

**EASTERN STATES
Bureau of Land Management**

**Decision Record
Supplemental Environmental Assessment
Barn Improvements at Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA)
DOI-BLM-ES-920-2015-0011-EA**

Decision:

It is my decision to authorize activities described in Alternative One (Proposed Action) of the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for Barn Improvements at the Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) (DOI-BLM-ES-0920-2015-0011-EA), in addition to implementing the repairs previously approved in the Decision Record for the *Environmental Assessment for Barn Deferred Maintenance at Meadowood SRMA* (2014).

Upgrades to the barn previously approved in the 2014 EA include the following:

- Structural repairs to include replacing columns, structural members including boards along the sidewalls and end walls, flat 2-inches by 4 inches 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 ADA-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 would be replaced and small holes caulked
- Upgrade to the drainage outfall for the horse wash stalls

The proposed action assessed in the Supplemental EA includes a series of minor improvements in and around the Meadowood barn, as discussed below, and would result in approximately 12 acres of disturbance at Meadowood SRMA. Under the proposed action, all of the horses currently housed in the barn would be moved outside during the proposed six-month construction period from approximately September 2015 to March 2016. Horses managed by CAS (approximately 35 horses) would be accommodated in two of the main pastures located at Meadowood SRMA and horses managed by Simple Changes (approximately five horses) would utilize an existing farrier shed located just east of the barn. Simple Changes horses would continue to use the same pasture as they are currently using, located south of the barn.

Barn Improvements and Adjacent Vicinity. BLM would grade the interior walkways inside the barn as well as the indoor arena floor to provide for better traction and movement for people and horses. Additionally, grading would be conducted on the exterior east and west sides of the barn. During heavy rain events, water flows into the barn and causes ponding and flooding. Grading on the east side would improve drainage and may include installation of a storm drain system to improve overall flow. On the west side of the barn, BLM would regrade the gravel area used for storing bedding material and install a new storage system to replace the existing containers to minimize

overflow of the materials onto the ground. The actual design of the storage system has not yet been finalized, but the system would be constructed within the footprint of the area adjacent to the barn that is already disturbed.

Temporary Equestrian Feeding Areas and Shelters. A temporary feeding area for mares and geldings managed by CAS would be set up within each of the two main pastures located along Gunston Road. The feeding areas would consist of temporary enclosures, constructed from panels with open railings, with a central corridor, “stall” for each horse, and a circular corral at one end. The feeding area for the geldings would be located on the western main pasture, along the fence line near the entrance road. There are two options for siting the feeding area for the mares, one on the north side of the pasture and one on the south. Feeding areas need to be located adjacent to the water source and are therefore limited in terms of their placement within the pasture.

In addition to the temporary feeding areas, temporary shelters would be set up at a ratio of one shelter for every three horses. Based on this ratio, approximately 11 shelters would be needed. The shelters would be approximately 16 feet wide by 8 feet deep by 8 feet high to keep horses out of the elements. Shelters would be placed in the pastures along the high points and would be designed such that horses can enter and leave them as needed. The temporary shelters would rest on top of the ground. Both the shelters and feeding areas would be removed after construction is completed.

Pasture Rotation. Once construction is complete, two pasture areas would be rotated into use to allow for rest-rotation of the pastures that accommodated the horses during the construction period. One of the pasture areas is located to the west of the barn and the other is located to the east. These pastures are not currently being used to accommodate horses. Additional fencing would be constructed as needed, including surrounding a small pond and depression located on the pastures. Additionally, the unpaved recreational trail located within the east pasture would be rerouted along the existing tree line to ensure safe conditions are maintained for the public while horses are utilizing the pasture.

Outdoor Arena. Approximately eight pole-mounted lights would be installed at the outdoor arena and the outdoor arena floor would be graded and resurfaced to improve traction. A new, 35 kilowatt (kW) generator would be needed to provide power for the lights. The generator would be contained within a relocatable, temporary structure near the outdoor arena. The existing trail leading up to the outdoor arena would also be improved by grading and installing solar-powered lights along the trail.

Construction Staging. Up to three construction staging areas would be established on disturbed locations at Meadowood SRMA. Construction equipment, vehicles, and materials may be stored at these sites. Additionally, the indoor arena may be used to store materials during certain times within the construction period.

Purpose of and Need for Action:

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide for safe and enjoyable public equestrian use of the Meadowood SRMA by implementing minor improvements within the barn and immediate vicinity as well as providing for temporary equestrian facilities onsite to ensure user groups and

horses have access to safe conditions while construction occurs. The proposed action is needed to address structural deficiencies with the barn, improve drainage and storage of materials around the outside of the barn, allow for the continued recreational use of the outdoor arena by installing lighting, and improving ecological conditions of the pastures by bringing new pastures into rotation.

Authority:

The authority for this decision is contained in Section 302(a) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (Public Law 94-579).

Mitigation and Monitoring:

Mitigating and monitoring measures to reduce impacts to the various resources were incorporated in the design of the proposed action as detailed in Chapter 4 of the SEA. These mitigating and monitoring measures include:

- Soil decompaction and re-seeding of main pastures upon construction completion;
- Re-seeding with optimal seed mix for the soil and climate;
- Requiring construction vehicles be power washed prior to entering the Meadowood SRMA to avoid spreading invasive or noxious weed species;
- Use of straw wattles, silt fence, or other barrier to prevent construction debris and sediment from contacting surface water;
- Proper ventilation and use of dust masks when substrate is removed and soil graded in the indoor riding arena;
- Soil testing every three to five years to determine Diesel Range Organics (DRO) levels of barn flooring;
- Placing generators utilized at the outdoor riding arena and at temporary stalls on mats or within containment structures and utilizing drip pans during fueling to contain spills;
- Train employees and contractors prior to beginning work on the identification of archaeological resources;
 - Upon finding any archaeological remains, work would be halted at that location and the contractors would contact the BLM or other archaeologist assigned to the project for further evaluation.

Plan Conformance and Consistency:

The proposed action is in conformance with the *Meadowood Farm Planning Analysis/Environmental Assessment* (2003), p. 4-12; and the *Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area Integrated Activity Management Plan/Environmental Assessment* (2004), pp. 14-15.

Compliance with Major Laws:

The proposed decision is in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, executive orders, and policies including but not limited to the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976

- Clean Water Act of 1972, as amended
- Clean Air Act of 1963, as amended
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918

Alternatives Considered:

- Proposed Action (Alternative One): Includes upgrades to the Meadowood barn approved in the 2014 *Environmental Assessment for Barn Deferred Maintenance at Meadowood SRMA* and a series of minor improvements in and around the Meadowood barn, as described in the EA. This alternative is preferred and meets the purpose of and need for the action.
- No Action Alternative: Includes only the upgrades to the Meadowood barn approved in the 2014 *Environmental Assessment for Barn Deferred Maintenance at Meadowood SRMA*. This alternative does not meet the purpose of and need for the action.
- Alternative Two: Under Alternative Two, BLM would implement the improvements described under the Proposed Action, with the following exception:
 - Horses would not be accommodated in the main pastures overnight and therefore temporary shelters and feeding areas would not be needed. BLM would work with the contractor on the construction schedule such that construction would end in the early afternoon and horses would utilize the pastures only during the daytime.

This alternative meets the purpose of and need for the action, but is not the preferred alternative as it poses a slightly greater risk to health and human safety than the Proposed Action from transferring horses in and out of the barn and pastures.

Alternatives Considered, But Eliminated From Further Consideration:

- An alternative in which another nearby stable would be temporarily utilized during the construction time period: BLM conducted an inventory of available stables within a reasonable distance from Meadowood SRMA and none were found to be suitable or available. One facility, Woodlawn Stables, a recently decommissioned facility, was found to be unsuitable due to the condition of the property and was therefore not further considered as a possible location. Other stables were too far away or did not have enough facility space.

Public Comments:

The public had opportunities to provide comments on the 2014 EA regarding the barn repairs; the proposed action analyzed in the SEA addresses additional minor improvements inside the barn and to areas outside of the barn. A 30-day appeal period commences on the date of approval of the preferred alternative.

Rationale for the Decision:

The decision to approve the preferred alternative, upgrades to the Meadowood barn and minor improvements in and around the barn, is based on the following:

- Consistency with resource management and land use plans – the decision is in conformance with the *Meadowood Farm Planning Analysis/Environmental Assessment* (2003) and the *Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area Integrated Activity Management Plan/Environmental Assessment* (2004).
- National policy – it is the policy of the BLM as derived from Section 302(a) of the Federal Land Policy Management Act of 1976, “the Secretary shall manage the public lands under principles of multiple use and sustained yield, in accordance with the land use plans developed by him under section 202 of this Act.” As such, implementing the activities under the preferred alternative meets the purpose of and need for the action.
- Agency statutory requirements – the decision is consistent with all federal, state, and county laws and regulations required for implementation of the proposed action.
- Relevant resource issues and finding of no significant impact – the SEA analyzed the potential for direct impacts from the proposed action and alternatives to cultural resources, fish and wildlife, hazardous wastes, health and human safety, noxious and invasive plant species, recreation, soils, special-status species, vegetation, and water resources. The proposed improvements at Meadowood SRMA would be accomplished over an approximately six-month time period that may cause minor inconveniences to equestrian activities and for recreational users, but these activities would continue during the construction period and not differ from past activities at the Meadowood SRMA. There are no potential cumulative impacts associated with the proposed construction activities because the past, ongoing, and reasonably foreseeable projects mentioned in the SEA are temporally and spatially separate from the Proposed Action and are not expected to cumulatively affect the decision area. None of the direct, indirect, or cumulative environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA are considered significant and a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) was prepared. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required. All required consultations including under the ESA and NHPA, have been completed.
- Application of measures to minimize environmental impacts – mitigating measures to reduce impacts to the various resources were incorporated in the design of the proposed action as detailed in Chapter 4 of the SEA.

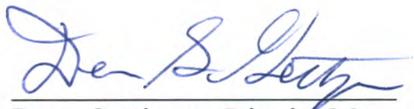
Appeal Procedures:

This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of Hearings and Appeals, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and Form 1842-1. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in this office (Attn: Authorized Officer, BLM Eastern States Office, 20 M Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003) within 30 days from your receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice

of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must be submitted to each party named in this decision, to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR Section 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted. Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied;
2. The likelihood of the protestor's success on the merits;
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted; and
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.



Dean Gettinger, District Manager
Northeastern States District

8/27/2015

Date