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State Correction Crew Camp
Relocation Project

Environmental Assessment

Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District

Deschutes National Forest

Lead Agency: USDA Forest

Service

Bend-Ft. Rock Ranger District 1230 NE 3 rd, Suite A-262 Bend, OR 97701

Responsible Official: WALTER C.

SCHLOER, JR. Bend-Fort Rock District Ranger

Deschutes National

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Bend, Oregon

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PLANS, ANALYSES, ASSESSMENTS

Alternative 2 is the Preferred Alternative.

- Links
- We welcome your comments on our service and your suggestions for improvement.
 Forest

For Information Contact: Leslie Moscoso Recreation Planner 541 383-4712

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Ochoco National Forest

3160 N.E. 3rd Street Prineville, OR 97754

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

I. PLANNING AREA DESCRIPTION

The State Correction Crew Camp Relocation Project Environmental Assessment (hereinafter referred to as the EA) project is designed to analyze effects of relocating the camp from the existing location at Deschutes Bridge gravel pit to Ogden Group Camp. It would address the effects of use on the facilities, character and function at the site in regards to past, present and future use as a public camp and state correction camp.

The project is located approximately 30 miles southeast of Bend, Oregon, in the south-central portion of the Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District of the Deschutes National Forest. The project lies within portions of T21S, 11E, Section 28 (Ogden Group Campground) Willamette Meridian. The area is located east of the Northwest Forest Plan boundary line, and lies outside the range of the northern spotted owl.

II. MANAGEMENT DIRECTION

The Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan, which establishes broad direction for the Forest and this project. The analysis conducted for the State Correction Crew Camp Relocation Project tiers to the LRMP and its supporting documentation.

III. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The current camp is located at Deschutes Bridge Gravel Pit #1054. The site will not be available for the correction crew camp in 2005 or 2006 because it will be in use to provide material for scheduled road improvement projects. Also, the Deschutes National Forest was operating on a temporary permit from Deschutes County for the use of the pit as a grey water disposal area. A new location with a permanent facility is needed to fulfill commitments to the county in

this regard.

Currently, the camp is powered by a temporary electric hook up. Water is supplied from a temporary water line coming from Deschutes Bridge Guard Station as well as a 400 gallon "water buffalo" used to fill personal canteens. Other facilities and amenities are provided for the camp by the State Department of Corrections in the form of a mobile kitchen and shower units brought in annually to the site.

Criteria for the new location were to consider and meet as many of the following criteria as possible:

- Site should be approximately 2 to 3 acres in size.
- Site should be at a lower elevation to provide for longer working day, especially when use restrictions are in place, such as no chain saws.
- Availability of electricity or ability to easily tie into existing power.
- Availability of water or ability to easily tie into existing facilities.
- Proximity of camp to major roads for easy access travel routes to different points across the National Forest.

Alternative locations across the Deschutes National Forest were reviewed and considered for this project. Field reconnaissance in 2002 and 2003 identified one site that fit most of the above criteria: Ogden Group Camp, approximately 3 miles east of Highway 97, off or Forest Road 21. The site meets all of the above criteria.

IV. EXISTING CONDITION

Correction Camp

The size of the correction crew program has grown from its onset in 1999 from approximately 80 participants to 115 in 2004. With this increase in personnel, the program has increased fuels reduction across the Deschutes National Forest. For the past five years, the crews have piled a total of 23,000 acres of hazardous fuels on the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests. These crews are playing a key role to help meet the goals of treating hazardous fuels in the urban interface areas and communities in central Oregon.

As described above, the existing camp location is in Deschutes Bridge Gravel Pit #1054. It has resided there from 1999 through 2004. Housing consists of canvas wall tents for the inmate crews and recreational vehicles for state staff. Water and electricity is brought in from the adjacent Deschutes Bridge Guard station on a temporary basis each year. Grey water is disposed of in the gravel pit on a temporary permit from Deschutes County Health Department. The intent of the temporary permit for the disposal of grey water into the pit was to allow the Deschutes National Forest to find a better location and either one or a combination of a drainfield or septic system to accommodate the camp. This EA will provide the clearance for such a site to be located and constructed.

Recreation

Ogden Group Camp is available for use on a reservation basis only site and provides 3 large group camp areas. Use is low, with the largest occupancies occurring for special events, such as the annual Bend Bowmen archery shoot held annually each May. This event is the largest of its kind in the State and is a boon to the local economy of the LaPine area. The campground has water provided at one spigot per camp area (3). There is no electricity at the site.

The Peter Skene Ogden Trailhead is adjacent to the camp and provides access to the Peter Skene Ogden Trail. This trail follows Paulina Creek east up and into Newberry caldera. It is popular amongst horse users as well as hikers and bikers.

Paulina Creek runs just south of Ogden Group Camp and provides a setting for refreshing day use activities for the public who use it for wading for the kids and a general place to cool off in the hot summer months. People make pools with rocks at several locations from Road 21 to the trailhead area to provide a place for youngsters and others to splash in the cool water.

Prairie Campground is south of Ogden and on the other side of Road 21. It is a 16 campsite campground and is popular in the early season before the snow is gone from the campgrounds higher up in Newberry caldera.

Wildlife

Ogden Group Camp is in an area that is dispersal habitat for a variety of wildlife and bird species. As this is a well established campground and in use for many years, there is nothing more than incidental use of the camp by wildlife during low or non-use periods. There are a few downed woody debris and snags within the proposed site, with the exception of one posted wildlife tree that could be used as a roost for bat species.

Plants

The proposed relocation site at Ogden Group Camp does not present good, quality habitat for any PETS plant species or contain any known sites.

There is a known noxious weed population of knapweed at this site. This population has been pulled during the summer of 2003.

Cultural Resources

Native use of the project area was prevalent with known sites scattered along the shores of Paulina Creek.

V. PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action (Alternative 2) is described in detail on page 6.

It was designed to be consistent with the Forest Plan, existing laws and Forest Service Manual direction. It proposes the relocation of the existing State inmate crew camp at Deschutes Bridge gravel pit to Ogden Group Camp. This proposal would address the need for better facilities and location. Improvements would include: electricity to the camp where none currently exists and new water lines to meet staff and camp needs.

1. Decision to be Made

The purpose of this document is to display the effects of the proposed action and the various alternative methods of addressing the purpose and need and issues identified for this EA. It documents an environmental analysis of the alternatives including the no action alternative. Based on this information and public comments, the Bend-Fort Rock District Ranger would determine which alternative would be implemented in the campground expansion project area and if so, where and under what conditions. An Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) conducted a site-specific environmental analysis. The analysis is supported by reports and background material from resource professionals.

2. Incorporated by Reference

Specialists' reports and their professional references used in the preparation of this Environmental Assessment are found in the project file and incorporated by reference.

CHAPTER II - ALTERNATIVES

I. SCOPING

The scoping process identifies public, Forest Service and other agencies' issues regarding a proposal to implement an action. Public scoping was initiated by including this project in the fall 2003, and the winter, spring and summer 2004 editions of the Schedule of Projects (SOP) for the Ochoco and Deschutes National Forests and the Prineville District of the Bureau of Land Management. A public meeting was also held on July 22, 2004, in LaPine, Oregon to share information and collect comments from the public. Information was also provided, and comments received, at a Backcountry Horsemen Association meeting on August 7, 2004. Public comments are used by the IDT to identify issues, further develop the proposed action and develop alternatives to the proposed action.

II. ISSUES AND MEASURES

The scoping process for this EA, including public involvement, identified a total of 3 issues related to the proposed action. The

issues, together with applicable laws, regulations, and policies, were used as alternative design criteria. The ability of how each alternative addresses each issue involves the use of "measures of responsiveness" (measures). Measures were used in this analysis to clarify and compare the differences between alternatives and not as a strict quantitative measure of environmental effects. Measures must be taken in context when interpreting effects.

Issue 1 - Safety

Comments received from the public were positive in regards to the fuels reduction projects that the correction crews do across the Deschutes National Forest, especially as it relates to adjacent private property and homes. In regards to the camp being located to Ogden Group Camp, the comments were mostly negative. The concern was that Ogden was too close to the nearest subdivision and Highway 97 (about 3 miles each), and thus would make it more tempting and easier for someone to escape from the camp and threaten the local community. Also, commenters felt the adjacent Peter Skene Ogden Trailhead and Prairie Campgrounds, which are popular amongst the locals of the area, would be unsafe to use. Many of the public in the LaPine area use the trailhead and campground throughout the camping season, including the early season when trails and campgrounds higher up in Newberry are not accessible due to snow. They feel their personal safety and safety of their vehicles would be at risk with the inmate camp at Ogden.

Unit of Measure – Location of camp adjacent to or near recreation sites.

Issue 2 - Camp Location/Logistics

As was discussed in the Purpose and Need section, the current camp will not be available due to the need for use of the gravel pit for upcoming road projects. Also, a lower elevation site would allow the camp to start earlier in the season and thus provide longer working days. Currently, the crews have to shut down cutting operations when use restrictions are in place during fire season. This results in a loss of approximately half of the productivity.

Unit of Measure – Best camp location that addresses the most criteria identified in the Purpose and Need (page 2).

Issue 3 – Loss of Public Access to Ogden Group Camp

Another concern brought out during the public meeting in July was the loss of Ogden Group Camp for use by the public. Specifically, the loss of an annual event sponsored and held by the Bend Bowmen. This event is held each Memorial Day weekend and is the largest archery event in Oregon. It is purported to have an economic impact for LaPine in the \$10,000 range (as was told at the public meeting by several publics attending).

Unit of Measure – Availability of Ogden Group Camp.

III. ALTERNATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

Alternatives are designed to move towards the purpose and need, and the desired condition specified in the Forest Plan consistent with the standards and guidelines in that Plan.

A . Alternatives Considered But Eliminated from Further Study

Alternate locations that were initially considered for the new camp site were eliminated from further study because they were infeasible due to travel distance to work locations, or too costly to bring in the required utilities to operate the camp. These sites were: China Hat Campground and Cabin Lake Campground.

Both China Hat and Cabin Lake campgrounds would have added up to two additional hours of commute time for crews to get to the north and south ends of the Deschutes National Forest. The adjusted commute time for those days traveling to those project areas would equate to approximately one-third to one-half of their work day. This would not be a productive use of the crew time and would result in less fuels reduction work occurring on the ground. This would be especially true during public use restrictions when chain saws have to be shut down at 1:00 in the afternoon.

B. Alternative 1 - No Action

The No Action Alternative is a baseline by which to measure relative changes that would result from implementation of the action alternatives. Under this alternative, the proposed project would not take place. There would be no camp as the current site would not be available because of the need to use the rock pit for scheduled road improvement projects in 2005 and 2006. A new site would not be developed at Ogden Group Camp or any other location.

C. Alternative 2 – Proposed Action – Ogden Group Camp

Alternative 2 would make improvements to the Ogden Group Camp to accommodate the correction crew and staff. Approximately 125 crew and staff would occupy the camp from mid-April and depart by the 4th of July holiday.

A powerline would be brought in from an existing line on Road 21 to the camp. Six poles would be installed and the power would be used to run lighting, the kitchen facility and to provide power to the staff trailers.

The existing water system would be enhanced to provide for the increased use of the site. New water lines would be installed in key locations to meet the need of the camp.

There would be trees removed to facilitate the power line installation and installment. All trees removed would be less than 10" dbh (diameter breast height) and are mostly lodgepole pine. They are located primarily south of Paulina Creek, with several trees to be

felled on the north side and east of the trailhead.

D. Alternative 3 - Road 9724

Another location for the camp was a site east of Highway 97 approximately 3 miles along Road 9724. The camp would consist of the same facilities as those described in Alternative 2 - Proposed Action.

At approximately 4,400 feet, it is lower in elevation than the existing site at Deschutes Bridge gravel pit, but not as low as the Ogden site.

Electricity would be connected from an existing line that runs adjacent to Road 9724. However, no other existing features, facilities or utilities are available at this site and would have to be constructed. As this is a fairly open area in primarily a ponderosa pine stand, no trees would have to be cut and dropped in this location.

E. Alternative 4 – Deschutes Bridge Campground

Deschutes Bridge Campground is another alternative location for the corrections camp. It is located across from the existing camp off of Road 4270 at approximately 4,600 feet elevation. Electricity would be brought in from the existing line along Road 4270 to provide power to the staff units and mobile kitchen.

Water exists at the site but it would have to be extended to provide service to the staff and kitchen units. A drain field would also be constructed to provide for grey water disposal. Deschutes Bridge Campground would not be open to the public until the 4 th of July weekend for the rest of the season. A powerline would be brought in from an existing line on Road 4270 to the camp.

IV. MITIGATION & MONITORING

The following mitigation measures would be applied to all the action alternatives whenever the applicable site-specific conditions are present.

Mitigation Measures Common to All Action Alternatives

a. Wildlife

1. None.

b. Noxious Weeds

1. It is essential that all equipment and vehicles to be used in the project are cleaned before entering National Forest System lands and mud, dirt and plant parts are removed. Remove mud, dirt and plant parts from project equipment before moving it into

project area.

2. All spotted knapweed plants and plant parts are removed before the project is implemented.

c. Cultural Resources

1. No mitigation is needed as there are no sites within the project area.

d. Fisheries

- 1. BMP T-21. Servicing and Refueling of Equipment. In summary, service equipment to be used in construction of the campground facilities and parking areas are to be in areas away from water.
- 2. BMP W-4. Oil and Hazardous Substance Spill Contingency Plan. In summary, have a contingency plan for emergency spill of fuel or hazardous materials into water bodies.

Monitoring Common to All Action Alternatives

CHAPTER III – ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

I. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

This section describes the beneficial and adverse impacts to the environment that would occur if the alternatives were implemented. Estimated effects are discussed in terms of environmental changes from the current situation and include qualitative as well as quantitative assessments of direct, indirect, and cumulative effects.

1. Correction Camp

Alternative 1 - No Action

A new site would not be developed at Ogden Group Camp or any other location. This would result in a loss of a work force that has accumulated 23,000 acres of fuels reduction on the Deschutes National Forest over the past 5 years. In turn this would push back the timeframe for addressing this hazardous condition through fuels reduction on more acres of the Forest and in urban interface areas.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

This location would provide the lowest elevation as well as the quickest and shortest access to project locations across the National Forest. Thereby, the crew can start earlier in the season and not be hampered by personnel use restrictions which would result in a loss

of productivity. As some of the needed facilities exist at or near the site, it would be feasible to expand on them to accommodate the camp. As a centrally located camp, this location would provide quick access to all points on the Deschutes National Forest. Also, as it is at a lower elevation of approximately 4,300 feet (existing camp location is approximately 4,600 feet elevation), the site would be clear of snow earlier in the season, allowing earlier access and start time for the crew.

Alternative 3

This location would be at a lower elevation than the existing quarry site, but not as low as the Ogden Group Camp. As the only existing facility nearby is electrical, this would be the most costly alternative to implement. The location near Highway 97 makes it very accessible and is logistically a good location for reaching project locations across the Deschutes National Forest.

Alternative 4

This location is at the same elevation as the existing camp. It would provide an adequate location for the camp in terms of existing facilities and low use of the site by the recreating public (in comparison to other recreation sites). However, the elevation makes this a less desirable site than the proposed action since it would require a later start time due to snow levels and less productivity as chain saw use would be limited due to personal use restrictions during fire season.

2. Recreation

Alternative 1 – No Action

There would be no effect to Ogden Group Camp, or any other campground, as there would be no camp relocation.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

This alternative would alter the use at Ogden Group Camp during the early portion of the camping season. From approximately late April to July 1, the camp would be closed to public use. It would be made available for the 4 th of July holiday.

The Peter Skene Ogden Trailhead and Prairie Campground would remain open for use during the timeframe that the crew would be operating out of Ogden. There is concern by the recreating public that their personal and private property (i.e. vehicles) would be at risk of attack or vandalism by a "walk-away" inmate (escapee). Where there are no guarantees that an inmate could not escape, the risk is minimal as the inmates selected for the program are hand-selected to meet the goals of the program and are minimal security status. They are also within one year of release, so to risk getting

caught during an escape would be a deterrent as it would result in another 5 years in jail.

The Bend Bowmen would have to relocate and reschedule their annual event as Ogden would not be available over the Memorial Day weekend. This would have an effect to the club and the event participants as this is a well established event, time and location. A new time and location would also conflict with other bow events in the State. As this is the Bend Bowmen's largest event and money maker for the year, a new time could result in a likely loss of participation and that would then reduce the amount of money generated for their club.

The loss of the Bend Bowmen event, if not located in a nearby site, would also have an economic effect on the businesses in the LaPine area. The event brings in approximately 1,000 attendees, some of which who stay in the LaPine area. The local retailers and overnight lodging providers would lose this income if the event is not held in the LaPine basin.

Alternative 3

The cost of implementing this location would be lost as this site and subsequent facility improvements would also not be utilized by the recreating public. There would be no effect to recreationists with the use of this site. Recreation use of Ogden Group Camp and Deschutes Bridge Campground would not be disrupted by the camp location. With the location being approximately 3 to 4 miles from Highway 97 and Sunriver, respectively, there would be the same minimal risk to the safety of the community as described in Alternative 2- Proposed Action.

Alternative 4

The use of Deschutes Bridge Campground as the camp location would continue the existing closure (during camp operations) making it unavailable to the recreating public until the camp is closed in mid-July. As the campground's been closed since the camp was located at Deschutes Quarry, there should be no effect on the recreating public if this site is selected. Recreation use of this camp is historically low during the time of year that the camp would be in operation, with moderate use occurring in the fall during big game hunting seasons.

3. Wildlife

Alternative 1 - No Action

No change in conditions.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

There would be no effect on wildlife habitat or populations.

Alternative 3

There would be no effect on wildlife habitat or populations.

Alternative 4

The Deschutes Bridge Campground occurs within the North Crane Prairie Key Elk Area. The key elk area (KEA) is used extensively by a resident elk herd. The use of this campground by the state correction crew is not expected to have an impact on the use of this KEA by the elk because of habitat disturbance that already occurs adjacent to the campground. The campground occurs along the northwest edge of the KEA and is bordered by the Deschutes River, Cascade Lakes Highway and Road 4270. It is also adjacent to the Deschutes Bridge Guard Station and a rock pit (previous site of the correction camp). The area is most likely the least used by the elk herd.

4. Plants

For all alternatives: Implementation of any of the 4 alternatives will have no direct, indirect, or cumulative effects upon any proposed, threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants because no plant habitat for them is located within any of the areas.

Alternative 1 – No Action

There is no risk of the spread of noxious weeds being spread under this alternative since there would be no new ground disturbance from construction activities. Ground disturbing activities provide an area for noxious weeds to become established.

Alternatives 2 and 3

There is a low risk of the spread of noxious weeds being spread under this alternative since there are small populations of noxious weeds in the area of the proposed camp.

Alternative 4

There is a high risk rating for this alternative because there is a known spotted knapweed population along Road 4270 at the entrance of the Deschutes Bridge Guard Station. This could lead to the introduction of noxious weeds with seeds transported by motor vehicles and possibly during construction of the proposed improvements (i.e., electric and water facilities).

5. Heritage Resources

Alternative 1 - No Action

Under this alternative the project would not be implemented and would therefore not have an affect on cultural resources.

Alternative 2 - Proposed Action

There is no effect to the heritage resources at this site. Known sites in the area are being avoided by locating the camp outside of the boundaries of the sites.

Alternative 3 & 4

There would be no effect since there are no known heritage resources at this location.

5. Fisheries

Alternative 1 - 4

There are no direct effects to water resources, fish populations or fish habitat.

II. OTHER EFFECTS

All alternatives are in compliance with relevant federal, state and local laws, regulations, and requirements designed for the protection of the environment. None of the alternatives establishes a precedent for future actions, or a decision in principle about a future consideration.

1. Consumers, Civil Rights, Minority Groups, and Women

Effects on consumers, minorities and women are within the scope of effects described in the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Deschutes Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP 8/90).

2. Unique Landforms/Geologic Hazards

Under alternatives 2-4 there would be some modification to topography with the development of the camp (i.e., drain field installation). There would be no effect to unique characteristics of the geological or ecological resources of the caves.

3. Effects on Noise

There would be some noise associated with this project during

construction in alternatives 2 through 4, but it would be short term, less than three weeks.

4. Effects on Water Quality

None of the alternatives would retard or prevent attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.

5. Public Health and Safety

No adverse effects to public health or safety have been identified. The construction zones would be thoroughly marked on the ground and posted to inform the public of any cautions.

6. Irretrievable/Irreversible Resources

There would be some irretrievable commitments of resources due to the proposed drain field construction included in the action alternatives.

7. Roadless

There are no inventoried roadless areas within or adjacent to the project area. There would be no change to the unroaded or undeveloped character as defined by the current proposed rule for roadless areas.

CHAPTER IV - CONSULTATION

CONSULTATION WITH OTHERS

The scoping process identifies public, Forest Service and other agencies' issues regarding a proposal to implement an action. Public scoping was initiated by including this project in the fall 2003, and the winter, spring and summer 2004 editions of the Schedule of Projects (SOP) for the Ochoco and Deschutes National Forests and the Prineville District of the Bureau of Land Management. A public meeting was also held on July 22, 2004 in LaPine, Oregon, to share information and collect comments from the public. Public comments are used by the IDT to identify issues, further develop the proposed action and develop alternatives to the proposed action.

List of Interdisciplinary Team

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