

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

**Wallupa/Wildcat Creek Road Reconstruction
Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-OR-V050-2014-065-EA**



BACKGROUND

The FONSI is a document that explains the reasons why an action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and why, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will not be required (40 CFR 1508.13). This FONSI is a stand-alone document but is attached to the Environmental Assessment (EA) and incorporates the EA by reference. The FONSI does not constitute the authorizing document: the decision record is the authorizing document.

“Significance” as used in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires considerations of both context and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27). For context, significance varies with the setting of the proposed action. For a site-specific action, significance would usually depend upon the effects in the locale rather than in the world as a whole. For this proposed action and alternatives, the effects are confined to the immediate area within the Wallupa Creek Road Reconstruction project. For this reason, the analysis of effects is in the context of this site. These effects are described and analyzed in DOI-BLM-OR-V050-2014-065-EA.

Intensity refers to the severity of effect. Wallowa County will conduct the actions described using the BMPs referenced in the EA and limiting effects to the immediate vicinity of the proposed project.

The action being proposed is for the BLM to authorize Wallowa County to reconstruct a portion of Wallupa/Wildcat Road on BLM administered land. The BLM is required to comply with NEPA and the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations. The BLM determined that an EA was necessary to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with this proposed action. The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on understanding of environmental consequences and take actions that protect, restore, and/or enhance the environment (43 CFR 1500.1(c)). The EA prepared for this action analyzes the environmental consequences of reconstructing the Wallupa/Wildcat Road.

On August 7, 2014 National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued a biological opinion (BO) for the Wallupa/Wildcat Creek Road Reconstruction project. NMFS’s opinion is that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of Snake River Basin (SRB) steelhead, SRB spring/summer Chinook salmon, or destroy or adversely modify their designated critical habitats.

The proposed road reconstruction is not within areas possessing wilderness characteristics, and the BLM has determined that no wilderness characteristics are present within the boundaries of this project.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Any land management action involving ground disturbance invariably, and by definition, entails environmental effects. I have determined, based upon the analysis of environmental impacts contained in the referenced EA (DOI-BLM-OR-V050-2014-065-EA), that the potential impacts resulting from the proposed action would not be significant and that, therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

I find that the project’s affected region is localized and the effects of implementation are relevant to compliance with existing land use plans. There would be no adverse societal or regional impacts and no significant adverse impacts to the environment. In addition, NMFS issued a

biological opinion for the Wallupa/Wildcat Creek Road Reconstruction project. NMFS's opinion is that the proposed action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of SRB steelhead, SRB spring/summer Chinook salmon, or destroy or adversely modify their designated critical habitats. I have evaluated the environmental effects, together with the proposed mitigating measures, against the tests of significance found at 40 CFR 1508.27. Although not a condition of my determination, implementation of all Best Management Practices (BMP) of the proposed project would be critical to the success of the action.

I have determined the following:

1. The proposed action would cause no significant impacts, either beneficial or adverse; all impacts would be insignificant due to the small scale of the project. The area disturbed from reconstruction of the Wallupa/Wildcat Road will be approximately 1000 feet long.
2. The proposed action would not affect unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, or ecologically critical areas because of the small scale of the project.
3. The proposed action would have no highly controversial effects because of the small scale and existing use and disturbance on Wallupa/Wildcat Creek Road.
4. The proposed action is not related to any immediate action being considered by BLM because other than the Wallupa/Wildcat Road Reconstruction project, there are no other projects pending or active in the immediate area.
5. The proposed action would have no adverse effects to scientific, cultural, or historical resources including; sites that are "currently listed" or "potentially eligible for listing" on the National Register of Historic Places. Pursuant to 36 CFR 800.
6. The proposed action would not significantly adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or any habitat critical to an endangered or threatened species because the project would occur adjacent to already disturbed ground where no known federally listed threatened, endangered, or strategic plant species populations occur. BMPs and design features would be followed for construction and maintenance activities using heavy equipment to minimize effects of the proposed action.
7. The proposed action would not significantly adversely affect livestock grazing because the livestock operators within the project area have chosen not to graze the BLM parcels adjacent to the project area.
8. The proposed action does not violate any law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment because all Local, State and Federal laws and regulations will be followed and regular inspections and monitoring will occur for the life of the project. The proposed action is consistent with the Baker Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision (1989).



Lori Wood
Baker Resource Area Field Manager
Vale District BLM

9/12/2014

Date