

Categorical Exclusion Documentation

A. Background

BLM Office: Prineville Field Office

NEPA Log #: DOI - BLM - OR – P060 - 2012 - 0053 - CX

Proposed Action Title: US National Fly Fishing Championship SRP

Location:

- Lower Crooked River below Bowman Dam, from Big Bend to Castle Rock Campgrounds: T16&17S, R16E. Ten miles south of Prineville, OR.

Description of the Proposed Action: The proposed action is to approve a Special Recreation Permit (SRP) for Visit Bend to host the US National Fly Fishing Championship Tournament.

The SRP would allow four days of competitive fishing on nine miles of the Crooked River below Bowman Dam. There would be five venues for the tournament across Central Oregon and this portion of the Crooked River would be the only venue authorized by BLM.

The US National Fly Fishing Championship would occur on October 18-21. There would be a maximum of twenty “beats” spread out along the nine miles of river. A beat is a stretch of river from 50-100 yards identified by competition organizers. On Thursday the 18th and Friday the 19th each beat may be visited twice, when competitors switch beats and would be occupied for two, four-hour sessions totaling eight hours each day. On Saturday the 20th and Sunday the 21st each beat would only be visited once and would be only be occupied for four hours. Not every beat may be filled each day depending on how many anglers qualify for the tournament and there may be groups of less than 20 anglers for portions of the event.

Beats would be marked with temporary flagging and stationed near the following Day Use Areas: Big Bend, Poison Butte, Devil’s Post Pile, Cobble Rock, Chimney Rock, Lower Palisades, Stillwater, Castle Rock, and Greenwood. A maximum of 120 tournament anglers, in groups of 20, would be permitted over the four days of the tournament. A maximum of 40 tournament anglers would be authorized on Thursday and Friday and a maximum of 20 tournament anglers would be authorized on Saturday and Sunday during the competition. Each group of 20 anglers would spread out among the 20 beats and a volunteer judge would accompany the tournament angler for the duration of the event. One angler and one judge would be allowed at any one beat at a time. A small number of spectators would be expected and must follow all rules and regulations of the corridor including parking in safe and legal places.

Fifteen passenger vans will be used to drop off and pick up each paired tournament angler and their volunteer judge at each beat. Most areas would not see any increased traffic as the vans would drop off participants at their respective beats and pick them up at the end of the session. Signs and vehicle parking would only be authorized at Big Bend and Chimney Rock Recreation Areas. These day use areas and parking areas were constructed in high use areas with public day use and commercial uses in mind.

A roving film and camera crew, with a maximum of five participants, would be authorized to record and photograph participants. The photographs taken by the permittee's camera crew would be allowed in the permittee's own promotional material or given to participants free of charge does not require a film permit. Any motion picture or still photography taken by participants or using participant's equipment does not require a film permit. If the intent of any picture or video taken is to be sold to anyone, including participants, a Commercial Filming Permit would be required and is not authorized by this Special Recreation Permit.

The Crooked River portion of the event would be walking and wading only, no floating devices would be authorized.

Participants, including anglers, judges, photographers and all others associated with the event would be required to use existing recreation areas, roads, and angler trails to access the beats. BLM staff would preview area before the event and during and at the end of the event. Evidence of off trail use and trampled vegetation would result in immediate cancellation of the permit or result in permit requests being denied in the future. Beats would be chosen in a way to ensure that participants can reach each beat with no new trampling of vegetation.

Participants would follow State law and any special stipulations set by the organizer or BLM. The organizers have rules for fish handling, the number and types of flies used, to minimize effects to the fish and the resource. A copy of the rules is attached at the end of this document. This is a catch and release tournament.

BLM would provide event organizers information on Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics and Aquatic Invader Prevention. Organizers would be expected to share this information with participants prior to the event.

Participants would be required to adequately clean and dry their boots and waders of any plant material and seeds prior to leaving their beat to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. Additionally they would be required to adequately clean and dry boots and waders in between visiting the different venues to avoid transporting aquatic invaders. Organizers would provide participants with the Inspect, Clean, Dry message:

- Inspect – Carefully examine all of your equipment at the end of your trip to see if there are any visible signs of unwanted material attached. This includes any type of plant or mud. Remove anything visible.
- Clean – Use water to wash your equipment clean. High pressure water works great to remove anything that may be attached to your equipment. It's ok to clean with water from the river or lake where you have been fishing or boating from because you will leave behind invasive species that you may have picked up. However, never clean your equipment at your put-in spot since you can easily be cleaning off hitchhikers that have been with you since your last trip. If you cannot clean before you leave a site, then make sure to clean at home where there is no chance that an invader can reach the water.

- Dry – A thorough drying of your equipment will kill any live invaders you may have picked up. Make sure that every bit of hidden moisture is gone.

If any non-tournament angler occupies an area when the beats are being established, the non-tournament angler would not be disturbed and the beat would need to be established a minimum of 75 feet above or below the non-tournament angler. If a non-tournament angler approaches a tournament angler's beat, the volunteer judge would speak with the non-tournament angler to let him know what was occurring and gently encourage them to move above or below the beat. If the non-tournament angler decides he would like to fish within the beat after contact, it is their right and they would not be harassed or disturbed in doing so.

No overnight use is authorized as part of this event. The only staging area would be parking for several vehicles in the day use areas of the recreation sites, and totals less than an acre.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan

Date approved (ROD): September, 2005

The proposed action is in conformance with the above plan, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following land use plan decisions, objectives, terms, or conditions:

- Provide for projects, programs, and permits that promote a diverse range of recreation opportunities. Provide for individual, group, and competitive event recreational use that could not be reasonably accommodated on private land. (Page 109)

Additional Guidance: Lower Crooked Wild and Scenic River Management Plan

Date approved (ROD): October, 1992

- BLM will be the lead agency managing commercial and competitive recreation use within the corridor. Special land use requests and concessions will require a special land use permit. Commercial guides and outfitters will be required to obtain a Special Recreation Use Permit. The number of permitted guides and outfitters will remain discretionary dependent upon use levels and their impacts on outstandingly remarkable values. All special use permits will be analyzed for their consistency with wild and scenic river management objectives. (Page 18)

This permitted action would comply with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act by enhancing the recreational opportunities on the Lower Crooked Wild and Scenic River while maintaining and protecting the outstandingly remarkable fishery and scenery values of the river corridor. The three Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Lower Crooked River are Scenic, Recreation, and Fishery as described on Page 13-14 of the Lower Crooked River Management Plan. The proposed event is consistent with these Wild and Scenic River Management Plan objectives.

The Environmental Assessment for the Lower Crooked River chose Alternative 5 as the best management alternative because it offers the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation and provides the greatest overall protection and enhancement of the river corridors outstandingly remarkable and significant resource values. Alternative 5 analyzed centralized use areas being designated and modified to adequately facilitate high use recreation opportunities such as camping and fishing. This Special Recreation Permit would use the high use day use areas at Big Bend and Chimney Rock for temporary parking of several fifteen passenger vans. Camping would be unaffected by the event and day use fishing by the public would be unaffected by the activities authorized by the permit as miles of fishing opportunities would still be available, even at tournament beat locations. Tournament angling at this time of the year is not expected to be any more of an impact than the public angling that occurs each day of the year.

C. Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, Effective Date June 21, 2005., H. Recreation Management., (1) Issuance of special Recreation Permits for day use or overnight use up to 14 consecutive nights; that impacts no more than 3 staging area acres; and/or for recreational travel along roads, trails or in areas authorized in a land use plan. This CX cannot be used for commercial boating permits along Wild and Scenic Rivers. This CX cannot be used for the establishment or issuance of Special Recreation Permits for "Special Area" management. (43 CFR 2932.5) The establishment and issuance of Special Recreation Permits in this "Special Area" is authorized by the Lower Crooked Wild and Scenic River Management Plan as described in the additional guidance of the Land Use Plan Conformance section.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply. See attached CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation checklist. The cultural, T&E plant and T&E animal specialists have indicated they expect no unacceptable impacts to resources.

D. Signature

I considered many social and environmental effects to the land and social experience by allowing this Special Recreation Permit activity. The following mitigation measures must be followed to minimize any effects.

- **Social Experience and Crowding:** This would be minimized by only allowing only four hours of tournament fishing on the higher public use days of Saturday and Sunday and only eight hours of tournament fishing on lower public use days of Thursday and Friday. Crowding would also be minimized by allowing non-tournament anglers to fish undisturbed and beats would be set up at least 75 feet from any non-tournament angler. If a non-tournament angler decides to fish within a tournament angler's beat they would be allowed to do so without harassment.

- **Natural Resource Concerns:** All natural resource concerns will be mitigated by restricting all activity to established recreation areas, the paved road, and established angler trails and wading in the river. No trampling of vegetation would be tolerated. Most participants are versed in Leave No Trace, but an introductory talk would include Leave No Trace and fish handling techniques. Cleaning vegetative matter between beats and cleaning and drying boots and waders between venues will minimize the spread of invasive species. Critical eagle nesting and trout spawning are not occurring in October and would not be affected by issuance of this permit.

Authorizing official: Molly Brown
 Molly Brown, Deschutes Resource Area Field Manager

8/20/12
 Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this review, contact: Jim Beaupre, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Prineville Field Office, 3050 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, OR 97754. Telephone: (541) 416-6776. Email: jbeaupre@blm.gov.

| CX EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION | | YES | NO |
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| The proposed categorical exclusion action will: | | | |
| 2.1 | Have significant impacts on public health or safety. | | X |
| Rationale: This event would not have any significant impacts on public health or safety. First Aid Kits and cellular phones would be available in the passenger vans, and encouraged to be carried by each judge. | | | |
| 2.2 | 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. | | X |
| Rationale: The event location is in an area where no wilderness values have been identified. Although the activity is taking place within a Wild and Scenic River corridor, the area is heavily used by anglers and angler trails are abundant and well established. The Lower Crooked Wild and Scenic River Management Plan also clearly establishes the allowance for issuing SRPs on page 18 where it states: "BLM will be the lead agency managing commercial and competitive recreation use within the corridor. Special land use requests and concessions will require a special land use permit. Commercial guides and outfitters will be required to obtain a Special Recreation Use Permit. The number of permitted guides and outfitters will remain discretionary dependent upon use levels and their impacts on outstandingly remarkable values. All special use permits will be analyzed for their consistency with wild and scenic river management objectives." This permitted action complies with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act by enhancing | | | |

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| <p>the recreational opportunities on the Lower Crooked Wild and Scenic River while maintaining and protecting the outstandingly remarkable fishery and scenery values of the river corridor. The three Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Lower Crooked River are Scenic, Recreation, and Fishery as described on Page 13-14 of the Lower Crooked River Management Plan. The proposed event is consistent with these Wild and Scenic River Management Plan objectives.</p> | | |
| 2.3 | Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)]. | X |
| <p>Rationale: There are no known controversial environmental effects and this action does not involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.</p> | | |
| 2.4 | Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. | X |
| <p>Rationale: There is no evidence that this action has potentially significant environmental effects. The action does not include any unique or unknown environmental risks.</p> | | |
| 2.5 | Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. | X |
| <p>Rationale: Authorizing a Special Recreation Permit does not set any precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. Special Recreation Permits are issued at the manager's discretion and could be revoked for violations of the permit.</p> | | |
| 2.6 | Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. | X |
| <p>Rationale: Similar past activities had no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effect. The tournament was unauthorized in 2011 and BLM received no negative feedback. Public angling and permitted, commercial angling has not had any direct, indirect, or cumulative significant effects.</p> | | |
| 2.7 | 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. | X |
| <p>Rationale: The project area does not include any property listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.</p> | | |
| 2.8 | 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. | X |
| <p>Rationale: The scope of the proposed action would not affect any Endangered or Threatened Species or have significant impacts or result in the loss of critical habitat.</p> | | |
| 2.9 | Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. | X |
| <p>Rationale: The proposed action conforms to the direction given for the management of public lands in the Prineville District which complies with all applicable laws, such as the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act and others.</p> | | |
| 2.10 | Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or | X |

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| minority populations (Executive Order 12898). | | |
| Rationale: The proposed action has no adverse effect on any low income or minority population. | | |
| 2.11 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 |
| Rationale: No known sacred sites exist in the authorized area. | | |
| 2.12 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). | | X |
| Rationale: The proposed activity would not measurably change the rate of introduction, continued existence or spread of noxious weeds or invasive species. | | |

Legend

- Bureau of Land Management
 - Private
 - Highways
 - Developed Recreation Sites**
 - Recreation Site Type**
 - ▲ Campground
- Contour interval 100 feet (shown in brown)*

US National Fly Fishing Tournament Special Recreation Permit

DOI-BLM-OR-P060-2012-0053-CX



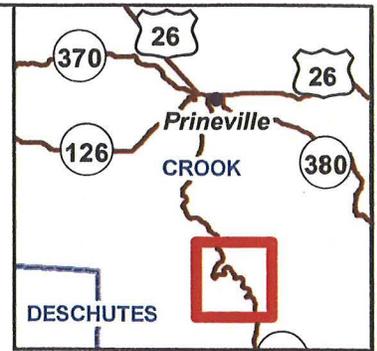
Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Prineville District
3050 NE Third Street
Prineville, Oregon 97754
Phone: 541-416-6700



No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification.

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***All beats will be set between Big Bend and Castle Rock Campgrounds.**

