

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Douglas Creek Allotment Management Plan (AMP) Revision and Douglas Creek Canyon Restoration Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-OR-134-2014-0008-EA

Bureau of Land Management

Wenatchee Field Office
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Background

The *Douglas Creek Allotment Management Plan (AMP) Revision and Douglas Creek Canyon Restoration Environmental Assessment (EA)* considers requests to graze livestock in the Douglas Creek grazing allotment and unleased adjacent areas, and simultaneously considers measures to improve land health and watershed conditions in action area (as described on page 5 of the EA).

The action area is located approximately 18 miles east-northeast of Wenatchee, Washington in south-central Douglas County. The legal description of the action area includes portions of T.23 N. R.23 E., sections 8-11, 13-16, and 21-24. Additional Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered portions of Douglas Creek canyon in T.23 N. R.23 E., Section 5 and T.24 N. R.23 E., Sections 19, 29, 30, and 32 are also analyzed in this EA.

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Based upon the review of the test for significance and the environmental analyses conducted, I have determined that the actions analyzed in the EA (DOI-BLM-OR-134-2014-0008) do not constitute a major federal action and that their implementation will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Accordingly, I have determined that an Environmental Impact Statement need not be prepared for this project.

Implementing regulations for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40CFR 1508.27) provide criteria for determining the significance of effects. *Significantly*, as used in NEPA requires consideration of both context and intensity. The text below cites 40 CFR 1508.27, with an explanation following each, stating how the proposed action conforms to this regulation.

Pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.13 and 1508.27, the potential “significance” of all reasonable alternatives was evaluated and it was concluded that there will be no significant effect on the human environment (including the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment). No significant irreversible or irretrievable resource commitments have been made, and long-term productivity has not been sacrificed in order to meet the project objectives, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not needed. This determination is based on:

a) Context: This means that the significance of an action must be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For instance, in the case of a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. Both short- and long-term effects are relevant:

The disclosure of effects in the EA found the actions limited in context. The proposed action is site-specific in nature and its effects are limited in size. The activities described in the EA are limited to ten years in duration. Therefore, effects are local in nature and are not likely to significantly affect regional or national resources.

b) Intensity: This refers to the severity of impact. Responsible officials must bear in mind that more than one agency may make decisions about partial aspects of a major action. The following are considered in evaluating intensity:

1. *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on balance the effects will be beneficial.*

Impacts associated with the proposed action are discussed in affected environment and environmental effects section of the EA. The proposed action will result in both beneficial and negative impacts to the human environment; however the impact on any resource is not expected to be significant.

2. *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety*

The proposed action is not expected to have any impacts related to public health or safety.

3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

Although approximately 200 acres of prime farmland (aggregated to include irrigated and/or drained farmland), and 570 acres of Farmland of Statewide Importance exist in the action area, action alternatives would not preclude future agricultural uses (EA, p.11). Therefore, no impacts to Prime and Unique Farmlands are expected. In addition, there are no ecologically critical areas associated with the project area.

Formal National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultations for projects discussed in the EA were initiated with the Washington State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Colville Confederated Tribes and the Yakama Indian Nation. The DAHP concurred with the Area of Potential Effect and with a determination of no adverse effect to cultural resources, provided that site protection and archaeological monitoring takes place as recommended (EA, p.9). Colville Confederated Tribes asked that BLM add an appendix to the EA which clarifies inadvertent discovery clauses for cultural resources and human remains in the event that previously unknown

cultural materials are identified (EA p.80). No response was received from the Yakama

4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

Any effects on the quality of the human environment are not highly controversial.

5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

The proposed action does not contain any unique or unknown risks to the human environment.

6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

The proposed action does not set a precedent for future actions with significant effects in the action area.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment. Significance cannot be avoided by terming an action temporary or by breaking it down into small component parts.*

A review of the cumulative impacts associated with the proposed action and reasonably foreseeable future actions found there would be no significant cumulative effects on the environment. The proposed action's direct and indirect effects on resources in the project area are minor and generally benign, with some exceptions. The incremental contribution of this project's relatively benign effects to the effects of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future action is not anticipated to result in any significant cumulative effects.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

The proposed action has been designed to curtail effects to cultural resources (EA, Section 2). Therefore, there would be no adverse impacts to cultural resources identified in the action area. Consultation with the DAHP concurs with this determination.

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

Although pygmy rabbit were not found in the action area during surveys, the proposed action's design features include avoiding activities that would affect this species if found.

Therefore, the proposed action is not expected to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat.

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The proposed action does not violate any Federal, State, or local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

/s/Linda Coates-Markle

3-16-2015

Linda Coates-Markle
Field Manager

Date