

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

**Wenatchee Field Office
915 Walla Walla Ave.
Wenatchee, Washington 98801**

SCOPING/INFORMATION PACKAGE

**DOUGLAS CREEK STREAM RESTORATION AND COUNTY ROAD REPAIR
BLM Wenatchee Field Office and Douglas County**

Introduction

This information package summarizes a Bureau of Land Management (BLM) proposal to complete bank stabilization and stream restoration activities on Douglas Creek and to assist Douglas County in acquiring funding for road repairs along the Douglas Creek Road.

Federal actions must be analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and state laws and regulations to determine potential environmental consequences.

The purpose of this information package is to inform interested and affected parties of the proposal and to solicit comments to assist with the environmental review of the proposal. The analysis of the proposal is underway and will be documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA). Public comments received in response to this solicitation will be used to identify potential environmental issues related to the proposed action and to identify alternatives to the proposed action that also fulfill the purpose of and need for the project.

Project Area Description

The BLM manages approximately 29,000 acres in the Douglas Creek area. This area comprises the largest single block of public lands in Douglas County. The Douglas Creek area is located in the southwest corner of Douglas County, south of Waterville in central Washington (T.23N., R.23E.). Douglas Creek is in the Moses Coulee Management Area of the BLM Spokane District's Wenatchee Field Office. The main road through the Douglas Creek area is a Douglas County road. The Nature Conservancy (TNC) owns a small portion of land crossed by the road in the southwest corner of T.23N., R.23E. The southern access point is near Palisades, approximately 25 miles from Wenatchee, and the northern access point is approximately 12 miles from Waterville.

Douglas Creek is a unique coldwater fish-bearing perennial stream in a desert shrub-steppe ecosystem. Originally, the creek was populated by native redband trout; however, over the last 70 years, stocked hatchery rainbow trout have hybridized or diluted the native redband trout population.

Background

Most of the lands within Douglas Creek were under BLM management prior to establishing the Wenatchee Field Office in 1984. One of the first management actions taken by the BLM in Douglas Creek was to fence and prohibit livestock grazing in the stream corridor to protect the creek and riparian vegetation from grazing damage. Active management of the riparian corridor has resulted in re-growth of vegetation and, subsequently, improved habitat along the creek.

Approximately 20 years ago, a large flood event damaged the county road in several places (see attached map). Subsequent flood events have exacerbated the damage to the extent that public access has been impeded. The primary areas of concern are as follows, in sequence from north to south (as shown the attached map).

On BLM managed lands:

1. The creek undercut bank below the road north of the first locust tree grove.

On the county road:

2. Two gravelled stream crossings that have been affected by high flows and beaver dams.
3. A damaged, non-functioning culvert northwest of McCue Springs.
4. The McCue Springs crossing which can be wet, muddy, and sometimes flooded.
5. The steep bank/culvert at the last stream crossing before reaching the Palisades which has been destroyed. Furthermore, the approach from the north is extremely rough and uneven. This area of concern is within the section of land owned by TNC.

Of the areas of concern, item #1 is the BLM's responsibility because it is located outside of the county road right-of-way. The remaining areas of concern, #2-5, are Douglas County's responsibility because these areas are located on the county road.

Because these areas of concern and the actions necessary to remedy the issues are co-located and inter-related, the BLM and Douglas County propose to develop a joint NEPA/Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) document, which will also form the basis for the submission of a Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application (JARPA). The joint document will satisfy the BLM's NEPA requirements for item #1, and the County's SEPA requirements for items #2-5; it will also form the basis for the JARPA for both the County and the BLM. The BLM has agreed to assist the County in preparing the JARPA which would be required for any work with potential to affect the waterway. In addition, the BLM and the county are jointly pursuing grant funding to assist the county in completing road repairs (items #2-5 above).

From Douglas County's perspective, the road repair is a relatively low priority given that the county's budget is limited and there are no county residents on this portion of the road. However, the county does acknowledge the importance of recreation opportunities in Douglas Creek. Therefore, road repairs and future roadwork in the canyon is contingent on the county's ability to acquire grants or other funding sources.

Proposed Action

The Proposed Action Alternative consists of the following five elements:

1. Undercut Bank Restoration

The BLM would repair the undercut bank beneath the road just after the first locust grove campsite. Approximately 50 feet of large boulder riprap would be placed at the toe of the undercut bank slope under the road to reduce silt and sediment delivery into the stream. The riprap would be backfilled with smaller rocks, earth, and gravel. Off-site borrow material may be used for fill around the boulders. Several railroad ballast stockpiles in Douglas Creek canyon have been identified as potential borrow sites. Riparian vegetation, including native willow species, would be planted within the boulders. Two large boulder barbs would be installed upstream of the undercut bank to direct most high flows into the relict channel next to the main channel and away from the undercut bank.

A Walking Spyder backhoe would be used for all instream work. The Walking Spyder backhoe is designed to prevent streambed and riparian damage. The BLM would ensure that the creek was blocked off by nets in the work area prior to beginning any instream work. All fish would be removed by electro shocking and would be deposited downstream of the nets prior to beginning work.

The proposed restoration work would occur after the primary spring runoff. It is estimated that the equipment would be operating in and adjacent to the stream for approximately 3-5 days following the completion of site preparation work.

2. *Gravelling of Two Stream Crossings*

Fill the two hardened crossings 4-6 inches deep with local gravel and small cobble from a dump truck, enough to raise the road bed at the crossing but not such that it would impede stream flows or fish passage.

3. *Culvert Near McCue Springs*

Remove the small non-functioning culvert across the road. Create a small ditch or waterbar (approx. 8' x 6") on the south side of the road to encourage proper drainage away from the road.

4. *Gravelling of the McCue Springs Crossing*

Fill the existing hardened crossing at McCue Springs with small gravel.

5. *Repairs to Steep Bank / Southernmost Stream Crossing*

On the steep, downhill stream crossing, machinery would be used to break off sharp rock points down to bedrock and/or to remove rocks altogether. Spoils and other debris would be scattered outside of the immediate road corridor.

Preliminary Purpose and Need

Visitors are drawn to the Douglas Creek canyon for a number of reasons, including hiking, camping, fishing, swimming, and hunting. The current condition of the county road provides for unreliable travel for visitors that are camping or traveling through the Douglas Creek canyon. Visitors also drive through a number of creek crossings, where the water flows across the road.

The project is needed to improve public access to the area, manage recreation use, reduce riparian impacts, and improve water quality.

The purpose of this action is to:

- Restore, protect, or enhance riparian resources and water quality.
- Improve safe ingress/egress to the area.
- Reduce unauthorized, user-created routes in areas that are difficult to negotiate.

As part of the NEPA review process, the BLM will decide:

- Should the BLM stabilize the undercut bank?
- What, if any, further actions should the BLM take to improve riparian resource conditions, including water quality improvements?

As part of the Washington SEPA review process, the County will decide:

- Should the County perform some or all of the specified road repairs?

Douglas County would be responsible for all repairs and ongoing maintenance on the county road. Although the BLM would assist Douglas County in acquiring grant or Federal funding for wholesale road repairs, the BLM is not making a decision on whether or not to proceed with any repairs on the road.

Preliminary Issues

The following issues or factors have been identified preliminarily for further analysis or consideration in the EA:

- What would be the short-term effects on recreational access and/or experiences in the vicinity of restoration and repair sites during implementation of the proposed project?
- What would be the effect of in-stream work on fish and other aquatic species in Douglas Creek?
- What would be the effect of bank restoration efforts on cultural resources in the immediate project area?

Public Input Needed

Please submit your comments on the proposed action and other issues to be considered to the address noted below by **May 13, 2011**. Comments will be most useful if they provide additional information about the preliminary issues identified above, identify new issues or concerns, or propose alternative actions to accomplish the purpose and need and/or to resolve issues.

Public comments may be submitted electronically or by U.S. Mail to the addresses noted below.

Please send electronic comments to:

OR_Wenatchee_Mail@blm.gov with “**Douglas Creek Stream Restoration EA**” in the subject line.

Please send U.S. Mail comments to:

Attn: **Douglas Creek Stream Restoration EA**

BLM–Wenatchee Field Office

915 Walla Walla Ave.

Wenatchee, WA 98801

For all comments submitted, please identify whether you are submitting comments as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization.

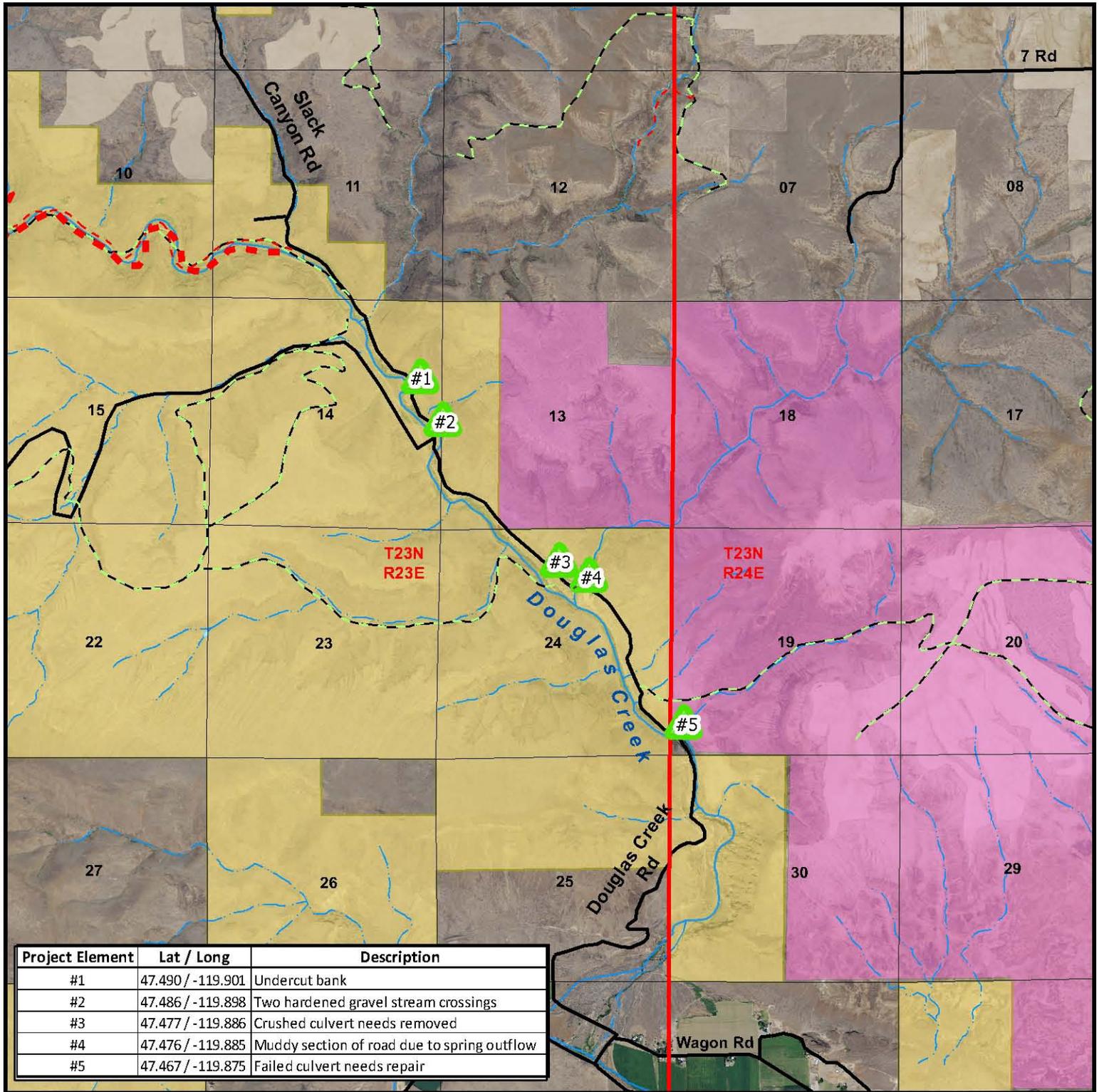
Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

If you have questions, please contact Karen Kelleher, Wenatchee Field Manager, at 509-665-2100.

Enclosures:

Project Area Map

Douglas Creek Stream Restoration/County Road Repair Project



Project Element	Lat / Long	Description
#1	47.490 / -119.901	Undercut bank
#2	47.486 / -119.898	Two hardened gravel stream crossings
#3	47.477 / -119.886	Crushed culvert needs removed
#4	47.476 / -119.885	Muddy section of road due to spring outflow
#5	47.467 / -119.875	Failed culvert needs repair

Project Element

Land Status

BLM

TNC

Road

Non-Motorized Trail

Douglas Creek Trail

Intermittent Stream

Perennial Stream

April
2011

0 0.5 1

Miles

GPS Coordinates in NAD_1983

PROJECT AREA

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.