Big Marsh Creek
&
The Little Deschutes River

Wild and Scenic Rivers

Management Plan

Crescent Ranger District
Deschutes National Forest
Klamath County, Oregon

MANAGEMENT PLAN
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INTRODUCTION

Management Area Locations

Two new management areas will be formed, one for each river corridor. The specific management area numbers will be assigned and standards and guidelines will be numbered as part of the implementation process.

The Management Plan for Big Marsh Creek Wild and Scenic River corridor applies from the headwaters to its confluence with Crescent Creek. Other management allocations overlapping or included within this area are Late Successional Reserve (NWFP), Riparian Reserve (NWFP), and Oregon Cascades Recreation Area (Congressionally designated and 1990 LRMP). Objectives for management are also found in the recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) management emphasis and the Visual Quality Objectives for maintaining scenery (LRMP).

The Management Plan for the Little Deschutes River corridor applies from the headwaters to the private property boundary at Two River North subdivision. Other management allocations overlapping or included within this area are Riparian Reserve (NWFP), Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (INFISH), Oregon Cascades Recreation Area (Congressionally designated and 1990 LRMP), and Mt. Thielson Wilderness (Congressionally designated). Objectives for management are also found in the recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) management emphasis and the Visual Quality Objectives for maintaining scenery (LRMP).

Plan Goals

This management plan aims to protect and enhance the resource values for which each river was designated into the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and which contribute to the current character of the rivers. The goal is to maintain this current character with an emphasis on identifying and rehabilitating degraded resources.

The following discussion defines desired condition in fairly broad terms, presenting a vision of the desired state of particular resources in the river corridors. This discussion should serve as a basis for determining how to interpret the more specific standards and guidelines when conflicts arise or when clarity is needed. Actions that lead toward the desired conditions over the long term should be considered consistent with this plan. Actions that lead the corridors away from those conditions over the long term should not be considered consistent with this plan.

Big Marsh Creek

Scenery – Big Marsh Creek and its environs provide a rich variety of scenic experiences, dominated by a natural-appearing landscape, where human use is evident but largely subordinate. This includes views from the marsh to middle and background views, as well as views of the creek and marsh from roads and trails. Facilities for the purpose of protecting river values are rustic in character, and blend with the natural surroundings.

Vegetation – A variety of native and desirable non-native vegetation can be found in the corridor, with thriving riparian communities prominent in the aquatic zones. Upstream and downstream from the marsh, riparian vegetation exhibits high species diversity, from grasses to sedges to willows, with conifer encroachment minimal. Noxious weeds and other undesired non-native species are also rarely found.

Geology and Hydrology – The marsh serves as a prime example of a rare high-mountain ecosystem, providing clean water, diverse habitat for thriving populations of plants, animals, and fish, and remarkable interpretive opportunities.

Wildlife – A diversity of wildlife (birds, mammals, and amphibians) find habitat within the riparian areas and the marsh, and in the upland forests that surround the marsh and corridor. This habitat may be constant and predictable for some species (e.g. amphibians) to carry out their complete life cycles, or it provides the transitory yet critical security necessary for some other species (such as sandhill cranes) to reproduce before moving out of the corridor. The marsh and its environs attract this variety of life because of the clean, abundant water, diversity of vegetation, and relatively low amount of disturbance by roads and other human causes.

Fish Habitat – Big Marsh Creek provides high quality fish habitat for native redband trout, as well as potential for bull trout habitat if the natural outflow from the marsh becomes cooler. Over time, the marsh may serve as a reservoir for cooler water as more water is retained in the water table and less water flows through directly on the surface. Historic flow patterns (i.e. no ditches) return to the marsh through active rehabilitation.

Upstream and downstream from the marsh, Big Marsh Creek contains an appropriate amount of woody material to provide channel formation, shade (for fish cover and temperature regulation), and invertebrate habitat. Habitat and stream conditions would favor native species of fish, invertebrates, etc. Within the marsh itself, fewer pieces of wood are found, but well-vegetated, overhanging stream banks offer high quality fish cover.

Recreation – Big Marsh creek provides opportunities for semi-primitive recreation experiences associated with wildlife watching, dispersed camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, and canoeing. Motorized access is available on roads; non-motorized transportation (e.g. hiking) are available for off-road use. On-water uses are non-motorized (canoeing, float-tubes, etc.). Opportunities for winter use such as cross-country skiing and over-snow machine travel, are available as part of the OCRA experience.

Roads and Access – The road system reaches key portions of the Big Marsh Creek corridor to provide for recreation opportunities and effective fire-fighting capability; yet most of the corridor is either unroaded or has a very low road density (less than 1 mile per square mile), in order to provide the highest possible wildlife habitat effectiveness and to reduce the risk of water quality degradation occurring from roads.

Water Quality/Quantity – Abundant amounts of water flow through the marsh to maintain it as a natural wetland system. Flows fluctuate appropriately for the season. Water table fluctuates at historic levels, which allows for historic processes to occur. The marsh dampens spring runoff and provides more even water temperatures downstream.

Private Land – Lands held in private ownership are managed follow State land-use law, Klamath County land-use ordinances, and other appropriate jurisdictions, so that the

river's free-flowing character and water quality are maintained at current levels. Activities, whether grazing, logging, or other agricultural practice are undertaken to reduce impacts to the riparian zone and to eliminate impacts to stream banks. Bank-side shade is provided by abundant vegetation and contributes to lower water temperatures and quality fish habitat. No new impoundment or diversions exist, and as possible using voluntary agreements and water-rights buyouts, those diversions in place at the time of the river designation are reallocated to in-stream flows.

As important as fully complying with laws, private land owners understand and value the Wild & Scenic River system. Land owners take advantage of the technical assistance available to them because their lands lie within such a corridor. Land owners willingly enter into appropriate partnerships with Federal and State agencies to maintain river values. Educational information is widely available to land owners for their use and for their distribution.

Future development occurs as appropriate to maintain water quality, free-flowing character, and other river values. State and County agencies participate in enforcement and educational programs that inform the appropriate land use decisions.

Little Deschutes River

Scenery – The character and appearance of the Little Deschutes River will be essentially the same as it is now. Visual variety is primarily between age classes. Within the OCRA portion of the corridor, scenic experiences are dominated by a natural-appearing landscape, where human use is evident but largely subordinate. Throughout the General Forest allocation, the scenery includes more evidence of harvest activities and other human use. Vegetation management activities are unobtrusive and blend with the natural landscape. Facilities (footbridges, toilets, etc.) in place for the protection of river values are rustic in character and do not detract from the natural surroundings. The canyon walls provide a sense of seclusion and rugged outcrops break up the forest scene.

Vegetation – A variety of native and desirable non-native vegetation can be found in the corridor, with thriving riparian communities prominent in the aquatic zones. Riparian vegetation exhibits high species diversity, from grasses, to sedges, to willows, with conifer encroachment minimal. Riparian areas will be functioning effectively. Noxious weeds and other undesired non-native species are rarely found.

In the river terrace adjacent to riparian areas, vegetation is dominated by lodgepole forest. These forests cycle through periodic disturbances from wind, insects, and disease. Fuel loading is at levels where periodic wildland fires may occur, but would cause low or moderate damage to the forests and adjacent riparian habitats.

Moving up the slopes of the river canyon, the vegetation is dominated by coniferous forest. These forests are healthy and resilient to periodic disturbances from fire, insects, or disease. Fuel loading is at levels where periodic wildland fires may occur, but would cause low or moderate damage to the forests.

Geology & Hydrology –The Little Deschutes River provides water of excellent quality and has consistent flows. The Little Deschutes River Canyon, which is the longest and deepest on the east flank of the Oregon Cascades, maintains its representation/character of a classic glacial canyon with moraines and an outwash plain.

Wildlife – A diversity of wildlife (birds, mammals, amphibians) find habitat within the riparian areas and in the upland forests that surround the river corridor. The upper reaches of the corridor provide remoteness and solitude for those species requiring such an environment. The river and its environs attract wildlife because of its healthy riparian zone and relatively low amount of disturbance byroads and other human causes.

Fish Habitat – The Little Deschutes River would provide high quality fish habitat for the naturally occurring native species. The river contains and appropriate amount of woody material to provide channel formation, shade (for fish cover and temperature regulation), and invertebrate habitat. Habitat and stream conditions favor native species of fish, invertebrates, etc.

Recreation – The Little Deschutes River canyon provides diverse opportunities for semi-primitive and primitive recreation experiences associated with dispersed camping, hunting, fishing, and hiking. Motorized access is available on low standard roads, but off-road use emphasizes non-motorized means of transportation, such as hiking, biking, and horseback riding. On-river use emphasizes non-motorized means such as canoeing and float tubes. Winter use is generally by local forest users, particularly snowmobiling, and is encouraged to remain on roads and winter trails.

Developed recreation facilities and the management controls are at the minimum level required to protect resources. Facilities, such as toilets and interpretive sites are only expected at key locations outside the OCRA and wilderness. Use levels will remain low in the OCRA and Wilderness because of the reduced emphasis and difficult access.

Interpretive materials are available at key locations, such as the Ranger Station and Cow Camp. In addition to offering natural history information, interpretive materials educate visitors about good resource etiquette and explain some resource management activities.

Water Quality/Quantity – The Little Deschutes River functions as a natural stream system (dimension, pattern, and profile) having excellent water quality. Flows (e.g. peak flows, base flows, overland flows, etc.) into the Little Deschutes River are released in such a manner to allow it to maintain a stable stream channel, capable of transporting sediment supplied from its supporting watershed.

Roads and Access – The road system provides for recreation opportunities and effective firefighting capability. Roaded access to the OCRA portion of the river corridor is limited to the 5830300, in order to provide the highest possible wildlife habitat effectiveness and to reduce the risk of water quality degradation occurring from roads. The roads that remain open for access in the corridor are maintained to a level that allows high clearance vehicle access and prevents resource damage.

Adjacent Private Property – While protecting the free-flowing character of the river and the ORVs for which is was designated, management of the Wild and Scenic River corridor provides for the safety of the Two River North subdivision.

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES
Big Marsh Creek and Little Deschutes River Management Areas

This section provides the management direction for National Forest lands within the Big Marsh Creek and Little Deschutes River Wild and Scenic River boundaries. If this Management Plan does not speak to a particular issue, the Forest Service lands within the river corridor will be managed in accordance with the laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to the Deschutes National Forest and the National Forest System, to the extent that such laws and regulations are consistent with the Wild and Scenic River Act (i.e. the Deschutes Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended).

Big Marsh Creek Wild & Scenic River Corridor

Note: When the Plan refers to "the marsh" or "the marsh area" it is understood to mean the area between the east and west ditches, south of the snowmobile bridge, and north of the confluence of Otter Creek with Big Marsh Creek.

Scenery

Practice – Visual quality Objectives (VQOs)

Standards and Guidelines

- VQO on Beales and Chinquapin Buttes, where seen from the river, will be Partial Retention. As the newly introduced Scenery Management System is adopted into current Forest Plans, the visual quality objectives would be translated, but the intent would remain to maintain a high level of scenic integrity for the background seen from Big Marsh.
- Project planning within the river corridor will use the Scenery Management System as a basis for analyzing scenic quality impacts of proposed management actions.
- Maintain views of the marsh from Forest Road 5825 by reducing screening as necessary. A site on this route may be developed into a more formal overlook, including interpretive signing.

- Where no longer needed for the management of commercial livestock grazing, range improvements such as fences and cattle guards would be removed over time and these areas rehabilitated to a natural appearance.

Vegetation

Practice – Riparian Habitat Management

Standards and Guidelines --

- Commercial livestock grazing shall be prohibited.
- Appropriate noncommercial methods of reducing conifer encroachment into the marsh include prescribed fire and natural flooding. Because of the wet soils, commercial harvest would be permitted only if light impact equipment (helicopter, horse logging, or other similar method) could be employed economically.
- Control spread of reed canary grass. Appropriate methods include fire, seeding, and willow staking. Use of a chemical treatment will be allowed as long as water quality is not affected.

Practice – Timber Management

Standards and Guidelines --

- No programmed timber harvest shall be planned within the river corridor.
- Outside of the LSRs, vegetation management activities aim to maintain the naturalness of the area, provide scenic diversity, maintain the health of vegetation, and reduce the risk of fire.
- Appropriate methods of vegetation management include prescribed fire, commercial harvest, commercial fuel wood, and other methods that provide a benefit to the long-term protection and enhancement of the river values and that have been designed to have a minimal impact to the river values, including the free flow of water, high value water quality, and the unique vegetation found in the corridor.
- Vegetation management activities within the Big Marsh Late Successional Reserves (LSRs) will follow recommendations from the Big Marsh LSR Assessment (1997). In the Upper LSR, manage as contiguous, multi-storied stand to serve as nesting/roosting/foraging or dispersal habitat for the spotted owl. No treatments are recommended except in the case of a catastrophic event. The Lower LSR is managed as a continuous block of lodgepole, providing habitat for black-backed woodpecker, and other late successional species. No treatments are recommended in the short term; with treatments at a minimum over the long term.
- Openings should not exceed three acres in size within the river corridor, except when salvaging areas of catastrophic damage. This allows for some effective treatment in lodgepole stands using group selection methods, but must be consistent with the Visual Quality Objective of Partial Retention.

Practice – Fuelwood Gathering

Standards and Guidelines

- Personal fuel wood gathering is allowed for on-site use (camping). Where personal use firewood permits can be used as a tool to meet specific vegetation management objectives (such as reducing dead/down levels), firewood collection may be permitted within specific, designated areas. Post these areas before permitting such a use.

Geology and Hydrology

Practice – Leasing and Common Variety Materials

Standards and Guidelines –

- No use or removal of common variety materials (e.g. sand, gravel) is allowed.

Practice – Marsh Restoration

Standards and Guidelines –

- Marsh restoration activities such as filling in old canals (ditches) and digging ponds will be allowed. Such projects will be evaluated under Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic River Act to determine any adverse effects to the free flowing character of Big Marsh Creek.
- Proposals that alter the bed/bank of Big Marsh Creek would be evaluated under Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to determine any adverse effects to the free-flowing character of the river.

Wildlife

Practice – Habitat Improvement

Standards and Guidelines –

- Habitat improvement projects would be natural appearing and be compatible with other values of the setting.

Practice – Recreation uses

Standards and Guidelines –

- Annual review will determine recreation impact to key nesting areas. If this review determines that recreational activities are precluding nesting of sandhill cranes, great gray owls, or other birds associated with the marsh, appropriate seasonal restrictions shall be applied. These restrictions include but are not limited to entry restrictions (such as a "CFR closure") or road-use restrictions, which include summer and winter Off-Highway Vehicle use.

Fisheries

Practice – Habitat Management

Standards and Guidelines –

- Outside of the marsh (i.e. in forested areas), the desired amount of woody material in stream is more than 20 pieces per mile. Pieces should be greater than 12 inches in diameter and more than 35 feet in length. In the forested portions of Big Marsh

Creek that receive canoe use, any wood removal to provide passage must be placed to provide fish cover wherever possible.

- Habitat improvement projects would be natural appearing and be compatible with other values of the setting.
- Emphasize cooperation with Federal, Tribal, and State fish management agencies to identify and eliminate adverse effects on native fish associated with habitat manipulation, fish stocking, fish harvest, and poaching.

Recreation

Practice – Trails

Standards and Guidelines –

- New trail construction is allowed outside the OCRA and marsh area for the primary purpose of offering wildlife viewing and enjoyment of the river and its surroundings.
- No trail construction will be allowed on the west side of the marsh. The closed portion of Road 6030 may be maintained as a trail for foot, horse or mountain bike travel, but should be allowed to grow in with vegetation along the sides.
- Use of mountain bikes will be allowed on existing roads and trails designated for mountain bike use. Off-trail bicycle travel shall be discouraged.
- Informal user-define trails that are displaying resource damage should be modified or closed.
- The Big Marsh Nature Trail is open to foot traffic only.
- Horses are allowed within the corridor. Within the marsh, horses must remain on designated trails or roads.
- Closed roads on the east side of the marsh should be considered for use as trails.
- Trail bridges may be constructed or reconstructed in OCRA and the marsh area for safety and resource protection. Elsewhere, trail bridges may be constructed or reconstructed for visitor convenience.

Practice – Dispersed Recreation and Camping

Standard and Guidelines –

- Dispersed camping sites will be inventoried using limits of acceptable change survey techniques. Sites that are displaying resource damage should be modified or closed.
- Designation of dispersed sites would be tied to LAC indicators.
- In recreation use areas, soil compaction should not exceed limits established in the Deschutes National Forest Plan for activity areas.
- The Big Marsh Nature Trail area is restricted to day-use only.

Practice – Off-Road Vehicle Use (ATVs)

Standards and Guidelines –

- Motorized use, including Class 1, 2 and 3 OHVs (ATVs) shall be restricted to roads and trails designated for ATVs.

Practice – Off-Road Vehicle Use (Snowmobiles)

Standards and Guidelines –

- Motorized use over snow is permitted, except in areas found to be suffering impacts to water quality, vegetation, and/or wildlife habitat security. Periodic monitoring shall be conducted to determine if such impacts exist and corrective measures other than closure would be pursued before closures are applied. At a minimum this monitoring should occur once a year in the spring before snow-melt season.

Practice – Boating

Standards and Guidelines –

- Travel on Big Marsh Creek is limited to non-motorized boating. Efforts should be made with the Oregon State Marine Board to close the mash to motorized watercraft if monitoring indicates increased occurrence.
- Current use of the creek from Forest Road 6020340 to Forest Road 6020 for canoeing would continue to be allowed. Moving or removal of down wood from the stream channel must be kept to the minimal extent needed to allow passage. Consider use restrictions if wood removal conflicts with meeting wood retention objectives.
- Within the marsh area, canoeing may be subject to seasonal restrictions. Based on monitoring, specific put-in and take-out locations should be identified to avoid conflicts. If needed, some areas may be identified as closed to protect specific wildlife habitats, identified through monitoring.
- From Forest Road 6020340 upstream to the headwaters, removal of instream wood or streamside vegetation for providing on-water passage is prohibited.

Practice – Recreation Developments and/or Improvements (National Forest Lands)

Standards and Guidelines –

- River corridor use should be managed to maintain the current recreation opportunity spectrum (ROS) level of semi-primitive.
- Dispersed recreation improvements would be provided to minimize site degradation. Any improvements, structures, and signs would be designed to take advantage of topography and vegetative screening. New structures that would have an adverse effect on the river's ORVs will not be allowed.
- No new facilities would be constructed within the marsh area. The need for facilities, such as restrooms outside the marsh would be tied to monitoring indicators.
- No new campgrounds would be constructed within the marsh area. Elsewhere, the need for new campgrounds would be tied to monitoring indicators.
- Within the Upper Big Marsh LSR and Lower Big Marsh LSR, new development would need to be beneficial or neutral to LSR-related values in addition to being beneficial to the river values.

Practice – Interpretation

Standards and Guidelines –

- The interpretive message for the Big Marsh Wild and Scenic River Corridor emphasizes the natural undeveloped character of the area. The emphasis should inform visitors about the conservation and low-impact use of the marsh, rather than promotion of the marsh as a destination.
- Also emphasize the importance of keeping large woody debris in the stream channel (outside the marsh, which will always be expected to contain lower amounts of in-stream wood).
- On site structures such as signs and kiosks will be limited to the eastern side of the marsh, where an interpretive trail already exists. An overlook from Road 5825 would be appropriate to introduce visitors to the marsh, with more physical development appropriate.
- On the west side of the marsh, similar on-site interpretive areas should not be developed.
- Interpretive information will focus on the geologic, hydrologic, and wildlife values of the river corridor. Within the marsh area, the interpretive program will consist of the Big Marsh Nature Trail and day use area. Interpretive materials may also be made available off-site, such as at the Visitor's Center or the Ranger Station.
- Adjacent to private lands within the corridor, the interpretive message will include information about trespass and respecting private property rights. Property owners who have land within the corridor will be eligible for Federal assistance to deal with trespass and similar issues.

Special Uses

Practice – Outfitter/Guides

Standards and Guidelines –

- Recreation-oriented commercial uses, such as outfitter-guides, will not be permitted within the corridor. These uses may be established if a need arises to reduce resource damage or to provide for public safety, but these instances are expected to be rare and should be initiated as a result of monitoring.

Practice – Special Forest Products

Standards and Guidelines –

- Within the marsh proper, collection of special forest products is limited to personal use only, unless river related resource benefits can be identified. In that case, a specific permit could be issued to provide that benefit. If such a permit is issued, periodic review (annually at a minimum) shall occur to validate the continued need for such permitted use.

Practice – Fuelwood

Standards and Guidelines –

- Personal fuel wood gathering is allowed only for on-site use (camping), unless authorized as a means of meeting vegetation management objectives. In order to assure meeting these objectives, any personal use fuel wood gathering would be permitted only with additional controls in place (for instance, a special permit).

Water Quality/Quantity

Practice – Monitoring

Standards and Guidelines

- Implement a water temperature monitoring program and establish thresholds for action. See monitoring plan.

Roads and Access

Practice – Road construction/road density

Standards and Guidelines –

- New road construction within the corridor would not be allowed, unless justified by a compelling need for resource protection.
- Open road density within the corridor should not exceed 1 mile per square mile.

Private Land

Practice – Cooperation

Standards and Guidelines –

- The Forest Service will work with landowners to increase overhead cover in riparian areas to help provide fisheries habitat and reduce stream temperatures.
- If monitoring indicates a need to increase the level of protection along the private lands, the Forest Service will work with Klamath County to update current zoning regulation.
- Work with landowners to adjust grazing practices to assure compliance with applicable federal, state, and county clean water laws.
- Work with landowners to accomplish fuel reduction around homes.
- Work with national forest visitors to increase awareness of private land along the corridor to reduce trespass and resource damage caused by such trespass.
- Work with landowners to prevent the spread of noxious weeds and non-native species onto Forest lands.
- Develop awareness among government and private agencies and develop stewardship roles and responsibilities.

Little Deschutes River Wild & Scenic River Corridor

Scenery

Practice – Visual quality Objectives (VQOs)

Standards and Guidelines –

- Project planning within the river corridor will use the Scenery Management System as a basis for analyzing scenic quality impacts of proposed management actions.
- Consider providing views to the river from access roads where possible.
- Reduce screening along roads by treating lodgepole thickets (thinning or other appropriate means.
- Where no longer needed for the management of commercial livestock grazing, range improvements (i.e. fences, cattle guards) should be removed and areas rehabilitated to a natural appearance.

Vegetation

Practice – Riparian Habitat Management

Standards and Guidelines –

- Commercial livestock grazing shall be prohibited.

Practice – Timber Management

Standards and Guidelines –

- No programmed timber harvest will be scheduled within the corridor.
- Vegetation management activities will aim to maintain the naturalness of the area, provide scenic diversity, maintain the health of vegetation, and reduce the risk of fire. Appropriate methods include prescribed fire, commercial harvest (including salvage) commercial fuel wood, or other methods that have a minimal impact to the river values and that provide a clear benefit of the long-term protection and enhancement of the river values.
- Fuel loads should be reduced wherever possible to reduce imminent susceptibility to catastrophic wildfire.
- Created openings should not be more than 3 acres in size, except when salvaging areas of catastrophic damage.

Practice – Fuelwood

Standards and Guidelines –

- Personal fuel wood gathering is allowed only for on-site use (camping), unless authorized as a means of meeting vegetation management objectives. In order to assure meeting these objectives, any personal use fuel wood gathering would be permitted only with additional controls in place (for instance, a special permit).

Geology and Hydrology

Practice – Leasing and common variety materials

Standards and Guidelines –

- No use or removal of common variety materials (e.g. sand, gravel) is allowed.

Practice – In-stream projects

Standards and Guidelines –

- Proposals that alter the bed/bank of the Little Deschutes River would be evaluated under Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to determine any adverse effects to the free-flowing character of the river.

Wildlife

Practice – Habitat Improvement

Standards and Guidelines –

- Habitat improvement projects would be natural appearing and be compatible with other values of the setting.

Fisheries

Practice – Habitat Management

Standards and Guidelines –

- The desired amount of woody material in the stream will be greater than 20 pieces per river mile. To provide the best long-term habitat, these pieces should be greater than 12 inches in diameter and more than 35 feet in length where available. In lodgepole pine stands the desired diameter may not be abundant and so taking the next largest sizes would be appropriate. Stands adjacent to the river may be managed to assure long-term availability of woody material for future recruitment.
- Habitat improvement projects would be natural appearing and be compatible with other values of the setting.
- Emphasize cooperation with Federal, Tribal, and State fish management agencies to identify and eliminate adverse effects on native fish associated with habitat manipulation, fish stocking, fish harvest, and poaching.
- Monitor changes to bank stability and cover that result form discontinued grazing.

Recreation

Practice – Trails

Standards and Guidelines –

- New trail construction is allowed outside the OCRA and Wilderness for the primary purpose of offering wildlife viewing and enjoyment of the river and its surroundings.
- Within the OCRA, new trail construction would be provided where necessary to reduce resource damage.

- Use of mountain bikes would be limited to roads and trails designated for mountain bike use. Off-trail bicycle travel should be discouraged.
- Existing non-system trails in the Mt. Thielson Wilderness may be evaluated for inclusion into the trail system, especially those that have minimal current resource impacts.
- Informal user defined trails and other existing non-system trails that are displaying resource damage should be modified or closed.
- Any roads in the corridors being closed should be considered for use as trails.
- Trail bridges may be constructed or reconstructed in wilderness and OCRA for safety and resource protection. Outside of the OCRA and the wilderness, trail bridges may be constructed for visitor convenience.

Practice – Dispersed Recreation and Camping

Standards and Guidelines –

- When demand for dispersed camping sites is such that resource damage and adverse effects to the scenic quality of the corridor are occurring, campground development may be considered, but in limited locations, most likely the current site of Cow Camp.
- Dispersed recreation sites should be inventoried using Limits of Acceptable Change survey techniques. Sites that are displaying resource damage that are adversely affecting the quality of the corridor's ORVs should be modified or closed. Designation of dispersed sites would be tied to monitoring indicators.
- Dispersed camping set backs will be 25 feet from the water's edge. Barriers such as logs may be placed where necessary.
- Within recreation use areas, soil compaction should not exceed currently established Deschutes NF limits for activity areas. This is generally considered 20 percent of the activity area.

Practice – Off-Road Vehicle Use (ATVs)

Standards and Guidelines –

- Motorized use, by Class 1, 2 and 3 ATVs shall be restricted to roads and trails designated for ATVs and/or snowmobiles.

Practice – Off-Road Vehicle Use (Snowmobiles)

Standards and Guidelines –

- Motorized use over snow is permitted, except in areas found to be suffering impacts to water quality, vegetation, and/or wildlife habitat security. Periodic monitoring shall be conducted to determine if such impacts exist and corrective measures other than closure would be used before closures are applied. At a minimum this monitoring should occur once a year in the spring during snow-melt season.

Practice – Boating

Standards and Guidelines –

- Travel on the river would be limited to non-motorized boating.
- Removal of instream wood or streamside vegetation for on-water use would be prohibited.

Practice – Recreation Developments and/or Improvements

Standards and Guidelines –

- The need for new facilities, such as restrooms and potential campgrounds must be tied to monitoring indicators. Cow Camp should be considered the most likely location for any such development. Site-specific analysis would be necessary before an actual decision were made to place any development at Cow Camp.
- No campground or day-use area development should be considered in the portion of the corridor within the OCRA and wilderness. However, in the OCRA, small scale development such as vault toilets, horse corrals, fire pits and similar facilities may be appropriate as a response to needs that arise from monitoring.
- Any improvements, structures, or signs would be designed to take advantage of topography and vegetative screening. New structures that would have an adverse effect on the river's ORVs should not be allowed.

Practice – Interpretation

Standards and Guidelines –

- The interpretive message for the Little Deschutes Wild and Scenic River Corridor emphasizes the natural undeveloped character of the area. The emphasis should inform visitors about the conservation and low-impact use of the canyon, rather than promotion as a destination.
- Also emphasize the importance of keeping large woody debris in the stream channel (outside the marsh, which will always be expected to contain lower amounts of in-stream wood).
- On site interpretive structures such as signs and kiosks will be limited to the area in or near Cow Camp. The upper portions of the corridor should not contain similar on-site interpretive.
- Interpretive information will focus on the geologic and hydrologic values of the river corridor, as well as providing a strong stewardship message.
- Winter-use interpretive programs would emphasize means of minimizing impacts water quality, wildlife, and vegetation.

Water Quality/Quantity

Practice – Monitoring

Standards and Guidelines –

- Implement a water temperature monitoring program that establishes thresholds for action.

- Utilize “No Trace” program for educating recreationists on resource protection and proper disposal of waste.

Roads and Access

Practice – Road Density

Standards and Guidelines –

- Forest Roads 5830300 and 5835300 are essential to the river corridor use and management. These roads should remain open. Any resource damage associated with these access routes should be solved by other means than road closure. Other roads may be closed as particular reasons for doing so arise.
- New road construction within the corridor would not be allowed, unless justified by a compelling need for resource protection.
- Road density within the corridor will not exceed 2 miles per square mile, which is currently considered the minimal amount as long as. Roads 5830300 and 5835300 remain open.
- Unless necessary to meet other resource needs (e.g. to allow winter, over-snow logging), these roads will not be plowed out in the winter.

Practice – Road Maintenance

Standards and Guidelines –

- Road maintenance on Road 5830300 will be the minimal level needed to maintain adequate drainage and to provide other resource protections (such as avoiding sediment delivery to streams). The intent of this low maintenance level is to preserve the aesthetic character and sense of remoteness created by the current winding road.
- Road maintenance on Road 5835300 should also be minimal, with the intent to preserve current access.

Adjacent Private Property

Practice – Fuels Management

Standards and Guidelines –

- Fuel treatments are appropriate within areas adjacent to the private land, with the intent of creating a defensible space type buffer zone around the urban interface. Large-scale fuelbreak treatments that create large openings are not appropriate in the river corridor, however.

Practice – Vector Control

Standards and Guidelines –

- Chemical treatments such as vector (mosquito) control are not appropriate within the river corridor unless a direct public health threat is established, and unless an appropriate means of control can be used to minimize the impact to river values, including water quality and vegetation.

MONITORING PLAN

This section identifies activities that will be conducted to assess the progress and results of implementing the River Plans. This monitoring program ensures that effects of projects and activities on river values remains within acceptable levels.

The monitoring and evaluation in this plan are based upon the Limits of Acceptable Change concept (LAC) whenever possible. LAC is based on the premise that change to the ecological and social conditions of an area will occur as a result of natural and human factors. The goal of management is to keep the character and rate of change due to human factors within acceptable levels that are consistent with plan objectives. These limits tie closely with protection and enhancement of the each river's outstandingly remarkable values.

The LAC system places its primary emphasis on the desired resource condition, rather than on how much use an area can tolerate (i.e., carrying capacity). The management challenge with this approach is one of deciding what changes should occur, how much change will be allowed, what management actions are needed to guide and control it, and how managers will know when the established limits are being reached. Therefore this emphasis does not aim to prevent all human-caused change in the corridors, but rather it focuses concern on specific indicators that reflect the carrying capacity in more more practical terms.

For each river value to be monitored, one or more key indicators are selected that will allow managers to keep attuned to changes in the ecosystem or social setting. For each key indicator, a threshold is set. This is the value that determines the amount of change that is either desired or that will be accepted before river management objectives are no longer being met. In this manner, indicators and thresholds provide managers with information to determine if the resource values and opportunities they are managing are actually being provided. The standards serve as 'triggers' that cause predetermined management actions to be implemented when the limit is being approached.

For each indicator and standard, a "Actions if Not Met" column lists the likely action that would be triggered if a particular threshold is reached. Sampling methods provide an example of how the indicator might be measured, but these sample methods can and should be changed as better means become available.

Additional monitoring is identified in this section that provides resource inventories or baseline data that is necessary to establish thresholds. River Plan implementation must include the final development of these thresholds where none exist yet.

VALUE	KEY INDICATOR	STANDARD TO MEET	ACTION IF NOT MET	SAMPLE METHODS
Water Quality	**Big Marsh:** Temperature (from outlet of marsh to confluence w/ Crescent Cr). **Little Deschutes:** Temperature	Temperature and pH levels meet or exceed state water quality standards.	Determine whether there is a cause attributable to human activity or if the cause is a natural occurrence. If the change stems from management activities, conduct remedial actions that will correct the change back to within state standards. .	Continue monitoring temperature from existing temperature sites on Big Marsh Cr. and Little Deschutes. **Monitor using established protocol according to ODEQ to meet State Standards for water temperature for salmonid spawning and rearing.**
	Both: Petroleum presence	No detectable amount.	Limit snowmobiles to existing trails.	Take water samples at least three times during snowmobile use season. Location should be determined by winter use patterns, with an emphasis on monitoring areas with the greatest amount of use.

VALUE	KEY INDICATOR	STANDARD TO MEET	ACTION IF NOT MET	SAMPLE METHODS
	Sediment Delivery	No net increase in number of crossings Limited sediment delivery to streams and tributaries. No increase **to riparian area road densities**	Identify source of sediment delivery and change the alignment if physically and economically feasible. Otherwise, close and restore the road to eliminate to sediment source..	Annual surveys of current condition of stream crossings in the corridors. Perform Wolman pebble counts using USFS (2000) established protocol at pool tails below road crossings. (Big Marsh Creek 6020) (Little Deschutes River 5830-200 Identified in (Houslet 2001).
Scenic Resources	Projects, activities or modifications which alter landform, vegetation, water, or character within the viewshed as seen from the river and high use areas.	Activities within river corridor and viewshed would be evaluated on how well they meet VQOs for river corridor and viewshed. Contrasts created by new management activities would not be allowed if they attract the attention of the casual observer within the characteristic landscape. Short-term impacts such as those created by trail building or prescribed fire would be allowed. Outstandingly remarkable scenic values will be preserved.	Management actions or developments (or proposed developments) not consistent with Wild and Scenic River classifications or scenic resource management objectives will be modified (i.e. screened) or proposals rejected.	Individual projects will be analyzed on a case by case basis to ensure protection of outstandingly remarkable values. Long-term scenic integrity monitoring will be conducted through the use of photo points at key areas within the corridor. Photos will be updated and reviewed every ten years.

VALUE	KEY INDICATOR	STANDARD TO MEET	ACTION IF NOT MET	SAMPLE METHODS
Vegetation	Amount of riparian habitat and wetlands. Proper functioning ecological condition as indicated by vegetative cover and streambank condition. Conifer encroachment. Species diversity.	Riparian vegetation would be managed to maintain or enhance vegetative diversity, biomass, and percent cover at desired level. Specific thresholds will be determined during baseline monitoring to comply with Forest Plan direction. No loss of vegetation caused by motorized over snow use unless along an exiting route.	Remove or eliminate source of impacts (i.e. close campsites, roads, trails, etc.) if inventory assesses extent of impact is unacceptable.	Conduct baseline riparian/wetland resource inventory and photo inventory, starting in 2002. Continue to reassess at 5-year intervals. If funding is limited, at a minimum identify areas of resource damage. Visually monitor recreation and other sites annually for resource damage. If funding allows, establish formal monitoring plots in high use areas Water table monitoring within the Big Marsh (height of channel to surface water). Record number of days water is found on surface of marsh.
	Upland Vegetation: Stand progression towards desired conditions.	Within LSRs, follow criteria for developing appropriate treatments in LSRA. See Big Marsh Watershed Analysis for vegetation objectives.		During project planning, survey vegetation noting species present and condition and soil conditions at project locations. Stand density, snag counts, size and decay classes will be recorded.

VALUE	KEY INDICATOR	STANDARD TO MEET	ACTION IF NOT MET	SAMPLE METHODS
	Populations of noxious weeds and undesirable species.	Prevention, reduction, and eradication of noxious weeds.	Implement short-term prescriptive activities to restore natural condition or biodiversity. Control, restrict, or mitigate human caused activities as necessary.	Survey likely areas on regular basis to determine presence of unwanted vegetation. Heavily used recreation sites should be surveyed yearly. Where possible, enlist private landowners to survey their property for these conditions.(

VALUE	KEY INDICATOR	STANDARD TO MEET	*ACTION IF NOT MET*	*SAMPLE METHODS*
Fish Habitat	Rearing habitat and pool quality Large woody material	Avoid decrease in the inventory habitat type and extent on mainstem and major tributaries, maintain habitat quality and quantity at least at inventory levels. Avoid decrease in the amount of large woody debris that meets minimum standard.	*Identify cause of degradation to quality and quantity of habitat and mitigate or eliminate impact.* *For example, if continued boating along lower Big Marsh Creek leads to excess removal of large wood from the stream, boating may be eliminated if necessary to maintain large wood at appropriate levels.* Create additional habitat when possible through habitat improvement opportunities.	Fish habitat cover and will be assessed every 10 yrs using the R6 stream survey protocol. In the forested section of Big Marsh Creek used by canoes, annual surveys of new wood recruitment need to be performed during spring of each year. Channel spanning wood will be manipulated to ensure canoe passage and maintain fish habitat for redband trout.
	Little Deschutes: Stream bank stability and cover.	No loss of stream banks and cover provided by banks.	Implement more aggressive restoration actions, such as willow/aspen planting where appropriate. If loss can be attributed to human use, redirect that use away from impacted areas.	Once every three years for the next 10 years, surveys and assessment should be conducted to determine the recovery of stream bank stability and cover along the Little Deschutes River no longer open to grazing.

VALUE	KEY INDICATOR	STANDARD TO MEET	*ACTION IF NOT MET*	*SAMPLE METHODS*
Wildlife	Populations of major species Amount and combination of habitat type Evidence of intrusions on key nest sites. Evidence of loss of winter habitat security.	Negative change in river corridor use by selected species (i.e. neotropical birds, big game, listed species) No substantial human-caused change in mix of habitat types within the corridor. No substantial evidence of human entry during seasons of concern.	Identify cause of change. If human-caused, correct practices or activities. Closure of area to eliminate the conflict.	Conduct wildlife surveys on five year basis to correspond with habitat surveys, starting in 2001. Count and record all nests, raptors, and waterfowl sightings on regularly scheduled surveys. GIS mapping of habitat type and extent using aerial photography interpretation. Establish baseline year and replicate survey every five years. Identify key areas of concern and then make at least annual walk through surveys of these areas to determine if encroachment occurred. Samples in winter use areas would be expected more often in order to determine any changes to habitat use by specific species, such as wolverine, American marten, etc.

VALUE	KEY INDICATOR	STANDARD TO MEET	ACTION IF NOT MET	SAMPLE METHODS
Cultural Resources	Cultural Resource Site Integrity	No significant cultural resource is being irreparably damaged by human use or eroded by natural forces to the point that it is in danger of being lost.	Conduct damage assessment and develop treatment or mitigation plan to eliminate sources of loss. Execute plans made.	Visit sensitive sites at least annually..
Recreation Experience	Key indicators and standards to be established with implementation of Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) inventory, survey and analysis. .	Established by user/visitor expectation survey and landowner survey to establish "carrying capacity" or acceptable levels of use. .	A combination of indirect (information, education, signing, site design, etc.) and direct (enforcement patrols, site closures, seasonal restrictions, permits, etc.) management actions and controls would be utilized emphasizing in-direct methods first. If above methods are not effective, use may need to be limited through use of permits or other more direct methods of visitor control, especially within Big Marsh, and the wilderness.	Conduct LAC survey and develop monitoring program, repeat every ten years. First survey should be in 2002.
	Quality of Experience Potential items most likely to be included are conditions of congestion, use levels, safety hazards, reported incidents of conflict such as site competition, vandalism, and trespass.	Numbers of encounters with other recreationists (groups) per day. Numbers of reported conflicts, trespass/vandalism reports or safety incidents recorded annually. Recreation visitor counts, trail user counts, vehicle counts. Number of days campsite and parking area capacity exceeded		

VALUE	KEY INDICATOR	STANDARD TO MEET	ACTION IF NOT MET	SAMPLE METHODS

Dispersed Recreation Sites	Soil Stability Vegetative loss Tree damage Human waste Litter New sites Distance between sites	Impacts to dispersed use areas (camping, trailheads, etc.) will be based on subjective judgment regarding erosion, vegetative change, facility damage, and accumulation of litter as follows: Light: Previous ground vegetation intact allowing natural erosion to occur. Facility damage and litter is not evident. The site has experienced only minimal physical changes. Moderate: Vegetative growth is somewhat retarded allowing minor abnormal erosion to occur. Traces of litter can be found within and adjacent to the site. Minor vandalism, repairable by maintenance, is occurring on facilities such as tables. Physical changes to the site could include: minor tree limbing, movement of rocks and semi-stationary facilities. Heavy: Use area vegetation is gone but adjacent vegetation still intact. Abnormal erosion within the site is correctable through maintenance. Major littering is evident within and adjacent to the site and can be corrected through maintenance. Major vandalism, repairable by maintenance, is occurring on facilities and physical features such as tables, rocks, trees and other site protection facilities. Physical changes to the site could include: moderate tree limbing, beginning tree root exposure, trails radiate from site, human caused changes to the layout of the use area. All impacts to camp and dispersed use areas could be resolved through routine maintenance.	Use basic site protection measures, harden sites to maintain important sites if necessary between moderate and heavy standards. Campsites or day use areas which have received extreme impacts will be rehabilitated and closed until levels of impacts have been mitigated to at least moderate levels. Other actions could include: increased user education efforts, seasonal closures, site or access restrictions, etc. Management actions and controls would be utilized emphasizing in-direct methods first, for example: 1. Increased user education in “minimum impact” camping techniques (signs, brochures, increased management patrol presence, etc.). 2. Campsite rehabilitation. 3. Use barriers to control traffic. 3. Campfire ban. 4. Designated campsites. 5. Close areas to overnight camping.	Inventory and assess all existing and proposed sites within the river corridors upon approval of this plan. Remeasure and assess all sites once every three years, or when conditions indicate need. Utilize feedback from routine patrols and biological/wildlife monitoring programs.

VALUE	KEY INDICATOR	STANDARD TO MEET	ACTION IF NOT MET	SAMPLE METHODS
Roads and Trails	Road erosion and damage related to roadside vegetation and facilities. Occurrence of accidents on roads to indicate safety problems. Trail erosion and damage related to trailside vegetation and bare ground. Conflicts between trail users (i.e. hikers, horses, bikes).	Confine motorized use to designated roads. Maintain roads to established federal or state standards. Maintain trails to established federal or Forest standards. Prevent multiple trail or trail networking using indirect methods. Trail use and design will be in keeping with Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS experience level and visual management standards. Evaluate user made trails for damage to resources, especially for trails potentially being used by ORVs.	Increase road maintenance frequency. Reconstruct/relocate roads, improve bridges, parking areas, trails, and related facilities to resolve unlawful access, resource damage, and road safety problems. Closure of unauthorized roads and trails where resource damage is taking place. Develop, maintain, and replace signing as needed. Increase trail maintenance frequency. Reconstruct/relocate trails to reduce trail networking and encourage appropriate use. Keep trail maps and information current. Actively close trails where unauthorized OHV use is taking place.	Monitor routine road maintenance needs annually. Utilize feedback from visitor contact. Monitor any accident reports on forest roads to identify safety problems. Monitor routine trail maintenance needs annually. Establish monitoring points along high use trails to measure trail depth, width, and drainage. Remeasure points and map inventory trails every five years.

USDA Forest Service
Deschutes National Forest
Crescent Ranger District
Klamath County, OR

Decision Notice
and
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
Big Marsh Creek
And
Little Deschutes River
Wild and Scenic River Plans

Introduction

Big Marsh Creek and the upper reaches of the Little Deschutes River are located approximately 60 miles south of Bend, Oregon, and approximately 12 to 14 miles southwest of Crescent, Oregon, in Klamath County. They both have headwaters in the high east slopes of the Cascade Mountains. (See Figure 1, vicinity map.) Big Marsh Creek runs into Crescent Creek, which eventually joins with the Little Deschutes River north of Crescent, Oregon. The entire Little Deschutes River runs approximately 92 miles from its headwaters to its confluence with the Deschutes River north of La Pine, Oregon.

The Omnibus Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1988 (P.L. 100-557) added portions of 40 Oregon rivers to the national Wild and Scenic River system. The following river segments are being addressed in this decision:

- Big Marsh Creek: The entire creek, 17.5 [*] miles in length from its headwaters to its confluence with Crescent Creek.
- Little Deschutes River: The upper 12 miles, from its headwaters to the Two Rivers North subdivision.

Designated rivers are classified as wild, scenic, or recreation, depending on the level of development and access present at the time of designation. Both of the rivers is this decision are classified as recreation rivers.

This decision amends the Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to incorporate these management direction changes.

Purpose of the Plan and Development Steps

The Deschutes National Forest is responsible for the administration of these river segments, and is mandated by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to complete comprehensive river management plans for each of these Wild and Scenic river segments. Each management plan

[*] The length of Big Marsh Creek noted in the 1988 Wild and Scenic River Act was 15 miles. During the plan development, stream miles were calculated from the most recent mapping data available in the Deschutes National Forest Geographic Information System (GIS). Therefore the more recent information was used.

provides for protection and enhancement of the river values and addresses site-specific issues related to the management of each river. The river management plans prescribe standards and guidelines to govern activities within river corridor boundaries to assure that these activities do not adversely affect river values. The plans also identify monitoring efforts that will insure that the river values are protected and enhanced now and into the future. Final corridor boundaries will also be identified.

The following planning steps have been used to develop the river management plans:

- Resource Assessments identified and evaluated river resources, and then determined the levels of significance of river-related resources. Outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) were reaffirmed. This step was completed in 1991 following a regional protocol.
- An interdisciplinary planning team assessed the current condition of river-related values, and then compared the current condition with respective desired future conditions. Where the current conditions fell outside or trended away from the desired condition, standards and guidelines were included as part of the proposed action. During scoping on the proposed action, public comment was used to identify issues and concerns. This step was completed in 1999.
- Environmental analysis compared alternative management scenarios. This step is documented in an environmental assessment that provided public review and gathered public comment. This step was completed in January 2001.

Decision

Based on the analysis documented in the environmental assessment (EA), I have decided to implement Alternative 2 as described in the EA, which will apply the goals, objectives, standards and guidelines found in River Plan for each respective river. As a result of this decision, current use patterns within these river corridors will change little. However, as future use increases, the river plans provide a means of responding to expected growth so that river values can be protected, even as more people enjoy them each year. For instance, as recreational use increases the River Plans provide a means of monitoring impacts and responding once impacts reach certain levels.

Also as a result of this decision, the area within the Big Marsh River Corridor will increase from the interim amount of 4,615 acres to approximately 5,190 acres. Most of this increase occurs in the vicinity of the Marsh where extra protection was needed. In contrast, the area within the Little Deschutes River Corridor will decrease from 3,510 acres to 2,445 acres. The decrease occurs in the portions of the river running through the Mt. Thielsen Wilderness Area and the Oregon Cascades Recreation Area, where management requirements already provide for protection of river values.

As described in the EA, the current conditions found in the two wild and scenic river corridors are close to their desired condition. In many cases, protection measures are already in place for river values. Specifically, the Northwest Forest Plan's aquatic conservation strategy and the Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH) riparian habitat conservation strategy have provided strong guidance for river value protection. In addition, portions of Big Marsh Creek lie within late-successional reserves that offer focused control over any management activities in these areas.

Finally, current management direction found in the 1990 Deschutes National Forest Plan provides strong emphasis for protecting river values. This direction includes the wilderness management plan and the Oregon Cascades Recreation Area (OCRA) management plan. Given

current use levels, this current direction provides a good level of protection within those management areas.

With that current direction in mind, the planning process found that more specific direction was needed in certain areas to assure protection and enhancement of river values. An important consideration was planning for future use. Current use is generally light and low impact, while trends indicate future use will increase and cause greater impacts.

As a general strategy the plans place an emphasis on monitoring of trends through specific indicators, rather than imposing restrictions now. If monitoring indicates use patterns and impacts that exceed an acceptable level (as measured by specific indicators), use restrictions may be applied. I have chosen this alternative because it provides a means of dealing with future use without unduly restricting current use.

The River Plans and a Monitoring Plan are attached to the EA. Any changes in the Standards and Guidelines in the River Plans should be made following appropriate procedures for amending the Forest Plan. Changes to specific details found in the Monitoring Plan may be made as necessary to allow for the adoption of the best science and monitoring methods available. No Forest Plan amendment is necessary to update the Monitoring Plan.

Rationale for the Decision and Response to Planning Issues

Analysis revealed several points where additional direction and specific decisions are needed. The discussion on the following pages summarizes the most important additions in guidance, discussed in terms of the river Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) and the planning issues. For a complete list, please see the management plans for each river.

Big Marsh Creek

Protection of ORVs formed a basis for much of the analysis because values that have been identified as outstandingly remarkable must be protected and enhanced. For Big Marsh Creek, the ORVs are Scenery/Vegetation, Geologic, and Wildlife. The following discussion describes the ORV and explains how the river plan responds to the need to protect that value.

Scenery/Vegetation*: The unique combination of an extensive high-elevation marsh with diverse vegetation and landforms is found nowhere else within the geographic region. The pristine nature of the upper reaches of Big Marsh Creek and the marsh itself leave the viewer with examples of environmental features the way they existed prior to human influence. Current efforts to restore stream flows to the marsh will create more wet habitats as less water diverts to the perimeter ditches. The lower reach of Big Marsh Creek—from the Oregon Cascades Recreation Area (OCRA) boundary north—does not exhibit these same characteristics and so is more typical of other streams in the vicinity.*

- ✓ Currently the foreground areas along Big Marsh are managed for a visual quality objective of "Partial Retention," which provides adequate protection for this value. However, to the east, two upland buttes are visible from the marsh. These buttes have been managed for a VQO of "Modification," which allows for a considerable amount of change at one time. Because such change would impact the scenic values of Big Marsh, a shift in visual quality objectives for these areas has been included in the selected alternative so that these buttes, where visible from the marsh, will be managed for a VQO of partial retention.

- ✓ Efforts to maintain and enhance riparian and meadow habitats have been occurring since Big Marsh Creek came into federal ownership in the mid 1980s. However, a small portion of the lower stream is currently in a cattle allotment, which has caused impacts to the health of riparian habitats. This allotment is currently vacant and will be closed as part of this decision. In addition, lodgepole pine is encroaching into the marsh and adjacent riparian areas, and reed canary grass is a concern as an aggressive unwanted weed species. Much of the forest vegetation has been identified as being imminently susceptible to catastrophic loss from insects, disease, or wildfire. Because the Forest Plan's interim guidelines (MA 17) lack the specifics for maintaining the marsh's riparian vegetation, the management plan describes allowable practices that will deal with these situations. No direction included in the river plan overrides the direction found in the LSR Assessments for the two Late-Successional Reserves found in the corridor. Current recommendations for these LSRs is no treatment.

Geology*: The area of the stream course known as Big Marsh was formed as a lake that filled with sediment. This high-elevation marsh makes up part of a larger, glacially created complex including a steep headwater, a deep glacial valley, and the sediment-filled lake. The marsh is the only high-elevation marsh within the geographic region. It provides unique opportunities for students of geology and geomorphology to study important aspects of glacial activity. The portion of Big Marsh Creek north of the OCRA boundary does not exhibit theses unique characteristics.*

- ✓ In order to assure that the marsh continues to serve as a prime example of a rare high-elevation ecosystem, the management plan includes restrictions on extraction of common variety minerals (e.g. sand and gravel) in the portion of the corridor where previous legislation has not already disallowed the practice. The OCRA is withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to mineral leasing and geothermal leasing (LRMP 4-147 and Appendix 4 page 4-43). For the river segment outside the OCRA, mining of locatable minerals could be allowed under current law if appropriate protection measures can be implemented. The river plan has not proposed a withdrawal similar to the OCRA's because the low potential for minerals makes such an effort unnecessary to protect the river values.

Wildlife*: The diversity of species present in the corridor of Big Marsh Creek is important both regionally and locally. Habitat diversity along the length of the upper reaches of Big Marsh Creek (within the Oregon Cascades Recreation Area) is unique within the region. The marsh provides high quality habitat for a number of species that are not otherwise found in the region, including nesting habitat for shore birds and waterfowl. As the marsh returns to wetter conditions, it will provide increasingly diverse habitats for not only the waterfowl, but also riparian dependent species such as spotted frogs. The riparian areas along the creek south of the marsh (in the headwaters) provide excellent fawning and calving areas for deer and elk. The lower reaches of Big Marsh Creek—from the OCRA boundary north to the confluence with Crescent Creek—do not exhibit these same river related characteristics and is typical of other streams in the vicinity.*

- ✓ The wildlife within the upper Big Marsh Creek corridor exhibits a unique variety, with some species demonstrating a high sensitivity to human activity. The management plan provides specific monitoring and follow-up actions to provide further protection of

wildlife and habitat to ensure that future management actions and human activity do not degrade this important river-related resource.

Other Planning issues that were considered during the analysis include Fish Habitat, Recreation, Roads and Access, Water Quality/Quantity, Commercial Use, and Private Lands. The following discussion describes how the river plan responds to these issues.

- ✓ **Fish Habitat**: More than 90 percent of the fish inventoried in Big Marsh Creek are brook trout, which out-compete other species, including natives. Current conditions also demonstrate a lack of down wood in stream channels (upstream and downstream from the marsh). Standards and Guidelines from the Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH) as well as Northwest Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines provide adequate protection of the fisheries resource. In addition, cooperation with Federal, Tribal, and State fish management agencies is emphasized to identify and eliminate adverse effects on native fish associated with habitat manipulation, fish stocking, fish harvest, and poaching. Also the plan emphasizes information sharing and education about the importance of keeping large woody debris in the stream channel outside the marsh. The Marsh will always contain lower amounts of in-stream wood).
- ✓ **Recreation**: Dispersed recreation activities comprise a major use of the area. These include hunting, canoeing, and wildlife viewing. Access is limited in the upper segments of Big Marsh Creek (the portion in the OCRA). The management plan assumed an increase in the number of visitors and a greater demand for dispersed recreation opportunities. Consequently, the plan establishes consistent standards within the corridor, in particular strengthening the restrictions in the portion of the river between the OCRA and the private lands. The plan also includes a monitoring program to identify and correct the occurrence of impacts to the river-related resources as they are found.
- ✓ **Roads and Access**: The aim of a road system within the river corridor is to provide access to key portions of the marsh for visitor use and fire suppression. At the same time, this road system must minimize impacts of the roads and their use on river values. The plan does not propose any particular road closure, but does provide a numeric goal for road density (1 mile per square mile). In particular, an emphasis is placed on maintaining the west side of the marsh as less accessible, while the east side would be more accessible for motorized use. To protect vegetation and water quality, ATV use has been restricted to roads and designated trails in the corridor outside the OCRA (these limits already exist in the OCRA). However, winter motorized access by over-snow machines (snowmobiles) has not been restricted as part of the management plan because current information does not provide a basis for including such a restriction. Monitoring will be conducted to establish use patterns in the canyon so that if needed, appropriate restrictions could be applied to minimize impacts to key resources, such as water quality and wildlife habitat security.
- ✓ **Water Quality/Quantity***:* Water quality is currently high and expected to remain high given the current direction. The management plan includes monitoring to assure the water quality remains high.
- ✓ **Commercial Uses**: Commercial timber harvest is allowed for forest health and fuel reduction purposes. The river plans would not permit commercial recreation uses, such as outfitter guides, although such uses could be permitted if a need for resource protection can be demonstrated and if guide services could provide needed protection

(e.g. guided entry into a sensitive area instead of unrestricted access). The plan closes the On/Off Grazing Allotment, thus eliminating commercial grazing on federal lands in the corridor. This allotment is currently vacant.

- ✓ **Private Land**: The lower 3.5 miles of Big Marsh Creek lie in private ownership. Any activities on these lands must follow Oregon land-use laws, Klamath County land-use ordinances, and other jurisdictions so that the river's free flowing character and water quality are maintained at current levels. Ideally, activities such as grazing, logging, or other agricultural practices allowed under the laws should be undertaken to reduce impacts to the riparian areas and to eliminate impacts to the stream banks. The management plan places an emphasis on collaborative partnerships that will allow and encourage the Forest Service to work with the landowners to improve stream conditions where possible.

Little Deschutes River

Protection of ORVs formed a basis for much of the analysis because values that have been identified as outstandingly remarkable must be protected and enhanced. For the Little Deschutes River, the ORVs are Scenery/Vegetation, Geologic, and Wildlife. The following discussion describes the ORV and explains how the river plan responds to the need to protect that value.

Scenery/Vegetation*: The Little Deschutes River provides a variety of views. The upper portion reveals a deep canyon with steep walls and impressive views of craggy rock outcrops. This same physical character and topography that limits views also focuses attention on the river's unique features, such as loop meanders, meander scars and oxbow channels. Limited evidence of human influence exists in the form of bridges, a stream monitoring station and wire fences. These features are limited and do not detract from the overall pristine quality of the river corridor.*

- ✓ Visual variety within the corridor is expressed primarily between age classes of trees. Evidence of human influence gradually decreases as one travels upstream past the Two Rivers North subdivision, through the Oregon Cascades Recreation Area (OCRA) and finally into the Wilderness headwaters. Because of the dominance of lodgepole pine along the flatter portions of the corridor, some latitude for vegetation management is needed in order to avoid the "tunnel effect" of a road in a thick stand. Small openings (less than 3 acres) are also allowed to enhance views from the road.
- ✓ The vegetation along the Little Deschutes River can be classified into three distinct zones:
  - **First is the riparian vegetation along the immediate banks of the stream and within the marshy areas between meander bends. In the riparian zone, cattle grazing has had an impact on vegetation. Cattle have not grazed within the allotment for more than three years, and so the riparian habitat is recovering. To provide future protection for the riparian vegetation, the allotment will be closed as part of this decision. Other impacts to riparian vegetation include off-road ATV use. Establishing use restrictions for ATVs along the length of the river corridor reduces this impact.**
  - **Second is the lodgepole pine flats adjacent to the riparian vegetation. Much of the forest along this terrace is in a condition that is imminently susceptible to loss by insects, disease and/or fire. Fire in these stands poses a threat to the riparian vegetation as well as the mixed conifer stands on the slopes above the terrace. Therefore, standards and guidelines have been included in the management plan that will allow for some treatments to occur**

(such as prescribed burning, thinning and group selection) if these treatments are justified in terms of reducing impacts to riparian and forest vegetation.

- **Third, on the canyon slopes, lodgepole gives way to species such as ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and true fir. These stands are in high-density conditions that make them susceptible to insects and disease, and given the condition of the lodgepole forests below them, they are at an even higher risk of loss to fire. Management actions such as thinning and burning have been provided in the management plan in order to protect these stands, as long as such treatments are justified in terms of reducing impacts to forest vegetation.**

Geologic*: The Little Deschutes River's upper segment represents a classic glacial canyon with moraines and an outwash plain. The canyon is the longest and deepest found on the east flank of the Oregon Cascade Range. The Little Deschutes River drains this entire area and is an integral part of this remarkable glacial landscape. The river meanders across the canyon floor in a pattern unique when compared with other rivers in glacial canyons of the Oregon Cascades. The interaction of the present day erosion processes with pumice and ash from Mt. Mazama provides a unique opportunity for geomorphic studies.*

- ✓ As with the Big Marsh Creek corridor, in order to protect the unique geologic nature of the upper Little Deschutes River canyon, the management plan includes restrictions on extraction of common variety minerals (e.g. sand and gravel) in the portions of the corridor that are not already withdrawn from such practices. River segments in the OCRA are already withdrawn from all forms of appropriation under the mining laws and from disposition under all laws pertaining to the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing (LRMP 4-147 and Appendix 4 page 4-43). For the river segment outside the OCRA (the Mt. Thielsen Wilderness to the south and the lands between OCRA and Two Rivers North), mining of locatable minerals could be allowed under current law if appropriate protection measures can be implemented. The river plan has not proposed a restriction on mineral development outside the OCRA because the low potential for minerals makes such an effort unnecessary to protect the river values (For the Mt. Thielsen Wilderness Area, this is discussed in the LRMP Appendix 4, page 4-17)

Other Planning issues that were considered during the analysis for the Little Deschutes River include Wildlife, Fish Habitat, Recreation, Roads and Access, Water Quality/Quantity, Commercial Use, and Adjacent Private Property. The following discussion describes how the river plan responds to these issues.

- ✓ **Wildlife**: The upper reaches of the canyon provide remoteness and solitude for species that require these undisturbed conditions. Maintaining a healthy riparian zone will result in high-quality habitat. Because of the closure of the grazing allotment, few conflicts remain between current uses and wildlife habitat. The exception to this is found in dispersed campsites located close to the water's edge, where stream bank stability is an issue. In order to reduce this impact, set backs have been included in the management plan. In the future, use is expected to increase and so conflicts may arise that are not evident now. Therefore, the management plan includes a monitoring program that will periodically review specific factors and if necessary, modify the activities that cause those factors to exceed acceptable limits.
- ✓ **Fish Habitat**: A combination of competition with non-native species and habitat conditions in the Little Deschutes River has resulted in the decrease in redband trout. Undercut banks provide important cover habitat and because of grazing in the past, these features have declined. With the closure of the grazing allotment, these conditions are expected to improve. Moreover, Standards and Guidelines from the Inland Native

Fish Strategy (INFISH) as well as the Northwest Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines will adequately protect the fisheries resource. In addition, cooperation with Federal, Tribal, and State fish management agencies is emphasized to identify and eliminate adverse effects on native fish associated with habitat manipulation, fish stocking, fish harvest, and poaching. Also emphasized are monitoring and assessments of how bank stability and cover have been restored passively since grazing has been discontinued.

- ✓ **Recreation**: The Little Deschutes River canyon provides diverse opportunities for hunting, fishing, and other dispersed recreation opportunities in a quiet setting. Considering the likely increase in visitors and an increased demand for dispersed recreation opportunities, the management plan provides guidance for future management actions and/or development. In particular, these standards restrict motorized off-trail use of ATVs outside the OCRA (which already has such a restriction), and requires dispersed campsite set backs from the water's edge. The plan also incorporates a monitoring program to identify the occurrence of impacts to the river-related resources and specify actions that will be taken in the event that impacts exceed certain limits. One of these factors is the quality of the recreation experience.
- ✓ **Roads and Access**: The aim of a road system within the river corridor is to provide access to the canyon for visitor use and for fire suppression. This system must at the same time minimize impacts of roads and their use on river values. Currently, one open road on each side of the river provides this access. Many side roads have been closed or are scheduled to be closed based on previous project decisions. The river plan does not propose any particular road closure, but does provide a numeric goal for road density (2 miles per square mile). Achieving a road density lower than this is not desirable because given the topography of the canyon, reducing road density to less than that amount would mean closing off one of the remain routes. The monitoring plan has included indicators for water quality such as the number of stream crossings and the road density within riparian reserves to provide a measure of impacts of roads to river resources. To protect vegetation and water quality, ATV use has been restricted to roads and designated trails in the corridor outside the OCRA (these limits already exist in the OCRA). However, winter motorized access by over-snow machines (snowmobiles) has not been restricted as part of the management plan because current information does not provide a basis for including such a restriction. Monitoring will be conducted to establish use patterns in the canyon so that if needed, appropriate restrictions could be applied to minimize impacts to key resources, such as water quality and wildlife habitat security.
- ✓ **Water Quality/Quantity**: The upper reaches of the Little Deschutes River lie in wilderness, with almost no human influence apparent on water quality or quantity. The exception is that fire suppression efforts and risk reduction downstream in the OCRA would serve to limit creation of large openings by fire. Downstream, water quality is protected by the riparian emphasis and a low development emphasis, coupled with riparian reserve standards and Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives. Closure of the grazing allotment, restrictions on ATV use, and camping setbacks will result in a long-term benefit to water quality. The management plan includes monitoring to assure the water quality remains at current levels.
- ✓ **Commercial Uses**: Commercial timber harvest is allowed for forest health and fuel reduction purposes. The river plans would not permit commercial recreation uses, such

as outfitter guides, although such uses could be permitted if a need for resource protection can be demonstrated. The plan closes the Little Deschutes Grazing Allotment, thus eliminating commercial grazing in the corridor. This allotment is currently vacant.

- ✓ **Adjacent Private Property**: The Two Rivers North subdivision lies adjacent to the Wild and Scenic River portion of the Little Deschutes River and so no direct ties exist between management of private lands and management of the river corridor. Some indirect connections have been considered. For example, the management plan limits the use of vector control agents within the river corridor. Since the corridor is adjacent and just upstream from the private land, such a restriction will limit the effectiveness of any control program. On the other hand, reducing the subdivision's vulnerability to fire was an important issue to resolve within the corridor, assuring that fires can be effectively and safely suppressed whether they are going into these lands or coming out of them. Another concern raised during planning focused on the potential impact of the main access road that runs through the subdivision. As more people come to the Wild and Scenic River, more road use will require more maintenance to maintain current conditions. The management plan does not address this concern directly because the road provides access to a large area outside the river corridors, and so the issue is broader than can be resolved in any particular management strategy for the Little Deschutes River. However, monitoring of use within the corridors can provide the basis for modifying road maintenance agreements if impacts to the road are demonstrated to be tied to increased recreational use.

Alternatives Considered

Two alternatives were considered in detail, and several other alternatives were reviewed but not analyzed in detail. The two alternatives analyzed in detail include:

- **No Action** uses existing direction from the Forest Plan and other higher level guidance to maintain and enhance the river values.
- **Alternative 2** uses existing direction as the baseline, and then adds guidelines to assure achievement of desired conditions, while protecting river values.

Alternative 1 was not selected because it would not provide the needed guidance to fully protect and enhance river values, although current direction does cover a number of areas of concern.

Within the range of alternatives considered was an alternative that would have eliminated all vegetation management within the river corridors and an alternative that would allow only non-commercial vegetation management. Eliminating vegetation management or limiting it to non-commercial tools would not meet the long-term protection needs for the corridors because fuel reduction would either be forbidden outright or prohibitively expensive. Therefore these alternatives were not studied in detail.

Another alternative considered would eliminate motorized use from the river corridors. This alternative was not considered in detail because it could not be supported with current use and impact information, even though this issue was a concern. Use restrictions have been incorporated into the river plan, as a means of reaching plan goals, but only if monitoring of future use patterns and impacts of use indicate the need.

Other alternatives were considered that would have required seeking authority outside the Forest Service's control to implement. These include an alternative that would have extended the corridor boundary beyond the limit found in the legislation (320 acres pre river mile), and an alternative that would have been more aggressive about eliminating locatable mineral mining from the corridors. These alternatives were not pursued because of the large amount of additional time and resources to implement without providing an appreciable gain in river protection. A further discussion of the rationale for eliminating alternatives is found in the EA, pages 14 and 15.

Public Involvement

Public involvement for these river plans began in 1990 with the development of the Resource Assessments for each river. These assessments reviewed and confirmed the river values that would serve as the basis for the management plan development stage. Scoping for the management plans began with the issuing of the proposed action in September 1999. Copies of a document called the Proposed Action and maps were sent to more than 130 interested people and organizations, including known property owners along the lower reach of Big Marsh Creek. Notice of the Proposed Action availability was mailed to more than 180 interested people and organizations.

The primary concerns raised by the public during scoping were related to road closures and potential decline in public access. Also, the Two Rivers North subdivision raised a concern with increased traffic through their residential area, resulting in increased road maintenance costs.

The Environmental Assessment was completed in February 2000 and subsequently mailed to more than 50 interested/affected parties. The initial 30-day comment period lasted from February 16 to March 16, 2000, and after a request from several potential commenters, this period was extended to April 14, 2000. Approximately 33 comment letters or phone calls were received, providing more than 110 comments on topics such as the following:

- Comments expressed suggestions or concerns on alternative details.
- Comments expressed concerns with specific factors of the analysis.
- Comments offered an alternative preference.
- Comments questioned the purpose of the plans.
- Comments expressed a concern with the draft plan provisions regarding snowmobile use.

Comments received on the Environmental Assessment were used to clarify and strengthen the analysis and provide more clear direction in the management plans. For example, one of the changes between the draft and final EA appears in the sections regarding motorized recreation. Many comments noted that by lumping all motorized use in the draft EA, ATVs and over-snow vehicles were treated similarly when in fact their impacts are different. After clarifying this point in the EA, the restrictions to over-snow travel were removed from the final plan. Instead, a monitoring element was added to the Monitoring Plan that will provide information on winter use patterns. Restrictions on motorized winter-use will be imposed only after monitoring establishes an effect that triggers their need (see the Roads and Access discussion above on pages 5, 7 and 8).

A complete description of the comments and responses to those comments is located in Appendix G of the EA.

Finding of No Significant Impact

I have determined that implementing Alternative 2 is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. This determination is based on the site-specific environmental analysis documented in the Environmental Assessment and supporting documents (e.g. the biological evaluations), which describe direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of this decision. This determination is also made with consideration of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions on National Forest land and other ownership's within potentially affected areas, which could have a cumulatively significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

I have found the context of the environmental impact of this decision is limited to the local area and is not significant. I have also determined the severity of these impacts is not significant, considering the following factors of intensity:

- The analysis considered both beneficial and adverse effects (EA Chapter 3 pp. 22-34).
- There are no known adverse impacts to public safety outside of those displayed in the FEIS for the 1990 Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the 1994 Northwest Forest, and the Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH).
- No unique characteristics of the geographic area such as cultural resources and wetlands will be adversely affected. (EA Chapter 3, pp. 32, 33, 34).
- The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial (EA Chapter 3, pp. 22-34).
- The degree of possible effects on the human environment are not highly uncertain, nor are there unique or unknown risks involved. (EA Chapter 3, pp. 22-34).
- The changes in programmatic direction do not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects, nor do these actions represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. (EA Chapter 3, pp. 22-34)
- The changes in programmatic direction are not related to other actions that, when combined, will have significant impacts. (EA Chapter 3, pp. 22-34)
- The changes in programmatic direction will have no impact to historic and prehistoric properties. No ground disturbance is authorized by this programmatic decision and standards and guidelines regarding protection of cultural resources are consistent with the current direction of protection of historic and prehistoric properties and sites. This current direction prescribes the necessary procedures to follow for reviewing site-specific actions. This decision does not change that direction. (EA Chapter 3, page 32-33).
- As described in the Environmental Assessment and Biological Evaluation, this decision does not authorize any specific management activity that could impact a plant or animal species listed as threatened or endangered. (EA Chapter 3, pp. 25-26, 29; BE pp. 2, 6-12).
- None of the changes in management direction included in this decision threatens a violation of the Federal, State, or local law, or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (EA Chapter 3, pp. 22-34)

Forest Plan Amendment

This decision establishes a river plan for Big Marsh Creek and a river plan for the Wild and Scenic segment of the Little Deschutes River. This decision amends the Deschutes National

Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1990 LRMP) to create two new management areas. The management plans will continue all current management direction and forest-wide standards and guidelines except where these are specifically amended by the river plans. The management plans also continue current direction contained in the Record of Decision for the Northwest Forest Plan (1994 NWFP), as well as the direction of the Regional Forester's Forest Plan Amendment No. 2 (“Eastside Screens”) and the Inland Native Fish Strategy (1995).

If the river plans do not speak to a particular issue, the river corridor will be managed in accordance with applicable laws, rules and regulations pertaining to the National Forest System and the Deschutes National Forest, the State of Oregon, Klamath County to the extent that such laws and rules are consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

The Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) identifies Big Marsh Creek and portions of the Little Deschutes as Wild and Scenic River, Management Area 17. This decision amends the Forest Plan to provide more specific direction for managing these rivers. Specifically, this decision amends the plan as follows:

- Establish a new management area for the Wild and Scenic segment of the Little Deschutes River. Establish a new management area for Big Marsh Creek,
- Eliminate these river segments from their current designation as a generic Wild and Scenic River designation (MA 17). Standards and Guidelines from MA 17 that remain relevant and that are not superceded by specific standards in the management plans are incorporated into those plans.
- Establish standards and guidelines within the respective river corridors that will complement current direction found in the Deschutes NF Land and Resource Management Plan (MA 14 and MA 17), the Northwest Forest Plan (including the Aquatic Conservation Strategy), INFISH, and the Big Marsh Late Successional Reserve Assessment, as well as other direction.
- This amendment also establishes legal boundaries for the new management area corridors. Refer to Figure-2 and Figure 3.
- Change the visual quality objective for approximately 1,220 acres on the west slopes of Beales Butte and Chinquapin Butte from Modification to Partial Retention. This decision also amends the plan to clarify that future planning efforts should use the Scenic Management System, when considering scenic resources.

I find that this amendment is non-significant as defined by 36 CFR 219.10(f) because this amendment will not significantly change the forest-wide impacts disclosed in the 1990 FEIS in the Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, nor will the amendment appreciably alter the goals, objectives or outputs established in the LRMP. Changes in corridor boundaries have changed acres in various management areas, but in most of these areas no programmed harvest component existed before this amendment.

For example, along the Little Deschutes River, 1,645 acres in the interim wild and scenic river corridor will instead be managed as OCRA and Wilderness. Similarly along Big Marsh Creek, 1,110 acres currently in OCRA and Old Growth management areas will be included within the river corridor. No programmed harvest occurs in any of these management areas.

Some impact will occur to programmed harvest because on the northern portion of Big Marsh Creek, 155 acres currently managed as General Forest would be included within the corridor, which does change this area from having a programmed timber harvest to no longer having such a programmed harvest. Similarly, on the northern portion of the Little Deschutes, 580 acres of General Forest would be managed as Wild And Scenic River. This change of 735 acres in area available for programmed harvest is not significant when compared with the amount of General Forest across the Forest.

In addition, the change in the Visual Quality Objective on Beales Butte and Chinquapin Butte will affect 1,220 acres. This does not eliminate programmed harvest from the General Forest Management Area on these buttes. The change to partial retention VQO places restrictions on regeneration harvest methods and logging methods that could be visible from Big Marsh. The added protection of the partial retention VQO is not expected to change the availability of these acres for appropriate thinning treatments.

Along Big Marsh Creek, 600 acres of private lands within the interim corridor will no longer be within the final corridor boundary, which will have no impact on forest output of goods and services.

Other Findings

Except as described above under the Amendment portion of this decision notice, the selected alternative is consistent with the management direction, standards, and guidelines in the Deschutes Forest Plan (1990) as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan (1994), including the requirements for survey and manage species. This forest plan amendment falls within the transition provision of the latest National Forest System Land Resource Management Planning regulations (Nov. 9, 2000 64 FR 67579; 219.35(b)), which means this amendment may be completed following provisions of the 1982 regulations.

Implementation Date

The standards and guidelines and other portions of the management plan (such as monitoring) will be in effect immediately after the completion of the administrative review process.

Administrative Review

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR 217. Because this decision constitutes a non-significant amendment to the Deschutes National Forest Plan, a written notice of appeal must be filed with the Reviewing Officer within 45 days of the date legal notice of this decision appears in the Bulletin (Bend Oregon). The notice of appeal must contain sufficient narrative evidence and argument to show why the decision should be changed or reversed, and it must contain the content specified in 36 CFR 217.9(b).

For a period not to exceed 20 days following the filing of a first level Notice of Appeal, the Reviewing Officer (Regional Forester) shall accept requests to intervene in the appeal from any interested or potentially affected person or organization (36 CFR 217.14(a)).

File the notice of appeal with:

Harv Forsgren
Regional Forester/USDA Forest Service
PO Box 3623
Portland OR 97208
Attention: **1570 Appeals**

For information contact:

Phil Cruz
Crescent District Ranger
P.O. Box 208
Crescent, OR 97733

Phone: (503) 433-2234

Responsible Official: /s/ *Leslie A. C. Weldon* April 4, 2001
LESLIE A.C. WELDON Date
Forest Supervisor
Deschutes National Forest