

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SALEM DISTRICT**

Categorical Exclusion Review

I. Background

BLM Office: Cascades Field Office **Lease/Serial/Case File No:** N/A

Categorical Exclusion Number: DOI-BLM-ORWA-S040-2016-0038-CX

Date: 8/23/2016

Proposed Action Title/Type: Cascades Field Office Beaver Relocation Project

Location of Proposed Action: T. 6 S., R. 2 E.; T. 6 S., R. 5 E.; T. 7 S., R. 3 E.; T. 7 S., R. 4 E.; T. 7 S., R. 5 E.; Willamette Meridian, Clackamas County

T. 8 S., R. 3 E.; Willamette Meridian, Marion County

T. 11 S., R. 2 E.; T. 11 S., R. 3 E.; Willamette Meridian, Linn County

Land Use Allocation(s): Congressionally Reserved-Wild and Scenic River, District-Designated Reserve, Riparian Reserve, Late Successional Reserve

Description of Proposed Action:

The BLM Cascades Field Office (CFO) proposes to coordinate with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to relocate beavers from the Willamette Valley area to BLM administered lands within the CFO. ODFW is working with private land owners within the Willamette Valley area that are requesting beavers be trapped and removed. These beavers will be trapped by ODFW and moved to suitable locations on BLM administered lands. The project will occur in Riparian Reserves (RR), and Late Successional Reserve (LSR) Land Use Allocations. Proposed sites within Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) will receive priority. These include the Crabtree Outstanding Natural Area (ONA)/Research Natural Area (RNA) complex (first priority) and the Snow Peak ACEC (second priority). Relocation will occur within ACECs first and monitoring of the beavers will take place prior to relocating to any of the other locations outside of a designated ACEC. Plant communities in the Crabtree ONA/RNA complex and the Snow Peak ACEC are all dependent on ecological conditions created by high water tables resulting from beaver dams. These areas previously had beaver activity, however there is no new beaver sign.

Beavers are absent in areas of the CFO that were once occupied 10-20 years ago. Surveys have been completed over the past seven years documenting the absence and lack of recolonization by beavers. Due to the distance from source populations in the Willamette Valley as well as having to cross unsuitable, high gradient streams and private timber lands, it is unlikely that historic beaver areas on BLM administered lands will be recolonized in the short term.

The goal of the project is to use beavers as a method to assist in restoring fish and wildlife habitat by improving riparian/wetland areas and stream function and preventing further meadow encroachment by conifers. Beavers play a critical role in ecological function, and biodiversity (Rosell et. al. 2005). On BLM lands in the CFO there are four Bureau Sensitive Species that directly benefit from the habitat created by beavers (see Table 1 below). The increased growth of vegetation surrounding beaver ponds also provides habitat for migratory birds (Rosell et. al. 2005).

Beaver dams and the habitat they create are considered the foraging habitat for the peregrine falcon, a Bureau Sensitive Species. As a Bureau Sensitive Species, current policy guides the BLM to manage for suitable nesting and foraging habitat for the peregrine falcon. Currently, one of the three known peregrine falcon nest sites in the CFO is near House Mountain where the nest ledge is located above historic beaver dams. As of 2009 there were no active beavers utilizing the dam and no new sign was apparent during surveys. As beaver populations increase with development of beaver dams and ponds, waterfowl populations increase, which in turn provides increased prey species for the peregrine falcon (Baker et. al. 2003).

The habitat created by beaver dams also provides higher quality habitat for the threatened coho salmon. During winter, the juvenile coho that inhabit side channels impounded by beaver dams are consistently larger and have greater overwinter survival rates than juveniles that use side channels without beaver dams (Nickelson et al. 1992, Swales et al. 1986, Bustard and Narver 1975). Increased numbers and larger sizes of juvenile coho have also been found upstream of beaver dams during the summer in main-stem and off channel habitats (Leidholt-Bruner et al. 1992, Murphy et al. 1989). High numbers of juvenile coho have been found to rear in beaver ponds on BLM administered land on Sixes Creek in the Sandy River basin (Roberts 2004).

The Proposed Action has the potential to impact culverts within the areas proposed for beaver relocation. Beaver activity can plug or damage culverts to a point where they no longer properly functioning. The Proposed Action could impact approximately 14 culverts at 14 relocation areas. Thirteen relocation areas out of 27 would not affect any culverts. The following Project Design Features will be implemented in order to reduce impacts to culverts:

- Prior to relocation, CFO Wildlife Biologists will document the number and location of culverts that could potentially be impacted by relocated beavers.
- The Salem District BLM will utilize Federal Highway Administration funding to install beaver deterrent devices on culverts within the proposed relocation areas.
- Monitoring of culverts will be completed through CFO Storm Watch patrols and field staff inspections when in the areas of relocation. CFO Wildlife Biologists will also monitor the relocated beavers throughout the year, including inspecting culverts for damage. Any culvert repair or maintenance will be included in the Salem District BLM Road Maintenance Operation Plan at the beginning of the year.

The project will start when trapped beavers become available for relocation from ODFW, which will be throughout the calendar year. Due to adverse winter weather, some proposed release sites will not be available. If this occurs, the project schedule and priorities will be adjusted to account for weather conditions. The CFO Wildlife Biologist will coordinate with ODFW to determine dates when beavers are available for relocation. The CFO Wildlife Biologist will follow the ODFW “Guidelines for Relocation of Beaver in Oregon” while completing the project (see Attachment A). The BLM will coordinate and notify adjacent land owners to prevent any possible issues with private infrastructure and lands after relocation has occurred.

Table 1. Fish and Wildlife Species dependent on or benefiting from beaver- altered habitats.

OCCURRENCE	SPECIES & STATUS	HABITAT DESCRIPTION
Documented	<i>FALCO PEREGRINUS</i> ANATUM BS/SE American peregrine falcon	Rare during the nesting season. Usually occurs as a transient/migrant and winter visitor. Found in a variety of open habitats near cliffs or mountains. Prefers areas near larger bodies of water and rivers.
Documented	<i>PROGNE SUBIS</i> BS/SOC/SC Purple martin	Rare summer resident. Typically occurs along rivers and other water bodies. Nests colonially in cavities in old buildings, abandoned woodpecker holes, and nest boxes.
Documented	<i>MYOTIS THYSANODES</i> BS/SOC/SV Fringed myotis	Associated with buildings, bridges, mines, snags and cliff/cave habitat. Likely in the north half of the Resource Area, at lower elevations closer to the Willamette Valley. Prefers older forests. Forages over water and riparian areas.
Documented	<i>ACTINEMYS MARMORATA</i> MARMORATA BS/SOC/ SC Northern Pacific pond turtle	Marshes, ponds, lakes, slow rivers and streams, usually with an abundance of aquatic vegetation and emergent logs or boulders for basking. Associated with Willamette Valley.
Documented	<i>ONCORHYNCHUS KISUTCH</i> T/E Willamette Coho Salmon	Coho salmon utilize freshwater, nearshore and offshore environments during its lifecycles. Coho salmon spawn in lower stream velocity, shallower water, and smaller gravel. Most Coho fry stay in the stream for over a year feeding on aquatic insects, zooplankton, and small fish. Adequate stream cover is important to fry survival, as is high dissolved oxygen levels.

Project Design Features

- Relocation will occur within ACECs first and monitoring of the beavers will take place prior to relocating to any of the other locations outside of a designated ACEC.
- Prior to relocation, Cascades Field Office Wildlife Biologists will document the number and location of culverts that could potentially be impacted by relocated beavers.
- The Salem District BLM will utilize Federal Highway Administration funding to install beaver deterrent devices on culverts within the proposed relocation areas.
- Monitoring of culverts will be completed through Cascades Field Office Storm Watch patrols and field staff inspections when in the areas of relocation. Cascades Field Office Wildlife Biologists will also monitor the relocated beavers throughout the year, including inspecting culverts for damage. Any culvert repair or maintenance will be included in the Salem District Office Road Maintenance Operation Plan at the beginning of the year.

II. Land Use Plan Conformance:

Land Use Plan Name: *Northwestern and Coastal Oregon Resource Management Plan (2016 ROD/RMP)*

Date Approved: August 2016

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP because it is provided for in the following LUP decisions related to Riparian Reserves and wildlife management direction:

ROD/RMP-Riparian Reserves (p. 70)

- Promote beaver habitat restoration where the presence of beaver and their associated dams would improve fish and aquatic habitat.

ROD/RMP-Wildlife (p. 95)

- Manage naturally occurring special habitats to maintain their ecological function, such as seeps, springs, wetlands, natural ponds, vernal pools/ponds, natural meadows, rock outcrops, caves, cliffs, talus slopes, mineral licks, oak savannah/woodlands, sand dunes, and marine habitats.

The Proposed Action is also in conformance with the below management direction for the ROD/RMP Land Use Allocations:

Congressional Reserve – Wild and Scenic Rivers (p. 56)

- Conduct management actions, including but not limited to fuels treatments, invasive species management, riparian or wildlife habitat improvements, forest management, and trail construction, in Wild and Scenic River corridors only if consistent with designated or tentative classifications and if any reductions in outstandingly remarkable values would be temporary and outstandingly remarkable values would be protected or enhanced over the long term.

District Designated Reserve – ACEC (p. 57)

- Implement activities as necessary to maintain, enhance, or restore relevant and important values.

III. 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 (A): “Fish and Wildlife. Relocation of nuisance or depredating wildlife, providing the relocation does not introduce new species into the ecosystem.”

A. Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review

Table 1: Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review (43 CFR 46.215)		
Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion	Yes	No
(a) Have significant impacts on public health or safety?		No
<i>Rationale:</i> The Proposed Action will have no significant impacts on public health or safety. Monitoring will take place for culverts potentially impacted by beaver relocation (see Project Design Features above).		

Table 1: Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review (43 CFR 46.215)		
Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion	Yes	No
<p>(b) 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, floodplains, national monuments, migratory birds, other ecologically significant or critical areas?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The Proposed Action will utilize existing road systems to access the proposed beaver release sites. There will be no new surface disturbance under the Proposed Action. There are no unique geographic characteristics or resources that will be affected by the Proposed Action. No refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, national natural landmarks, or sole or principal drinking water aquifers within the project area will be affected by the Proposed Action although there are proposed release sites within these designations. The Proposed Action will not impact cultural or historic resources because the action will be limited to existing roads and foot traffic. For wetlands, dam construction and water impoundment due to beaver activity will likely increase the depth and number of small wet areas/wetlands in the vicinity of release sites. In addition, adjacent floodplain surfaces would be flooded more frequently during winter storms which will result in improvements to wildlife and fish habitat at these sites.</p>		No
<p>(c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA section 102(2) (E)]?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The effects of this Proposed Action are not environmentally controversial and there are no unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. Wildlife has been relocated to BLM-administered lands in the past and will continue to occur in the future.</p>		No
<p>(d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The Proposed Action is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas without highly controversial, highly uncertain, or unique or unknown risks.</p>		No
<p>(e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> Implementation of the Proposed Action does not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects, nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. See (d), above.</p>		No
<p>(f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> There are no cumulative effects associated with the Proposed Action; therefore there are no significant cumulative effects as a result of these actions. The BLM has conducted this type of activity in the past with no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative effects.</p>		No
<p>(g) 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?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The Proposed Action has no significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.</p>		No

Table 1: Categorical Exclusions: Extraordinary Circumstances Review (43 CFR 46.215)		
Will the Proposed Action documented in this Categorical Exclusion	Yes	No
<p>(h) 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?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The Proposed Action will not generate any new ground disturbance or noise levels that will result in adverse effects to species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species. The Proposed Action has no significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts to designated Critical Habitat for these species. The Proposed Action will positively impact Bureau Sensitive Species as well as the Threatened coho salmon by providing important habitat created from beaver dam construction.</p>		No
<p>(i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The Proposed Action will follow all known Federal, State, or local or Tribal laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.</p>		No
<p>(j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898)?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The Proposed Action will not have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations. No effects on population will occur.</p>		No
<p>(k) 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)?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The Proposed Action will have no effect on access or use of sacred sites because it will not take place in any known sacred sites located within the Salem District BLM-administered land.</p>		No
<p>(l) 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)?</p> <p><i>Rationale:</i> The Proposed Action will not contribute, introduce or spread noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area. The Proposed Action will also not help promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of such species. Past actions of this type within this area have no documented results of new introduction, have not altered the continued existence of, and have not caused a significant spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive plant species.</p>		No

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. District personnel have reviewed the Proposed Action, and none of the 12 extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR Part 46, Section 46.215 (see Table 1, above) apply to the Proposed Action.

There is no potential for significant impacts for the following reasons:

- The Proposed Action will adhere to the above listed Project Design Features;
- The Proposed Action complies with the 2016 ROD/RMP and have the same or similar effects as the actions described in 516 DM 11.9 (A); and
- None of the 12 extraordinary circumstances apply to the Proposed Action.

IV. Signature:

Specialist Review and Concurrence: None required or

Review Required	Review Not Required	Resource	Name	Initial/Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aquatic/Fisheries	Bruce Zoellick	BWZ 9/29/16
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural Resources	Fred Greatorex	FG 8/25/16
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hydrology	Patrick Hawe	with 8/29/16
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NEPA Compliance	Whitney Wirthlin	WW 9/6/16
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NRSA	Belle Verbics	BV 9/6/2016
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Invasive/Non-Native	Terry Fennell	TF 9/29/16
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Engineering	Michael Fore	MF 9/21/2016
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation	Traci Meredith	TM 9/30/16
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wildlife	Corbin Murphy	CM

Contact Person: For additional information concerning this CX review; contact Whitney Wirthlin, Planning and Environmental Specialist, Cascades Field Office, BLM Salem District Office, 1717 Fabry Rd SE, Salem, Oregon, 97306, (503) 375-5612

Authorized Official: Chris Paper Acting
for John Huston
Field Manager, Cascades Field Office

Date: 9-22-2016

CX#: DOI-BLM-ORWA-S040-2016-0038-CX

Project: Cascades Field Office Beaver Relocation CX and DR

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SALEM DISTRICT, CASCADES FIELD OFFICE**

Decision Record

Decision and Rationale on Action

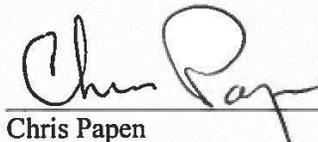
Based on my review of the attached categorical exclusion review (CX# DOI-BLM-ORWA-S040-2016-0038-CX), I have determined that the Proposed Action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, and that no further environmental analysis is required for the following reasons:

- The Proposed Action will adhere to the above listed Project Design Features;
- The Proposed Action complies with the 2016 ROD/RMP and have the same or similar effects as the actions described in 516 DM 11.9 (A)
- None of the 12 extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR Part 46, Section 46.215 (see CX Table 1) applies to the Proposed Action.

It is my decision to authorize the implementation of the Cascades Field Office Beaver Relocation Project, as described in the Proposed Action of the attached Categorical Exclusion documentation.

Implementation Date

This project will be implemented on or after October 21st, 2016.



Chris Papen
Acting Field Manager, Cascades Field Office

9-22-2016
Date

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, contact Whitney Wirthlin, Planning and Environmental Specialist, Cascades Field Office, BLM Salem District Office, 1717 Fabry Rd SE, Salem, Oregon, 97306, (503) 375-5612.

Attachment A
Guidelines for Relocation of Beaver in Oregon
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
January 4, 2012

Introduction: Beaver are well known for their ability to modify aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Beaver activity can provide valuable and often critical habitats for a variety of wildlife species, and for many fish species, including federally listed (ESA) coho salmon, mid-Columbia summer steelhead, and bull trout. Nearly extirpated in Oregon, beaver have made a remarkable comeback in many areas through natural re-colonization and relocation efforts by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and others. There is a strong interest in relocating beaver in Oregon because they have the potential to provide considerable benefits to fish, wildlife, and habitats. However, beaver may also create conflicts with humans. Dam building can result in damage to roads and structures, and beaver may also damage important woody vegetation along water ways, including ornamental plantings and commercially valuable trees. Therefore, a clear set of guidelines is needed to direct relocation efforts for beaver in Oregon to carefully balance the potential for beaver to benefit fish and wildlife with possible damage issues. Because ecological differences exist between western and eastern Oregon, these guidelines may reflect minor differences in protocols to improve relocation efforts.

Purpose: The purpose of these guidelines is to establish standards for when, where, and by whom beaver may be relocated on public and private lands in Oregon, and to provide a process for monitoring and evaluating the success of beaver relocation efforts. These guidelines will also provide direction to ODFW staff when evaluating applications for relocating beaver.

Who: The guidelines apply to all agencies, organizations, and individuals that propose to relocate beaver onto public or private lands in Oregon.

Process: ODFW district fish and wildlife staff will jointly evaluate applications based on these guidelines. No beaver will be released until the site has been evaluated and approved by the ODFW District Wildlife Biologist responsible for the release site. The ODFW district office in the source area will issue a relocation permit if the District Wildlife Biologist in the receiving area agrees to the relocation. The permit will be valid for the specific site, duration, and desired number of beaver to be released.

Where: The very first step is to contact the ODFW District Wildlife Biologist in the proposed release area to discuss if beaver may be relocated in that district. Selection of release sites must then be based on an evaluation for suitability prior to any release of captured beaver. No releases will occur in areas where evidence (e.g., dams, dens, chewing, lodges, scent mounds) indicates the site(s) are currently occupied by beaver. Multiple releases from the same source population may occur at the same site to improve chances of successfully establishing a colony.

An analysis of the Oregon stream survey data indicated that suitable release sites for beaver should have the following characteristics:

- Small, perennial streams with an active channel width of 4-8 m
- Valley width greater than 2 times the active channel width
- $\leq 5\%$ gradient
- A density of ≥ 550 trees/ha of small (15–30 cm DBH) deciduous trees or shrubs within 30 meters of the stream (statewide, preferred trees and shrubs include willow, cottonwood, alder, red osier dogwood; in eastern Oregon, preferred trees also include aspen)

The ODFW district biologists may have GIS maps that display stream reaches that may meet the release site criteria and for western Oregon, may also indicate primary rearing areas for coho.

Additional attributes for release sites should include:

- Sites without visible evidence of current occupation by beaver (e.g., fresh chewing, active dams, lodges, dens, forage caches, active channels, scent mounds). Sites recently vacated by beaver should not be considered until an analysis determines why the site is no longer occupied.
- Sites not adjacent to roads, or unprotected culverts or other critical infra-structures that may be detrimentally impacted by beaver activities.
- Areas that allow for dispersal upstream and downstream.
- Cooperation by the majority of landowners within 5–6 miles upstream and 5–6 miles downstream from the release site. Without consensus of the landowners, the ODFW Watershed Manager for the release area will make the final decision for approval or denial of an application.

Source populations selected for relocation will also be evaluated for suitability based on the following considerations:

- Presence of invasive species or pathogens that may be transported with relocated beaver may preempt the relocation in certain situations.
- Proposed relocations of beaver within a watershed must be approved by ODFW District Wildlife Biologists for both the source population and the destination area.
- Proposed relocations of beaver out of a particular watershed must be approved by ODFW Watershed Managers for both the source population and the destination area.

Monitoring: Monitoring is needed to determine the success or failure of relocations. Measures of success include evidence that relocated beaver become established, build structures, and persist in an area for the long term (at least one full year post-release). The following monitoring protocols will be the responsibility of the individuals conducting the release.

Minimum required post-release monitoring of beaver will include:

- at least one site visit in the first 30 days post-release (complete appropriate section of monitoring form)
- a second site visit the spring following a release (complete appropriate section of monitoring form)
- a final site visit the following fall (complete appropriate section of monitoring form)
- Submit the monitoring form to the ODFW office that approved the relocation within 30 days of the final site visit

If radio-marked, beaver will be monitored for the life of the radio transmitter or until the fate of the beaver is known.

Monitoring criteria will include evaluation of a minimum of 1000 meters (Oregon Plan habitat monitoring site survey distance) upstream and downstream from the release site for signs of beaver or beaver activity (e.g., dams, dens, chewing, lodges, scent mounds). Monitoring should include efforts to identify individually marked beaver.

Reporting: Completed post-release forms shall be submitted after each of the three monitoring site visits to the ODFW District Wildlife Biologist where the release occurs. Forms will include information on number of beaver moved, fates of beaver(s) (e.g., mortality and cause of death [if possible], dispersal distance from release site), and a summary of information collected during site

monitoring visits (e.g., observation of dam-building efforts, lodge-building efforts). Frequent dialogue with the ODFW District Wildlife Biologist is recommended and specific issues that develop with reintroductions and/or monitoring shall be reported as soon as possible.