and local officers and employees in the performance of their official duties; members of organized rescue or firefighting forces in the performance of their official duties; and persons with written authorization from the BLM.

Restrictions would be valid for up to 24 months or until Supplementary Rules are implemented, whichever comes first.

Restrictions would apply to BLM lands in the Table Rocks Management Area in Township 35 South, Range 2 West, sections 26, 34, 35, and 36 and Township 36 South, Range 2 West, sections 1, 2, 4, and 9.

Based on the analysis documented in the EA and after consideration of the comments received from the Jackson County Board of Commissioners and the public, I have determined the Table Rocks Temporary Restrictions will not have significant effects on the human environment. Section 4 in the EA details the effects of the proposed project (EA, p. 5-7). None of the effects identified, including direct, indirect, and cumulative effects, are considered to be significant and all effects are within those described in the broader analyses conducted and disclosed in the *Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement* (PRMP/EIS). The environmental effects do not meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR § 1508.27. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

## **RATIONALE**

This conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's 10 criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27 [b][1-10]), for evaluating the context and intensity of the action and impacts.

### **1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.**

Based on the analysis documented in the EA, no significant adverse or beneficial effects will result from authorizing the Table Rocks temporary restrictions. The effects on the issues identified for this project are of the type and within the magnitude of effects described in the PRMP/EIS.

The EA identified potential beneficial and adverse impacts that could result from the proposed action (EA, p. 5-7). The analysis found the impacts from implementing the temporary restrictions would be short term (up to 24 months) and would not be significant.

### **2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.**

The temporary restrictions were designed to address concerns over public safety. In particular, the BLM proposed temporary restrictions that would “. . . protect human safety and property and prevent potential accidents” (EA, p. 6) by restricting the discharge of firearms; “. . . protect hikers and other trail users that may encounter mountain bikes on steep sections of trail or areas where line-of-sight is limited . . .” (EA, p. 6) by restricting motorized and nonmotorized vehicle use in the management area; and “. . . protect visitors from aggressive or overly friendly dogs, especially when encountered on the narrow, highly used trails” (EA, p. 6) by prohibiting domestic animals in the management area.

### **3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.**

The temporary restrictions are designed to provide protection to historic or cultural resources, ACEC values, wetlands (vernal pools), and vernal pool fairy shrimp critical habitat. The proposed temporary restrictions would limit unmanaged activities such as digging and shooting that are currently not compatible with ACEC values. Temporary restrictions would protect the historical Camp White pillboxes from damage that could result from bullets or paintballs. “Restricting the use of metal detectors would protect historical and archaeological sites in the Table Rocks Management Area from being disturbed or destroyed. This temporary restriction would also protect the special status plant and animal species and their habitat and the unique geological values found in the Table Rocks Management Area” (EA, p. 6). Restricting domestic animals would protect vernal pools from the impacts from noxious weeds transported by the animals and from trampling.

The project area could contain prime farmlands and park lands; however, these unique characteristics are found on private and other public lands. Temporary restrictions would apply only to BLM lands in the project area. The project area does not contain wild and scenic rivers.

### **4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.**

## Table Rocks Temporary Restrictions FONSI

The Butte Falls Field Manager met with the Jackson County Board of Commissioners to apprise them of the temporary restriction proposal. The Board of Commissioners expressed their desire that no additional restrictions be put in place beyond the restrictions that existed under the previous ownership. The commissioners expressed concern about limiting the use of public lands and would like to see expanded opportunities for public uses in the future. Meetings with the Board of Commissioners generated a May news article in the Medford Mail Tribune and a 2-day television news story on KDRV Channel 12 that discussed the proposed temporary restrictions. No complaints or concerns were generated by this media attention. The temporary nature of the restrictions will allow the BLM the time to pursue future management actions that are responsive to the Jackson County Board of Commissioners' interests.

Restricting motorized vehicles from the area will be a continuation of an existing restriction that has been in place on the public lands under ACEC designation since 1985. The newly acquired lands were closed to all public uses when in private ownership. While individuals may not agree with the firearms restriction, the BLM has dialogued with local hunting organizations and the Federal Land Hunting, Fishing and Shooting Sports Roundtable. These organizations did not express their concern about this temporary restriction as it only applies to a specific area of small acreage. Equestrian users and hikers with dogs may not agree with the restriction on domestic animals outside of parking areas; however, the area was closed to dogs and horses when previously owned by TNC.

The BLM has informally restricted and posted some of the uses outlined in the EA since the 1990s in order to provide visitors with management consistent with the intermixed TNC land. Based on this, overall controversy is expected to be low.

### **5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.**

The analysis did not indicate this action will involve any unique or unknown risks outside of those addressed and anticipated in the EIS for the Medford District ROD/RMP. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas and has found the results to be reasonably predictable.

### **6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about future considerations.**

The proposed project will not set precedents for future actions with significant effects. While the temporary restrictions would be replaced with permanent supplementary rules, future rules could be different and would be subjected to additional analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act.

### **7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.**

No significant cumulative impacts have been identified. Temporary restrictions in the Table Rocks Management Area would not change the total amount of public land in the Butte Falls Resource Area that is available for various uses and activities.

### **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 of destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.**

Table Rocks Temporary Restrictions FONSI

The Project Area contains the remains of World War II training structures that are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Temporary restrictions against discharging firearms would help protect these structures from bullet or paintball damage. The Table Rocks Management Area has not been thoroughly surveyed for cultural resources but information indicates there is a high probability for cultural sites in the area. Restricting metal detectors, digging, and scraping would protect historic and archaeological sites from being disturbed or destroyed. The actions analyzed in the EA would benefit these resources.

**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.**

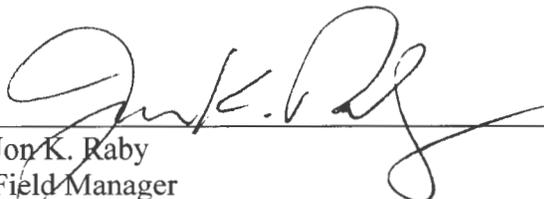
The project area contains the federally endangered plant species *Fritillaria gentneri*, the federally endangered wildlife species vernal pool fairy shrimp, and critical habitat for the vernal pool fairy shrimp. Proposed temporary restrictions would keep domestic animals from spreading noxious weeds, especially in the sensitive vernal pool habitat. The temporary restrictions would provide fragile plants and wildlife, and plant and wildlife habitat, with protection from digging and scraping.

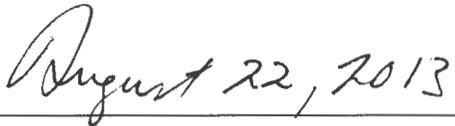
**10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or Local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.**

The proposed project does not violate any known Federal, State, or local environmental protection laws. The project is designed to comply with the Medford District ROD/RMP and other legal requirements (EA, p. 3).

**FINDING**

I have determined the Table Rocks Temporary Restrictions project does not constitute a major Federal action having a significant effect on the human environment; an environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared. This conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's criteria for significance (40 CFR § 1508.27), with regard to the context and the intensity of the impacts described in the EA, and on my understanding of the project, review of the project analysis, and review of public comments. The analysis of effects has been completed within the context of the Medford District ROD/RMP. This conclusion is consistent with the ROD/RMP and the anticipated effects are within the scope, type, and magnitude of effects anticipated and analyzed in this plan.

  
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Date