

Bureau of Land Management
Lower Potomac Field Station
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DECISION RECORD
Environmental Assessment
NEPA #: DOI-BLM-ES-0920-2012-0001-EA
Meadowood Barn EA

The Bureau of Land Management has conducted an environmental analysis (NEPA # DOI-BLM-ES-0920-2012-0001-EA) to determine how to provide for safe and enjoyable public equestrian use of the Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) by addressing the maintenance and future use of the Meadowood barn. The action is needed because the existing Meadowood barn needs renovating to bring it into conformance with structural, plumbing, electrical, and ABA (Architectural Barriers Act) standards for Federal facilities. Several structural components need replacement or repair. The roof needs repair. The restroom needs renovating to meet accessibility standards and the existing facility also needs an upgrade to the outflow from the horse wash stalls. Two alternatives were analyzed for their environmental impacts.

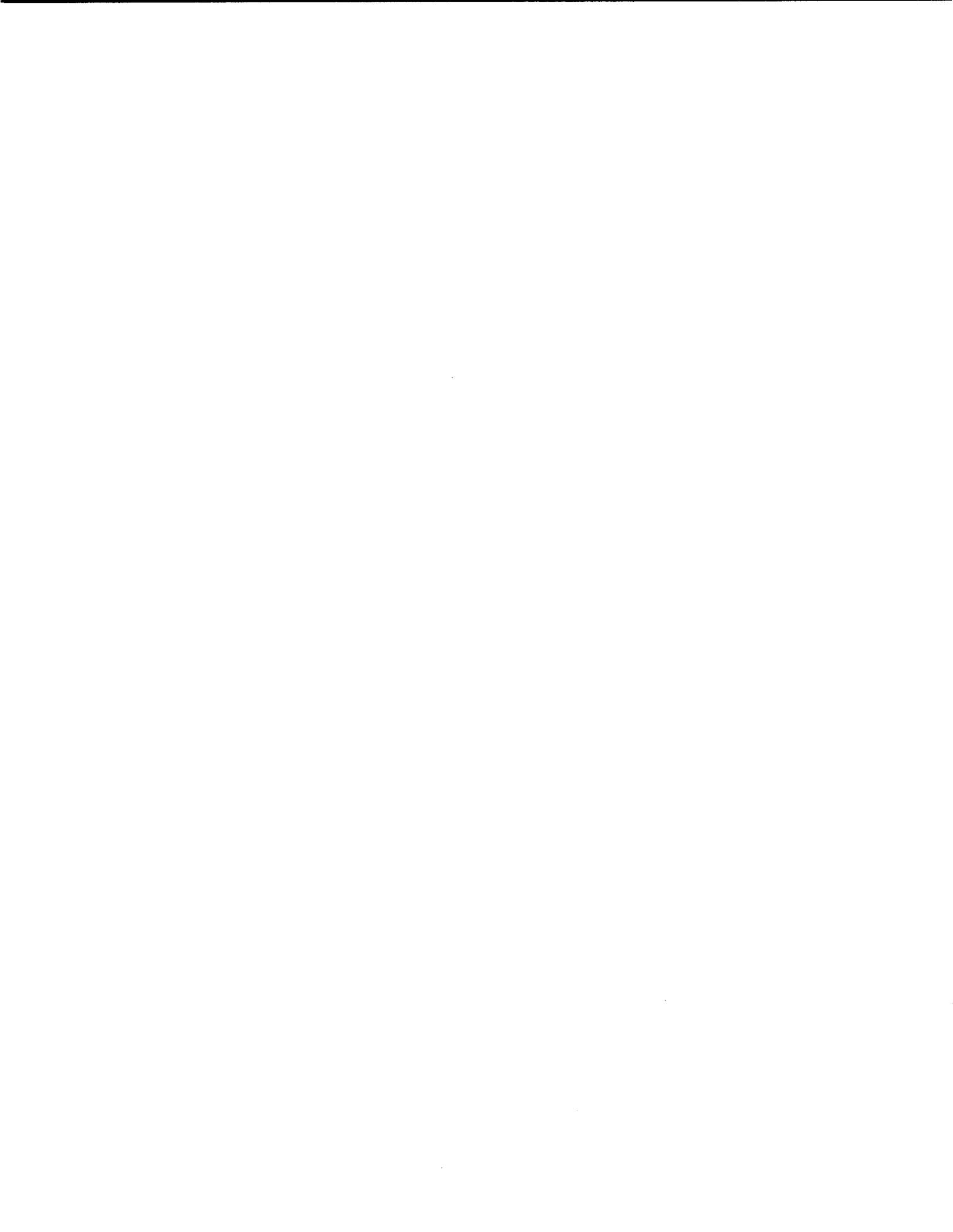
It is my decision to approve the Proposed Action Alternative, which authorizes basic repairs to the barn using existing Federal Deferred Maintenance funds to meet structural, plumbing, electrical, and ABA standards for Federal facilities. The BLM will prioritize the work to be completed in phases to eliminate the need to close the barn during the renovation. The EA and FONSI analyzed the selected alternative and found no significant impacts.

Implementation of this decision will result in the renovation of the Meadowood barn, incorporating the following:

- Structural repairs to include replacing columns, structural members including boards along the sidewalls and end walls, flat 2" X 4"s in between roof trusses, stiffening and bracing of the roof structure, truss repair, and other bracing and blocking as needed;
- Electrical improvements to include new wiring, conduit, waterproof fixtures, new light fixtures, new electrical service to the barn and removal of old wiring and fixtures;
- Installation of a fire detection system including wiring;
- An ABA-compliant accessible restroom with new fixtures, sink, and commode;
- A new mechanical room for the water heater and storage;
- Loose or worn out fasteners on the roof will be replaced and small holes caulked; and
- Upgrade to the drainage outfall for the horse wash stalls.

Renovations will not include the following at this time:

- Windows will not be replaced;
- Siding will not be replaced, but patched where necessary;
- Roof will not be replaced, but will be secured with new fasteners;



- Dust suppression system is adequate and will not be upgraded;
- Automatic horse water system will not be repaired, but likely removed at a later date;
- Barn doors will not be replaced; and
- Stormwater runoff from the gutters will be addressed at a later date.

The contract for the renovation project is expected to be awarded before the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2014, and construction is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2014 or beginning of 2015.

Authorities: The authority for this decision is contained in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976.

Compliance and Monitoring: Upon selection of the contractor, the BLM will enforce all terms, conditions, and stipulations of the contract for the renovation of the Meadowood barn.

Terms / Conditions / Stipulations: Terms, conditions, and stipulations of the Meadowood barn renovation contract will include, but are not limited to:

- Renovation of the barn on the existing footprint
- To the extent possible, use of the existing framing and structural components
- Conformance with current public use accessibility regulations
- Conformance with current federal, state, and local public use safety standards for building construction

The BLM will also solicit bids and issue a long-term recreation commercial lease (RCL) for management of the barn, designated adjacent outbuildings, and pasture. The lease will require these stipulations:

- broad public access to the barn requiring a specified number of stalls be reserved for horses that provide public recreation and education opportunities such as lessons, therapeutic riding, and trail rides;
- accommodation of special recreation permit (SRP) holders; and
- the barn must be economically self-sufficient.

PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY:

The Proposed Action and Alternatives have been reviewed and found to be in conformance with one or more of the following BLM Land Use Plans and the associated decision(s):

- *Meadowood Farm Planning Analysis/Environmental Assessment*, November 2002
- *Meadowood Special Management Recreation Area Integrated Activity Management Plan/Environmental Assessment*, June 2004

Alternatives Considered: Two alternatives were considered in the EA, 1) the Proposed Action Alternative: Barn Renovation Using Existing Footprint; and 2) the No Action Alternative.

Two additional alternatives were considered but eliminated from further analysis. These alternatives were:

- An alternative in which the Meadowood barn is demolished and an entirely new barn is built on the existing footprint. This alternative was eliminated from consideration, as it would cost considerably more than the BLM has available in the existing Federal Deferred Maintenance fund.

- An alternative where the Meadowood barn would close immediately, be demolished, and not rebuilt. This alternative was eliminated from consideration, as it would:
 - not use the available Federal Deferred Maintenance funds allocated for this project;
 - end horse boarding at Meadowood; and
 - diminish public recreation and education opportunities such as lessons, therapeutic riding, and trail rides.

Rationale for Decision: The No Action Alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the proposed action as it would mean not performing any maintenance on the Meadowood barn, and it would not increase public use of the barn. The Meadowood barn would not comply with structural, plumbing, electrical, and ABA standards for Federal facilities. The condition of the Meadowood barn would continue to decline and become less functional over time. Existing hazards and functional deficiencies would become increasingly expensive to mitigate and the barn would eventually be forced to close. Activities that currently occur at the barn, such as the therapeutic riding program and horse boarding, both critical concerns of the local community based on comments received from the public, would eventually cease and the barn would be closed to public access, condemned, and demolished.

The Proposed Action Alternative, basic repairs to the Meadowood barn within the existing footprint using Federal Deferred Maintenance funds, is the selected alternative. This alternative conforms to the current land use plans for the Meadowood SRMA and meets the purpose for the proposed action by continuing to provide for safe and enjoyable public equestrian use of the Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) by addressing the maintenance and future use of the Meadowood barn. Basic repairs are needed to bring the barn into conformance with structural, plumbing, electrical, and Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) standards for Federal facilities. Several structural components need replacement or repair. The roof needs repair and the restroom needs renovating to meet accessibility standards. The facility needs an upgrade to the outflow from the horse wash stalls. Selection of the Proposed Action Alternative will also prioritize the work to be completed in phases to eliminate the need to close the barn during the renovation.

Public Involvement: The EA and unsigned FONSI were released to the public for comment on the Eastern States website on February 18, 2014. The public comment period ended on March 20, 2014. Over 110 comments were received both online and by phone during this period from the public and other government agencies. Almost all comments received were supportive of the Finding of No Significant Impact and the Proposed Action. The main issues raised by the comments were:

- Keep Meadowood open to horse boarding and stipulate a certain number of stalls be reserved for boarding in the long-term lease;
- Continue to allocate stalls for lessons and for the therapeutic riding program, Simple Changes;
- Renovate the barn structure and allow current horse boarders, Simple Changes, and other users to remain on the property during the renovation period;
- Complete the renovation of the barn structure in phases to enable indoor access during repairs;
- Scale back the repairs to only those which enable the barn to become safer, more accessible, and structurally sound;
- In the Socioeconomics section on Page 12:
 - EA should acknowledge that boarders use the local Fairfax County farrier for services; use other local service providers, such as trainers; and that boarders and other barn users spend thousands of dollars at businesses in the local area for food, groceries and other purchases. In the final EA, the Socioeconomics section is updated to account for these changes;



- EA does not acknowledge the negative impact of the No Action Alternative on the barn manager and her business (loss of wages for six employees) and that of the local Fairfax County farrier. In the final EA, the Socioeconomics section is updated to account for these changes; and,
- Horse relocation under the No Action Alternative would be unlikely due to the paucity of available horse boarding facilities in Fairfax County. In the final EA, the Socioeconomics section is updated to account for these changes.

Some commenters also feel that the indoor arena footing should be replaced and are concerned about the roof not being replaced. The existing Federal Deferred Maintenance funds allocated to this project are enough to complete the basic repairs described in the Proposed Action, but not enough to address all issues with the barn at this time. Future maintenance and repairs to the barn will be addressed in coordination with the holder of the long-term recreation commercial lease.

The contract for the renovation project is expected to be awarded before the end of the fiscal year, September 30, 2014, and construction is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2014 or beginning of 2015.

Protest/Appeal Language:

This decision shall take effect immediately upon the date it is signed by the Authorized Officer and shall remain in effect while any appeal is pending unless the Interior Board of Land Appeals issues a stay (43 CFR 2801.10(b)). Any appeal of this decision must follow the procedures set forth in 43 CFR Part 4. Within 30 days of the decision, a notice of appeal must be filed in the office of the Authorized Officer at Eastern States Office, 7450 Boston Blvd., Springfield, VA 22153. If a statement of reasons for the appeal is not included with the notice, it must be filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, U.S. Department of the Interior, 801 North Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22203 within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed with the Authorized Officer.

Authorized Officer: Elena Fink
 Elena Fink, Deputy State Director
 Natural Resources
 Eastern States Office

APR 10 2014

 Date

