

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW & DECISION RECORD

(DOI-BLM-OR-M060-2015-0007-CX)

Project Name: Timber Mountain Trail Rehabilitation

BLM Office: Ashland Resource Area, Medford District Office

Contact: Jameson Whitehead, (541) 618-2369

Location: Within the Timber Mountain OHV Area outside of Jacksonville, OR. T. 38 S., R. 3 W. in sections 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, and 17; T. 37 S., R. 3 W., in sections 15, 21, 22, 23, 27, 31, 33, and 34; W.M., Jackson County (see attached map).

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:

The proposed action is to to authorize the rehabilitation/restoration of select OHV (Off Highway Vehicle) trails within the Timber Mountain OHV Area. Trail maintenance is a priority in the Timber Mountain OHV Area to ensure a quality riding experience for trail users, minimize user conflicts, and to protect natural resources (1995 RMP p. 63). Trail maintenance and rehabilitation is proposed to correct trail rutting, braiding, and associated erosion for resource protection and trail user safety. The proposed action would authorize the maintenance and rehabilitation of approximately 22 miles of trail categorized heavy maintenance, and 70 miles of trail categorized light maintenance to be implemented over a period of five years.

The trail segments proposed for maintenance are Class I (quad) and Class III (motorcycle) OHV trails. Some rehabilitation and maintenance work has been done in recent years to improve the Timber Mountain OHV Area and on trails previously improved (e.g. constructed water diversion features, trail hardening, geo-blocking) primarily light maintenance is called for. Trails receiving light maintenance will only require the use of hand tools for tread maintenance and brush removal. Tread maintenance consists of removing the slough material from the trail to reestablish its specified tread width, appropriate cross slope, and bench. In the event a previously installed "heavy" maintenance feature has become unserviceable, then mechanized equipment would be used. Proposed heavy maintenance trail work consists of 1) logout and brushing; 2) installing, repairing and replacing drainage structures; 3) tread reconstruction including reroutes within the trail corridor and installing, repairing, and replacing retaining walls; 4) tread resurfacing including, installation of Geoblock® when trail rerouting is not an option; 5) trail obliteration including scarifying, debris scattering, mulching, barrier placement, and seeding; and 6) installing, repairing and replacing trail signs.

The Medford District is developing trail standards for motorized designated trail systems on the District. In the interim, the BLM has been using standards established by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). All tread work will be done to USFS OHV trail standards by using hand tools or mechanized equipment such as tracked gravel haulers, skid steers, small excavators, and small trail building machines (e.g. Sweco®, Single Track ST240), or both. In addition to adhering to USFS OHV trail standards, the BLM will adhere to H-9114-1 national trail standards handbook; and to the programmatic district CX DOI-BLM-OR-M000-2014-0001-CX, which outlines our district trail maintenance standards and guidelines. The document for trail standards can be found at:

http://www.sharetrails.org/uploads/Wildlands_CPR_FS_Handbook_Summary_2012.pdf

The goal of all proposed trail work is to stay within the existing trail corridor, however; in the interests of long-term sustainability of these trails minimal disturbances outside the existing trail corridor (e.g. a trail building equipment turn around area) may occur in order to effectually improve drainage features, provide sediment catchments, harden trail surfaces, and improve over all trail safety. The trail corridor is defined as the area within the trail alignment that includes the specified clearing limit (width and height of vegetation removal), a structure (e.g. a culvert with an energy dissipater, or a trail bridge and its abutments), or an unmovable natural obstacle (rock, root wad, log, slide material, etc.). Equipment will be cleaned before moving to different project sites.

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 Resource Management Plan, including the Aquatic Conservation Strategy, and State and Federal laws. The following PDFs would be implemented as applicable.

General:

- Heavy trail maintenance would not occur during the wet season (October 15 to May 15) when the potential for soil erosion and water quality degradation exists. This restriction would be waived by the Field Manager in consultation with a watershed specialist under dry conditions and with a specific erosion control plan (e.g. rocking, water-barring, seeding, mulching, barricading). All construction activities would be stopped if determined by a watershed specialist (soil scientist, hydrologist, or fish biologist) that resource damage would occur if construction is not halted.
- Use of sediment ponds, trenches, weed free straw bales, geotextile fabric or coconut fiber logs/bales, would be used to prevent or reduce the movement of sediment from the project site to stream channels.
- Trail segments over 20 percent grades would be treated to harden the surface. Techniques include, but are not limited to, Geoblock®, rock surfacing, or soil amendments. Other techniques which meet the objective of reducing rutting and erosion will be used as needed.
- Water drainage features (rolling drain dips, waterbars, etc.) would be designed and constructed to ensure rutting, rilling and/or gullyng does not occur where water is discharged onto the surrounding terrain.
- Water drainage facilities and trail treads would be maintained as needed to avoid excessive trail gullyng and erosion. If excessive rutting, rilling, and gullyng does occur the affected trails (or areas) will be shut down, rehabilitated, and rested in compliance with 43 CFR 8341.2(a).
- Vegetation brushing will be by the means of cutting actions (saws, pruners, weed eaters, etc.).
- Where possible, rolling grades and outsloping would be used on trails with grades that are less than 8 percent. These design features would be used to reduce concentration of flows and minimize accumulation of water from trail drainage.
- Slash would be windrowed at the base of trail fill slopes to catch sediment.
- Maintain large coarse woody material along trail edges, keeping rider safety in mind, to maintain the stability of the trail running surfaces.
- Inventories would occur annually to identify and schedule ongoing trail maintenance needed to ensure resource protection and rider safety.

- Where there is a likelihood of loosened soil or inadequate drainage that may result in sediment discharge to surface waters, place perimeter BMPs such as weed free straw bales or straw wattles to contain such material. These should be firmly anchored and be in contact with the ground.
- Suspend activities when the trail surface is wet or during precipitation events or when resource damage is occurring.
- All ground disturbance resulting from maintenance activities outside of the trail corridor and within Riparian Reserves would be mulched with weed free straw or other native materials and seeded with approved native grass species.

For the protection of wildlife Special Status Species:

- Work activities that produce loud noises above ambient levels would not occur within specified distances (Table 2-7) of any documented northern spotted owl site during the critical early nesting period, March 1 and June 30, or until two weeks after the fledging period. This seasonal restriction may be waived if protocol surveys determine the activity center is not occupied, owls are non-nesting, or owls failed in their nesting attempt.
- No heavy equipment, chainsaws, or other devices producing sustained noise above ambient levels will be operated within Mandatory Restriction Distances (see table below) of NSO suitable habitat or within Mandatory Restriction Distances of known NSO sites during the critical breeding season (1 March through 30 June). Annual coordination with the wildlife biologist will be required.

Table 2-7. Mandatory Spotted Owl Restriction Distances

Activity	Zone of Restricted Operation
Heavy Equipment (including nonblasting quarry operations)	105 feet
Chain saws	195 feet
Impact pile driver, jackhammer, rock drill	195 feet
Small helicopter or plane	360 feet*
Type 1 or Type 2 helicopter	0.25 miles*
Blasting; 2 pounds of explosive or less	360 feet
Blasting; more than 2 pounds of explosives	1 mile
* If less than 1,500 feet above ground level.	

To minimize the spread of noxious weeds:

- All equipment and tools shall be washed clean and devoid of mud and debris prior to engaging in trail maintenance activities.
- When practical, immediately after performing trail maintenance in or near weed infested areas, clean all tools and equipment before moving to weed-free areas in order to prevent weed spread.
- Conduct weed inventories, treatments, and monitoring along the trail and at staging areas as funding and resources allow.
- Maintain or enhance native plant communities by seeding and mulching highly disturbed sites with native plant materials as determined necessary and practical by the project Botanist.

For the protection of Special Status Plant Species:

- The project leader shall submit maps of planned maintenance areas to the project Botanist in a timely manner to determine if surveys and/or protection measures are necessary prior to implementation of maintenance activities.
- Plant protection areas shall be flagged, and location maps with protection specifications clearly stated, shall be given to the project leader in a timely manner to ensure proper implementation of plant protection measures.

For the protection of cultural resource values:

- Significant archaeological sites and paleontological sites occurring within activity areas would be flagged for avoidance and identified to the project lead on a map. Site flagging would be placed twenty-five feet from the site perimeter. No disturbance would occur in the buffered areas.
- The project lead shall submit maps of planned maintenance activities involving any ground disturbing work to the cultural resource specialist prior to implementation. The cultural resource specialist will be allowed sufficient time to determine if additional survey and/or protection of cultural resources is needed in compliance with the Protocol for Managing Cultural Resources on Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Oregon.
- If during project implementation the contractor encounters or becomes aware of any objects or sites of paleontological or cultural value on federal lands, such as fossils, historical or pre-historical ruins, graves, grave markers, or artifacts, the contractor shall immediately suspend all operations in the vicinity of the cultural value and notify the Authorized Officer of the findings. The project may be redesigned to protect the cultural resource values present, or evaluation and mitigation procedures would be implemented based on recommendations from the Ashland Resource Area Archaeologist with concurrence by the Ashland Field Manager and State Historic Preservation Office.

PLAN CONFORMANCE

The proposed action is in compliance with the *1995 Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)*. The 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan 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)*.

This project 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*, as incorporated into the Medford District Resource Management Plan.

The proposed action is consistent with BLM Manual 6840 (USDI 2008), the purpose of which is to provide policy and guidance for the conservation of BLM special status species and the ecosystems upon which they depend on BLM-administered lands. BLM special status species include those species listed or proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as well as those designated as Bureau sensitive by the State Director(s). The objectives of the BLM special status policy are:

To conserve and/or recover ESA-listed species and the ecosystems on which they depend so that ESA protections are no longer needed for these species; and to initiate proactive conservation¹ measures that reduces or eliminates threats to Bureau sensitive species to minimize the likelihood of and need for listing of these species under the ESA (USDI 2008: section 0.02).

This decision 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 National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 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 of 1990, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR § 46.205(c)) require that any action that is normally categorically excluded must be evaluated to determine whether it meets any of the extraordinary circumstances listed in 43 CFR § 46.215. An action would meet one of the extraordinary circumstances if the action may:

- | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>Categorical Exclusion Exception</u> |
|-------------------|------------------|---|
| () | (X) | 1. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety. |
| () | (X) | 2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resource; 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. |
| () | (X) | 3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)] not already decided in an approved land use plan. |
| () | (X) | 4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. |
| () | (X) | 5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. |
| () | (X) | 6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but significant cumulative environmental effects. (40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.25(a)). |
| () | (X) | 7. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. |
| () | (X) | 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. |

¹ **Conservation:** as applied to Bureau sensitive species, is the use of programs, plans, and management practices to reduce or eliminate threats affecting the status of the species, or improve the condition of the species' habitat on BLM-administered lands (USDI 2008, Glossary p. 2).

- () (X) 9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
- () (X) 10. Have disproportionate significant adverse impacts on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
- () (X) 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).
- () (X) 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).

COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA

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

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.

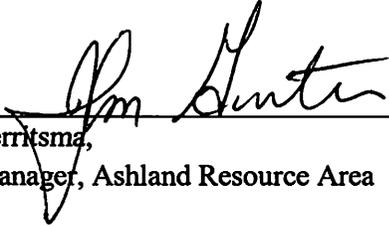
G-4: Placement of recreational, special designation, or information signs, visitor registers, kiosks, and portable sanitation devices.

DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND REVIEW

Jameson Whitehead	OHV Park Ranger	12/17/2014
Prepared by	Title	Date
Stephanie Kelleher	Environmental Coordinator	1/15/2015
Reviewed & Edited by	Title	Date

DECISION

I have determined that the proposed action, which qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 43 CFR 46.210 (f) and 516 DM 11.9 G (2 & 4), involves no significant impact to the human environment and that no further environmental analysis is required. It is my decision to authorize the trail maintenance and rehabilitation as described above. Notice of this decision will be posted on the District internet website.

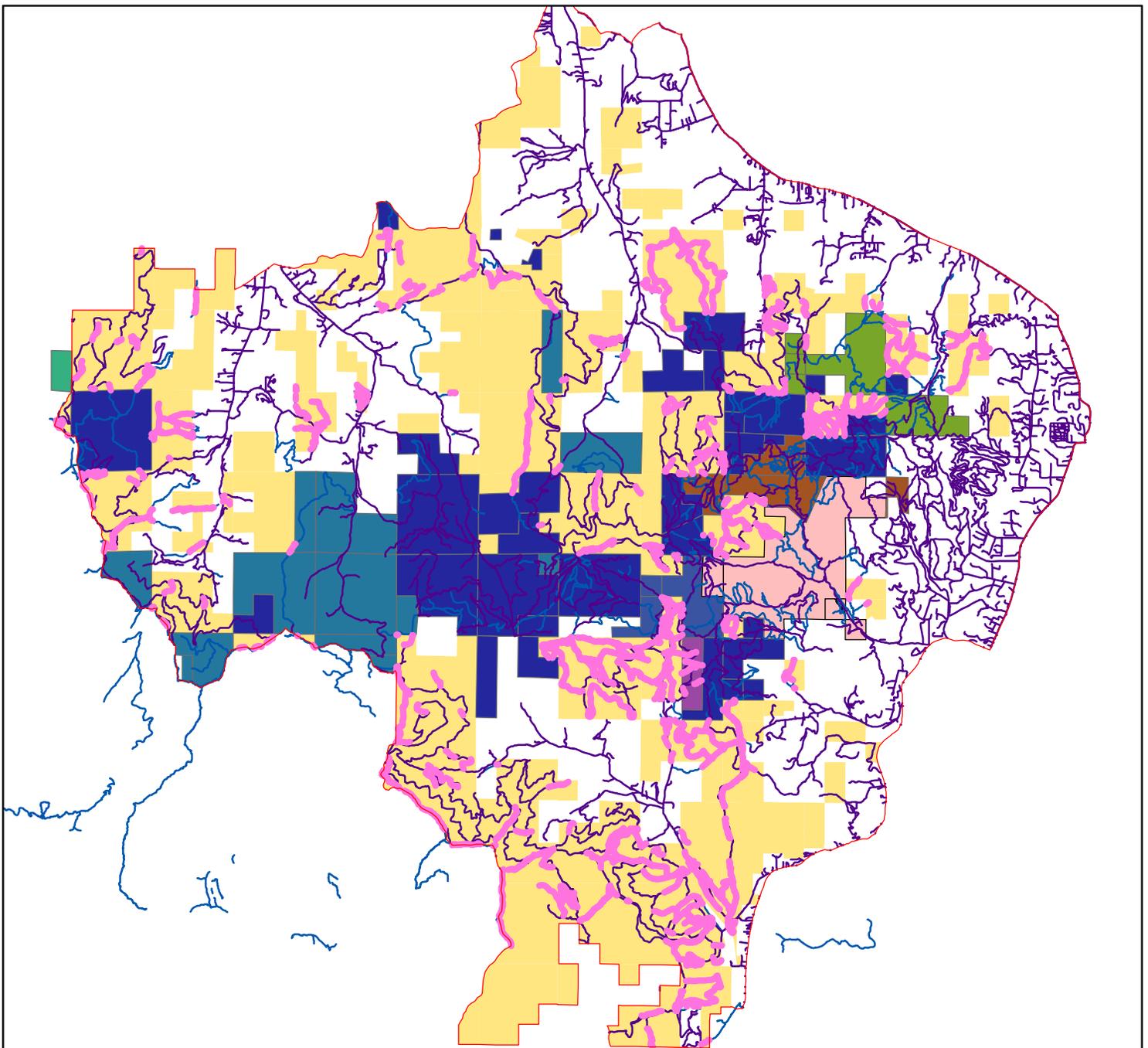


John Gerritsma,
Field Manager, Ashland Resource Area

1-15-15
Date

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

Notice of this decision will be posted on the Medford 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 under 43 CFR part 4.



Legend

- Timber Mt Planning Boundry
- Propossed Maintenance
- Timber Mt Roads
- GTRN Null Trails

Land_Ownership_Industrial_Lands

FEEOWNER

- BOISE CASCADE CORP; BOISE CASCADE CORPORATION
- GLAESEMANN ROBERT O/LINDA S
- INDIAN HILL LLC
- JACKSONVILLE CITY OF
- MILLS ROBERT D/MARLENE A
- MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSN INC; MOTORCYCLE RIDERS ASSOC INC
- ROBERTSON FRED; ROBERTSON FRED/DEBRA
- SPALDING MERWIN L TRUSTEE
- SUPERIOR LUMBER CO; SUPERIOR LUMBER COMPANY

**Ownership_WithinOhv_Clip
PROPERTY_STATUS**

- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Forest Service
- Private Individual or Company