

Categorical Exclusion Documentation

A. Background

BLM Office: Prineville Field Office

NEPA Log #: DOI - BLM - OR – P040 – 2015 – 0002 - CX

Proposed Action Title: Hail Creek Culvert Replacement

Location: Hail Creek – 18 Miles East of Post – T15S, R22E, Section 31.

Description of the Proposed Action:

The proposed action is to replace the culvert on Committee Creek Road at Hail Creek and create 75' of step pool channel below the culvert. This action is needed because the culvert is at risk of plugging and failing due to conditions resulting from the 2014 Oscar Canyon Fire. This road serves as the primary travel route for recreationists and agency staff visiting and working in the North Fork Crooked River Wilderness Study Area. The BLM would install an 8' wide x 5'7" tall culvert to replace the existing structure. This culvert is of a size that would allow for wood being transported by Hail Creek to pass through and would meet fish passage criteria by allowing for a native stream bottom within the culvert itself.

The Hail Creek watershed was a fairly heavily timbered basin which contained both conifers such as ponderosa pine and Douglas fir and native hardwoods such as alder and aspen. Much of this was lost during the fire which will likely result in greater quantities of debris being carried down the channel during precipitation events. Watershed modeling utilizing NRCS's small watershed hydrology model, TR-55, indicate that a 20% increase in peak stream flows resulting from the fire can be expected.

The state of the crossing prior to the fire was already compromised, with a portion of the stream flow passing through the road grade both through a side channel as well as beneath the culvert itself. While the size of the existing culvert will likely be adequate to pass any flows which may occur as a result of this fire, it will not facilitate the additional woody debris that may be transported by the stream, resulting in a blockage at the culvert. This blockage would force greater volumes of water to divert through the road grade, or even over the top of the road itself, drastically increasing the likelihood of a failure of the road at this location. This major road failure would not only pose a risk to human life and safety, but would also result in a large plume of sediment being delivered into the North Fork Crooked Wild and Scenic River.

There is a two foot drop at the bottom end of the culvert that will need to be addressed in order to facilitate fish passage through the structure. Because of the already steep gradient of the existing culvert, simply steepening the culvert is not an option in that the resulting energy inside the culvert during high flows will wash out any streambed material placed inside it. Therefore, a step-pool channel, or a stream consisting of channel spanning pools and boulder/cobble steps, will be constructed below the culvert extending 75 feet downstream of the crossing and into the North Fork WSA.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed project complies with the Brothers/La Pine Resource Management Plan (1989) "Cadastral surveys and engineering activities will continue to be conducted in support of resource management programs. The road maintenance program will continue." (page 117)

Page 98 of the Brothers/La_Pine RMP: "Management actions within riparian areas will include measures to protect or restore natural functions, as defined by Executive Orders 11988 and 11990 and the Oregon-Washington Riparian Enhancement Plan (1987)."

The Oregon/Washington Riparian Enhancement Plan (1987) provides overall guidance and direction for management of riparian areas within the planning area. The overall goal of this plan is to maintain, restore or improve riparian areas to achieve a healthy and productive ecological condition for maximum long-term multiple use benefits and values. This project would help achieve that goal.

C. Compliance with NEPA

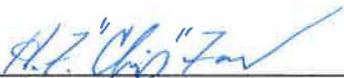
The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, I. Emergency Stabilization. Planned actions in response to wildfires, floods, weather events, earthquakes, or landslips that threaten public health or safety, property, and/or natural and cultural resources, and that are necessary to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management-approved condition as a result of the event. Such activities shall be limited to: repair and installation of essential erosion control structures; replacement or repair of existing culverts, roads, trails, fences, and minor facilities; construction of protection fences; planting, seeding, and mulching; and removal of hazard trees, rocks, soil, and other mobile debris from, on, or along roads, trails, campgrounds, and watercourses. These activities:

- (a) Shall be completed within one year following the event;
- (b) Shall not include the use of herbicides or pesticides;
- (c) Shall not include the construction of new roads or other new permanent infrastructure;
- (d) Shall not exceed 4,200 acres; and
- (e) May include temporary roads which are defined as roads authorized by contract, permit, lease, other written authorization, or emergency operation not intended to be part of the BLM transportation system and not necessary for long-term resource management. Temporary roads shall be designed to standards appropriate for the intended uses, considering safety, cost of transportation, and impacts on land and resources; and
- (f) Shall require the treatment of temporary roads constructed or used so as to permit the reestablishment by artificial or natural means or vegetative cover on the roadway and areas where the vegetative cover was disturbed by the construction or use of the road, as necessary to minimize erosion from the disturbed area. Such treatment shall

be designed to reestablish vegetative cover as soon as practicable, but at least within 10 years after the termination of the contract.
(August, 2007)

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.

D. Signature

Authorizing official:  11.17.14
H. F. "Chip" Faver, Date
Central Oregon Resource Area Field Manager

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this review, contact: Mike McKay, Hydrologist, Prineville Field Office, 3050 NE 3rd Street, Prineville, OR 97754, telephone (541) 416-6774, mmckay@blm.gov.

CX EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION The proposed categorical exclusion action will:	YES	NO
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
Rationale: The proposed action is not predicted to have significant impacts on public health or safety. The replacement of the culvert would help to increase the safety of travelers along the Committee Creek road by reducing the likelihood that the road will washout during a high flow event.		
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 proposed project is not located in park or refuge lands; therefore the proposed action would not have a significant effect on any such lands. The action will extend 75 feet into the North Fork WSA for the purpose of reconnecting the existing stream channel with the culvert. This project would create new surface disturbance inside the WSA. This would generally be considered a violation of the non-impairment standard. However, this project would fit two exceptions to the non-impairment standard found in BLM Manual 6330. Specifically, the BLM may take action to protect public safety and to restore impacts from emergencies. The fire caused an emergency situation and because of the potential for the road to wash out due to the predicted load of debris and sediment, public safety is at risk. The restoration would reestablish fish passage through the culvert and restore native plant populations in the area. BLM would partner with the Oregon Natural Desert Association, who would provide staff and volunteer labor to help ensure the site restoration is to a level that is better than what existed at the site prior to the disturbance. The project proposal is not located in any national natural landmarks, national monuments, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, or prime farmlands and thus would have no significant effect on any such ecologically significant or critical areas. The proposed action would not have any significant effect on historic or cultural resources because the area is considered to have a very low potential for significant cultural resources. The area has very low potential for significant cultural resources because the proposed project is located within the floodplain of Hail Creek or in road fill associated with the already established crossing. Additionally, there would not be any significant effect to cultural resources because any cultural resources found during installation and operation of the trap would necessitate a halt and an authorized officer would be contacted so that the situation can be assessed to determine if the project could continue in such a way as to prevent significant effects on the cultural resource.		

2.3	Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X
Rationale: The proposed project does not have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts with other resources. The effects associated with the project are generally well understood and agreed upon. The methods utilized to incorporate a natural stream bed through the culvert are fast becoming the industry standard and are readily implemented across federal lands.			
2.4	Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
Rationale: The proposed project would not have any highly uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks because the culvert is already present at the site. This project just replaces it with a larger one and reconnects it back to the stream channel.			
2.5	Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
Rationale: The proposed action does not set a precedent for future actions because future actions would go through their own evaluation processes and the decision pertaining to this proposal to replace the culvert only pertains to this proposal and not any future proposals that may be made.			
2.6	Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
Rationale: There are no other actions occurring in the project area that would have a significant cumulative environmental effect.			
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
Rationale: There are no properties associated with the National Register of Historic Places near the project site.			
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
Rationale: There are no listed or proposed to be listed species in the immediate project area.			
2.9	Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
Rationale: The proposed project would conform to all federal, state, and tribal laws.			
2.10	Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
Rationale: The proposed project would have no impact on low income or minority populations.			
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: The proposed project would not limit access or effect of physical integrity of sacred Indian sites on Federal lands because there are no known sacred sites, or access points to sacred sites, in or near the project 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 project would not contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species. The BLM would ensure that the spread of noxious weeds does not occur by washing equipment before and after use on public land.

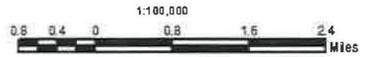


Legend

- Culvert
- Bureau of Land Management
- U.S. Forest Service
- ▨ Wildemess Study Areas
- Roads**
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- Major Highways
- Streams**
- perennial
- seasonal



Hail Creek Culvert Replacement



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