United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT OFFICE
ASHLAND RESOURCE AREA
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, Oregon 97504

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

FOR THE

CASCADE-SISKIYOU NATIONAL MONUMENT BOX R RANCH (ROWLETT) LAND EXCHANGE (OR-66137 FD/PT)

(DOI-BLM-OR-M040-2014-001-EA-R)

INTRODUCTION

The Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) was reserved by presidential proclamation (Presidential Proclamation 7318, June 2000) in recognition of its remarkable ecology and to protect a diverse range of biological, geological, aquatic, archeological, and historic objects. The *Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan* (CSNM ROD/RMP) was approved in August 2008. It provides guidance and direction for a strategy aimed at protecting and enhancing the public lands and associated resources within the CSNM.

The Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Pub. L. No. 111-11 gave the Secretary of the Interior the authority to offer to convey two BLM parcels in exchange for parcels owned by private individuals; the BLM parcels are within the boundaries of the CSNM. The BLM processed an RMP Amendment in October 2013 that allows lands to be acquired by exchange where the public land involved in the exchange is located inside or outside the boundaries of the CSNM as long as, in either case, the exchange "furthers the protective purposes of the monument." The RMP Amendment allows the BLM to consider the two Congressionally-authorized land exchanges.

The *Revised Environmental Assessment for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Box R Ranch (Rowlett) Land Exchange (OR 66137 FD/PT)* (DOI-BLM-OR-M040-2014-001-EA-R) documented the environmental analysis conducted to estimate the site-specific effects on the human environment that may result from the implementation of the proposal to complete the Box R Ranch land exchange authorized under Public Law 111-011, Section 1403 and exchange an isolated 46.39 acre tract of federal land in T. 40 S. R. 4 E., Section 5, Government Lot 2 for an approximate 40-acre parcel of non-federal land in T. 40 S., R. 4 E., Section 18, portions of Government Lots 2 and 3.

CONTEXT AND INTENSITY

Based on the context and intensity of the impacts analyzed in the *Revised Environmental Assessment for the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Box R Ranch (Rowlett) Land Exchange (OR 66137 FD/PT)* (EA) (pages 20-26), I have determined that implementation of the proposal, as described in Alternative 2 (Proposed Action) of the Rowlett Land Exchange EA, is not a major federal action that would

significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. I considered the following criteria, suggested by CEQ (40 CFR 1508.27), for evaluating intensity or severity of the impact of exchanging the parcels of land identified in Alternative 2 of the EA.

The Rowlett Land Exchange will:

1. **Not result in significant beneficial or adverse effects.**
The EA has considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of the proposed action for the Box R Ranch (Rowlett) land exchange.

The federal parcel in the proposed exchange is classified as revested Oregon & California Railroad Grant Lands (O&C Lands). As such, disposal of O&C lands is subject to the "No Net Loss Policy," Oregon Public Lands Transfer and Protection Act of 1998, P.L. 105-321, § 3(b), 112 Stat. 3020, 3022 (1998). The federal parcel in the proposed exchange is slightly larger than the proposed non-federal parcel (as currently configured) by 6.49 acres (federal = 46.39, non-federal = 39.9). However, there is currently a positive net change in O&C lands by 50 acres since 1998. Therefore, the exchange is in compliance with the Act and the Instruction Memorandum that provides the Act's implementation guidance. The final acreage figure will be determined after the appraisal process.

The proposed land exchange allows the BLM to complete one of the exchanges authorized in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. This alternative meets the intent of the Proclamation as it "furthers the protective purposes of the monument" because: 1) the federal land is developed and encumbered and the use currently interferes with the management objectives of the CSNM, and 2) the non-federal land is in an undisturbed ecological natural condition (consistent with the management objectives of the CSNM).

The proposed action also allows the BLM to resolve a long-standing inadvertent trespass on public lands within the boundary of the CSNM.

2. **Not result in significant impacts on public health and safety.**
No aspects of the Box R land exchange have been identified as having the potential to significantly and adversely impact public health and safety.

3. **Have no significant, adverse effects on 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 Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument was reserved by presidential proclamation as a unit of the National Landscape Conservation System (National Conservation Lands). The CSNM RMP, as amended provides for the potential enhancement of the area by allowing for land exchanges that further "the protective purposes of the monument" where the public land to be exchanged is located within the boundaries of the CSNM.

Acquisition of the non-Federal parcel would transfer into public ownership 0.3 miles of Lincoln Creek and between 0.2 miles and 0.3 miles of Keene Creek (depending on which configuration is ultimately transferred after the final parcel-size adjustment based on the appraisal). Both of these creeks contain valuable riparian and fisheries habitat. Keene Creek provides habitat for Jenny Creek suckers and redband trout.

The proposed exchange benefits cultural resources by allowing 1) the 50+ year old outbuilding on the federal parcel to continue to be used and maintained for the ongoing and historical uses as a hay

storage and outbuilding as part of the Box R Ranch operations and 2) protect the Applegate Trail and Pinehurst Cemetery through a deed restriction (EA, pages 22-24).

There are no prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or parks within the federal parcel to be exchanged.

4. Not have highly controversial environmental effects.

The anticipated effects of implementing the Box R Ranch land exchange, documented in the EA, are well known, consistent with the Presidential Proclamation 7318, and no highly controversial effects have been identified.

Public input regarding the proposed land exchange was solicited with the publication of Notice of Exchange Proposal (NOEP) in the *Medford Mail Tribune* on September 10, 17, 24 and October 1, 2013. The NOEP was also mailed to the congressional delegation, State legislators, local government officials, authorized users, adjacent landowners, and other interested parties. The first publication of the NOEP initiated the public scoping period which ended on October 25, 2013. No public comments were received for the proposed land exchange. Based on the lack of the comments received from the public, the effects on the quality of the human environment are not considered highly controversial.

5. Not have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks.

The analysis does not show that this action will involve any unique or unknown risks.

6. Not establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

The proposed Box R Ranch land exchange neither establishes a precedent for future BLM actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. Future land exchange proposals within the CSNM will be considered in subsequent NEPA analysis which will determine if the proposal furthers the protective purposes of the monument.

7. Not result in significant cumulative environmental effects.

Cumulative environmental effects are "the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions" (See definition of "cumulative impact" in 40 CFR § 1508.7).

Analysis was performed at multiple scales, and included the consideration of past actions, as reflected in current conditions, current actions, and foreseeable future actions on both private and federal lands (EA, Environmental Consequences: Effects of Implementation, pages 12-17). The proposed land exchange, authorized by the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, "furthers the protective purposes of the monument," as required under the CSNM RMP, as amended and Presidential Proclamation 7318. The proposed action does not contribute significantly to the effect of any of the past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions within the geographic area. No significant cumulative impacts were identified.

8. Have no significant effects on scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The proposed action will not cause the loss or destruction of any significant scientific, cultural or historic resources. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties; those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The BLM archeologist surveyed both the federal and non-federal parcels proposed for exchange as part of the environmental

analysis. There are two archaeological/historical properties located on the federal parcel in this exchange that are eligible for the NHRP: 1) the Pinehurst Cemetery and 2) a segment of the Applegate Trail. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred on April 6, 2015 that the land exchange would have no adverse effect on the eligible sites or any known archeological sites, provided that the exchange include a deed restriction that protects the cemetery and the Applegate Trail. Conveyance of the property is subject to the deed restriction described on pages 22-24 of the EA.

9. **Have no adverse effects on species listed or proposed to be listed as Federally Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated critical habitat for these species.**

No ground-disturbing activities are associated with this land exchange. There are no known adverse effects to any of these species or their habitat from the implementation of this land exchange.

10. **Not Violate a Federal, State, Local, or Tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment.**

Through analysis documented in the EA, the BLM has determined that the proposed land exchange would not threaten a violation of any federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

FINDING

Based on a review of the EA, I have determined that the proposed Box R Ranch (Rowlett) land exchange does not constitute a major federal action and will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity, as defined at 40 CFR 1508.27 and the analysis of effects documented in the EA has been completed within the context of multiple spatial and temporal scales and within the context of the Presidential Proclamation 7318 establishing the CSNM, the 2008 *Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan,* as amended in 2013 and the associated *Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument Proposed Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement* (2005). The anticipated effects are within the scope, type, and magnitude of effects anticipated and analyzed in those plans.

Dayne C. Barron
District Manager
Medford District Bureau of Land Management

9 June 15
Date