United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Eugene District Office
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IN REPLY REFER TO:
1792A
EA-01-14
Whittaker Creek Water
System Upgrade

June 19, 2001

Concerned Citizen,

The Coast Range Resource Area of the Eugene District Bureau of Land Management has completed the Environmental Assessment for a proposal to upgrade the water system at the Whittaker Creek Recreation Site located approximately 1½ miles south of Austa, Oregon in Section 21, T. 18 S., R. 8 W.

You have expressed an interest in receiving copies of Environmental Assessments for district projects. Enclosed is a copy of the Environmental Assessment for your review and any comments. Public notice of this action will be published in the Eugene Register Guard on June 20, 2001. The public comment period will end on July 5, 2001. If you have any questions concerning this proposal, please feel free to call Art Emmons at (541)683-6787.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the district office, 2890 Chad Drive, Eugene, Oregon during regular business hours (7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EA or other related documents. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

Sincerely,

Dan M. Howells

for Joe Williams, Acting
Coast Range Field Manager

Enclosure

1792A
8300B
EA-01-14

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
EUGENE DISTRICT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO. OR O90-EA-01-14

Whittaker Recreation Site Water System Upgrade

I. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION - The Whittaker Creek recreation facility was designed and built nearly 40 years ago. Over the years many improvements have been made to the roads, campsites, shelters, toilets, and drinking water systems. The drinking water facilities have been upgraded with the installation of new wells and hand pumps. Presently there are maintenance as well as health and safety issues associated with the continued use of the hand pump drinking water system. There is no easy way to make sure that the current system is being properly disinfected at all times.

The current water facilities consist of 2 hand pumps supplied by two wells. The north well has not been tested recently but historically has had the ability to supply enough water to supply the entire campground. The south well has been tested recently and its existing capability (1 gallon per minute) would not be adequate to supply an electrically powered system.

The present method of disinfecting the water uses an iodine dispenser and requires constant monitoring and frequent maintenance to ensure safe drinking water for campground users. It is difficult to control the amount of iodine in the water in system of this type. The current need is a new low maintenance water system that would provide an efficient, continuous supply of safe drinking water for existing and potentially increased visitor use of the park.

LOCATION - The Whittaker Creek Recreation Site is located about 1½ miles south of Austa, Oregon in Section 21 of Township 18S Range 8W, Willamette Meridian. The site is within a Late-Successional Reserve Land Use Allocation of the Northwest Forest Plan. The park is within the Upper Siuslaw River 5th field watershed. The park site has been modified from its natural condition to a state described as semi-primitive and rustic as a camping enthusiast might know it.

CONFORMANCE and RELATIONSHIP APPLICABLE LAWS AND DECISIONS – Several laws and plan decisions are applicable to the maintenance of government facilities and

improvements. The O&C Act requires that management of O&C lands "protect watersheds, regulate streamflow, provide for recreational facilities, and contribute to the economic stability of local communities and industries" (P49 ROD for *Amendments to Forest Service & BLM Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*). The ROD and Standards & Guidelines (S&Gs) for the *Survey & Management & Protection Buffer and Other Mitigating Measure S&Gs,* address this subject in Record of Decision chapter on page 24. The decision speaks to agency and permittee legal and financial responsibilities for maintaining structures, roads, and other improvements.

The proposed action and alternatives are in conformance with the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl, April 1994 (ROD),* and the *Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, June 1995 (Eugene District ROD/RMP)* as amended by the *Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines, USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management, January 2001*. The analysis contained in these EIS's are incorporated by reference.

Watershed analysis has been completed for the Siuslaw Watershed. This analysis included the Eugene District Siuslaw Watershed Analysis (February 1996) and the Esmo-Whitt Subwatershed Analysis, June 1998 (Addendum to the Siuslaw Watershed Analysis, February 1996). Design features and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the proposed action and alternatives to address resource concerns identified within the ACS objectives (pages B-11 to B-13 ROD for *Amendments to Forest Service & BLM Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl*).

II. ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

A. Alternative No. 1 (preferred alternative)

This alternative would involve the installation of one pressurized drinking water system that would consist of modern filtration and sterilization technology powered with electricity from a commercial source. A water system that would be somewhat vandal resistant is proposed for this recreation site. The water system would consist of a secured concrete building that would house the filtration system and an ultraviolet disinfection system. This building would be located in the park area within view of the camp host and/or others to lower the likelihood of vandalism.

The water in this system would be under constant pressure produced by a submersible pump located in the well and maintained by a pressurized type holding tank and closed distribution system. The overall system would have a monitoring device that would shut down the whole system and sound an alarm if the ultraviolet disinfecting equipment were

to fail. The proposed drinking water system would hold a small amount of purified water, thereby limiting the chance of the water going bad. The distribution system would have 6 or 7 self-closing spigots, thereby limiting the size of the pipe system and the amount of water being held and used at any one time. This action addresses the water need of the campground as it exists today. Water need for future expansions would be assessed at that time.

The installation of this system may involve the cutting of one or two trees to insure a good position for the pump house. The pump house would be located about 500 feet from the existing wellhead. Some ditch work would be required to install the water distribution system. A "Ditch Witch" type machine would be used to dig some of the narrow 2-foot deep trenches for burying pipes and an electrical cable. Ditches of about 2 foot width would be needed when the power line and pipes would occupy the same ditch. A narrower ditch would be required when placing either water lines or electric cables. The water would be pumped from a well to the pump house for storage and treatment and subsequently distributed throughout the park.

Presently the park does not have commercial power; therefore, a provision of this action would be to obtain electricity from the local power distributor. The local power company would install a new underground power cable in or next to the ditchline of the Siuslaw River County road #4390 between Highway 126 and the campground. The installation of this power line would be on the side of the road away from the Siuslaw River and within the existing right-of-way of the County road. The cable would cross the Siuslaw River via the Whittaker bridge. From the bridge to the park the cable would be buried on the north side of Whittaker Creek Road until it enters the park. The cable would be laid with a cable plow that would cause some temporary disturbance to the soil or plants within the dedicated right-of-way of the affected County and BLM roads. The cable plow would disturb an area approximately 6 to 8 inches wide and 24 inches deep for the estimated 2 mile length. Because of some steep slopes, up to approximately 10,000 square feet of ditch line surface could be disturbed to lay the power cable. The electrical cable would be put in a conduit which would be attached to the bridge. This same methodology would be used to cross Whittaker creek within the campground. No equipment would be used in the river or creek to attach the conduit to the bridges.

The proposed new drinking water system would need little maintenance throughout the camping season. However, as is the case now, the well and distribution system may need to be chemically sanitized once a year at the start of camping season and after any maintenance that would open the system. The UV system would keep the water clean for the remainder of the year. In order to decrease the possibility of a problem occurring during the heavy use period, the ultraviolet lamp in the disinfectant unit would be changed annually.

The project would also include the drilling of a new well to be used now, if necessary, or

in the future. The well proposed for this action has not been tested recently and, if it needs replacement, this is the time to address the subject. Even if the new well is not needed now it could be in the near future.

Project Design Features

1. CXT pump house – A Concrete building (10 feet by 14 feet) that will fit into the park setting with the least visual impact would be installed to house the pump, filters, and ultraviolet sterilization system.
2. UV Water purification equipment – An ultraviolet sterilization unit would be located in the pump house.
3. UV monitor and alarm – In case of the failure of the UV light, the system would shut down and an alarm would sound. The monitor and alarm are also housed in the CXT structure.
4. Filter (5 micron) – A five (5) micron filter would be used to keep the water and the system clean.
5. Submersible pump – A submersible pump would be installed to ensure the proper pressure and best energy efficiency.
6. Water distribution system with low flow self-closing spigots. Would conserve water and help in energy conservation.
7. A new well would be drilled on the south side of Whittaker Creek for future use or in case the existing well that was chosen for this action turns out to be marginal or begins to fail.
8. Electric power – Would be provided by a new cable from the main power line on Hwy 126. The cable would be installed on the uphill side of the county road with a cable plow unless unforseen circumstances arise. The new underground electrical cable would be about 2 miles long.

Mitigating Measures (design features)

1. Prevent soil or silt from entering any streams.
2. Temporarily divert water from roadside streams to be crossed prior to trenching or plowing.
3. Utilize silt fences or straw bales to limit sediment movement.
4. Wash construction equipment before entering project area.
5. Construction of trenches would be limited to the dry season and all construction would be limited to the less sensitive or non-nesting periods (August 5th to February 28th) for.marbled murrelet and the northern spotted owl.
6. Seed disturbed areas with native species mixture after project is completed.
7. All disturbed roadside stream beds would be compacted after the installation of the power cable.
8. Construction equipment would not be permitted to enter either the Siuslaw River or Whittaker Creek or their associated stream banks.

B. Alternative No. 2

Similar to Alternative # 1 except two (2) small solar powered water systems would be constructed. These separate small water systems would be relatively vandal safe and unobtrusive. The only weak link in the vandal question is the solar panels. They are fragile, expensive, and would be vulnerable when no one is around.

Each water system would be composed of a secured concrete pump house that would house the pressurized holding tank, converter, batteries, filtration system, and an ultraviolet disinfection system. Batteries would store the energy to power the system day and night. They would be kept charged by a solar panel that would be either attached to a pole or the roof of each pump house. Each pump house would be located within the campground area within view of the camp host and/or others, thereby lowering the likelihood of vandalism.

The water in these two systems would be under pressure produced by the submersible pump, located in the wells, and maintained by a pressurized type holding tank and closed distribution system. The system would have a monitoring device that would shut down the system and sound an alarm if the ultraviolet sterilization equipment were to fail. The proposed drinking water system would only hold a small amount of purified water, thereby decreasing the chance of the water in the system going bad. Each system would have only 3 or 4 self-closing spigots, thereby limiting the size of the pipe system and the amount of water being held and used at any one time.

This type of system would need little maintenance throughout the camping season. The well and distribution system may need to be chemically sanitized once a year at the start of camping season and after any maintenance that opens the system. The ultraviolet lamps in the disinfectant units would be changed annually to lessen the chance that they would need to be replaced at an inconvenient time.

The installation of this system would involve the drilling of a replacement well for the area south of Whittaker Creek within the park. Approximately 30 to 40 trees would be cut or pruned to provide access to the proper amount of solar radiation. There could be the need to prune trees annually to keep the solar access open. The pump houses would be located on top of or close to the well heads. Some minor ditch work would be done to install the distribution system. Most of the pipes would be buried in a two foot deep trench located next to the road system within the park.

Construction of trenches would be limited to the dry season and all construction would be limited to the less sensitive or non-nesting periods (August 5th to February 28th) for the marbled murrelet and the northern spotted owl.

C. Alternative No. 3 (No Action)

The present drinking water system would be retained along with its inefficient sterilization and monitoring methodologies. There would continue to be a need to closely monitor the quality of the drinking water. Eventually the State Sanitarian may recommend that something be done to improve or disable the present system.

D. Other Alternatives Considered

Various combinations of chemically sanitized, gravity storage, and solar or commercially powered systems were considered. The chemical aspect with its hazards, frequent maintenance, and monitoring requirements made many of these systems less desirable and not chosen. Many of these systems would have had holding tanks far removed from the park, which would present security concerns and special sterilization problems. Most of the gravity storage systems would have also required the construction of flat spots for the tanks, which may have required the removal of numerous trees and a greater amount of soil disturbance than the alternatives analyzed.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES

This section describes key components of the existing environment. The plants and animals found in and around the park are typically of the type and species discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 of the *Final Eugene District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement* dated November 1994. This project area is a campground within the Late-Successional Reserve of the Northwest Forest Plan. Most of the park is located within the riparian zone adjacent to Whittaker Creek and the Siuslaw River.

Project areas would be surveyed for Special Status and Survey and Manage species (categories A and C) using current protocols. These predisturbance surveys would be completed prior to the Decision Notice. In the event a Special Status or Survey and Manage species is found to be present, the appropriate mitigation or project modifications would occur.

Prior to beginning on-ground project work, BLM would complete all required ESA consultation, conferencing, and protocol clearances.

Vegetation - The Whittaker Creek Campground is dominated by mature hardwoods (bigleaf maple, red alder), and includes some western red cedar, western hemlock, and Douglas-fir. Shrubs include salmonberry and vine maple. The herbaceous layer is typical of moist lowland Coast Range forests, including bleeding hearts, wood-sorrel, and waterleaf. A complete description of the vegetation of the project area is available in the Coast Range Botany Files.

Botanical Resources

1. **Special Status and Survey and Manage Plant Species** – Surveys for Special Status and Survey and Manage Plants will be completed prior to the Decision Notice. *Cimicifuga elata* (Bureau Tracking Species) is known to occur at the junction of the Siuslaw River Road and Hwy. 126, but the exact location is unknown at this time. The Survey and Manage fungus *Phaeocollybia dissiliens* was found just north of the campground but well outside of the proposed project area. Currently, no other Threatened, Endangered, BLM Sensitive, BLM Assessment, or Survey and Manage vascular or non-vascular plants have been located in the proposed project areas.

1. **Noxious Weeds and Nonnative Plant Species** – An assessment of the noxious weeds and nonnative plant species will be conducted during the 2001 field season, prior to the decision notice.

Soils - The general area lies in the Bohannon-Digger-Preacher Soil Association. These soils formed from sandstone in the udic-mesic zone of the Coast Range (USDA, 1987). Whittaker Campground is located within the Nehalem silt loam soil series on the flood plain of Whittaker Creek. The Nehalem silt loam is a well-drained soil that forms in bottomlands in silty alluvium. Permeability is moderate. Typically, the surface layer is very dark brown silt loam about 15 inches thick. Subsoils reach to 60 inches or more in depth (USDA, 1987).

The project area would be within an existing campground that is heavily impacted by recreational use and a dedicated right-of-way that contains paved and rocked roads.

Cultural Resources – A cultural resource inventory of the proposed area has not been completed. Past pre-project inventories in the lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management within the Coast Range Physiographic Province have not resulted in the discovery of historic properties; therefore, no cultural resources are expected to be affected. The guidelines of the protocol agreement (Protocol Appendix D) between the Bureau of Land Management and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Officer (1998) make the conclusion "that the chances of finding important historic properties in the area are so minimal that further cultural resource survey prior to project implementation does not justify the continued expenditure of federal funds in the effort." The protocol agreement does set forth procedures covering post-project cultural resource surveys that would be implemented.

Recreation Resources – The Whittaker Creek Recreation Site is a rustic forest park with camping, swimming, and picnicking facilities. The park has a very heavy canopy of hardwoods and a few conifers. The amenities include modern vault toilets, hand-operated pitcher type pumps for drinking water, an instream swimming area, blacktop roads, well-maintained campsites, and a hiking trail. This campground site is designated a watch-able wildlife site and receives extensive seasonal day use for salmon viewing.

Visual Resources – The campground visual resources are managed under a VRM Class 2 prescription for all the area within the campground's viewshed. This means that management actions may be seen, but should not attract the attention of a casual observer. Changes to the characteristic viewscape in the elements of form, line, color, and texture should be slight, and create no more than mild contrast with the existing scene.

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species – Listed species known to occur in the general vicinity are the northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, and bald eagle.

No federally listed or proposed terrestrial wildlife species regularly frequent the park since habitat in the park proper does not provide adequate resources for these species, and there is considerable human disturbance during the nesting periods.

Bald eagles have occasionally been reported perching and flying within a mile of the campground during various times of the year; however, no nest sites have been documented in the area.

Three occupied marbled murrelet sites are documented in the vicinity of the park. These sites are located in mature and old growth Douglas-fir stands. Within the park, there is no structure present suitable for murrelet nesting.

A spotted owl nest site is also located in the vicinity. Since no surveys have been conducted here in recent years and the status of this site is unknown, it is unlikely this bird would utilize the park except as an infrequent travel corridor during the non-camping season.

Wildlife – Special Status Species not Federally listed – No surveys for Special Status Wildlife Species are required for this project. Some mollusk, amphibian, and red tree vole surveys have been conducted in the surrounding area in conjunction with past endeavors. During those surveys red tree voles and the Oregon megomphix were documented in the vicinity but not within the proposed action area. Pileated woodpeckers have been documented within the park. Other Special Status Species that may occur in varying degrees of likelihood in the park are: northern goshawk, Townsend's big-eared bat, tailed frog, red-legged frog, Olympic salamander, and clouded salamander. Because of the constant activity during the camping season, this area is regularly disturbed and would provide little for these species during this time. During the winter, these species may be active within the park because of decreased human disturbance and abundant moisture.

Other Wildlife – For an extended list of species expected to occur in the vicinity of the park, refer to the Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (1995).

Species of general public interest expected to occur in the immediate area are: black-tailed deer, black bear, elk, cougar, and various raptors. Because these species generally avoid human activity, their occurrence in the park would be infrequent while the campground is in use.

A variety of neotropical migrant birds would be expected to utilize the park. Most nesting would occur away from human activity.

Bats are an important component of the local fauna, and public interest in these species has increased in recent years. In 1998, surveys in the vicinity documented the long-legged myotis, long-eared myotis, fringed myotis, big brown bat, and little brown bat. Preferred roost sites for these mammals are large snags or defective trees with adequate crevices and temperatures. Concrete bridges are frequently used as night roosts since these structures retain heat during the evening hours. Because of the lack of large snags within the campground, roosting opportunities are limited. Bats do benefit from increased numbers of large trees and snags in adjacent stands and Whittaker Creek produces abundant prey in the form of insects.

Snags and down logs provide essential habitat for a variety of wildlife as well as physical benefits to soil. These components are limited within the campground because of safety and maintenance requirements normally associated with such facilities.

Water/Riparian Resources – The average annual rainfall in this area exceeds 70 inches per year, with most in the form of low intensity rainfall. The project area is located in the Siuslaw River watershed. The Siuslaw River at this point has a predominantly bedrock bottom. The temperatures of the river near the park exceed the State standard for salmonids through much of the summer with maximum seven day average temperatures exceeding 75 degrees. Whittaker Creek temperatures are more in line with State standards. There are no wetlands within the project area. There are two small unnamed streams that cross the County road between the campground and Highway 126. Neither stream is accessible to fish from the Siuslaw River.

Fisheries – Whittaker Creek is a major fisheries migration, spawning, and rearing stream within the park. Spawning populations of chinook and steelhead are among the highest of any stream along the Oregon Coast. Four species of anadromous fish, including the federally listed threatened Oregon Coast Coho spawn in the campground or migrate further upstream. From January through May the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife sets up a dam and fish trap in Whittaker Creek in an attempt to limit the spawning of nonnative steelhead in the upper reaches of Whittaker Creek. Native steelhead are moved around the dam to allow them to spawn upstream. Eggs are also taken from the captured steelhead to augment the Siuslaw sport fishery. During the various migration periods (primarily October thru June) park visitors can witness the spawning and migration activities from within the park.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Unaffected Resources - There would be no adverse impacts from the proposed action to regional or local air quality, prime or unique farmlands, cultural resources, flood plains, areas of critical environmental concern, environmental justice, Native American religious concerns, hazardous or solid waste, wild and scenic rivers, and wilderness.

B. Environmental Consequences of Alternative 1 (the Preferred)

Vegetation-

Special Status or Survey and Manage Plants – Surveys would be completed prior to the decision notice for this project. In the event that a Special Status or Survey and Manage plant species is located during these surveys, the project would be modified or the area excluded to protect the identified sensitive species.

1. **Noxious and Nonnative Plants, and other impacts** – The impacts to the native vegetation at the campground are expected to be low. Under this alternative, the total amount of ground within the campground that would be disturbed is relatively small. However, this alternative requires installation of a buried electrical cable along Siuslaw River Road and Whittaker Creek Road for approximately 2 miles. The additional soil disturbance involved with this operation has the potential to increase noxious and nonnative species in the area. Mitigation measures No.4 and No.6 under "Mitigating Measures" should help alleviate the potential for the increase or spread of nonnative species.

Soils – Growth impairing soil disturbance is unlikely with the small ditching work planned. The affect on stability, compaction, and productivity would be short term and of minimal impact. The ditching work would have little to no measurable effect on moisture interception by the disturbed ground cover layer. The use of the mitigation items listed under the "Mitigating Measures" would mitigate the adverse effects of this alternative. No long term adverse impacts are anticipated with this project.

Cultural Resources – No cultural resources are expected to be affected. The guidelines of the memorandum of understanding between BLM and the Oregon State Preservation Officer (1998) concludes "that the chances of finding important historical properties in the area are so minimal that they do not justify the continued expenditure of federal funds in further cultural resource surveys prior to project implementation."

Recreation Resources – This action would not change the character of the park. The new water system would provide safer drinking water of a higher quality than is presently available. The electrical power would not be used for anything but the water system. No lighting or hookup power would be provided under this project or analysis.

Visual Resources – The installation of the new pump house would be consistent with the spirit and objectives of the VRM II classification. The structures would be consistent in design with existing toilet structures located nearby in terms of form, line, color, and texture.

Wildlife –

1. **Threatened and Endangered Species** – This proposed alternative would not

alter suitable habitat for any federally listed or proposed species known to occur in the vicinity. Consequently, there is no affect to listed species as a result of habitat modification.

This project may affect but is not likely to adversely affect both the northern spotted owl and marbled murrelet as a result of audio disturbance during the nesting period. The project would be implemented during the less sensitive or non-nesting periods (August 5th to February 28th) for marbled murrelets. There would be no affect to bald eagles.

2. **Special Status Species not Federally Listed** – Because this proposed project would require ground clearing, excavation and felling of some small trees, some amphibians and invertebrates may be impacted. Areas of impact would be a small portion of the overall landscape, and it is not expected that this endeavor would result in a change of the general faunal composition.

3. **Other Wildlife** – Since wildlife in the vicinity of the campground are either used to human activity or avoid such disturbance, and no major habitat modification would occur, this endeavor would not alter the behavior or result in injury of these animals.

Water/Hydrology Resources – The proposed action involves the installation of a power line to be plowed into the ditch line along the Siuslaw River County Road. Approximately 60 percent of this roadway is within 100 feet of the river. There would be a possibility of some sediment entering the river from the residual effects of the installation of the power cable. The amount of sediment would not cause a measurable increase in turbidity.

Using the proposed Project Design Features and Mitigating Measures, it is anticipated that the proposed project actions would have no measurable effect on the hydrology or water quality of this area.

Fisheries – Two live streams, tributaries to the Siuslaw are located along the proposed powerline route. The installation at these sites may create a short-term increase in sediment. Timing of the work at low flow periods, use of bypass, use of silt fences, and hardening of disturbed sites are all potential mitigating measures. The course of the two streams across the Siuslaw floodplane are low gradient and well vegetated and probably capable of intercepting silt from the project area. Work during periods of no rain when the road ditches are dry would further reduce the potential of silt reaching the Siuslaw River.

For the majority of the right of way, the underground cable installation could be done on either side of the road. Where the distance from the road is < 60 feet or un-vegetated,

the installation the cable on the side of the road away from the river would reduce impacts. Of particular concern is the rock area near the area opposite the mouth of Whittaker Creek.

Based upon the information available the determination for coho would be a "may affect, not likely to adversely affect" which will require conferencing with NMFS.

C. Environmental Consequences of Alternative No. 2 (Solar)

Vegetation – This alternative would require the removal of up to 40 trees (which have the potential of hosting Survey and Manage lichens). However, the overall amount of ground disturbance would be lower in this alternative than in the preferred alternative because the 2 miles of buried power line would not be needed. Impacts of overstory tree canopies and associated epiphytes within the park area would greater with this alternative because tree cutting and pruning required for the solar panels. The additional concrete pump house would also contribute a small impact to a previously unused area.

Mitigating Measures No. 4 and No.6 should help alleviate the potential for the increase or spread of nonnative species.

Soils – Similar to Alternative No.1 within the park. Overall there would be less soil disturbance. Measurable impacts to the overall soil compaction, productivity, and stability are not anticipated due to the nature of the recreation facility's history, condition, and use.

Cultural Resources – No cultural resources are expected to be effected. The guidelines of the memorandum of understanding between the BLM and the Oregon State Preservation Officer (1998) concludes **?**that the chances of finding important historical properties in the area are so minimal that they do not justify the continued expenditure of federal funds in further cultural resource surveys prior to project implementation."

Recreation Resources – This action will not change the overall character of the park. The new water system would provide safer drinking water of a higher quality than is presently available.

Visual Resources – The two solar systems may be seen as a small change in visual expectations in this park. These solar systems would contrast with the existing landscape character in terms of color and texture. The smooth surface might often reflect sunlight brightly, creating a frequently incongruent surface appearance. This effect would create a moderate to strong contrast intermittently.

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species – Affects similar to Alternative No. 1.

Wildlife – Although this alternative calls for an additional pump house and solar set-up, consequences to wildlife under this alternative would be similar to those of alternative 1.

Water/Riparian Resources – This action would have no measurable effect on the hydrology or water quality of this area.

Fisheries – Similar to Alternative No. 1 within the park and no impact outside the park area.

D. Environmental Consequences Alternative No. 3 (No Action)

Vegetation – The no action alternative would have no immediate direct effects on any botanical resources.

Soils – Existing conditions of soil and water resources would not be affected.

Cultural Resources – No cultural resources are expected to be affected.

Wildlife – If no action is pursued, the campground would continue to be maintained for public use and no change in impacts to wildlife would be expected.

Water/Riparian Resources – Existing conditions and trends would be unaffected.

Fisheries – There would be no effect on the anadromous fish that pass through the area at various times of the year.

Recreation Resources – Without improvement of the current water system the present iodine method of water purification would continue to be used. This method of water purification requires constant monitoring and high maintenance to ensure safe drinking water for campground users. Under the no action alternative the opportunity to provide a more reliable water system and to meet potentially increased visitor use needs in the future would be forgone or postponed to a later date.

Visual Resources – There would be no noticeable change to the visual resources by not doing anything at this time.

V. CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

A. Alternative No. 1 (the Proposed Action)

The proposed improvement to the Whittaker Creek Recreation Site drinking water system would have little impact on the immediate or long-term habitats of threatened or

endangered species. The wildlife that presently use the park would continue to do so.

The impact to the immediately affected resources, i.e., soils, low vegetation, and possibly water, would be minor, not measurable, and of short duration.

Maintenance of the buried power line may require occasional disturbance to the ditch over time. The effect of disturbance would be to keep the roadside plant community in an early seral condition. However, since existing road maintenance activities currently maintain an early seral plant community within the ditchline of the road, there would be no new long- term or cumulative effects on the right-of-way vegetation.

B. Alternative No. 2

Similar to Alternative No. 1 except none of the area outside the park would be impacted and a little more of the campground portion would be temporarily affected. Over the long-term, as the trenches heal, the impact would be considered unnoticeable. The minor but acceptable VRM impacts would persist as long as the solar power is required. Potential vandalism during unattended periods would have the potential to make this the more costly alternative.

C. Alternative No. 3 (No Action)

By not implementing the action at this time there would be no change to the expected natural progression of the environment. If no new action is pursued, the campground would continue to be maintained for public use and no change in impacts would be expected over the long-term.

VI. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The following individuals were consulted during the development and analysis of this proposal.

A. Agency Preparers

Neil Armantrout	BLM Fish Biologist
Graham Armstrong	BLM Hydrologist
Karin Baitis	BLM Soil Scientist
Woody Banks	BLM Civil Engineering Tech
D. V. Crannel	BLM T & E Biologist
Arthur Emmons	BLM Forest Inventory
Jeanne Ponzetti	BLM Botanist
Leo Poole	BLM Fisheries Biologist
Michael Southard	BLM Archaeologist

Mark Stephen	BLM Forest Ecologist
Joseph Williams	BLM Recreation & VRM Specialist

B. Agencies, Groups or Individuals Consulted

State of Oregon Health Department - John Potts, Environmental Specialist.
Blachly Lane Power Co. - Kris Myers, Electrical Serviceman.

C. NMFS and USFWS

A Biological Assessment addressing this proposal related to the Federally listed coho will be submitted this summer to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in the summer of 2001. Because of the potential for siltation of the Siuslaw River this action would have a may affect, not likely to adversely affect, to the coho and other fishes. The NMFS response, in the form of a Biological Opinion, is expected prior to on-the-ground work. This action would not take place prior to the issuance of this Opinion.

All terms and conditions in that Biological Opinion would be adhered to in order to provide appropriate mitigation for affected species.

A Biological Assessment addressing this proposal related to Federally listed or proposed species will be submitted to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in the summer of 2001. Because of the potential for audio disturbance to spotted owls and marbled murrelets during the latter part of the critical nesting period, this proposed action would have a may affect, not likely to adversely affect, the spotted owl and marbled murrelets. The USFWS response, in the form of a Biological Opinion, is expected prior to on-the-ground work. This action would not take place prior to the issuance of this Opinion.

All terms and conditions in the Biological Opinion would be adhered to in order to provide appropriate mitigation for affected species.

VII. REFERENCES

USDA, Forest Service and USDI, Bureau of Land Management. Feb 1994. *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl). Washington DC.*

USDA, Forest Service and USDI, Bureau of Land Management. May 1994. *The Record of Decision final for Amendments to Forest Service & BLM Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl. Washington DC.*

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USDA, Forest Service and USDI, Bureau of Land Management. Jan 2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and Other Mitigating Measures Standard and Guidelines.

USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Eugene District. November 1994 *Final Eugene District proposed Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement.*

USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Eugene District. June 1995 *Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan.*

USDI, Bureau of Land Management. February 1996. *Siuslaw Watershed Analysis*. Eugene District Office. Eugene, OR.

USDI, Bureau of Land Management. June 1998. *Esmo-Whitt Subwatershed Analysis*. An Addendum to the Siuslaw Watershed Analysis (Feb. 1996) Eugene District Office. Eugene, OR.

USDI, Bureau of Land Management and Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. 1998. Protocol Agreement.

U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare - *U.S. Clean Water Act*

National Science Foundation – *National Science Foundation Standard 55 Disinfection of Water*

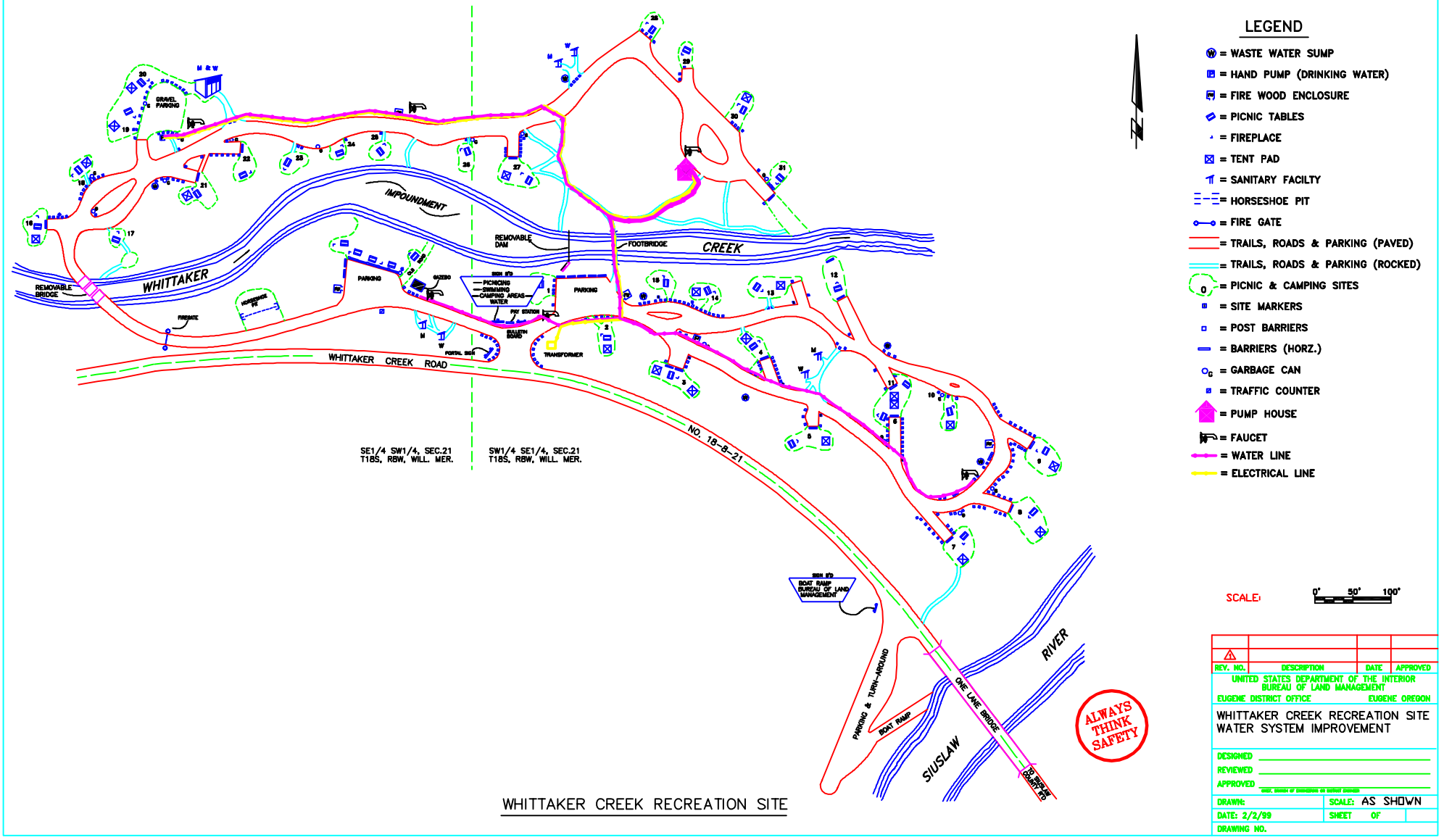
USDA - Soil Conservation Service - *Lane County Soil Survey - 1987*

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR 1792A
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT 8300B
EUGENE DISTRICT OFFICE EA-01-14

Preliminary
Finding of No Significant Impact
for
Whittaker Creek Recreation Site Water System Upgrade
Environmental Assessment No. OR-090-EA-01-14

Determination:

On the basis of the information contained in the Environmental Assessment, and all other information available to me, it is my determination that implementation of the proposed action or alternatives will not have significant environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl, April 1994 (ROD),* and the *Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan, June 1995 (Eugene District ROD/RMP)* as amended by the *Record of Decision for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines, USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management January 2001,* with which this EA is in conformance, and does not, in and of itself, constitute a major federal action having a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.



WHITTAKER CREEK RECREATION SITE