



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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1792/6700/6843 (ORC030)

DOI-BLM-ORWA-C030-2016-0001-EA

North Spit Snowy Plover Habitat Restoration Areas Environmental Assessment

Scoping Document

Dear Citizen:

The Umpqua Field Office of the Coos Bay District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing the North Spit Snowy Plover Habitat Restoration Areas (HRAs) Environmental Assessment (EA No. DOI-BLM-ORWA-C030-2016-0001-EA) to revise and consolidate multiple outdated NEPA analyses to provide the most up-to-date management tools for future HRA management.

The western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus* ssp. *nivosus*) is a Federal threatened species and a State endangered species. The Coos Bay North Spit snowy plover HRAs are the most productive snowy plover-nesting grounds on the Oregon Coast. The BLM manages three snowy plover HRAs on the Coos Bay North Spit. The snowy plover HRAs on the North Spit also include habitat for pink sandverbena (*Abronia umbellata* var. *breviflora*), which is a Federal species of concern, a Bureau sensitive species, and a State endangered species.

The following information briefly describes the BLM's proposed actions. The BLM seeks written comments on any issues or concerns.

Project Summary

The North Spit Snowy Plover HRAs EA will identify resource issues and action alternatives, and analyze the environmental effects of both active and passive management options. The EA would include, but would not be limited to, analysis of vegetation modifications (e.g., manual or mechanical removal, or prescribed burning), site modifications, habitat amendments, herbicide use, expansion of the snowy plover breeding season physical closure areas, and the lengthening of the breeding season closure period. As the project area is within the Coos Bay Shorelands Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), the analysis would include the effects of the proposed actions on recreational travel routes and public safety.

Project Location

The BLM manages approximately 1,736.8 acres of the 3,536.7 acres of the North Spit south of the Forest Service/BLM boundary. The snowy plover HRAs are located near the southern (ocean-side) end of North Spit of Coos Bay, Oregon. These areas are north of the Army Corps of Engineers North Jetty parcels (and their plover HRAs) and generally south of the FAA Tower (see **Table 1, Figure 1**). The BLM-managed HRAs, totaling approximately 71.6 acres of possible treatment areas, are within the boundaries of the North Spit Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC).

Table 1. Locations of the Habitat Restoration Areas (HRAs) in the EA.

HRA Name	Township	Range	Section	BLM-managed HRA Areas (Acres)	Land Use Allocation
1995 HRA	25 S.	14 W.	26	26.80	GFMA
1998 HRA East	25 S.	14 W.	26	23.74	GFMA
1998 HRA West	25 S.	14 W.	23, 24, 25, 26	21.02	GFMA

Need for the Project

The BLM is currently managing the snowy plover HRAs on the North Spit using multiple outdated NEPA documents, including the 1995 Coos Bay Shorelands Plan as amended in 2005. New information for plover and pink sandverbena requires new habitat management analysis.

The EA would serve as the ‘foundation’ for new consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This is an opportunity to develop one cohesive and comprehensive NEPA analysis, which would:

- 1) consolidate multiple outdated NEPA documents;
- 2) update management options for the HRAs; and
- 3) analyze specific habitat restoration strategies to achieve habitat goals and objectives.

Project Objectives (Purpose)

Any action alternatives given serious consideration as a reasonable alternative to a project proposed to be implemented within the planning area must meet the objectives provided in the 1995 Coos Bay District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (ROD/RMP). The ROD/RMP and applicable statutes specify the following objectives to be accomplished in managing the lands in the project area:

1. Protect, manage, and conserve federal listed and proposed species and their habitats to achieve their recovery in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, approved recovery plans, and Bureau special status species policies (p. 32).
2. Manage for the conservation of federal candidate and Bureau sensitive species and their habitats so as not to contribute to the need to list and to recover the species (p. 32).
3. Manage for the conservation of state listed species and their habitats to assist the state in achieving management objectives (p. 32).
4. Study, maintain, or restore community structure, species composition, and ecological processes of special status plant and animal habitat (p. 32).
5. Maintain, protect, or restore relevant and important values of areas of critical environmental concern (p. 38).
6. Manage scenic, natural, and cultural resources to enhance visitor recreation experience expectations and to satisfy public land users (p. 46).
7. Manage off-highway vehicle use on BLM-administered land to protect natural resources, provide visitor safety, and minimize conflicts among various users (p. 46).
8. Manage roads to meet the needs identified under other resource programs (p. 69)
9. Contain and/or reduce noxious weed infestations on BLM-administered land using an integrated pest management approach and avoid introducing or spreading noxious weeds infestations in any areas (p. 72).

Public Input

The BLM invites you to submit written comments on any issues or concerns you may have regarding the proposed actions by February 28, 2016.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the address listed below during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EA document or other related documents. Before including your address, phone number, email address or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publically available at any time.

While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Please direct questions to Heather Partipilo at (541) 756-0100. You may send your comments to the Bureau of Land Management, Coos Bay District Office, 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend, OR 97459, Attn: Heather Partipilo. Comments may be submitted electronically to BLM_OR_CB_Mail@blm.gov, Attn: Heather Partipilo.

/s/ Todd D. Buchholz

January 27, 2016

Todd D. Buchholz
Umpqua Field Manager

Date

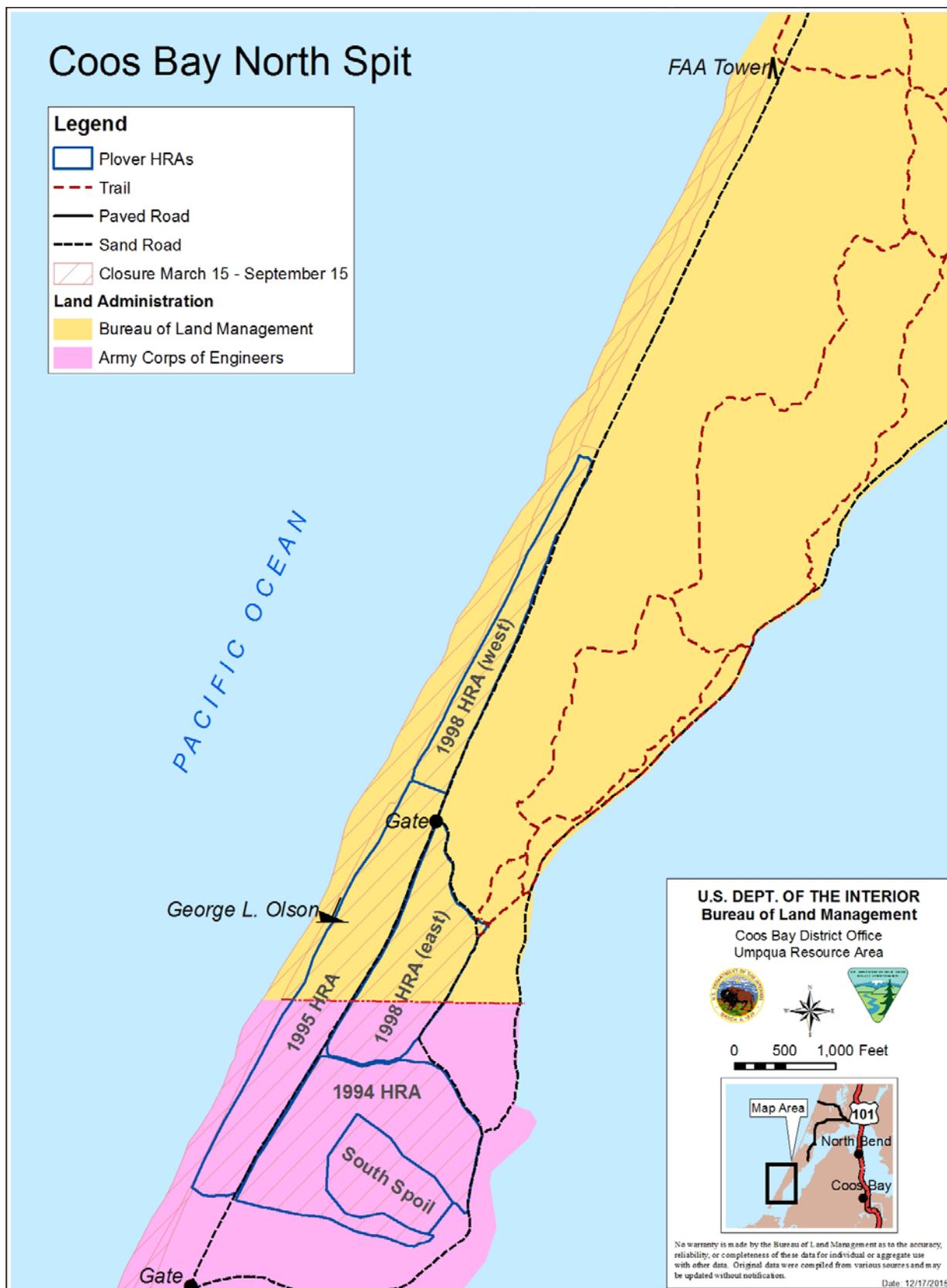


Figure 1. Location of western snowy plover habitat restoration areas (HRAs) on the Coos Bay North Spit. Plover HRAs (outlined in blue) span BLM-managed lands (in yellow), and Army Corps of Engineers-managed lands (in pink).

Note: The North Spit Snowy Plover HRAs EA would address only BLM-managed lands.