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*CACHE CREEK PROPOSED WILDERNESS
TRAIL MAINTENANCE AND REROUTES*

Environmental Assessment CA-340-06-019

Trail Repair and Reroutes prior to Wilderness Designation

July 18, 2006



United States
Department of the Interior

Bureau of Land Management
Ukiah Field Office
2550 North State Street
Ukiah, California

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Date: July 18, 2006

Project Title: Cache Creek Proposed Wilderness Trail Maintenance and Reroutes

Name and Address of Applicant: Bureau of Land Management, Ukiah Field Office

Project Location: T.13N., R.6W. Section 14, 15
Lake County (Lower Lake 7.5' Quad)
T.13N. R.5W. Section 4, 9, 15, 16
Colusa County (Wilson Valley 7.5' Quad)

Land Status Verified: Yes, all public land

Affected Surface Area: The trail maintenance planned near the Baton Flat area along the Redbud Trail will affect approximately ½ acre. Approximately ⅓ acre is affected by the three short stretches of trail reroutes along the Cache Creek Ridge Trail.

Other spots along these two trails may need light touch-up and some brushing where trees and brush have encroached. Estimated total surface area affected at the two sites is less than one acre.

Authorization for the Action: Federal Land Policy and Management Act, 1976.

Conformance with Applicable Land Use Plan: Ukiah Resource Management Plan (RMP) Final, June, 2006; Cache Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan (Final), 2004

Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, Policies, Plans or Other Environmental Documents: The two project sites are located within the Cache Creek Natural Area (CCNA) and are subject to the management constraints found in the Cache Creek Coordinated Resource Management Plan.

Remarks: The Redbud Trail project site is within the boundary of proposed wilderness designation for Cache Creek, while the Cache Creek Ridge Trail project site is just outside the boundary in Colusa County. The goal is to complete this work before designation as wilderness has occurred.

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Need for the Proposed Action:

The Redbud Trail beyond Baton Flat has not been maintained for several years. Several years ago a slide severely damaged a stretch of this trail approximately 200 yards long. Since that time the slide in this area has stabilized, however the damage to the trail from the slide has not yet been repaired. It is very difficult at this time for those on foot, horse, or mountain bike to negotiate the access through this damaged portion of the trail.

BLM plans to maintain the Cache Creek Ridge Trail from Highway 20 to Highway 16 as a multi-use trail, including use by mountain bikes. The majority of this trail is located on the Colusa County (non-wilderness) side of the ridge. However, in three locations for short stretches along this 10.5-mile trail, the trail veers across the ridge into Lake County (proposed wilderness) side of the ridge. To continue to allow the use of mountain bikes along this trail, short reroutes will be necessary to keep the entire length of this trail on the Colusa County side.

Description of the Proposed Action:

The Preferred Alternative evaluated in this Environmental Assessment involves trail maintenance along a damaged portion of the Redbud Trail, and the construction of three short reroutes along the Cache Creek Ridge Trail (see maps).

The work on the Redbud Trail will involve repairing the trailbed in the area damaged by a landslide. This slide has now stabilized, but it is very difficult for users to negotiate across this portion of the trail. Work here will consist of repairing the trailbed and removing downed trees and brush to improve the access along this approximately 200-yard stretch. Additional work beyond the landslide will be completed as time allows. This additional work will involve light brushing and trailbed maintenance. This work will be completed by a Student Conservation Association crew (6 workers plus one crew leader) using hand tools and chainsaws.

The Cache Creek Ridge reroutes consist of three short stretches that need to be constructed to keep the entire length of the trail on the Colusa County side of Cache Creek Ridge. All work here will be completed by the trail-building Sweco tractor, due to the nature of the extremely hardened soils at this time of the year. This tractor has a 4-foot wide blade used exclusively for trail construction. The majority of the terrain is fairly level and consists of oak woodland/oak savannah habitat, so it is fairly open. The total length of the three reroutes is approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ mile.

All trail work will be implemented according to BLM trail standards for multi-use trails. In addition to the actions described above, carsonite signs will be placed to mark the trails.

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Environmental Impacts:

Proposed Action: Maintain stretch of Redbud Trail past Baton Flat, and construct three short reroutes along Cache Creek Ridge Trail

Critical Element	Affected?		Critical Element	Affected?	
	yes	no		yes	no
1. Air Quality (CAA, 1955) Frank Arriaza		x	2. T&E Species (ESA, 1973) Gregg Mangan or Pardee Bardwell		x
3. Water Quality (Surface and Ground; SDWA amend 1996, CWA 1987, EO's 12580, 12088, 12372) Frank Arriaza	x		4. ACEC's (FLPMA, 1976) Gregg Mangan		x
5. Wetlands/Riparian Zone (EO- 11990) Pardee Bardwell		x	6. Hazardous & Solid Wastes (RCRA, 1976; CERCLA, 1980) Doug Prado		x
7. Floodplains (EO-11988) Pardee Bardwell		x	8. Farm Lands (SMARA, 1977)		x
9. Environmental Justice (EO- 12898) Brooke Brown		x	10. Wilderness (FLPMA, 1976; WA, 1964) Jonna Hildenbrand		x
11. Native American Religious Concerns (AIRFA, 1978) Brooke Brown		x	12. Wild and Scenic Rivers (W&SRA, 1968) Jonna Hildenbrand		x
13. Cultural Resources (NHPA, 1966) Brooke Brown	?	?	14. Invasive, Non-Native Species (Lacey Act, Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974) Pardee Bardwell	x	
15. Migratory Birds (EO 13186, 2001) Gregg Mangan or Pardee Bardwell		x			

In the following paragraphs describe the impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative) to the above critical elements and all other resources that might be affected by the Proposed Action or alternatives. If a critical element is not affected, write a short explanation below, otherwise explain how the critical element is affected. For all impacts, describe a mitigation measure to reduce or eliminate that impact.

See NEPA Handbook, App5, for more info and references to BLM manual sections about these Critical Elements.

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A. Impacts to Critical Elements:

1. Air Quality: Not Affected.
2. T&E Species: Not Affected.
3. Water Quality: Affected. This is expected to be minor, however. Along the new and maintained stretches of trail there may be minor sediment transport caused from the trail construction. This will not be noticed until the following rainfall season. The trailbed will harden to some degree after construction, decreasing the amount of sediment that could potentially be moved. Overall this would be minimized by following BLM standards for proper trail-building techniques.
4. ACEC's: Not Affected.
5. Wetlands/Riparian Zone: Not Affected.
6. Hazardous & Solid Wastes: Not Affected.
7. Floodplains: Not affected.
8. Farm Lands: Not affected.
9. Environmental Justice: Not affected.
10. Wilderness: Not Affected.
11. Native American Religious Concerns:
12. Wild and Scenic Rivers: Not affected.
13. Cultural Resources:
14. Invasive, Non-Native Species: Affected. Due to minor soils disturbance from the construction of the new and maintenance of existing trail segments, it is likely that some noxious weed seed will be planted and will eventually germinate following the next rains.
15. Migratory birds: Not affected.

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B. Impacts to other resources from the Proposed Action:

1. Soils: Affected. This is expected to be minor. See 3 above.
2. Recreation: Affected. Impacts to recreation will be positive, as the proposed maintenance of Redbud Trail and reroutes along the Cache Creek Ridge Trail will benefit users. These actions will improve access along problem areas of the Redbud Trail, as well as making it possible for mountain bike use along the entire length of the Cache Creek Ridge Trail. These two improvements will also help to provide for a better dispersal of hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. This is important in light of expected wilderness designation for Cache Creek, which could significantly increase visitor use.
3. Wildlife: Affected. Wildlife species in the area will temporarily leave the area while trail construction is occurring. This will only be a short-term minimal impact.
4. Vegetation: Affected. Several common plant species will be affected by the trail maintenance/construction. No Special Status Plant Species are known to occur within the project areas.

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Alternative 1 - No-Action: This alternative involves leaving the situation as it currently is. No action means that maintenance will not be done along the Redbud Trail past Baton Flat, and the three reroutes along Cache Creek Ridge Trail would not be built. There would be no impacts to soils or water from trail work. Visitors would be on their own to find their way along the portion of the Redbud Trail, and mountain bikers would not be able to ride the entire length of the Cache Creek Ridge Trail without illegally crossing the wilderness boundary at the three locations.

Environmental Impacts

Critical Element	Affected?		Critical Element	Affected?	
	yes	no		yes	no
1. Air Quality (CAA, 1955) Frank Arriaza		x	2. T&E Species (ESA, 1973) Gregg Mangan or Pardee Bardwell		x
3. Water Quality (Surface and Ground; SDWA amend 1996, CWA 1987, EO's 12580, 12088, 12372) Frank Arriaza		x	4. ACEC's (FLPMA, 1976) Gregg Mangan		x
5. Wetlands/Riparian Zone (EO- 11990) Pardee Bardwell		x	6. Hazardous & Solid Wastes (RCRA, 1976; CERCLA, 1980) Doug Prado		x
7. Floodplains (EO-11988) Pardee Bardwell		x	8. Farm Lands (SMARA, 1977)		x
9. Environmental Justice (EO- 12898) Brooke Brown		x	10. Wilderness (FLPMA, 1976; WA, 1964) Jonna Hildenbrand	x	
11. Native American Religious Concerns (AIRFA, 1978) Brooke Brown		x	12. Wild and Scenic Rivers (W&SRA, 1968) Jonna Hildenbrand		x
13. Cultural Resources (NHPA, 1966) Brooke Brown		x	14. Invasive, Non-Native Species (Lacey Act, Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974, EO 13112, 1999) Pardee Bardwell		x
15. Migratory Birds (EO 13186, 2001) Gregg Mangan or Pardee Bardwell		x			

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A. Impacts to Critical Elements:

1. Air Quality: Not affected
2. T&E Species: Not affected
3. Water Quality: Not affected.
4. ACEC's: Not Affected.
5. Wetlands/Riparian Zone: Not Affected.
6. Hazardous & Solid Wastes: Not affected.
7. Floodplains: Not Affected.
8. Farm Lands: Not affected.
9. Environmental Justice: Not affected.
10. Wilderness: Affected. If the reroutes are not built, unauthorized mountain bike use within the boundaries of the proposed wilderness area could occur at the three locations.
11. Native American Religious Concerns: Not affected.
12. Wild and Scenic Rivers: Not Affected.
13. Cultural Resources: Not affected.
14. Invasive, Non-Native Species: Not Affected.
15. Migratory birds: Not Affected.

B. Impacts to other resources from the No Action Alternative:

1. Recreation: Affected. Without the maintenance along the Redbud Trail and construction of reroutes along the Cache Creek Ridge Trail, recreational access will be negatively affected. Users will be on their own to negotiate the damaged trail through the slide past Baton Flat, while mountain bikers will not be able to legally ride the entire length of the Cache Creek Ridge Trail, as several segments of the existing trail cross over onto the Lake County side of the ridge (the proposed wilderness side)

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Cumulative Impacts: The Proposed Action to repair and maintain a portion of the Redbud Trail and construct three trail reroutes along the Cache Creek Ridge Trail could result in a slight increase in public use on these trails, particularly mountain bike use along the Cache Creek Ridge Trail. Over the long term, a comprehensive trails plan will be prepared and could result in some existing trails being closed, or additional new segments being constructed.

Residual Impacts: It is possible that visitor use on the new trail reroutes may increase to the point that minor localized soils and vegetative impacts may occur. These will be dealt with on a site specific basis if they do occur.

Monitoring Plan: The proposed maintenance work on the Redbud Trail and the reroutes along the Cache Creek Ridge Trail will be monitored twice annually by at least one of the following: Cache Creek Natural Area Manager Gregg Mangan, Ukiah Field Office Range Conservationist Pardee Bardwell, or Ukiah Field Office Outdoor Recreation Planner Jamie Neilans. They will document their findings, including any signs of vandalism, closure violations, and in general the overall condition of the trails.

People/Agencies Contacted:

Scott Koller, CDFG
Jim Wright, CDF

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Writer's and Reviewers' Signature Page

(Each of you should sign-off on this page only when you are satisfied that this NEPA.doc or CX is complete, correct, and accurate.)

Title of Project: Cache Creek Proposed Wilderness Trail Maintenance and Reroutes

Preparing Office: Ukiah Field Office

Project Leader: Gregg Mangan **Title:** Cache Creek Natural Area Manager

List of Reviewers:

Position	Signature	Position	Signature
Biology, Forest Plan, and Rangeland Management	Pardee Bardwell	Soil, Water, and Air Specialist	Frank Arriaza
Realty Specialist	Alice Vigil	Operations	Steve Myers
Archaeologist	Brooke Brown	Engineering and Rights-of-Way	Bill Dabbs
Fire/Fuels	Jim Dawson	Geologist	(vacant)
Cache Creek Natural Area Manager (sign for CCNA projects only)	Gregg Mangan	Hazardous Materials	(vacant)
Recreation Planner and Visual Resources Mgmt.	Jonna Hildenbrand	Law Enforcement Supervisor	Walt Gabler
OHV Recreation Planner	Jamie Neilans	Energy (sign for energy projects only)	Rich Estabrook
Pesticides (sign for pesticide projects only)	Tobey Ringuette		

Project Leader Date

FONSI/DECISION RECORD

Project: Cache Creek Proposed Wilderness Trail Maintenance and Reroutes

The Proposed Action involves repair/maintenance along a stretch of the Redbud Trail, and construction of three short reroutes along the Cache Creek Ridge Trail in the Cache Creek Natural Area.

1. FONSI

I have reviewed Environmental Assessment CA-340-06-019 and have determined that the Proposed Action results in a Finding of No Significant Impact on the human environment. I find that proper consideration has been given to all resource values and that this assessment is technically adequate. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required to further analyze the environmental effects of the Proposed Action.

Reviewed by:

Environmental Coordinator

Date

Ukiah Field Office Manager

Date

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2. DECISION RECORD

I have reviewed the Proposed Action addressed in Environmental Assessment CA-340-06-019 and approve the Proposed Action as the decision of the Bureau of Land Management. The decision is to repair a 200-yard stretch of the Redbud Trail damaged in a landslide and normal trail maintenance beyond this point, as well as construct three reroutes along the Cache Creek Ridge Trail totaling less than one mile.

Approved by:

Ukiah Field Office Manager

Date