

## **Categorical Exclusion Documentation Format When Using Categorical Exclusions Not Established by Statute**

### **A. Background**

**BLM Office:** Marys Peak Resource Area      **Lease/Serial/Case File No:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Categorical Exclusion Number:** DOI-BLM-OR-S050-2012-0015-CX    **Date:** 6/11/2012

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Alsea Falls Recreation Site Sign Installation

**Location of Proposed Action:** T. 14 S., R. 7 W., Section 25, Willamette Meridian. Benton County, Oregon.

#### **Background and Description of Proposed Action:**

The Alsea Falls recreation site is a popular destination for day-use and overnight recreation in the Marys Peak Resource Area during the summer months. The BLM has been actively managing the area for forest health and public safety over the last few years. In 2010, the BLM implemented the South Fork Alsea Park Enhancement thinning project, which involved the removal of hazard and suppressed trees throughout the park. Areas affected with laminated root rot were subjected to the greatest tree removal, leaving up to half-acre gaps in the tree canopy that are visible from the South Fork Alsea River highway and the trail system connecting the day-use and campground areas. In the spring of 2011 and 2012, BLM employees planted a variety of native tree species in the recreation area, including Douglas-fir, western hemlock, western redcedar, Pacific dogwood, and Pacific crabapple.

The proposal is to install two kiosks to house site-specific interpretative signs in the day-use and campground areas to describe recent management activities and local flora. Minimal ground disturbance will occur as project activities will occur within the previously disturbed road bed and there will be no digging into the natural substrate.

**Approximate locations of signs to be placed in the Alsea Falls Campground and Day-Use areas.**

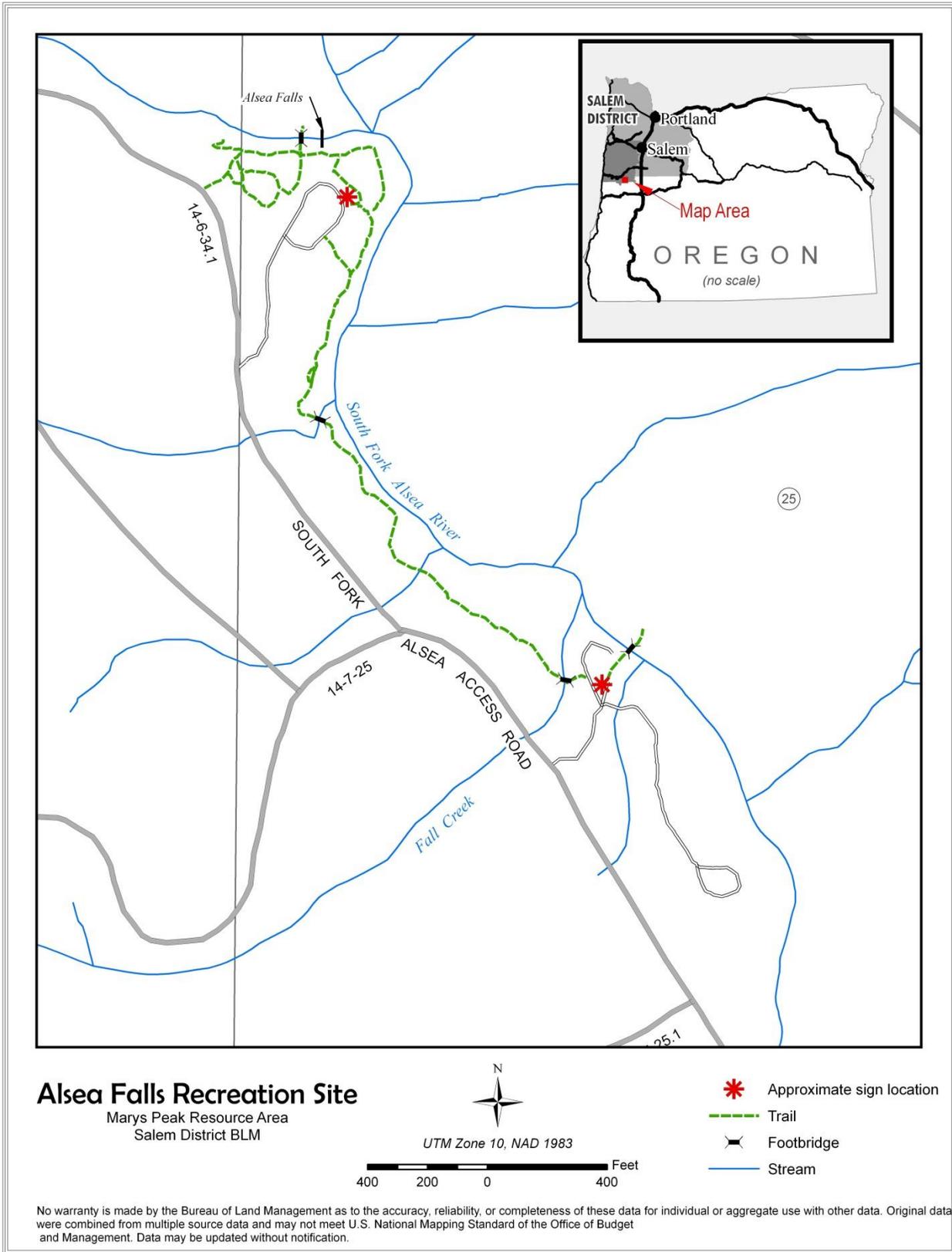


Photo 1. Current kiosk in the day-use area. This will be replaced with a larger kiosk.



## Project Design Features

### To minimize the spread of noxious weeds

- All equipment moved into the project area will be required to be clean and free of dirt and vegetation as directed by the Authorized Officer. Any disrupted soil would be sown with weed free red fescue or a native species mix if available.

### To protect Cultural Resources

- The project area occurs within the Coast Range Physiographic Province. Survey techniques are based on those described in Appendix D of the Protocol for Managing Cultural Resource on Lands Administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Oregon. A post-project survey would be conducted according to standards based on slope defined in the Protocol appendix.
- If any cultural and/or paleontological resource (historic or prehistoric site or object) is discovered during project activities all operations in the immediate area of such discovery shall be suspended until an evaluation of the discovery can be made by a professional archaeologist to determine appropriate actions to prevent the loss of significant cultural or scientific values.

## B. Land Use Plan Conformance

**Land Use Plan Name:** *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (1995 RMP)* **Date Approved** May 1995 **Date Amended:** The 1995 RMP was amended in January 2001 as documented in the *Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and Other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines*, dated January 2001 (SM/ROD).

This project conforms and is consistent with the Land Use Plan (LUP) because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

- Enhance travel and recreation management through increased emphasis on interpretive and informational signs and maps (RMP, p. 42)

## 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 G(4), which allows for “Placement of recreational, special designation, or information signs, visitor registers, kiosks, and portable sanitation devices.”

**Table 1. Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review**

Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion:	Yes	No
<p><b>a) Have significant impacts on public health or safety?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The proposed project will have no impacts on public health or safety therefore will have no significant impacts on public health or safety. All activities associated with the proposed action will be conducted in a forested location outside of population centers and will conform to established Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules concerning health and safety.</p>		No
<p><b>b) 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, floodplains, national monuments, migratory birds, other ecologically significant or critical areas?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The project area is located within the Alsea Falls Recreation Site. This project is of small context and intensity and is designed to enhance visitor experiences. The project is not located in any refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, or national natural landmarks. There are no floodplains, prime farmlands, wetlands, national monuments, or other ecologically significant or critical areas present in the project area. There are no known historic or cultural resources located within the project area.</p>		No
<p><b>c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2) (E)]?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The effects of the proposed action are not controversial and there are no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. Past experience has shown that the environmental effects of the proposed project are not highly controversial. The ROD/RMP established the land use allocation and goals for the affected lands. As such, there is no unresolved conflict regarding other uses of these resources.</p>		No
<p><b>d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Installing interpretative signs in recreation areas is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas without highly controversial, highly uncertain, or unique or unknown risks.</p>		No
<p><b>e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The proposed project is authorized under the existing ROD/RMP, and as such, this project will represent implementation of that land use plan decision, not a decision in principle on future actions.</p>		No
<p><b>f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?</b></p>		No

Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion:	Yes	No
<p><b>Rationale:</b> There are no cumulative effects associated with the proposed project and therefore no significant cumulative effects as a result of these actions.</p>		
<p><b>g) Have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as determined by either the bureau or office?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> There are no NRHP listed or eligible sites located within the project area.</p>	No	
<p><b>h) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened (T&amp;E) Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b>  <u>Botany:</u> No T&amp;E or Bureau Special Status botanical or fungi will be affected.  <u>Wildlife:</u> Proposed action would have no effect on any T&amp;E or Bureau Special Status wildlife. ESA, Section 7 consultation is not needed.  <u>Fish:</u> No T&amp;E or Bureau Special Status fish species will be affected.</p>	No	
<p><b>i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The proposed project is in conformance with direction given for the management of public lands in the Salem District ROD/RMP, which complies with all applicable laws such as the Federal Land Policy Management Act, Endangered Species Act, Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, and others.</p>	No	
<p><b>j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> The project is not anticipated to have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations.</p>	No	
<p><b>k) 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)?</b></p> <p><b>Rationale:</b> Past actions within this area have not resulted in tribal identification of concerns.</p>	No	
<p><b>l) 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)?</b></p>	No	

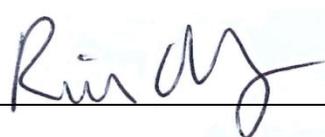
Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion:	Yes	No
<p><b>Rationale:</b> The risk rating for the long-term establishment of noxious weeds through the implementation of this project is low because: a) the project area is limited in size, b) the project area will be monitored for the establishment of noxious weed species, c) the resource area has a weed management plan in place which allows for control of non-native and noxious weed species and d) the Authorized Officer would require sowing grass seed on mineral soil areas which would reduce the amount of potential noxious weed habitat.</p>		

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 12 extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR Part 46, Section 46.215 (see Table 1, above) apply.

**D. Interdisciplinary Review and Signature**

Interdisciplinary Team Review

<u>Name</u>	<u>Specialty</u>
Debra Drake	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Ron Exeter	Botanist
Scott Hopkins	Wildlife Biologist
Stefanie Larew	NEPA Coordinator
Arlene Roux	Forester – Silviculture
Scott Snedaker	Fisheries Biologist
Heather Ulrich	Archaeologist
Steve Wegner	Hydrologist and Soil Scientist

Authorized Official:  Date: 6/11/2012  
Name: Rich Hatfield  
Title: Marys Peak Field Manager

**Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this Categorical Exclusion, contact Debra Drake, Outdoor Recreation Planner, Salem District Office, 1717 Fabry Rd SE, Salem, Oregon, 97306, (503) 815-1134.

