



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
GRANTS PASS INTERAGENCY OFFICE
2164 NE Spalding Ave
Grants Pass OR 97526

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DOCUMENTATION AND DECISION RECORD

**French Flat ACEC Meadow Restoration
Removal of Encroaching Vegetation
NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-OR-M070-2010-0040-CX**

A. Description of the Proposed Action

The BLM is proposing to cut and pile small conifers and shrubs growing in meadows occupied by the federally Endangered plant Cook's desert parsley (*Lomatium cookii*). The meadows are located in the French Flat Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

The project area would have all conifer trees under 8 inch DBH cut and manually removed from the meadows. Shrubs such as *Ceanothus cuneatus* (wedgeleaf ceanothus) and *Arctostaphylos viscid* (whiteleaf manzanita) would also be cut and manually removed from the meadows. Cut vegetation would be piled in areas that have previously been disturbed by mining and are devoid of vegetation. Cut and piled vegetation may be burned under separate NEPA analysis. Work would occur between August 16, 2010 and November 30, 2010; this is the time period when Cook's desert parsley is dormant.

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). Proposed Critical Habitat for the Federally Endangered plant *Lomatium cookii* is located within the project area. The project is within Critical Habitat Unit IV12.

B. Location and Land Use Allocation

The project is on BLM-owned lands located in T.40 S., R.8 W., Section 10 and 15. The land use allocation of the project area is ACEC. Activities within the ACEC should maintain or improve the values for which the ACEC was established. French Flat ACEC was established primarily for special status plants and the unique plant communities.

C. Need / Rationale for the Proposed Action

There is a need to remove small conifers and shrubs from meadow habitat in the French Flat ACEC. A comparison of aerial photos of French Flat ACEC from 1964 and 2001 and site visits in 2009 show trees and shrubs encroaching into meadows from the perimeter. Portions of the meadows in French Flat are occupied by the endangered plant Cook's desert parsley. Removing the conifers and shrubs would improve the meadow habitat for Cook's desert parsley. Without any management or continued passive management of conifer and shrub encroachment, the meadow habitat and species which depend on the meadows would slowly decline.

D. Project Design Features

- No conifer trees over 8 inch DBH would be cut.
- Project implementation would occur during the dormant season for Cook's desert parsley.

E. Plan Conformance Review

The proposed action is in conformance with the following plans:

- the *Final-Medford District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision* (EIS, 1994 and RMP/ROD, 1995);
- the *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 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)
- the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement: Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon* (FSEIS, 2004 and ROD, 2004);
- *Medford District Integrated Weed Management Plan Environmental Assessment (1998)* and tiered to the *Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program* (EIS, 1985)

The proposed action is 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 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, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

F. Categorical Exclusion Determination

This proposed action qualifies as a categorical exclusion as provided in United States Department of the Interior Departmental Manual 516 DM 11.9 C (4). This section allows for "Pre-commercial thinning and brush control using small mechanical devices."

Extraordinary Circumstances Review

Title 43, Section 46.205(c) of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) requires the review of this action to determine if any of the following "extraordinary circumstances" (found at 46 CFR 46.215) would apply. If any of the extraordinary circumstances apply, then an otherwise categorically excluded action would require additional analysis and environmental documentation.

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

()Yes (**X**)No

2) *Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime*

farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

Yes No Remarks: This project is within the French Flat ACEC. This project would enhance the botanical values and would not impact the cultural values for which the ACEC was designated.

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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.

Yes No Remarks: The project is consistent and covered under the FY 2009-2013 Programmatic Assessment for Activities that May Affect the listed endangered plant species Gentner's fritillary, Cook's lomatium, McDonald's rockcress, and large-flowered woolly meadowfoam (BLM August 2008) and the Letter Of Concurrence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Assessment (September 2008) Tails number 13420-2008-I-0136. Project Design Criteria listed in the programmatic will be followed for this project. The project is within Critical Habitat Unit IV12. This project would not adversely modify proposed critical habitat designated for Cook's desert parsley. The project would help maintain the habitat by removing competing vegetation.

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

Yes No

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

Yes No

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

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

Yes No

Reviewers:

Neal Davison 8/16/10
Silviculture, Vegetation
Dynamics, & Port-Orford Cedar Date

Robin E. Smith 8/20/10
Wildlife Date

LS 8/14/10
Botany/ACEC Values Date

Dave Mauer 8/14/10
Soils/Hydrology Date

Loeber 8/16/10
Cultural Resources Date

Paul Kertch 8/10/10
Visual Resources / Recreation Date

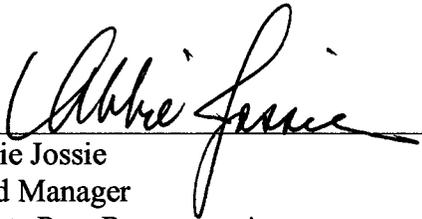
J. W. Brown 8/20/10
Fisheries Date

James R. Popen 8/23/10
Engineering Date

Dulcey Schuster 8/23/10
Planning Coordinator/NEPA Date

DECISION

I have reviewed this Categorical Exclusion Documentation, including the plan conformance, NEPA compliance review, and extraordinary circumstances review, and have determined the proposed action is in conformance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required. It is my decision to implement the action as described and approve the proposal to remove encroaching vegetation in the French Flat ACEC for meadow restoration.



Abbie Jossie
Field Manager
Grants Pass Resources Area

8-25-2010
Date

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES:

This decision is a forest management decision. Administrative remedies are available to those who believe that they will be adversely affected by this Decision. Administrative recourse is available in accordance with BLM regulations and must follow the procedures and requirements described in 43 CFR § 5003 - Administrative Remedies.

In accordance with the BLM Forest Management Regulation 43 CFR § 5003.2 (a&c), the effective date of this decision, as it pertains to actions which are not part of an advertised timber sale, will be the date of publication of the notice of decision in the Grants Pass Daily Courier. Publication of this notice establishes the date initiating the protest period provided for in accordance with 43 CFR § 5003.3. While similar notices may be published in other newspapers, the Grants Pass Daily Courier publication date will prevail as the effective date of this decision.

7-6-2001

BLM

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BLM French Flat ACEC

Rocky Fork Rd

Shenker Lake

Tree Removal

Vegetation Piles to burn

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