

**Finding of No Significant Impact
Highlands & Crane Ridge Trails
Environmental Assessment
DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0041-EA**

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in Environmental Assessment (EA) No. DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0041-EA would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the above EA, using the following factors defining significance:

1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

The activities described in the proposed action (Alternative B of DOI-BLM-ID-B010-2012-0041-EA) do not include any significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)), as described below:

- The addition of 3 miles of new, non-motorized trail opportunities in the 135 mile Ridge to Rivers Trail System would enhance recreational experiences in the general project area by re-establishing a trail connection that was eliminated by loss of public access across private property. By providing managed, maintained trail corridors, land managers can accommodate public demands for increased trail access, and help channel rising recreation use into areas best able to sustain such use.
- One and a half (1.5) miles of new trail construction would not have any significant beneficial or adverse impacts to species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), candidate species for listing under ESA, or BLM special status species.
 - a. Neither Aase's onion (*Allium aasae*) nor its habitat would be impacted by the proposed action, as described in Section 3.2.2.2 of the EA. Please see the answer to Factor 9 for more detail.

2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*

The activities included in the proposed action would not have a significant effect on public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)). The analysis did not find that the proposed actions would have any appreciable effect on public health or safety.

3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

The proposed activities would not significantly affect any unique characteristics (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)) of the geographic area such as prime and unique farmlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or areas of ecological critical concern.

- 4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

The activities described in the proposed action would not involve effects on the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)). Public scoping associated with the City of Boise's Draft Open Space Plan indicated general support for providing improved non-motorized recreational opportunities in the Boise Foothills.

- 5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).*

The analysis did not identify any effects on the human environment which are highly uncertain or involve unknown risks as a result of this action. Several other non-motorized connecting trails have been constructed in the Boise Foothills over the last five years and the effects of these actions are well known. As regional population grows, the area faces an inevitable increase in human use in the Boise Foothills. While the managing agencies are not in a position to stop this increase in use, they will employ a variety of standard management tools to minimize potential user conflicts and to enhance recreational opportunities. Inaction may result in a variety of risks and impacts as uncontrolled recreation use and user-built trails expand onto steep, unstable slopes. The EA (Section 3.0, *Affected Environment & Environmental Consequences*) discloses the expected environmental effects on the human environment; no unique or unknown risks have been identified.

- 6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).*

The actions analyzed in the EA are a normal practice that has been successfully implemented elsewhere. This EA does not set a precedent for future actions that have significant effects. Construction of new trails is in accordance with decisions and direction established in the 1988 Cascade Resource Management Plan, and the 2000 Foothills Open Space Management Plan, and does not set a precedent for any further trail development (EA, pgs. 2 and 3).

- 7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

The effects of the proposed actions would not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other actions (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).

The EA discloses that no other connected or cumulative actions would cause significant cumulative impacts (throughout Section 3.0, *Affected Environment & Environmental Consequences*). The proposed action was designed to lessen potential environmental effects relative to natural resources and current uses. The cumulative effects analysis concluded that implementation will not cause significant cumulative effects on biological, cultural, or social resources, even when considered in relation to other actions (EA, pages 10-12).

- 8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

I have determined that the activities described in the proposed action would not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction of scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).

Based on the analysis documented in the EA, the proposed action would not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. Currently undiscovered eligible or listed properties that might be discovered in the future would be protected from loss or destruction using appropriate management techniques, including route closure or avoidance.

- 9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.(40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).*

The proposed action would not adversely affect any known threatened, endangered, or BLM special status species or its habitat. As disclosed in the EA (Section 3.1.1), the Boise Foothills contain Aase's onion (*Allium aasae*) habitat, a BLM Type II sensitive species. No plants or habitat would be adversely impacted by this project and disturbance to existing vegetation would be kept to a minimum.

- 10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.*

The proposed activities would not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)). The proposed action was developed in accordance with Federal, State, and local laws for the protection of the environment. The EA disclosed the effect of the proposed action on all critical and non-critical elements and it was determined that the proposed action would not adversely affect any of these elements. Chapter 1 of the EA (Section 1.5, Relationship to Statues, Regulations, and Other Requirements) describes how the proposed actions conform to relevant laws, regulations, policies, and any relevant local permitting requirements.

/s/ Terry A. Humphrey

08/02/2013

Terry A. Humphrey
Four Rivers Field Manager

Date