

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND DECISION RECORD

Implementation of the McGowan Creek Environmental Education Area Environmental Assessment

EA OR 090-01-20

BACKGROUND

The McKenzie Resource Area Interdisciplinary Team for the Eugene District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has completed an Environmental Assessment (EA) and analyzed a proposal to complete various projects in the BLM's McGowan Creek Environmental Education Area. The objectives of the EA are to: (1) minimize disturbance of educational values, (2) ensure the safety of visitors, and (3) protect wetland vegetation. The analysis focuses on three alternatives. Alternative 1 is the Proposed Action, which aims to provide for visitor safety and mitigate resource damage by constructing handrails on a log bridge, constructing an elevated walkway, and improving the existing trail. Alternative 2 also proposes the trail improvements and elevated walkway, but rather than just handrails on the log bridge this action would construct of a permanent stream crossing. The last alternative proposes no action. The EA and preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were made available for public comment on July 25th, 2001.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

On the basis of the information contained in the EA (OR 090-EA-01-20) and all other information available to me, it is my determination that implementation of the Proposed Action 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), and the *Eugene District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (May 1995) as amended by the *Record of Decision for Amendment to the Survey & Manage, Protection Buffer and other Mitigation Measures Standard and Guidelines* (January 2001), with which is 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, and an environmental impact statement or a supplement to the existing environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

DECISION AND RATIONAL

It is the decision of the Bureau of Land Management to implement the proposed action and project design features identified in the Environmental Assessment (EA-01-20) for the McKenzie Resource Area. The EA and FONSI analyzed the selected alternative and found no significant impacts. An environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

The proposed action was selected because it will complete various trail improvements, construct handrails on a log bridge, and construct an elevated walkway over a portion of wetland. These actions will minimize disturbance to the areas educational values, protect wetland vegetation and provide for visitor safety.

Project design features adequately protect environmental resources and minimize risk of adverse effects, which might result from implementing the project.

Alternative two was not selected because Alternative 1 achieved the same goals and had less impact to streambanks during construction. The No Action alternative was not selected because the environmental damage associated with visitor use would only increase over time, and the issue of visitor safety was not met.

CONSULTATION

The Proposed projects were consulted on with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service through programmatic biological assessments and opinions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A public notices advertising the availability of the EA and preliminary FONSI appeared in the Eugene Register Guard on July 25th, 2001. Additionally, the EA and FONSI were mailed to interested individual and organizations (EA, p. 15). A 14-day public comment period closed on August 8, 2001. No public comments were received.

Approved by: Emily Rice
McKenzie Area Field Manager

Date: August 17, 2001