Documentation of Land Use Plan Conformance and NEPA Adequacy (DNA)

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Salem District, Oregon

Alsea Falls Trail Construction - Phase 1 Continuation
DOI-BLM-ORWA-S050-2016-0014-DNA

A. Background and Description of the Proposed Action

The purpose of this document is to determine whether existing environmental analysis in the Alsea Falls Recreation Area Management Plan Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-OR-S050-2013-0001-EA) (EA) is adequate for the proposed project. The EA analyzed several actions to improve recreation and visitor experiences within the Alsea Falls Recreation Area. This area included the day-use area, campground, and trails across the byway. The management plan and decision included a number of components including campground expansion, restoration work, day use area modifications, and an overhaul of the trail system, focused around Fall Creek. The decision included an implementation schedule that prioritized actions over the next several years. The first five years of implementation included a number of actions related to the trail system. This current project is intended to continue the development of the original 10-12 miles identified in the Plan to provide greater connectivity and improve visitor experience throughout the trail network.

As described in the EA and the 2013 DR, the trail system around Fall Creek was underutilized and minimally maintained. Prior to the current trail development, the system consisted of approximately 2.5 miles of trails and 15–20 miles of logging roads. As described in the EA, many of these trails were in poor condition and in need of maintenance (EA pp. 45–46). Use of the system was described as "moderate," estimated at less than 1,000 visitors annually. Mountain biking and hiking appeared to be the dominant uses with very limited use by equestrians (EA p. 45). The DR recognized that trail development was an opportunity for improvement and was deemed a high priority for action (DR p. 6).

The 2013 DR prioritized the "Phase 1" trail development of 10–12 miles. In 2013, implementation began on Phase 1. First, a combination of BLM-funded contractors and a local volunteer group constructed a hiking and biking loop trail and re-routed an existing trail. Volunteer interest from the mountain biking community was immediate. Team Dirt, a Corvallis-area mountain bike group, expressed interest in supporting, building, and maintaining the new trails in the Alsea Falls area. During the summer and fall of 2013, the group actively volunteered and assisted in the construction of new trails and the maintenance of existing trails. In 2014, this volunteer effort continued and was expanded. During the winter and spring of 2014, Team Dirt constructed a new bike trail, "High Baller." Similarly, the group assisted with the construction of a machine-built trail in May and June 2014. During the winter and spring of 2014, the group also assisted in the maintenance of the existing trail system including clearing trails in February 2014 after an extensive snow and ice event and repairing horse-related damage in April 2014.

On June 22, 2014, the new trail system (approximately six miles) was opened to the hiking and biking public. The system was an immediate success with mountain bikers. In the first three

weeks, the system hosted nearly 1,000 users (the approximate number of users the trail hosted the entire previous year). Team Dirt continued their volunteer efforts; it is estimated that in 2014, the group provided more than 4,000 volunteer hours for the trail system. On June 15, 2015, an additional 1.5 miles of trail opened as the result of 3,000 volunteer hours donated by Team Dirt and IMBA contract work, bringing the current overall mileage to approximately 7.5 miles.

Three trails will be added to the trail system, resulting in a total approximate mileage of 9.4 miles. The uppermost trail ("Misery Whip") would take advantage of the highest point publicly accessible from Road 14-7-27. This trail would provide a high-intermediate level rider experience tying into Upper Whistlepunk. The next trail down-slope ("High Climber") would allow riders to "loop" easily and quickly back up to Road 14-7-27 to ride those upper trails again without having to ride the long way around on Road 14-7-25. The final, lower-most trail ("Dutch2Bailout") would connect the Dutchman and Bailout trails, rather than riding the gravel road as is currently occurring.

Trails will be constructed with a combination of volunteer labor (Team Dirt for Misery Whip and Dutch2Bailout) and contracted labor (IMBA Trail Solutions Crew for High Climber), with BLM staff support. Methods would include both machine (mini-excavator, etc.) and hand crews utilizing best management practices for adhering to modern trail design standards.

Total acreage of impact would be 0.65 acres, with Misery Whip being approximately 0.7 mile long, High Climber 0.9 mile long, and Dutch2Bailout 0.3 mile long. Completed trails will average 3 feet in width. A 100' corridor (50' from center flag-line as portrayed on map below) would be the necessary planning area to allow for alignment adjustments during layout and construction as needed for factors that warrant rerouting of the trail (e.g., seeps or cultural sites), found during those processes as well as for trail features and corners. Target difficulty ratings would be moderate/blue for all three trails, with Misery Whip at the upper end of that spectrum and High Climber at the lower.

Location: T. 14 S., R. 7 W., Sections 25-26, 33-36, and T. 15 S., R. 7 W., Section 4, Willamette Meridian, Benton County, Oregon.

B. Conformance with the Land Use Plan and Consistency with Related Subordinate Implementation Plans

The analysis documented in EA is site-specific and supplements analyses found in the *Salem District Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement*, September 1994 (RMP/FEIS). The project was designed under the *Salem District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan*, May 1995 (RMP) and related documents which direct and provide the legal framework for management of BLM lands within the Salem District. All of these documents may be reviewed at the Salem District office.

This project conforms to the Salem District Resource Management Plan/Forest Land and Resource Management Plan as 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* (2001 ROD), as amended.

The project is in conformance with the Land Use Plan (LUP) because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

- Manage scenic, natural, and cultural resources to enhance visitor recreation experiences and satisfy public land users (RMP p. 41).
- Retain and maintain existing recreation developments consistent with other management actions/directions for Late-Successional Reserves and Riparian Reserves (RMP p. 42).

C. Identify the applicable NEPA document(s) and other related documents that cover the proposed action.

Applicable NEPA Documents:

- Alsea Falls Recreation Area Management Plan Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-OR-S050-2013-0001-EA) – October 2012

Other NEPA documents and other related documents that are relevant to the proposed action include:

- Salem District RMP – May 1995

D. NEPA Adequacy Criteria

1. Is the current proposed action substantially the same action (or is a part of that action) as previously analyzed?

Yes, the proposed action was directly analyzed and would be completed as described and analyzed in the Alsea Falls Recreation Area Management Plan Environmental Assessment (pg. 20).

> ***"Provide a mix of trails that offer targeted experiences***
> *Phase 1 of the trail system development in the Fall Creek area will focus on re-routing and connecting existing trails in the area. The emphasis for this phase will be on addressing known sustainability issues, moving use from roads to trails, and creating logical loops. The end result of this phase will be a 10-12 mile trail system…"*

2. Is the range of alternatives analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s) appropriate with respect to the current proposed action, given current environmental concerns, interests, resource values, and circumstances?

The EA analyzed the No Action and the Proposed Action alternatives. No other reasonable alternatives to achieving the purpose and need were identified by the Interdisciplinary Teams or the public. No new environmental concerns, interests, resource values, or circumstances have arisen since the EAs were published that would require the development of additional alternatives. A full description of the alternatives can be found in Chapter 2 of the EA (pp. 13-32).

3. Is the existing analysis adequate and are the conclusions adequate in light of any new information or circumstances? Can you reasonably conclude that all new information and all new circumstances are insignificant with regard to analysis of the proposed action?

Yes, the existing analysis is adequate. There is no new significant information or circumstances

relative to the analysis in the EA or the current action. I find that this DNA is consistent with the original EA prepared for this project. Building these trails will not cause impacts or effects that were not analyzed in the EA.

4. Are the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the current proposed action similar (both quantitatively and qualitatively) to those analyzed in the existing NEPA document(s)?

The EA analyzed direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed action on affected resources (recreation, vegetation, air quality, soils, fuels, water and riparian, wildlife, fisheries, and visual resources). The project will adhere to best management practices and project design features in the EA to minimize the effects to the aforementioned resources. There are no substantial changes from those addressed in the analyses to the present.

5. Are the public involvement and interagency review associated with existing NEPA document(s) adequately for the current proposed action?

Public involvement for the EA has been adequate. The BLM sent scoping letters in 2010 to 86 federal, state, and municipal government agencies, nearby landowners, tribal authorities, and interested parties. The BLM received 30 comments during this period.

The EA and FONSI were made available for a 30 day public review on October 9, 2012. The BLM received 13 comment letters on the EA. Comments were generally favorable for the plan and the proposed activities.

As described in the 2013 Decision Record (DR), the Alsea Falls Management Plan project employed a robust public participation strategy. Multiple open houses were held in 2010. Similarly, an open house was held in 2012 when the EA was released for public comment.

Since the 2013 DR was released, there has been close public involvement and coordination with the mountain bike community. This user group has donated over thousands of hours of volunteer time to support the trail development. User groups have demonstrated support for this action.

Consultation

As described in the 2013 DR, consultation was completed for this project for both fish and wildlife. This DNA does not introduce any factors that would trigger a re-consultation.

E. Interdisciplinary Review

Name	Resource
Stefanie Larew	NEPA Coordinator
David Moore	Outdoor Recreation Planner
Scott Hopkins	Wildlife
Douglass Fitting	Hydrology and Soils
Ron Exeter	Botany
Fred Greatorex	Cultural Resources

Prepared By

David Moore
Outdoor Recreation Planner

7/14/16
Date

Reviewed by

Stefanie Larew
NEPA Coordinator

7/14/16
Date

CONCLUSION

Based on the review documented above, I conclude that this proposal conforms to the applicable land use plan and that the existing NEPA documentation fully covers the proposed action and constitutes BLM's compliance with the requirements of NEPA.

Paul Tigan
Marys Peak Field Manager

7/15/16
Date

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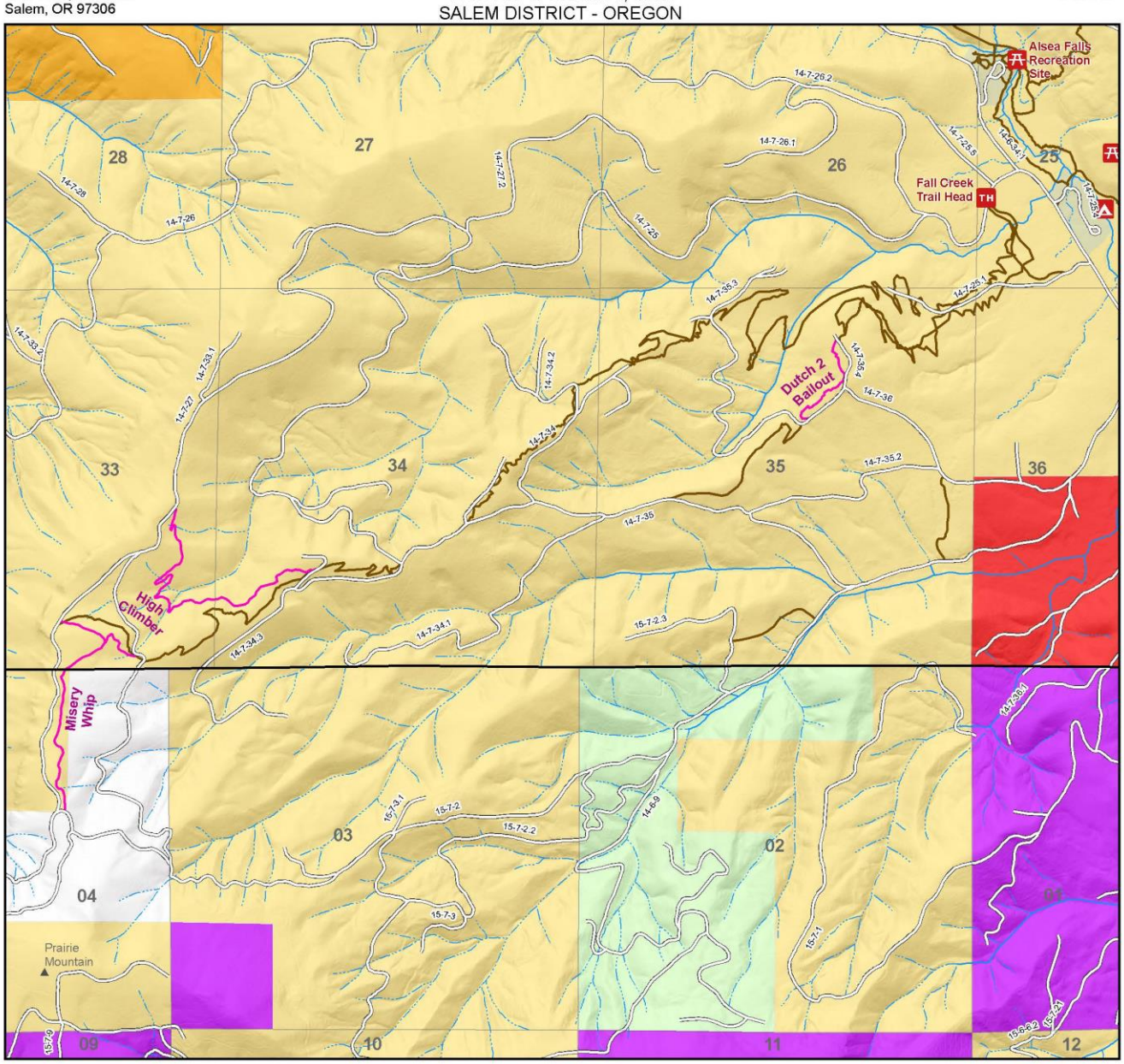
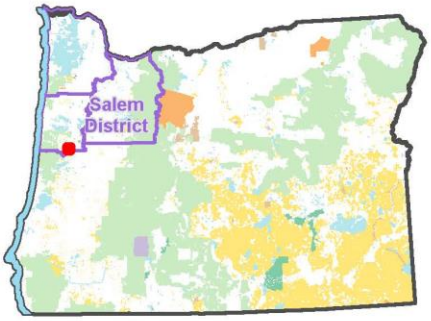
United States Department of the Interior - BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MARYS PEAK FIELD OFFICE PROJECT MAP
T14S R07W Section 25, 26, 33, 34, 35, 36, W.M.
T15S R07W Section 4, W.M.
SALEM DISTRICT - OREGON

7/12/2016



Feet
0 1,000 2,000
N

- Proposed Trail
- Existing Trail
- Road
- Minor Stream
- Major Stream
- Bureau of Land Management
- Private/Unknown
- Tall Corn Forestry LLC
- Freres Timber Inc
- Giustina Resources LTD
- Starker Forests Inc



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