

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
MEDFORD DISTRICT**

**Recreation Site and Trail Maintenance, Calendar Year 2014 to 2019**

**NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW & DECISION RECORD  
NEPA #: DOI-BLM-OR-M000-2014-0001-CX**

**PROJECT NAME:** Recreation Site and Trail Maintenance, CY 2014 to FY 2019

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Medford District

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project involves all maintenance activities for Medford District's designated and dispersed recreation sites, and designated trail systems which comprise over 200 miles of trails for hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, cross-country skiers, and snowmobilers. As Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) trails are designated, maintenance will occur on those trails as well. In some cases, the motorized trail segments utilize BLM-administered roads as the designated route. For BLM-administered roads used as trails, all maintenance activities other than sign installation, repair, or replacement, will be completed under the Medford District Road Maintenance Categorical Exclusion (DOI-BLM-OR-M000-2010-0006-CX). The designated recreation sites include day-use areas, viewpoints, river access points, grounds of visitor centers, administrative sites and designated camp grounds. Dispersed recreation sites are commonly used impacted sites, often user-created, with minimal or no developed facilities, that are used for recreation activities such as camping, parking, and picnicking. The Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP) (1995) lists recreation objectives to "provide a wide range of developed and dispersed recreation opportunities" and to "manage scenic, natural and cultural resources to enhance visitor recreation experience expectations and satisfy public land users" (pg. 63). Maintaining the existing, designated trail systems and recreation sites addresses these objectives.

**Recreation Site Maintenance**

Recreation site maintenance provide users with a safe, quality recreation experience while minimizing and/or eliminating potential impacts to natural resources. These maintenance activities will occur within the boundaries of designated recreation sites:

1. Installing, repairing and replacing signs, kiosks, tables, benches, and other similar infrastructure
2. Installing, repairing, and replacing fences
3. Installing, repairing, and replacing trash receptacles
4. Installing, repairing, and replacing vehicle barricades
5. Repairing and replacing toilets
6. Brushing, weed eating, raking, and mowing in groomed areas
7. Resurfacing (gravel, pavement, cement, mulch), and repairing parking / walking areas including pathways built to Americans with Disabilities Act standards
8. Falling hazard trees consistent with the *Field Guide for Danger Tree Identification and Response* (USDA, USDI 2008)
9. Painting or staining existing structures

10. Cleaning or power washing surfaces (e.g. parking lots, sidewalks, walls)
11. Rehabilitating or decommissioning social trails, high-use areas, and other disturbed areas by seeding or planting native plants and applying weed-free mulch

### Trail Maintenance

Each trail type has a specified construction and maintenance design standard based on type of use allowed and recreation setting characteristic that identifies the tread width, tread cross slope, maximum grade, and brushing parameters for vegetation both in width and height. See Figure 1 for general trail structure terminology. These design standards are necessary to provide users with a safe, quality trail experience while minimizing or eliminating potential impacts to natural resources.

The Medford District is developing trail standards for designated trail systems on the District. In the interim, the BLM will use standards established by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). The USFS has established Trail Classes, which are general categories reflecting trail development scale, and define tread and traffic flow; common obstacles; trail features and elements; signs; and typical recreation experience.<sup>1</sup> These design standards are guidelines that may vary depending on site-specific conditions. The USFS also has established design parameters in this document, which will be used by the district until the BLM develops its own standards.

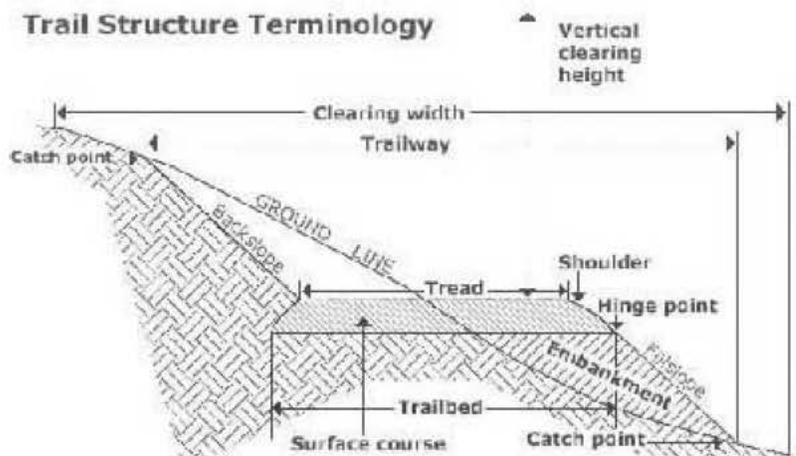


Figure 1. Trail Structure Terminology (U.S. Forest Service Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook (2007))

Design parameters designate trail width, surface, grade, cross slope, clearing and turning radius for each designated use (e.g., hiker, equestrian, bicycle) and Trail Class. Document available at: [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5341754.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5341754.pdf)

Trail maintenance work consists of:

- Tread construction within the trail corridor (defined below)
- Installing, repairing and replacing drainage structures
- Installing, repairing and replacing retaining walls
- Tread resurfacing including installing, repairing and replacing tumpikes and puncheon bridges
- Trail obliteration including scarifying, debris scattering, mulching, barrier placement, and seeding
- Hazard tree removal, logout and brushing
- Installing, repairing and replacing trail signs
- Reconstruction or repair of trail bridges
- Trail reroutes for short distances due to resource damage, or health and safety issues

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Forest Service. 2011. Trail Fundamentals and Trail Management Objectives: Trail Reference Package District Programmatic Recreation and Trail Maintenance CX – CY 2014-2019

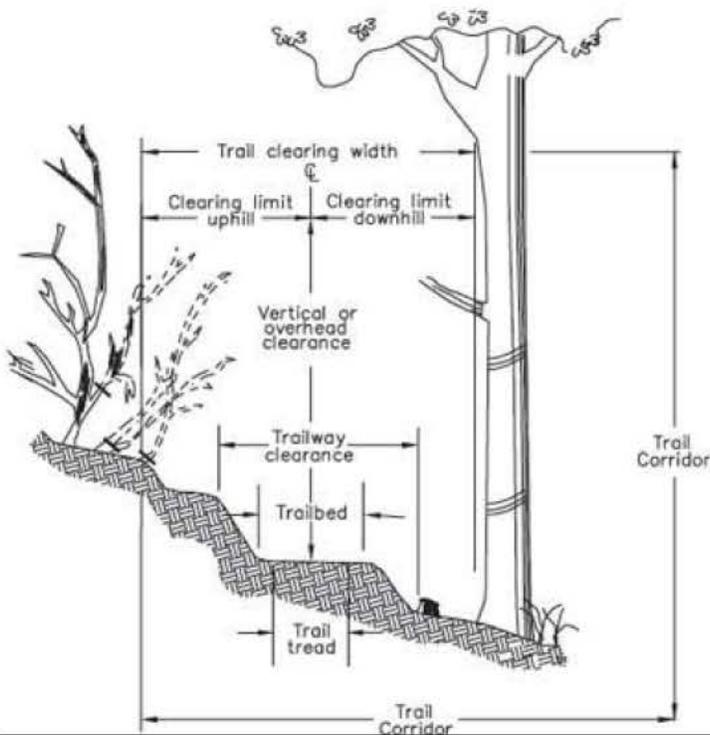


Figure 2. Trail Corridor (U.S. Forest Service Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook (2007))

These maintenance activities will occur within the trail corridor (Figure 2). The trail corridor is a zone that includes the trail tread and the area above and to the sides of it. Trail standards typically define the edges of this area as the "clearing limits." Vegetation and other obstacles, such as boulders, are trimmed back or removed from this area to make it possible to ride or walk on the tread. Tread maintenance consists of removing the slough and berm buildup material from the trail to reestablish its specified tread width, the appropriate cross slope, and the original full bench construction design. In some cases, mechanized equipment such as tracked gravel haulers, bobcats, small excavators, and small trail building machines (e.g. Sweco™) are utilized for maintenance on trails where the trails designed tread width is between 24 inches and 52 inches (e.g. accessible trails, Class I – Quad trails). Logout consists of

removing downed trees with chainsaws, cross cut saws, and in some instances cabled winches from within the trail corridor

### Project Design Features

Recreation site and trail maintenance Project Design Features (PDFs) are specific measures included in the proposed action to minimize the impacts on the human and natural environments and comply with the District's management direction in the RMP, including the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, and State and Federal laws. The following PDFs will be implemented as applicable.

### Recreation Site and Trail Maintenance Standards

- Maintain each trail segment or recreation site to its specified standards by manual or mechanical means. Maintain a list of these standards for each location. Further clearances and/or analysis will occur for work exceeding those standards.
- Implement short-term trail/parking area/sidewalk closures during maintenance activities as needed.
- Logout and vegetation brushing will be achieved by the means of a cutting tool (e.g., chain saws, hand saws, pole saw, hedgers, saw pruners, weed eaters). Cleared vegetation will be scattered outside the trail corridor.
- Short distance reroutes ( $\leq 100$  feet) will be allowed when there are immediate health and safety issues or resource damage is occurring, such as slides, irreparable damage to the trail from improper trail location (e.g., low/wet areas), or erosion / sedimentation. Reroute locations will be surveyed for botanical, cultural and wildlife species if necessary prior to implementation.
- Waste material from maintenance activities will be placed in stable disposal areas away from any stream or wet area outside of Riparian Reserves when using mechanized equipment, and 50 feet from streams when using hand tools, and in a location where sediment laden runoff can be confined.

- Provide erosion control to minimize sediment delivery to streams or wet areas
- Install energy dissipaters at newly installed cross drain outlets or drain dips where water is discharged on unprotected fillslopes to reduce potential for soil erosion.

### **Protection Measures for Soils, Water Quality and other Resources**

- Annually coordinate work restrictions (temporal and/or spatial) with specialists to protect cultural resources, soil and water quality, Riparian Reserves, and Bureau sensitive and federally listed Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive species for each recreation site or trail.
  - Resource Area Wildlife Biologists will review annual work plans to assure that no disturbing activities will occur during sensitive nesting periods consistent with Project Design Criteria within current consultation.
- Avoid using chemically treated wood that would cause water quality degradation in maintenance activities, where materials would be in contact with the stream, or may leach into any water bodies.
- All power tools and other mechanical equipment requiring fuel will be refueled and stored no closer than 150 feet of any stream.
- Non-emergency maintenance activities will not be performed with mechanized equipment within Riparian Reserves if work will result in sediment moving off-site.
- Activities performed with mechanized equipment on the Upper and Lower Table Rock, during wet conditions, generally from Oct. 15 to May 15 will be limited to the tread surface.
- If the reroute is near a fish-bearing stream or potentially on the edge of the trail corridor, further consultation with specialists and/or further environmental analysis would be required
- Suspend maintenance activities when observations indicate that saturated soils exist to the extent that there is visible runoff or a potential for causing elevated stream/water body turbidity and sedimentation; maintenance may occur in areas of perennially saturated soils.
- Minimize vegetation clearing on trails within 60 feet of streams to the extent possible.
- Where the potential for surface erosion is high, install drainage features where appropriate and seed and mulch only with native sources.
- All new ground disturbances within the Riparian Reserve that exceeds 0.1 acres of new disturbance will be mulched with weed-free straw or native materials. Maintain a minimum of 80 percent ground cover following such activities.
- Dewater streams during culvert removal, replacement, and installation to minimize the movement of sediment downstream.
- Mechanical trail machines and/or heavy equipment will be washed prior to being transported to, or between locations on federal lands to remove soil and plant parts to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and disease.
- Where the potential for noxious weed invasion is high, revegetate disturbed soil with native seed and weed-free mulch.
- The Resource Area or District Wildlife Biologist will be notified prior to trail maintenance to ensure special status, big game, raptors, neotropical migratory birds, or threatened or endangered wildlife species will be protected from direct mortality, disturbance, or significant habitat loss. If reasonable, seasonal restrictions will be implemented to avoid disturbance to nesting raptors.
- Cultural resource specialists will be notified at least two weeks prior to any ground-disturbing activities outside the trail prism, to review the proposed activities and conduct needed cultural resource compliance work. This may include new surveys and/or site evaluations to find or protect existing cultural resources.

## PLAN CONFORMANCE REVIEW

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the following plans:

- Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and 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 FSEIS, 1994 and ROD, 1994)
- Final-Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision (EIS, 1994 and RMP/ROD, 1995)
- Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon (FSEIS, 2004 and ROD, 2004)
- Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (FSEIS, 2000 and ROD, 2001)\*<sup>2</sup>
- Medford District Integrated Weed Management Plan Environmental Assessment (1998) and tiered to the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program (EIS, 1985)
- Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (2008) and PRMP/FEIS (2005)
- Rogue National Wild and Scenic River: Hellgate Recreation Area, Recreation Area Management Plan (2004) and PRMP/FEIS (2003)

**Categorical Exclusion :** The proposed action is covered by Department categorical exclusion 1.7 43 CFR 46.210 (f): Routine and continuing government business, including such things as supervision, administration, operations, maintenance and replacement activities having limited context and intensity; e.g. limited size and magnitude or short-term effects.

It is also covered by the following BLM categorical exclusions (516 DM 11.9, Appendix 4):

**G-2:** Installation of routine signs, markers, culverts, ditches, water-bars, gates, or cattleguards on/or adjacent to existing roads identified in any land use or transportation plan, or eligible for incorporation in such plan.

**G-3:** Temporary closure of roads and trails

**G-4:** Placement of recreational, special designation, or information signs, visitor registers, kiosks, and portable sanitation devices.

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<sup>2</sup> The project is consistent with the 2001 ROD and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines, as incorporated into the District Resource Management Plan. No habitat disturbing activities are expected.

## CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances having effects that may significantly affect the environment as documented in the following review. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR § 46.215 rise to the level of significance. A summary of the extraordinary circumstances is listed below. The action must have a significant or a disproportional effect on the listed categories to warrant further analysis and environmental review.

1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Yes ( ) **NO (X)** **Remarks:** Trail maintenance will provide for a safe recreation experience for visitors. No significant impacts are expected.

2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, park, recreation, refuge, lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); ecologically significant or critical areas (including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks).

YES ( ) **NO(X)** **Remarks:** Maintenance work could occur in Wild and Scenic River Corridors and potentially could come in contact with wetlands and floodplains; however, none of these contact points will lead to significant impacts. The majority of the work performed will be within the prism of existing trails. Primary Shade Zones will be preserved and a vegetated filter between activities and streams will not facilitate changes to the sediment regime of any stream.

3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (NEPA section 102(2)(e)).

YES ( ) **NO (X)** **Remarks:** No controversial effects or unresolved conflicts are expected.

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

YES ( ) **NO (X)** **Remarks:** This is routine maintenance and short reroutes of existing trails. No unique or unknown risks are expected.

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

YES ( ) **NO (X)** **Remarks:** This project will not set any precedent for future actions.

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

YES ( ) **NO (X)** **Remarks:** No cumulative effects are expected. This project is of very limited context and intensity, and PDFs will result in minimal effects.

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

YES ( ) **NO (X)** **Remarks:** No effects on listed or eligible properties are expected. Cultural resource specialists will be consulted as necessary.

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

YES ( ) NO (X) **Remarks:** No effects are expected.

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

YES ( ) NO (X) **Remarks:** No violation of law will occur during implementation of this project.

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

YES ( ) NO (X) **Remarks:** No such effects are expected.

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 (X) **Remarks:** This project will not limit access to any ceremonial or sacred sites.

12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area 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 (X) **Remarks:** PDFs will minimize the potential for introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious or non-native invasive species.

**Reviewers:**

*Je M. Li* 7/10/14  
Recreation / Visual Resources Date

*John G. Sidel* 7/10/14  
Wildlife Date

*Bryanna* 7/22/14  
Botany Date

*John J. Palko* 7-8-14  
Soils/Hydrology Date

*Cheryl O'Byrne* 7/24/14  
Cultural Resources Date

*Don Williams* 7/24/14  
Fire and Fuels Date

*Michael W. Crawford* 7-8-14  
Fisheries Date

*Shirley J. Proctor* 7/25/14  
Engineering Date

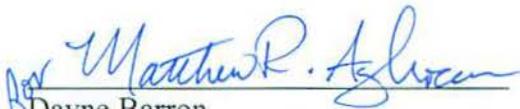
*Anthony E. Kim* 7/28/14  
Planning Coordinator/NEPA Date

## COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

In accordance with 43 CFR 46.205 (c) and 46.215, the proposed action has been reviewed against the twelve criteria, and I have determined that none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.205 (c) apply to this project.

The proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 43 CFR 46.210 (f) "Routine and continuing government business, including such things as supervision, administration, operations, maintenance, renovations, and replacement activities having limited context and intensity (e.g., limited size and magnitude or short-term effects);" under 516 DM 11.9 G (2) "Installation of routine signs, markers, culverts, ditches, water-bars, gates, or cattleguards on/or adjacent to roads and trails identified in any land use or transportation plan, or eligible for incorporation in such plan;" under 516 DM 11.9 G (3) "Temporary closure of roads and trails;" and under 516 DM 11.9 G (4) "Placement of recreational, special designation, or information signs, visitor registers, kiosks, and portable sanitation devices." No further environmental analysis is required. It is my decision to implement the project, as described, with the Project Design Features identified above.

I have reviewed the proposed action in accordance with the above criteria and have determined that the proposed action will not involve any significant environmental impacts. Therefore, the actions do not meet any of the criteria for exception and is categorically excluded from future environmental review.

  
Dayne Barron  
Medford District Manager

7/28/2014  
Date

### Administrative Remedy

Notice of the decision to be made on the action described is this categorical exclusion will be posted on the District internet website. The action is subject to protest under 43 CFR 4.450-2. A decision in response to a protest is subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

## General References

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Hesselbarth, Woody; Vachowski, Brian; Davies, Mary Ann. 2007. Trail construction and maintenance notebook: 2007 edition. Tech. Rep. 0723-2806-MTDC. Missoula, MT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Missoula Technology and Development; Washington D.C: U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. 166 p. ([http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational\\_trails/publications/fs\\_publications/00232839/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/publications/fs_publications/00232839/)).

Hancock, Jan; Vander Hoek, Kim Jones; Bradshaw, Sunni; Coffman, James D.; Engelman, Jeffrey. 2007. Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails, Trailheads, and Campgrounds: 2007 edition. Tech. Rep. 0723-2816-MTDC. Missoula, MT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Missoula Technology and Development Center. 312 p.

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U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management. 2012. 6250 – Management of National Scenic and Historic Trails and Trails under Study of Recommended as Suitable for Congressional Delegation. Washington D.C: U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management.

U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service . 2010. Federal Trail Data Standards.