

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW AND DECISION RECORD

DOI-BLM-ORWA-M060-2016-0005-CX

Project Name: Right-of-Way Grant (OR 068028 FD) – Victoria Land and Cattle Company, LLC

BLM Office: Ashland Resource Area, Medford District

Prepared By: Michelle Calvert **Title:** Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Contact Person: Juanita Wright **Phone #** (541) 618-2345

DESCRIPTION & LOCATION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed project is to authorize a Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) right-of-way grant (OR 068028 FD) for the use and maintenance of an existing Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for legal ingress/egress to private property, road maintenance, commercial hauling, and maintenance of an existing buried telecommunications line to Victoria Land and Cattle Company, LLC.

This right-of-way grant (OR 068028 FD) is perpetual, provided the United States has all legal access and other rights described in nonexclusive Road Easement OR 068028 PT, unless Right-of-Way Grant OR 068028 FD is relinquished, terminated, or modified pursuant to the terms and conditions of the grant or of any applicable federal law or regulation.

The subject perpetual grant will authorize the following:

- The right to operate and maintain a road right-of-way for use and maintenance of an existing BLM road for access to private property.
- The operation, use, and maintenance/repair of an existing telecommunications line. The subject right-of-way is 25 feet wide, 0.51 miles long and contains approximately 1.55 acres. No new construction or changes to this line are planned.
- Haul of commercial forest products over the road is authorized under this grant. The Holder is responsible to perform road maintenance during any commercial hauling as approved by the BLM Authorized Officer. Whenever forest products are transported over the BLM road, the Holder shall furnish to the United States copies of the scaling reports and a certified statement showing the land from which the timber or forest product was removed, and the total merchantable volume.
- The holder agrees that during the life of this grant they will comply with all environmental stipulations and Oregon State Fire Laws and Safety Regulations.
- The holder is liable for any damage to the road or adjacent roadside which results from his operations.

LOCATION

The proposed right-of-way is located on BLM-administered lands noted below:

PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES

Project Design Features (PDFs) are an integral part of the Proposed Action and have been developed to avoid or reduce the potential for adverse impacts to resources. The following PDFs are included in this project and will be incorporated into the FLPMA Right-of-Way Grant OR 068028 FD .

The Holder agrees to comply with the following additional environmental and safety stipulations as required Project Design Features:

For watershed protection (water quality, hydrological functions, and Riparian Reserves):

- Commercial haul will be limited to the dry season (generally May 15th to October 15th). Thirty days prior to haul, the Holder will notify the BLM.
- With the exception of emergency repairs, road and telecommunication line maintenance/repair will also be limited to the dry season. If emergency repairs are necessary during the wet season, the BLM will be notified prior to ground-disturbing activities.
- All soil disturbance associated with road drainage improvement will be within the existing road right-of-way.
- All ground disturbances within Riparian Reserves will be mulched with weed-free straw or native materials. A minimum of 80 percent ground cover will be maintained following such activities. Where the potential for surface erosion is high, seeding will be considered with native grass seed.
- Blading and vegetation removal will be avoided unless necessary to remove drainage impediments when maintaining inboard ditches. Sediment will be controlled by spreading weed-free straw in ditchlines where ditchline blading is required within 100 feet of streams.
- No snow plowing will occur on the gravel or native surface road segments.
- Any stockpile areas of loose soil or other materials will have perimeter controls such as straw wattles or silt fence around the down slope perimeter when precipitation is occurring or is imminent.
- Regardless of the season, ground-disturbing activities will be restricted when precipitation is occurring or is imminent.

To prevent the spread of noxious weeds:

- All equipment will be cleaned prior to entry onto BLM-administered lands to prevent the introduction and spread of noxious weeds. Cleaning is defined as removal of dirt, grease, plant parts, and material that may carry noxious weed seeds. Cleaning prior to entry may be accomplished by using a pressure hose.
- The Holder will only utilize the road prism for commercial hauling.
- The Holder will comply with the applicable Federal and State laws and regulations concerning the use of pesticides (i.e., insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides, and other similar substances) in all activities/operations under this grant. The Holder will obtain from the Authorized Officer approval of a written plan prior to the use of such substances. The plan will provide the type and quantity of material to be used; the pest, insect, fungus, etc. to be controlled; the method of application; the location for storage

and disposal of containers; and other information that the Authorized Officer may require. The plan will be submitted no later than December 1st of any calendar year that covers the proposed activities for the next calendar year (i.e., December 1, 2015, deadline for any 2016 action). Emergency use of pesticides may occur. The use of substances on or near the right-of-way will be in accordance with the approved plan. A pesticide will not be used if the Secretary of the Interior has prohibited its use. A pesticide will be used only in accordance with its registered uses and within other limitations if the Secretary has imposed limitations. Pesticides will not be permanently stored on public lands authorized for use under this grant.

- Following maintenance activities outside of ditch cleaning, the Holder will apply BLM Botanist-approved seed and mulch to disturbed areas exposing bare soil.

For the protection of Special Status Species:

- If gray wolves or Pacific fisher den or rendezvous sites are discovered in the vicinity of the right-of-way, restrictions may be placed on activities to avoid disturbance to these species.
- The Holder will notify the BLM of any ground-disturbing work for the maintenance of the telecommunications line or road associated with this right-of-way grant by February of the planned activity year.
- Following timely notification of routine maintenance actions (by February of the planned activity year), BLM will flag and map any areas requiring avoidance or other specific Project Design Features and provide this information to the right-of-way holder in a timely manner, provided such direction does not impede required maintenance.
- No heavy or power equipment will be used within 195 ft of any northern spotted owl nest during the nesting season (March 1st through June 30th, or until two weeks after the fledging period).

For the protection of cultural resources:

- If during project implementation the contractor encounters or becomes aware of any objects or sites of paleontological or cultural value on federal lands, such as fossils, historical or pre-historical ruins, graves, grave markers, or artifacts, the contractor will immediately suspend all operations in the vicinity of the cultural value and notify the Authorized Officer of the findings. The project may be redesigned to protect the cultural resource values present, or evaluation and mitigation procedures will be implemented based on recommendations from the resource area archaeologist with concurrence by the Ashland Field Manager and State Historic Preservation Office.

PLAN CONFORMANCE

The Proposed Action is in compliance with the *1995 Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)*. The 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan incorporated the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (Northwest Forest Plan)* (USDA and USDI 1994). The 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan was later amended by the 2001 *Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the*

Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines.

The Proposed Action is also in conformance with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937 (O&C Act), Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further documentation under NEPA in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 E (16): acquisition of easements for an existing road or issuance of leases, permits, or rights-of-way for the use of existing facilities, improvements, or sites for the same or similar purposes.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances having effects that may significantly affect the environment as documented in the following review. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR §46.215 rise to the level of significance. A summary of the extraordinary circumstances is listed below. The action must have a significant or a disproportional effect on the listed categories to warrant further analysis and environmental review.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR § 46.205(c)) require that any action that is normally categorically excluded must be evaluated to determine whether it meets any of the extraordinary circumstances listed in 43 CFR § 46.215. An action would meet one of the extraordinary circumstances if the action may:

CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation	Yes	No
1. Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
Rationale: This right-of-way request is for continued use of existing facilities. It is not anticipated that the Proposed Action will have any effects to public health and safety.		
2. 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.		X
Rationale: The Proposed Action is not anticipated to affect the aforementioned resources.		
3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X

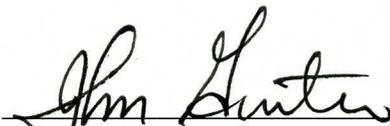
CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation	Yes	No
<p>Rationale: Based on past experience from these types of activities, there are no predicted environmental effects from the Proposed Action that are considered to be highly controversial nor are there unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses. This project's Categorical Exclusion authority allows for activities which utilize existing facilities.</p>		
4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
<p>Rationale: The activities proposed in this CX are not highly uncertain, potentially significant, unique, or unknown risks.</p>		
5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
<p>Rationale: The activities proposed in this CX are addressed and authorized under the Medford ROD/RMP. The proposed activities occur widely on federal lands throughout Oregon and there is no evidence this type of activity would establish a precedent or decision for future actions that would have significant environmental effects.</p>		
6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
<p>Rationale: The Proposed Action would not result in a cumulative significant effect when added to relevant past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions in the area.</p>		
7. 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.		X
<p>Rationale: The Proposed Action will not have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places.</p>		
8. 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.		X
<p>Rationale: The location of the Proposed Action has been reviewed by the BLM's botanist, wildlife biologist, and fisheries biologist. The Proposed Action would have no 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.</p>		
9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
<p>Rationale: The proposed activities conform to the Medford RMP's direction for management of public lands on the Medford District and comply with applicable laws, rules, and regulations.</p>		
10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).		X
<p>Rationale: Similar actions have occurred throughout the District and there is no evidence that this type of activity would have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on said populations.</p>		
11. 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 130007).		X

CX Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation	Yes	No
Rationale: The Proposed Action does not significantly or adversely affect the physical integrity of any such sacred sites.		
12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative 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).		X
Rationale: The Proposed Action does not result in measurable changes to the current baseline of the risk, or actual introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species above what would be present from other activities that occur on federal lands.		

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Based on the Categorical Exclusion Review above, I have determined that the Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9 E (16), acquisition of easements for an existing road or issuance of leases, permits, or rights-of-way for the use of existing facilities, improvements, or sites for the same or similar purposes. It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action and authorize the issuance of FLPMA Right-of-Way Grant OR 068028 FD to Victoria Land and Cattle Company, LLC. In making my decision, I considered the Project Design Features that will be incorporated into the project.

In addition, I have reviewed the plan conformance statement and have determined the Proposed Action is in accordance with the approved land use plan and that no further environmental analysis is required. Therefore, an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement is not needed. It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action as described.



 John Gerritsma
 Field Manager
 Ashland Resource Area

12/2/15

 Date

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

Administrative review of right-of-way decisions requiring National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment will be available under 43 CFR Part 4 to those who have a “legally cognizable interest” to which there is a substantial likelihood that the action authorized would cause injury, and who have established themselves as a “party to the case.” (See 43 CFR § 4.410 (a) – (c)). Other than the applicant/proponent for the right-of-way action, in order to be considered a “party to the case” the person claiming to be adversely affected by the decision must show that they have notified the BLM that they have a “legally cognizable interest” and the decision on appeal has caused or is substantially likely to cause injury to that interest (See 43 CFR § 4.410(d)).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF DECISION

This is a land decision on a right-of-way application. All BLM decisions under 43 CFR Part 2800 remain in effect pending an appeal (See 43 CFR § 2801.10) unless the Secretary rules otherwise. Rights-of-way decisions that remain in effect pending an appeal are considered as “in full force and effective immediately” upon issuance of a decision. Thus, this decision is now in effect.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

This decision may be appealed to the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Interior Board of Land Appeals (Board) by those who have a “legally cognizable interest” to which there is a substantial likelihood that the action authorized in this decision would cause injury, and who have established themselves as a “party to the case.” (See 43 CFR § 4.410). If an appeal is taken, a written notice of appeal must be filed with the BLM officer who made the decision in this office by close of business (4:30 p.m.) not more than 30 days after the date of service. Only signed hard copies of a notice of appeal that are delivered to the following address will be accepted.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD INTERAGENCY OFFICE
Ashland Resource Area
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504

Faxed or e-mailed appeals will not be considered.

The person signing the notice of appeal has the responsibility of proving eligibility to represent the appellant before the Board under its regulations at 43 CFR § 1.3. The appellant also has the burden of showing that the decision appealed from is in error. The appeal must clearly and concisely state which portion or element of the decision is being appealed and the reasons why the decision is believed to be in error. If your notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and with the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal was filed.

According to 43 CFR Part 4, you have the right to petition the Board to stay the implementation of the decision. Should you choose to file one, your stay request should accompany your notice

of appeal. You must show standing and present reasons for requesting a stay of the decision. A petition for 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 appellant'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.

A notice of appeal with petition for stay must be served upon the Board and the Regional Solicitor at the same time such documents are served on the deciding official at this office. Service must be accomplished within fifteen (15) days after filing in order to be in compliance with appeal regulations (43 CFR § 4.413(a)). At the end of your notice of appeal you must sign a certification that service has been or will be made in accordance with the applicable rules (i.e., 43 CFR §§ 4.410(c) and 4.413) and specify the date and manner of such service.

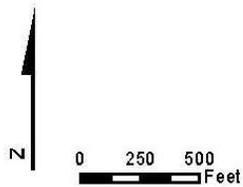
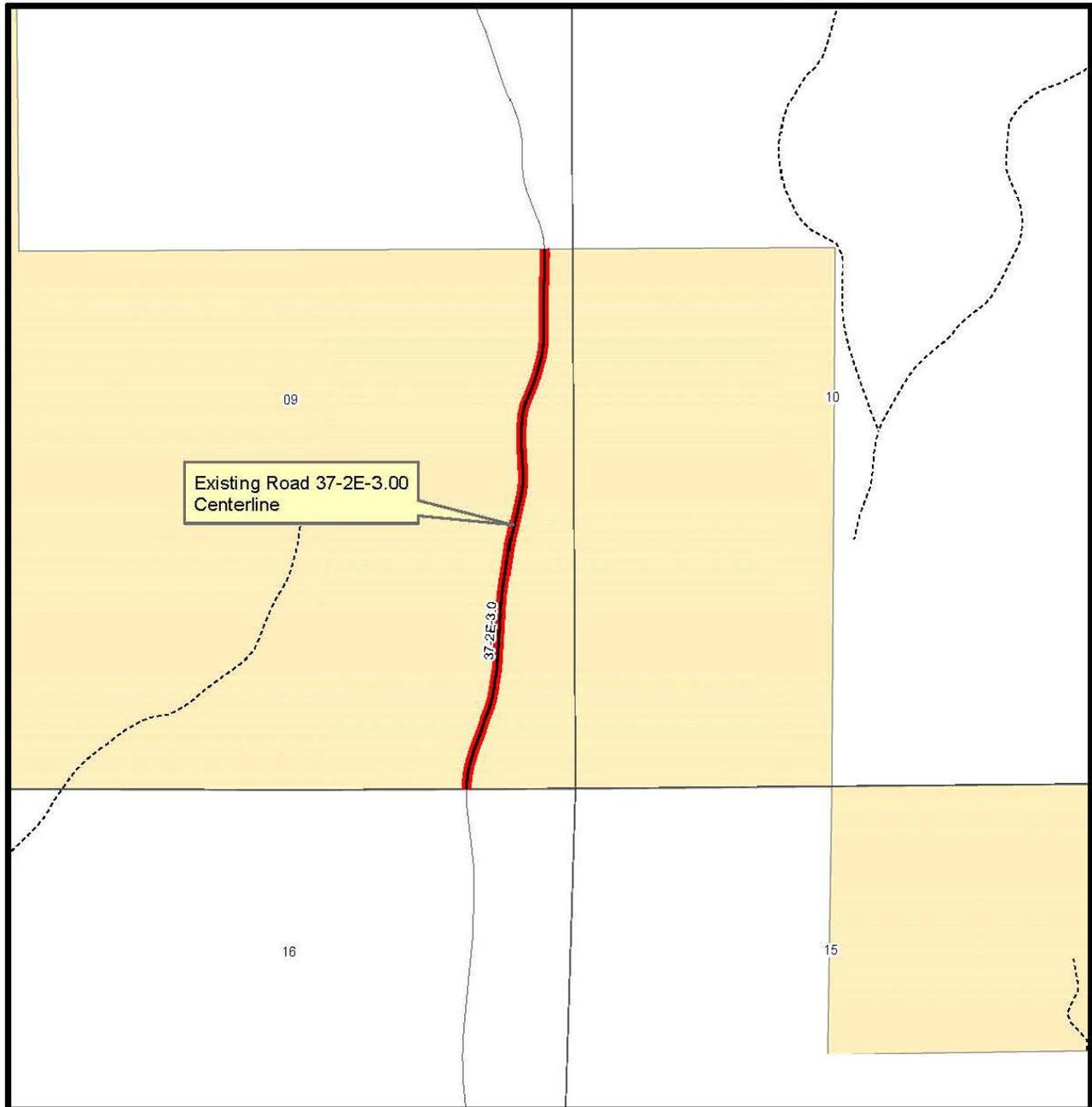
The IBLA will review any petition for a stay and may grant or deny the stay. If the IBLA takes no action on the stay request within 45 days of the expiration of the time for filing a notice of appeal, you may deem the request for stay as denied, and the BLM decision will remain in full force and effect until IBLA makes a final ruling on the case.

U.S. Department of the Interior
Office of Hearings and Appeals
Interior Board of Land Appeals
801 N. Quincy Street, MS 300-QC
Arlington, Virginia 22203

Regional Solicitor
Pacific Northwest Region
U.S. Department of the Interior
1220 S.W. 3rd Avenue
Portland, OR 97204

Victoria Land and Cattle Company, LLC
John Scileppi
6248 Lost Creek Road
Eagle Point, OR 97524

For additional information concerning this project, contact Michelle Calvert, Planning and Environmental Coordinator, at (541) 618-2252.



RIGHT OF WAY (25' WIDE)
RW WIDTH = 12.5' EACH SIDE OF CENTERLINE
RW AREA = 1.55 ACRES MORE OR LESS
RW LENGTH = 0.51 MILES MORE OR LESS

Legend

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  Private Individual or Company