

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION /PLAN CONFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

DOI-BLM-AK-F020-2015-0023-CX

A. Background

Proposed Action: Trail maintenance for Mt. Prindle hiking trail

Date of Proposed Action: August 29, 2015

Location: Nome Creek crossing, Mt. Prindle Campground, Nome Creek Valley White Mountains National Recreation Area

Applicant: Eastern Interior Field Office, BLM

Serial Number: N/A

Description of the Proposed Action

A non-motorized trail up the headwaters of Nome Creek and Mt. Prindle is used by recreationalists. This trail starts at the Mt. Prindle campground. The trail does have signage indicating non-motorized use but the signage is damaged and in need of repair. The trail has numerous stream crossings including two larger crossings at the beginning. Recreational users in the past have attempted to build rock crossings. Improperly designed, these can impede stream flow and be washed away by annual icing each winter.

Volunteers will establish a rock path crossing at the beginning of the trail head, clean up the second crossing and install replacement trailhead signs.

Placement of 10 to 20 inch diameter rock to facilitate a foot crossing of Nome Creek. All materials are local, existing rocks in the riparian zone:

- Fish passage will be maintained at all crossings.
- Fish passage areas will consist of 2 ft. wide gaps in the rock bridge where fish can pass freely.
- Fish passage areas will be spaced along the rock bridge at a minimum -of every 20 ft.
- Stream crossings that are <20 ft wide will provide a minimum of 1 break in the rock wall that allows for fish passage.
- A minimum of 1 fish passage area will be provided in the deepest section of the stream allowing for passage during periods of low water

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: White Mountains National Recreation Area RMP

Date Approved/Amended: 1986

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

GOAL 1:

Provide for a variety of public outdoor recreational opportunities which emphasize the existing natural primitive and semi-primitive values appropriate to the WMRNA designation.

- Improve recreational access to the interior highlands emphasizing primitive and semi-primitive experiences.

Further, the action is identified in the White Mountains National Recreation Area Recreational Activity Management Plan (RAMP), 1988:

I.B.1.d I Trailhead Site as well as “maintenance related to unimproved trails consisting of limited vegetation clearing, necessary trail markers, and boardwalks to span unavoidable wet areas...” I.B.1.a Trail Systems.

III.B. Highlands (Primitive) include:

- Improve recreation access to interior highlands emphasizing primitive experiences.
- Establish backcountry hiking/horseback riding opportunities along the high ridge complex linking Cache Mountain, Lime Peak and Mt. Prindle.

IV. Management program for attainment of recreation management objectives:

IV.A.1. a.i. Summer Trails (trails for weekend hiking)

- Trailhead parking/signing
- Minimal clearing/trail construction to eliminate major obstacles/hazards and for resource protection
- Trail markings as necessary to allow the user to follow the trail with a topographical map

C. Compliance with NEPA

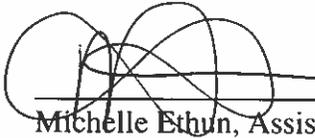
The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 G(2) which states: ...Installation of routine signs, markers, culverts, ditches, waterbars, gates, or cattleguards on/or adjacent to roads and trails identified in any land use or transportation plan, or eligible for incorporation in such a plan.

The proposed action must be screened against the extraordinary circumstances found in 43 CFR 46.215 and listed below. Any “yes” finding requires that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement be prepared for the Proposed Action.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES	YES/NO
1) May have significant impacts on public health or safety.	No
2) May have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.	No
3) May have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.	No
4) May have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.	No
5) Might establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.	No
6) May have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	No
7) May have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.	No
8) May have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.	No
9) Might violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.	No
10) May have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).	No
11) Might limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).	No
12) Could contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).	No

Recommendation

I have found that the Proposed Action is compatible with the White Mountains National Recreation Area Resource Management Plan and is an action that can be categorically excluded. The Proposed Action does not trigger any of the Extraordinary Circumstances found in 516 DM Chapter 2, Appendix 2. I recommend that the Proposed Action be allowed and that an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement is not needed.



Michelle Ethun, Assistant Field Manager
Eastern Interior Field Office

26 Aug 2015
Date

Concurrence

I concur that the above action is in conformance with the White Mountains National Recreation Area Resource Management Plan, does not meet any of the extraordinary circumstances, and qualifies as a Categorical Exclusion.



Lenore Hepler
Field Manager
Eastern Interior Field Office

8/27/15
Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this CX review, contact Michelle Ethun, Assistant Field Manager, Eastern Interior Field Office, at 907-474-2223.