

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

**NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW & DECISION RECORD  
NEPA #: DOI-BLM-OR-M000-2011-0002-CX**

**PROJECT NAME:** Trail Maintenance, FY 2011 and FY 2012

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Medford District

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The proposed project involves all maintenance activities for the district's designated trail system which comprises over 200 miles of trails for hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, and off-highway vehicle users. 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 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 system addresses these objectives.

Each trail type has a specified construction and maintenance design standard that identifies the tread width, tread cross slope, maximum grade, and brushing parameters for vegetation both in width and height. These design standards are necessary to provide users with a safe, quality trail experience while minimizing and/or eliminating potential impacts to natural resources. Maintenance work consists of:

1. Logout (see below) and brushing
2. Installing, repairing and replacing drainage structures
3. Tread reconstruction including reroutes within the trail prism
4. Installing, repairing and replacing retaining walls
5. Tread resurfacing including installing, repairing and replacing turnpikes and puncheon bridges
6. Trail obliteration including scarifying, debris scattering, mulching, barrier placement, and seeding
7. Installing, repairing and replacing trail signs.

These maintenance activities will occur within the trail prism. The trail prism 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 (e.g., rock, root wad, log, slide material). Logout consists of removing downed trees with chainsaws, cross cut saws, and in some instances cabled winches from within the trail prism. Tread maintenance consists of removing the slough 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).

## **Project Design Features**

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 would be implemented as applicable.

### **Trail Maintenance Standards**

- Maintain each trail segment to its specified standards by manual or mechanical means. Maintain a list of these standards for each trail. Further clearances and/or analysis shall occur for work exceeding those standards.
- Implement short-term trail closures during maintenance activities.
- Vegetation brushing will be by the means of cutting actions (e.g., saws, pruners, weed eaters). Cleared vegetation will be scattered outside the trail prism.
- 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 trail.
  - Resource Area Wildlife Biologists would review annual work plans to assure that no disturbing activities would occur during sensitive nesting periods consistent with Project Design Criteria within current consultation.
- All reroutes will be within the trail prism.
- Waste material from trail maintenance activities would be placed in stable disposal areas away from any stream or wet area, a minimum of 200 feet when using mechanized equipment and 50 feet 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.
- Do not use chemically treated wood that would cause water quality degradation in bridge maintenance where materials would be in contact with the stream or may leach into the soil or water.
- All power tools and other mechanical equipment requiring fuel will be refueled and stored no closer than 150 feet of any stream.

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

- Non-emergency trail maintenance activities performed with mechanized equipment within 200 feet of streams or on the Upper and Lower Table Rock trails shall occur during the dry season (May 15 to Oct. 15).
- If the reroute is near a fish-bearing stream or potentially on the edge of the trail prism, further consultation with specialists and/or further environmental analysis will be required.
- Suspend trail maintenance activities during precipitation events or 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.
- Minimize vegetation clearing on trails within 150 feet of streams to the extent possible.
- Where the potential for surface erosion is high, water-bar where appropriate and seed and mulch with native sources only.
- All ground disturbance within 200 feet of any stream shall 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 shall 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.

## **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) and amendments or modifications as of March 21, 2004
- 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.

## 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:

1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Yes ( ) **NO (X)**

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)**

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

YES ( ) **NO (X)**

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

YES ( ) **NO (X)**

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

YES ( ) **NO (X)**

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

YES ( ) **NO (X)**

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)**

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)**

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

YES ( ) **NO (X)**

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

YES ( ) **NO (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).

YES ( ) **NO (X)**

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)**

**Reviewers:**

_____ Recreation / Visual Resources	_____ Date	_____ Wildlife	_____ Date
_____ Botany	_____ Date	_____ Soils/Hydrology	_____ Date
_____ Cultural Resources	_____ Date	_____ Fire and Fuels	_____ Date
_____ Fisheries	_____ Date	_____ Engineering	_____ Date
_____ 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 would 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.

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Dayne Barron  
Medford District Manager

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Date

### **Administrative Remedy**

Notice of the forest management decision to be made on the action described is this categorical exclusion will be posted on the District internet website. 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, 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 local newspaper. Publication of this notice establishes the date initiating the protest period provided for in accordance with 43 CFR – 5003.3.

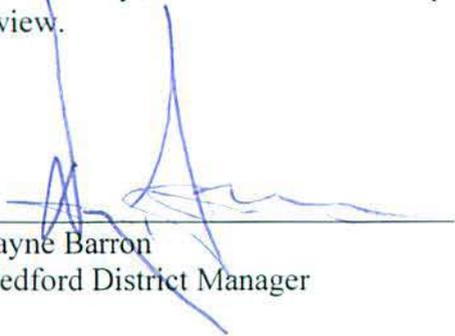
Any contest of this decision should state specifically which part of the decision is being protested and cite the applicable CFR regulations.

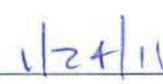
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Dayne Barron  
Medford District Manager

  
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Date

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Any contest of this decision should state specifically which part of the decision is being protested and cite the applicable CFR regulations.

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YES ( ) NO (X)

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)

**Reviewers:**

CT ART 01/10/11  
Recreation / Visual Resources Date

Carole Jensen 1/11/2011  
Wildlife Date

Mark Montseant 01/10/2011  
Botany Date

Laurie Lindell 1/10/2011  
Soils/Hydrology Date

Ronald Gregory 01/10/11  
Cultural Resources Date

Don WA 1/24/11  
Fire and Fuels Date

Rale Johnson 1/23/11  
Fisheries Date

[Signature] 1/21/11  
Engineering Date

[Signature] 1/24/11  
Planning Coordinator/NEPA Date