

Prairie Mountain Communication Site Amendment

Final Decision and Decision Rationale for Prairie Mountain Communication Site Amendment

Environmental Assessment Number DOI-BLM-OR-S050-2009-0004-EA

November 2009

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Oregon State Office
Salem District
Marys Peak Resource Area

Township 15 South, Range 7 West, Section 7 Willamette Meridian
Benton County, Oregon

Responsible Agency: USDI - Bureau of Land Management

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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering economic use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interest of all people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

I. Introduction

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has conducted an environmental analysis for the Prairie Mountain Communication Site Amendment, which is documented in the *Prairie Mountain Communication Site Amendment Environmental Assessment* (DOI-BLM-OR-S050-2009-0004-EA) and the associated project file. The proposed action is to retain and upgrade an existing electronic site through the installation of a 120 feet tall tower (with the ability to extend an additional 40 feet at a later date) and upgrade the building site within LSR Land Use Allocation (LUA). A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) was signed on October 16, 2009 and the EA and FONSI were then made available for public review.

The decision documented in this Decision Rationale (DR) is based on the analysis documented in the EA. This decision authorizes the implementation of only those activities directly related to and included within the communication site amendment.

II. Decision

I have decided to implement Prairie Mountain Communication Site Amendment as described in the proposed action (EA pp. 5-7), hereafter referred to as the “selected action”. The selected action is shown on the map attached to this Decision Rationale.

Decision Summary.

The following is a summary of this decision.

- Upgrade the site compound surface around existing building to provide a solid groomed surface for installation of site components (see site drawing).
- Remove the old fence. Supply and install replacement 8' high chain link fencing with a twelve-foot wide, double swing gate around the shelter compound.
- Construct concrete slab for above ground Liquid Propane (LP) fuel tank.
- Construct foundation for the generator.
- Install Liquid Propane (LP) fuel tank, fill it with fuel and connect to generator.
- Install standby power generator, including interconnection wiring between the generator, transfer switch, and site electrical service mains.
- Remove old indoor generator, exhaust fans, and air intake/exhaust ducts and louvers.
- Install uninterruptible power supply.
- Fell and yard approximately 70 to 100 green trees located within the existing Prairie Mountain meadow to provide wavepath transmission to the new tower. Where possible, trees would be felled to existing roadways and be processed by equipment operated on the roadways. One skid road approximately 500 feet long would be necessary to harvest trees in the southwest corner of the project area. Yarding would be accomplished using ground-based equipment. Harvested trees would be utilized as fish logs for aquatic habitat restoration purposes and the skid road would be obliterated and seeded with native grass.

This decision is based on site-specific analysis in the *Prairie Mountain Communication Site Amendment Environmental Assessment* (DOI-BLM-OR-S050-2009-0004-EA), the supporting project record, as well as the management direction contained in the Salem District Resource Management Plan (May 1995), which are incorporated by reference in the EA.

III. Compliance with Direction:

On July 16, 2009 the U.S. Department of the Interior, withdrew the Records of Decision (2008 ROD) for the Western Oregon Plan Revision and directed the BLM to implement actions in conformance with the resource management plans for western Oregon that were in place prior to December 30, 2008. The analysis documented in the Prairie Mountain Communication Site Amendment EA is site-specific and supplements analyses found in the Salem District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement, September 1994 (RMP/FEIS). Since project planning and preparation of National Environmental Policy Act documentation for this project began prior to the effective date of the 2008 ROD, this project had been designed to comply to the land use allocations, management direction, and objectives of the 1995 resource management plan (1995 RMP) and related documents which direct and provide the legal framework for management of BLM lands within the Salem District (EA p. 4). All of these documents may be reviewed at the Marys Peak Resource Area office.

Survey and Manage Review

“On July 25, 2007, the Under Secretary of the Department of Interior signed a new Survey and Manage Record of Decision Record (Decision To Remove the Survey and Manage Mitigation Measure Standards and Guidelines from Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plans Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl) that removed the survey and manage requirements from all of the BLM resource management plans (RMPs) within the range of the northern spotted owl.

IV. Alternatives Considered

The EA analyzed the effects of the proposed action and the no action alternatives. No unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (section 102(2) (E) of NEPA) were identified. No action alternatives were identified that will meet the purpose and need of the project and have meaningful differences in environmental effects from the proposed action (EA Section 3.2). Complete descriptions of the "action" and "no action" alternatives are contained in the EA, pp. 12-18.

V. Decision Rationale

Considering the content of the EA and supporting project record and the management direction contained in the RMP, I have decided to implement Alternative 2, hereafter referred to as the selected action as described above. The following is my rationale for this decision.

1. The selected action:
 - Meets the purpose and need of the project (EA section 1.6), as shown in *Table 1*.
 - Complies with the *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*, May 1995 (RMP):
 - Will not have significant impact on the affected elements of the environment (EA FONSI pp. ii-iv) beyond those already anticipated and addressed in the RMP EIS.
 - Has been adequately analyzed.

2. The No Action alternative was not selected because it does not meet the Purpose and Need directly, or delays the achievement of the Purpose and Need as shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Comparison of the Alternatives with Regard to the Purpose of and Need for Action (EA section 1.6)

Purpose and Need (EA Section 1.6)	No Action (Alternative 1)	Proposed Action (Alternative 2)
The purpose for the project is to make BLM –administered land available for needed rights-of-way where consistent with Oregon statewide planning goals (RMP p.55). There is a need to retain and upgrade an existing electronic site through the installation of a 120 feet tall tower (with the ability to extend an additional 40 feet at a later date) and upgrade the building site.	Does not meet this purpose and need. Without upgrading the existing communication site four state agencies would not meet federal and state mandates of narrow banding and providing interoperability.	The improvements would allow four state agencies to meet federal and state mandates of narrow banding and providing interoperability. Prairie Mountain is a key site in OWIN’s statewide microwave system and an integral part of Oregon’s public safety communications network.

VI. Public Involvement/Consultation/Coordination

Public Scoping:

- A scoping letter, dated September 4, 2009, was sent to 8 potentially affected or interested individuals, groups, and agencies. No responses were received during the scoping period.

EA and FONSI Comment Period and Comments:

The EA and/or notice of availability of the EA were mailed to approximately 11 agencies, individuals and organizations on October 19, 2009. A legal notice was placed in a local newspaper soliciting public input on the action from October 22 to November 5, 2009. No comment letters were received.

Consultation/Coordination:

Fish: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)

Project site is located on the ridge top between Bummer Creek and East Fork Lobster Creek drainages in Section 7. Fish present in proximity to project site is most likely coastal cutthroat trout. In East Fork Lobster cutthroat trout is likely more than 1 mile downstream from the project site. In Bummer Creek fish bearing streams are estimated to be 1.75 miles downstream from the project site. ESA listed Oregon Coast coho salmon are present in both Bummer and East Fork Lobster Creeks downstream of the project area. Based on Streamnet distribution database coho are between approximately 1.8 miles (East fork) and 2.7 miles (Bummer) downstream from the project area.

ARC GIS review indicates no suspected stream channels in the project area. The lack of stream

channels in the project site indicates that any soil impacts on site would not be transported downstream were resident fish, aquatic habitat, ESA listed fish, and ESA listed Critical Habitat are located. The combination of distance of the project site and lack of connecting features to fish habitat indicates no effects to resident fish or ESA listed fish would be anticipated by the proposed expansion project.

VII. Conclusion

I have determined that change to the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI – October 2009) for the Prairie Mountain Communication Site Amendment is not necessary because I've considered and concur with information in the EA and FONSI.

Protests: In accordance with Forest Management Regulations at 43 CFR 5003.2, the decision for this communication site amendment will not become effective or be open to formal protest until the Notice of Communication Site Amendment is published "in a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the lands affected by the decision are located". Protests of this communication site amendment must be filed within 15 days of the first publication of the notice. For this project, the Notice of Communication Site Amendment will be published in the *Gazette Times* newspaper on or around November 10, 2009.

Contact Person: For additional information concerning this decision, contact Gary Humbar (503) 315-5981, Marys Peak Resource Area, Salem BLM, 1717 Fabry SE, Salem, Oregon 97306.

Approved by: Trish Wilson
Trish Wilson
Marys Peak Resource Area Field Manager

NOV 6, 2009
Date

PRAIRIE MOUNTAIN REPEATER SITE SELECTED ACTION MAP T. 15 S., R. 7 W., Section 7, W.M.

