

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Clary and Meehan Right-of-Way

EA# OR-117-08-07

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT
GRANTS PASS RESOURCE AREA

March 2010

Dear Reader:

We appreciate your interest in the BLM's public land management activities. BLM designed the Clary and Meehan Right-of-Way project under the 1995 Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP). Public involvement for the Clary and Meehan Right-of-Way began in July 2008 when approximately 45 scoping letters were sent to the public. The scoping letter was sent to residents and landowners near or adjacent to BLM parcels within the planning area, to federal, state, and county agencies, and to private organizations and individuals that requested information concerning projects of this type.

We appreciate your taking the time to review this EA. If you would like to provide us with written comments regarding this project or EA, please send them to me at 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, OR 97526. Email comments may be sent to: Medford_Mail@blm.gov.

If confidentiality is of concern to you, please be aware that comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review or may be held in a file available for public inspection and review. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name and address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this clearly at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests would be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

I look forward to your continued interest in the management of our public lands.

Abbie Jossie
Field Manager
Grants Pass Resource Area

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT

EA COVER SHEET

RESOURCE AREA: Grants Pass EA # OR-117-08-07
 ACTION/TITLE: Clary and Meehan Right-of-Way
 LOCATION: T37S, R5W, Section 20 Willamette Meridian, Josephine Co.,
 Oregon.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Abbie Jossie
 Field Manager, Grants Pass R.A.,
 Medford BLM
 Grants Pass Interagency Office,
 2164 NE Spalding Ave.
 Grants Pass, Oregon 97526
 (541) 471-6500

Interdisciplinary Preparers	Title	Resource Values Assigned
Jon Raybourn	Fisheries Biologist	Fisheries
Dave Maurer	Soil Scientist	Floodplains, Wetlands, Soils, and Water
Robin Snider	Wildlife Biologist	Wildlife
Lisa Brennan	Archeologist	Cultural Resources
Susan Fritts	Botanist	Special Status Plants
Mike Mathews	NEPA	Editor, NEPA
Jim Roper	Roads	Roads
Tim Gonzales	Fire Mitigation & Education Specialist	Fire and Fuels

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1.0 Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Grants Pass Resource Area, proposes issuance of a right-of-way for road construction to local residents to access their property. This project implements the Bureau of Land Management's Medford District 1995 Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (1995 ROD/RMP) for this watershed. Management direction set forth in the 1995 RMP provides direction for resource management on BLM-administered lands according to various land use allocations. The RMP was developed and overall effects of its implementation were analyzed and disclosed in the 1994 Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Resource Management Plan.

This environmental assessment (EA) will assist in the decision making process by assessing the environmental and human effects resulting from implementing the proposed project or alternatives. This EA will also assist in determining if an environmental impact statement (EIS) needs to be prepared or if a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

The decision will also include a determination whether or not the impacts of the proposed action are significant to the human environment. If the impacts are determined to be within those impacts analyzed in 1995 FEIS, or otherwise determined to be not significant, a Finding of No Significant Impact can be issued and a decision implemented.

This EA tiers to or is consistent with the following documents:

1. *Final EIS/ROD for the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP) (1995)*
2. *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);*
3. *Final SEIS for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (2000), and the ROD and Standards and Guidelines for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines (2001)*
4. *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon (FSEIS 2004 and ROD 2004);*
5. *Medford District Integrated Weed Management Plan Environmental Assessment (1998) and tiered to the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program (EIS 1985).*

The Clary and Meehan ROW 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.

On December 17, 2009, the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington issued an order in *Conservation Northwest, et al. v. Rey, et al.*, No. 08-1067 (W.D. Wash.) (Coughenour, J.), granting Plaintiffs' motion for partial summary judgment and finding a variety of NEPA

violations in the BLM and USFS 2007 Record of Decision eliminating the Survey and Manage mitigation measure.

Judge Coughenour deferred issuing a remedy in his December 17, 2009 order until further proceedings, and did not enjoin the BLM from proceeding with projects.

The project may proceed even if the District Court sets aside or otherwise enjoins use of the 2007 Survey and Manage Record of Decision. This is because the Clary and Meehan ROW project meets the provisions of the last valid Record of Decision, specifically 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 (not including subsequent Annual Species Reviews). Details of the project surveys are described in the appropriate resource section below, under Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences.

1.1 Purpose of and Need for Action –What is BLM Proposing and Why?

Sharon Clary and Randall Meehan (hereafter referred as applicants) requested a Right-of-Way (ROW) to construct a road across BLM in T37S R5W section 20. The applicants own two tax lots divided by BLM land with no road access; the ROW is needed for access to their private property.

The Federal Land Management Policy Act (Title V section 501) grants the BLM authority to grant, issue, or renew rights-or-way over, upon, under, or through such lands for roads.

The purpose of this project is to meet the needs identified in the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP ROD 1995). Those objectives are to:

“Continue to make BLM-administered lands available for needed rights-of-way where consistent with local comprehensive plans, Oregon statewide planning goals and rules, and the exclusion and avoidance areas identified in this RMP,” (p.82);

“Develop and maintain a transportation system that serves the needs of users in an environmentally sound manner.” (RMP, p. 84).

1.2 Decision Factors

This Environmental Assessment will provide the information needed for the authorized officer, the Grants Pass Resource Area Field Manager, to render a decision regarding the selection of a course of action to be implemented for the Clary and Meehan Right-of-Way project. The Field Manager must decide whether to implement one of the Alternatives as proposed, or whether to select the no-action alternative. In choosing the alternative that best meets the project needs, the Field Manager will consider the extent to which each alternative responds to the purposes identified for this project.

The decision will also include a determination whether or not the impacts of the proposed action are significant to the human environment. If the impacts are determined not to result in significant effects beyond those disclosed in the 1994 Final EIS, or otherwise determined to not be significant, a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) can be issued and a decision

implemented. If the project will result in significant impacts beyond those analyzed and disclosed in the 1994 FEIS, then a project specific EIS will be prepared.

In choosing whether or not to issue a Right-of-Way (ROW) and authorize road construction, the Grants Pass Field Manager would evaluate the residents' proposal on:

- Potential for significant environmental effects
- Consistency with the Medford District Resource Management Plan

Project Location and Land Use Allocation

The project is in T37S, R5W, section 20 approximately one mile east of the town of Murphy (Appendix A Map 1). The project is in the Applegate Adaptive Management Area.

1.3 Issues

A variety of issues and concerns were raised during project scoping by interested individuals or groups outside the BLM and by BLM's interdisciplinary team. In this EA, an issue is something unique to the project area that may need particular consideration and which may contribute to defining a particular action alternative. Issues include:

- Removal of vegetation may remove or degrade wildlife habitat
- Heavy equipment operation may increase noxious weed transport

1.3.1 Issues Considered but Eliminated

The project team examined the following potential issues and resource concerns and eliminated them from further analysis. The review found that due to the isolated nature of the action, the environmental setting, and/or lack of resource presence, further analysis was not necessary:

Cultural –Project activities may damage or destroy cultural sites.

Cultural surveys have been completed for this project following the standard compliance procedures set forth by Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act. Surveys found no historic sites; therefore there would be no effects to cultural resources.

Hydrology – Road building and compaction may alter surface runoff.

The proposed road lies on flat ground, does not cross any watercourse or riparian area and compaction would be limited to less than 0.04 acres. At this level of disturbance and because of these site characteristics, there are no expected effects to hydrology or stream channels. Similarly, the proposed actions would not affect water quality.

Fisheries – Aquatic habitats may be affected by flow routing and sedimentation.

There are no changes to hydrology or water quality and no streams or fish in the project area. Therefore, there would be no effect to channel conditions or aquatic habitat. Due to the very localized small scale of the project, no off-site effects, and no streams or fish present in the area, there would be no affect to the aquatic system. Based on these findings, the applicants ROW request is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

Soils – Road construction may result in soil erosion and loss of stand productivity.

There are no sensitive soils in the area. The terrain is flat and compaction would be less than 0.04 acres. Loss of productivity is expected on this 0.04 acre. Given stable soils and flat terrain, no erosion is expected. At this scale and because of local site conditions, this level of compaction would not adversely affect stand productivity or aquatic habitat. Therefore, no further analysis is necessary.

Fuel hazard – Project activities may increase fuel loading.

Road clearing would remove brush and a few trees. This isolated small level of removal would not change fuel hazard or loading.

Off-highway Vehicles (OHV) – Creating a new road may increase OHV activity.

A gate currently restricts access to the proposed road site. A gate would remain following project implementation, and access on this ROW would be restricted to the landowners only; therefore there are no changes to existing access for unauthorized OHV use.

2.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives

The decision to be made is whether to grant the applicants' request for a right of way and road construction. Therefore, this section presents two alternatives—The No Action alternative, which would be to deny the applicants request in its' entirety, and the proposed action which would authorize construction of the road and grant a right-of-way over BLM lands. The ROW grant would be limited to the applicants.

2.1 Alternative 1: No Action

The no action alternative is defined as not implementing the proposed action, thus denying the resident's application. The no action alternative serves as a baseline for evaluating the effects of the action alternative. Inclusion of this alternative is done without regard to whether or not it is consistent with the RMP. The no action alternative assumes a continuation of current environmental conditions and trends.

2.2 Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The proposed action is to issue a right-of-way (ROW) to construct approximately 140 feet of road on BLM in T37S, R5W, section 20 NE1/4 SE1/4. The ROW would grant the residents perpetual use for access to their property.

The road would have a running width of 14 feet and a 45 foot clearing width. Road bed would be sloped with a 3% grade for drainage. The right-of-way would be 50 feet wide with a native surface road bed.

The road would run through a stand composed of Douglas fir, black oak, madrone and cedar. Up to 5 trees greater than 20 inches dbh may be removed, as well as shrubs and grass.

2.2.1 Alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed analysis

Direct Access from Williams Highway. The team considered access from the north from Williams Highway to the tax lot. A steep cutbank and irrigation canal paralleling the road prevents reasonable and feasible construction of a road entrance and, hence, direct access from Williams Highway.

2.3 Project Design Features

The following project design features (PDFs), based on BLM's best management practices, would help prevent potential adverse project impacts. The PDFs are applied to activities occurring on BLM managed lands.

- Snags felled for safety reasons or that are within the proposed ROW would be left on site.
- Green trees felled for the construction would be decked and sold as special forest products (e.g., firewood)
- Construction equipment would be confined to roadway construction limits.
- Cultural surveys have revealed no sites. If cultural sites are found during project implementation, activities around the site would halt until a BLM archaeologist reviewed the site and determined appropriate protection measures.
- Equipment would be cleaned to prevent weed transport. Native seed and mulch used for soil stabilization would be weed free.
- Existing gate limiting access to the area proposed for road construction would remain.

3.0 Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This section provides the basis for the comparisons of the alternatives and the reasonably foreseeable environmental consequences to the human environment. Impacts can be beneficial, neutral, or detrimental. This analysis considers the direct impacts (effects caused by the action and occurring at the same place and time), indirect impacts (effects caused by the action but occurring later in time or offsite) (40 CFR 1508.8), and cumulative impacts (effects caused by the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions on all land ownerships). The temporal and spatial scales used in this analysis may vary, depending on the resource being affected.

These effects will be analyzed and described in context by describing and identifying what would take place if no action is taken, considering the present conditions on the land that were produced by past actions, and what effects are and will take place from other present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. This analysis of the effects of taking "no action" then provides the context for analyzing the "incremental effect" of taking action under each of the action alternatives, by then showing how the action alternative will change the conditions on the ground. This is the "incremental impact" that constitutes the "cumulative impact" as defined in CEQ's regulations. (40 CFR §1508.7) ("the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions..."), and is consistent with the CEQ Memorandum of June 24, 2005 (see below) and 43 CFR §46.115 (effective November 15, 2008). The temporal and spatial scales used in this analysis may vary, depending on the resource being affected.

Only substantive site specific environmental changes caused by implementing the proposed action are discussed in this chapter. The following were found not to be affected by the proposed action or alternatives: air quality; Native American religious concerns; prime or unique farmlands; floodplains; areas of critical environmental concern (ACECs) wild and scenic rivers; and wilderness.

The level of detail necessary to inform the decision maker and the public needs to be commensurate with the context and intensity of the proposed activity. The project proposes an easement 140 feet long by 50 feet wide. At a running surface width of 14 feet, the project would create approximately 0.04 acres of compaction. The road would cross the Adaptive Management Area land allocation; there are no riparian reserves or other designated land use allocations.

As the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) points out in guidance issued on June 24, 2005, the “environmental analysis required under NEPA is forward-looking,” and review of past actions is required only “to the extent that this review informs agency decision-making regarding the Proposed Action.” Use of information on the effects on past action may be useful in two ways according to the CEQ guidance. One is for consideration of the Proposed Action’s cumulative effects, and secondly information on past actions may be useful is in “illuminating or predicting the direct and indirect effects of a proposed action.”

Past actions contributed to the current conditions in which the project will take place, but it is the current conditions, not a detailed step by step accounting for how every past action contributed to those current conditions, that is relevant to the currently proposed action. Further, addressing the suite of past actions and individual effects across the watershed would not assist in the identification of potential effects of a proposed road with a disturbance area of less than 0.2 acres. Field evaluation, literature, and extensive team and Bureau of Land Management experience with roads provide sufficient information to make informed effects analysis. Rather, the analysis focuses on the direct and indirect effects at the site specific area and future activities on BLM land in section 20. Under the Cheney-Slate Landscape Management project (EA #OR117-08-01), BLM proposes up to 56 acres of Density management with group selection. If analysis shows that local interactions between projects generate cumulative effects, and the effects would be conveyed off-site, the spatial context of the analysis will be expanded to larger scales as necessary and appropriate for each resource.

3.1 Wildlife

Special Status Species (Federally Listed, Federal Candidate, and Bureau Sensitive wildlife species) known or suspected to be present within the project area or adjacent BLM lands and potentially impacted by the proposed actions are addressed in this EA.

3.1.1 Affected Environment

Northern Spotted Owl (Federally Threatened)

Spotted owls are closely associated with older forests for nesting, foraging, and roosting throughout most of their range (Forsman et al. 1984; Carey et al. 1990; and Solis and Gutierrez 1990). Suitable spotted owl nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat (NRF) is characterized by forested stands with older forest structure, multiple canopy layers, and a canopy closure of 60 percent or greater. The best quality NRF habitat has large old trees with cavities, broken tops or

mistletoe platforms, large branches, dead standing and fallen decayed trees, and multiple canopies of shade tolerant hardwoods and conifers that support prey base. NRF habitat can also function as dispersal habitat. Dispersal-only habitat for spotted owls is defined as stands that have a canopy closure of 40 percent or greater and provides cover, food, and protection on a temporary basis to non-nesting owls moving between patches of NRF habitat (USDI, 2006).

The proposed road construction on BLM is in spotted owl NRF habitat. However, the proposed road location is not high quality NRF habitat because it is located on the edge of a small 13 acre stand and adjacent to Highway 238. There are approximately 35 acres of suitable spotted owl NRF and 71 acres of dispersal-only habitat located on BLM land in sections 20, 28, and 29. The nearest historic spotted owl site is approximately 2.5 miles south of the project area.

Fisher (Federal Candidate)

Fishers are associated with low to mid-elevation forests with a coniferous component, large snags or decadent live trees, large fallen trees for denning and resting, and complex physical structure near the forest floor, which provide habitat for fisher prey (Aubry and Lewis 2003). Suitable spotted owl NRF habitat also adequately describes suitable fisher denning and resting habitat because there is a direct correlation of key habitat features captured in the rating system and fisher habitat (high canopy cover, multi-storied stands, large snags, and large down trees on the forest floor). The proposed road construction on BLM is located in suitable denning and resting fisher habitat, but is marginal due to the close proximity to Highway 238. Additionally, the 13 acres of suitable denning and resting habitat and adjacent BLM lands are isolated and surrounded by private lands that do not provide suitable fisher habitat. BLM checkerboard ownership may be one of the primary factors limiting the ability of BLM lands to provide optimal habitat for fishers (USDA and USDI 1994b).

Forest carnivore surveys conducted throughout the Grants Pass Resource Area have detected fishers in the vicinity of Williams, the top of the Deer Creek drainage, and near Galice Creek. The nearest known fisher location on BLM is approximately 7 miles southeast of the proposed action.

Survey and Manage Species

BLM surveyed for red tree voles (RTV) in section 20 – the proposed road location— in December, 2008. No RTVs were detected. With the exception of the mollusk species, *Monadenia chaceana*, habitat for wildlife Survey and Manage species (great gray owl, other mollusks) does not occur within the project area. Potential habitat exists for the former Survey and Manage mollusk, *Monadenia chaceana*. However, the pre-disturbance survey requirement for the Grants Pass Resource Area was removed in The Survey Protocol for the Survey and Manage Terrestrial Mollusk Species from the Northwest Forest Plan, Version 3.0, due the *Monadenia chaceana* range change (USDA and USDI 2003). Additionally, since the late 1990s, more than 17 landscape management project areas throughout the Grants Pass Resource Area have been surveyed for mollusks using the terrestrial mollusk survey protocol (USDA and USDI 1997 and USDA and USDI 2003). Surveys have revealed no detections of *Monadenia chaceana*. Surveys have also been completed for *Helminthoglypta hertleini* across the resource area; however, all detections were found in rocky areas associated with damp grassy areas, oak woodlands, and shrub lands, or in conifer forests closely associated with these habitat types. This habitat type does not occur in the project area.

The project does not occur in suitable great gray owl nesting habitat and the nearest known site is approximately 6 miles from the proposed road location.

Additional Wildlife

Down logs and snags are present within the proposed road route that may provide habitat for some special status species and land birds (Neotropical birds and year round residents). These habitat characteristics also exist in the adjacent landscape. Land birds use a wide variety of habitats, including late-successional forests, riparian areas, brush in recovering clear-cuts, and small trees in developing stands.

3.1.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1: No Action

Under the No Action alternative the proposed road construction would not occur.

The BLM is proposing to implement portions of the Cheney Slate Landscape Management plan which analyzed potential timber harvest on up to 2,200 acres within the Lower Applegate River 5th field watershed. Approximately 56 acres of timber harvest is proposed within section 20 where the proposed private-land access road is located. If the timber is harvested in this section, 13 acres of the stand containing NRF habitat would be downgraded to dispersal habitat. The remaining 43 acres of harvest in section 20 would treat and maintain dispersal habitat (i.e., maintain adequate canopy closure and habitat characteristics to provide for spotted owl dispersal). It is assumed that private land would be harvested on a 60-year rotation (RMP EIS p. 4-5) and would be maintained in early to mid-seral habitat.

Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Northern Spotted Owl (Federally Threatened)

The proposed road construction on this route would remove 0.15 acres of spotted owl NRF habitat. However, this impact would be negligible because of the small scope of action. The proposed road would affect 0.1% of the spotted owl habitat provided in sections 20, 28 and 29. Additionally, there is a low likelihood spotted owls would use this stand for nesting because it's a small isolated patch of NRF habitat surrounded by private land. The proposed action would not preclude owls from dispersing within the watershed. Therefore, road construction is not expected to diminish survival or recovery of the spotted owl due to the small percentage of habitat affected.

Fisher (Federal Candidate)

Approximately 0.15 acres of fisher denning and resting habitat would be removed as a result of the proposed action. However, the loss of habitat from the proposed action would be negligible and would not preclude fishers from using the BLM lands within the watershed. Project activity disturbance effects to fishers are not well known. Fishers may avoid roaded areas (Harris and Ogan 1997) and humans (Douglas and Strickland 1987; Powell 1993). Disturbance from the proposed action would be temporally and geographically limited. Fishers have large home ranges and would be able to move away from the action area while the disturbance is occurring, without impacting their ability to forage and disperse within their home range. Habitat features, such as large snags and coarse wood, as well as untreated late-successional forest habitat, would be retained in the adjacent BLM stands and would continue to provide denning and resting

habitat within the Lower Applegate River 5th field watershed. The proposed action would not contribute to the need to federally list the fisher as threatened or endangered because of the small size and scale of the project, and large acreage of adjacent suitable habitat.

Survey and Manage Species

BLM conducted surveys for the Survey and Manage species for which there is suitable habitat in the forest stands within the proposed road ROW. No species were found. Therefore, there would be no effects to Survey and Manage species.

Additional Wildlife

The proposed action would remove approximately 0.15 acres of potential habitat (conifers, hardwoods, brush, snags, and coarse woody material) for Neotropical birds. However, this loss would be negligible due to the large amounts of suitable habitat retained on adjacent BLM and private land. Some individuals may be displaced during project activities. However, untreated adjacent lands would provide refuge and nesting habitat, which would help minimize short term loss of habitat and temporary displacement during project activities. Additionally, the failure or loss of a nest during one nesting season would not be expected to reduce the persistence of any bird species in the watershed due to the small scope of the project.

Road construction could cause warmer, drier conditions in adjacent interior forest habitats because of reduction of the canopy closure and increased solar and wind exposure (Trombulak and Frissell 2000). This could result in reduced reproduction and survival of species with low dispersal capabilities, such as mollusks and possibly amphibians (Marsh and Beckman 2004). Species with greater dispersal capabilities could likely move to areas with more favorable microclimate conditions if suitable habitat were nearby. However, due to the small scope of this project, effects would be negligible or undetectable.

Summary and Conclusions

Even though the proposed actions may potentially adversely disrupt local individuals of sensitive wildlife species and may cause the loss of habitat in some cases, this project is not expected to affect long-term population viability of any Bureau Sensitive wildlife species known to be in the area because of the small scope of the proposed action compared to the untreated lands in the Lower Applegate River 5th field Watershed. Even with the proposed maximum treatment of fisher denning and resting habitat under Cheney Slate (including units in Section 20), approximately 88% of the denning and resting habitat would remain within the Lower Applegate River 5th field watershed. Similarly, 88% of the spotted owl NRF habitat would remain within the Lower Applegate River 5th field watershed. Therefore, this project, combined with other foreseeable actions in the watershed, including the proposed Cheney Slate unit in Section 20, would not contribute to the need to federally list any Bureau Sensitive wildlife species.

3.2 Botany

3.2.1 Affected Environment

Special Status Species

BLM surveyed the proposed road site for the presence of federally-listed plants, State Listed plants, and Bureau Special Status plants during 2006. The project area is within the range of the federally-listed plant *Fritillaria gentneri*; however, no populations were observed during the Clary and Meehan Right-of-Way

surveys. There are no existing known sites of federally-listed, State Listed, or Bureau Sensitive botanical species in the project area. There are no proposed Critical Habitat Units for *Lomatium cookii* in the project area.

On July 26, 2007 a new Special Status Species list went into affect (IM No. OR-2007-072). This new list has two categories, Sensitive and Strategic. The former categories of Bureau Assessment and Bureau Tracking no longer exist. Sensitive species require a pre-project clearance and management to prevent them from trending toward federal listing. There is no pre-project clearance or management required for the Strategic Species at the BLM District level, thus Strategic Species will not be analyzed in this document.

Threatened and Endangered (T&E), State Threatened (STO), and Bureau Sensitive botanical species require protection and management. It is the BLM Oregon State Office's policy that the BLM would protect, manage, and conserve those sensitive species and their habitats such that any Bureau action would not contribute to the need to list any of these species (IM OR-1991-57 and IM OR-2003-054).

Survey and Manage Botanical Species

BLM completed surveys for the Survey and Manage species. The surveys revealed no presence. Further, there are no known sites within the project site or adjacent forest stands.

Special Status Fungi

Surveys have not been conducted for Bureau Sensitive fungi, which is consistent with the BLM Oregon State Office Information Bulletin # OR-2004-145, Attachment 5. Above-ground fruiting structures (sporocarps) are short-lived, seasonal, and annually variable making surveys difficult (USDA, USDI 2000). It is expected that field units will not conduct field surveys for these species due to survey impracticality. Protection of known sites along with on-going large scale inventory work would provide the measures and means to meet agency policy.

There are 20 Sensitive fungi species that are suspected or documented on lands administered by Medford District BLM. For these 20 fungi species, specific information regarding connectivity, range, habitat requirements, and response to disturbance are lacking. The NWFP and RMP acknowledge incomplete or unavailable information regarding these species. Given the broad habitat and the lack of surveys completed for these species, it is assumed that more sites exist in the area of the NWFP. It is unknown how rare these species really are, but it is known they are associated with common tree species. Therefore, there is acknowledged uncertainty regarding distribution and response to management actions.

3.2.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1—No Action

The proposed road under the No Action alternative would not be constructed. However, the BLM is proposing to implement portions of the Cheney Slate landscape plan which examined potential timber harvest of up to 2,200 acres within the Lower Applegate River 5th field watershed. Specifically, approximately 56 acres of timber harvest is proposed within section 20 where the proposed private land access road is located.

The No Action Alternative would not result in any direct or indirect effects to T&E, Bureau Sensitive, or State Threatened botanical species because none of these species are present in the project area and no road construction would take place. This alternative would not trend toward listing of any Bureau Sensitive species.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

Special Status Vascular and Non Vascular Species

Alternative 2 would not result in any direct effects to T&E, Bureau Sensitive, or State Threatened botanical species because none of these species are present in the project area. Therefore, Alternative 2 would have no affect on the T&E species *Fritillaria gentneri* or impact State Threatened botanical species. Additionally, this alternative would not trend toward listing Bureau Sensitive species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed Critical Habitat for the Federally Endangered plant Cook's desert parsley (*Lomatium cookii*) (Federal register, Vol 74, No. 143, Tuesday July 28, 2009, pages 37314-37392). There are no Critical Habitat Units within the Clary and Meehan project area.

Survey and Manage Species

BLM conducted surveys for the Survey and Manage species in the forest stands within the proposed road ROW. No species were found. Therefore, there would be no affects to survey and manage species.

Sensitive Fungi Species

This alternative proposes to build approximately 140 feet of road with a 45 foot clearing width. This is approximately 0.15 acre of new disturbance.

Dahlberg and Stenlid (1995) found that ectomycchorizal mycelia networks may range in size from 1.5 to 27 meters (5 to 89 feet). Given the potentially small range of mycelia networks, the ground-disturbing road building may fragment the mycelia network, reducing or eliminating local populations if Sensitive Fungi are present in the disturbed area. However, given there are no known sites of Bureau Sensitive fungi in the area and given the small percentage of ground disturbance, loss of local populations is not likely; the probability of adverse effects is low.

Summary and Conclusions

The proposed ROW project is located within the boundary of a proposed unit under the Cheney Slate Landscape Management Plan in Section 20. Combined with the Cheney Slate project, the ROW would have no effect on T&E, Bureau Sensitive, or State Threatened species because they are not present. Additionally the area of new disturbance is small (0.15 acres), so the likelihood of causing adverse effects to an unknown sensitive fungi site is low.

3.3 Noxious Weeds

3.3.1 Affected Environment

BLM surveys found one noxious weed species in the project area. Himalayan blackberry is located along the ditch line that is adjacent to the proposed right-of-way. Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor*) is a perennial bramble introduced from Western Europe that forms large

impenetrable thickets of prickly canes. It colonizes disturbed sites including waste areas, pastures, forest plantations, roadsides, and waterways. This species reproduces through seed spread and from the underground spread of rhizomes. Detrimental effects include displacement of native species, decrease of plant diversity, reduced forage, inaccessibility by humans and animals. Successful control methods include mechanical, prescribed burning, and chemical.

Noxious weeds can out-compete native species for light, space, water, and nutrients. They can alter soil fertility, dry up water supplies, poison animals, decrease agriculture production, infest rivers, and reduce recreational value. Noxious weeds find disturbed sites favorable for establishment and spread. Vehicles are a primary method for transporting noxious weeds and creating new populations of noxious weeds. On private land and throughout the watershed, the rate of weed spread is not possible to quantify, as it depends on many factors including, but not limited to, logging on private lands, motor vehicle traffic, recreation use, rural and urban development, and natural processes, such as wind, seasonal flooding, and animal migration patterns.

3.3.2 Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1—No Action

The proposed road under the No Action alternative would not be constructed. However, the BLM is proposing to implement portions of the Cheney Slate landscape plan which examined potential timber harvest of up to 2,200 acres within the Lower Applegate River 5th field watershed. Specifically, approximately 56 acres of timber harvest is proposed within section 20 where the proposed private land access road is located. These proposed actions could create additional disturbed areas or access points that may result in new weed populations.

Unpredictable vectors for weed spread, such as vehicle usage by private parties, wildlife behavior, and wind currents make it not possible to quantify with any degree of confidence the rate of weed spread and introduction in the future. PDFs for washing equipment and seeding with native material are standard for all BLM activities including activities associated with the Cheney Slate project; thus, proposed foreseeable activities on BLM land would not affect noxious weeds at a level that would be above natural weed spread.

Alternative 2

Given the reproductive biology of Himalayan blackberry, the population present near the proposed road would not increase in size due to the proposed action. Equipment mobilization and road construction represent opportunities for dispersal of noxious weed seed from outside the project area. Consistent with the RMP EIS (p. 4-41, 42), project activities could cause noxious weeds to become established in the project area through seed or plant transport due to road work. However, due to PDFs designed to reduce the risk of weed spread (i.e. equipment washing to remove dirt containing weed seeds or plants, seeding/mulching with native species to help native plants become established more quickly), increases in weed populations would be equal among the alternatives and are not anticipated to be distinguishable above current levels and mechanisms (vehicles, wind, animals, etc.). The use of mulch is not anticipated to increase the spread of noxious weeds because it would be from native species and weed free.

Additionally there would be no public access to the road as the road that accesses the proposed road is gated. This limits access to a few people and further reduces the risk of weed

introduction via vehicles. The PDFs for reducing or eliminating noxious weed impacts are widely accepted and utilized as standard operating procedures for the control of noxious weed control across the nation (USDI 2007, pg. 2-26).

Summary and Conclusions

Himalayan blackberry is the only noxious weed present in the project area and in the proposed Cheney Slate timber sale units in Section 20. Given the reproductive methods of the species, the actions proposed, and weed specific PDFs for both projects, increases in weed populations are not anticipated.

4.0 Public and Agencies Contacted

4.1 Public Involvement

The BLM extended an invitation to the local and regional communities and other state and federal agencies, private organizations and individuals to develop issues and resources important to local, state, national, and international economies.

Public scoping for the Clary and Meehan ROW was initiated in July 2008, when BLM mailed out approximately 45 scoping letters to landowners and others who have asked to be kept informed about upcoming BLM projects in this area. The letter described the intent and purpose for the project, proposed action and location, and contact information to submit comments or questions. BLM received no comments on the project

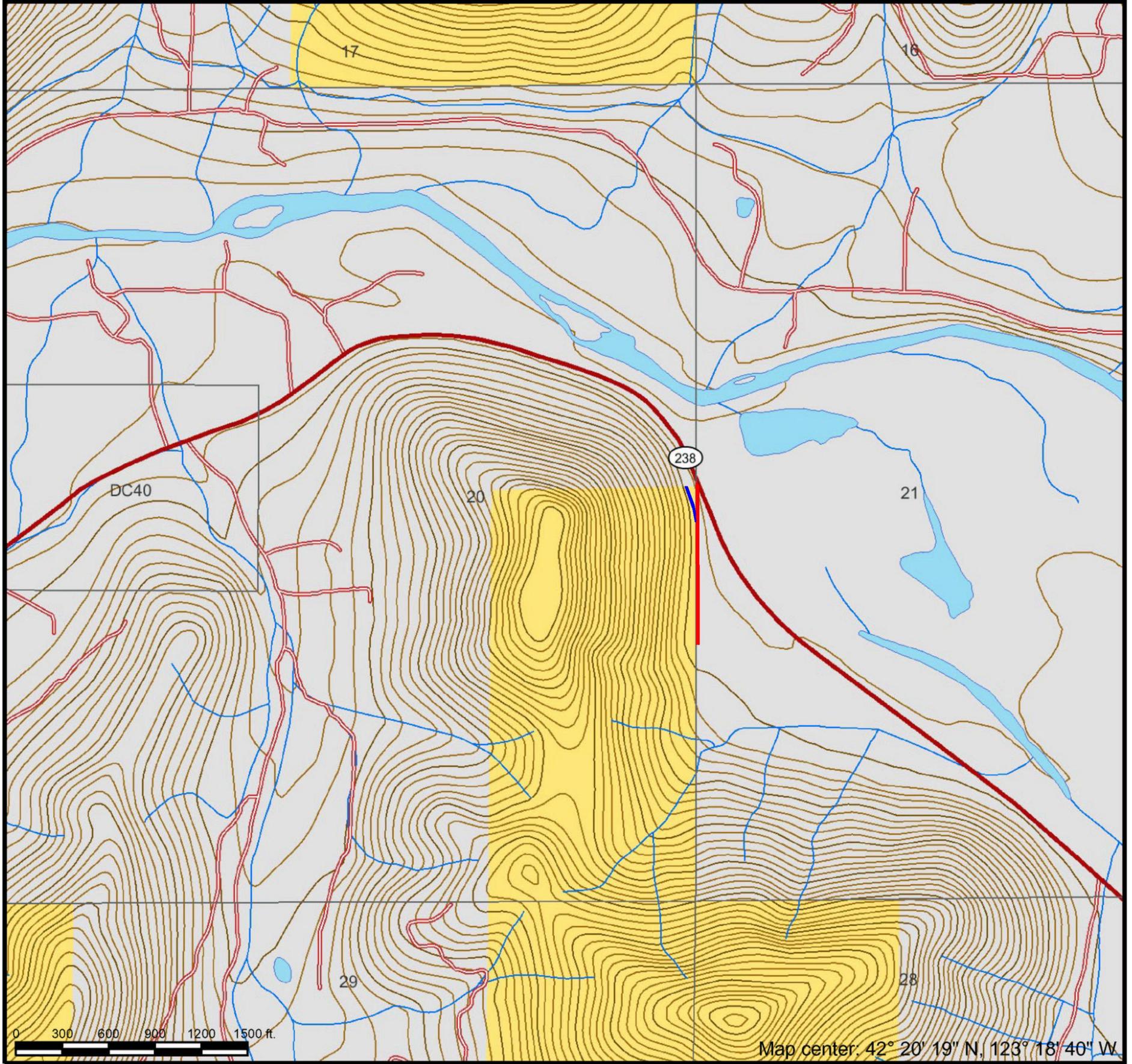
The following agencies were consulted during the planning process: Josephine County, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Confederate tribes of the Siletz, Confederate tribes of Grand Ronde, Cow Creek-Umpqua Tribe.

Copies of the EA will be available for public review in the Grants Pass Interagency Office. A formal 30-day public comment period will be initiated by an announcement in the Grants Pass Daily Courier. If you would like a copy of the EA, please stop by the office or contact Mike Mathews, Environmental Planner, at (541) 471-6565. Written comments should be addressed to Abbie Jossie, Field Manager, Grants Pass Resource Area, at 2164 NE Spalding Avenue, Grants Pass, OR 97526. E-mailed comments may be sent to *Medford_Mail@blm.gov*.

Appendix A – Location Map

Clary Easement

T37S - R5W Sec20



- | | | |
|---------|----------|---------------|
| Non BLM | Highways | Existing Road |
| BLM | Roads | Proposed Road |
| Streams | Trails | |



Internal Use Only

Scale 1:12,000



United States Department of the Interior
 Bureau of Land Management
 Grants Pass Resource Area Office
 2164 NE Spalding Ave
 Grants Pass, OR 97526

Printed: Jul 15, 2008 8:42:22 AM
http://web.maps.or.blm.gov/foi_section

Universal Transverse Mercator
 Zone 10, North American Datum of 1983

Appendix B – Literature Cited

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