

# Decision Memo

## **Pixieland and Tamara Quays Asphalt and Noxious Weeds Removal Project**

USDA Forest Service  
Hebo Ranger District, Siuslaw National Forest  
Lincoln, Oregon  
Township 6 South, Range 11 West, Section 25,  
Township 6 South, Range 10 West, Section 30

### **Background**

Pixieland is a former amusement park that has been vacant for two decades and Tamara Quays is a former trailer park that has been vacant since 2004. Both are located in the Salmon River Estuary, and are within the boundaries of the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area (CHSRA). Congress created the CHSRA in 1974 to maintain and enhance the scenic and ecological qualities of the area. Pixieland was purchased in the late 1980's by the Forest Service. The Forest Service completed the Tamara Quays purchase in 2004. Restoration in the Salmon River Estuary has been on-going since the late 1970's.

The purpose and need for this project is to begin restoring both sites to a natural condition that includes both estuary wetlands and upland spruce forest areas. It is in keeping with the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area Act and management plan, which states that the long-term goal in the estuary is "restoration to a functioning estuarine system free from the influences of man."

### **Proposed Action**

The Siuslaw National Forest proposes to mechanically remove 13 acres of invasive weeds, primarily Himalayan blackberries, and remove 7 acres of asphalt and concrete from the former "Pixieland" amusement park site and Tamara Quays, a former trailer park. The noxious weeds would be piled and burned. The asphalt and concrete would be removed from the site. The project area is within the Hebo Ranger District, Siuslaw National Forest, Lincoln County, Oregon.

In addition to the proposed action, the Forest Service also evaluated the *No Action Alternative*.

### **Decision**

I have decided to implement the plan to remove the asphalt and noxious weeds as described in the Proposed Action section of this Decision Memo. Mitigation measures will include heavily seeding the bare soil with native grasses to reduce the re-colonization by blackberries and other noxious weeds and for erosion control, following removal of the asphalt and blackberries.

### **Extraordinary Circumstances Review**

Site-specific conditions were reviewed on the ground to determine if the potential effects on resources would result in the existence of an extraordinary circumstance, thus precluding the use of the categorical exclusion:

- 1) The biological assessment prepared for this project concluded that project activities will not jeopardize the existence of bald eagles, northern spotted owls, and marbled murrelets. In their

biological opinion of the Siuslaw National Forest programmatic biological assessment for fiscal year 2006-2007 disturbance activities, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has concurred with the findings of the Forest that project activities will not jeopardize the existence of bald eagles, northern spotted owls, and marbled murrelets. The FWS terms and conditions will be applied to the to the project design criteria (FWS reference number 1-7-05-F-0644). Thus, the degree of effect on these species does not constitute an extraordinary circumstance.

- 2) The project area contains Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for coho and Chinook salmon, as described by the Magnuson–Stevens Act (MSA). The project is designed to avoid adverse impacts on this habitat by minimizing disturbance to water quality and riparian habitat. Based upon the relatively low degree of ground disturbance and the planned erosion control measures, salmon and other fish species utilizing this EFH are not expected to be adversely impacted by project activities.
- 3) The project area is located within the flood plain and associated wetlands within the Salmon River estuary. The project will improve floodplain and wetland function. The project meets the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives.
- 4) The project area is located within the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area. The project is consistent with the CHSRA Management Plan.
- 5) There are no inventoried roadless areas or municipal watersheds in the project area.
- 6) The proposed actions should have little to no adverse impact on known cultural resources, since these sites have been heavily disturbed in the past.

## **Public Involvement**

A team of students was selected for an intensive eight week project over the summer of 2006 to develop a restoration plan for the Salmon River Estuary. The student team looked at the lower Salmon River watersheds to understand how the uplands affect the estuary as well as the general condition of the estuary. The goal of the project was to: 1) develop a planning document that reviewed historic context, characterized current conditions, and made recommendations for future restoration and management in the Lower Salmon River, and 2) reflect community ideas and needs for meeting the goals of the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area Act and United Nations Biosphere Reserve objectives. The student team received assistance in this effort from the Sitka Center for Arts and Ecology, the Salmon-Drift Creek Watershed Council, local residents, non-governmental groups, tribes and state agencies. The eight week project resulted in a planning document with recommendations for future restoration and management in the Lower Salmon River. The planning document provides an historical landscape perspective and characterizes current political, cultural, and ecological conditions in the study area. By looking to the past, this project respects the diverse cultural heritage of indigenous and pioneer occupants of the land, as well as current landowners and stakeholders. Based on an integrated process of research, field studies, and public input, recommendations are presented to assist stakeholders in identifying key actions to enhance ecological function across the landscape.

The proposal to restore watershed function in Pixieland and Tamara Quays was listed in the Spring 2007 Schedule of Proposed Actions. On January 12, 2007, scoping letters were mailed to groups, organizations and individuals who have asked to be kept informed of activities on the Siuslaw National Forest. This included Tribal Representatives, Congressional Representatives, Lincoln County Commissioners, and environmental groups. Eleven comments were received either by telephone, letter, or e-mail. All comments were supportive of the restoration effort.

## **Findings Required by Other Laws**

This decision is consistent with the Siuslaw National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Suislaw Forest Plan) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (USDA Forest Service, 1990) as amended by the Record of Decision (ROD) for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and ROD Attachment A (Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Related Species Within the Range of the Northern spotted Owl) (USDA, USDI, 1994).

This decision is consistent with the Cascade Head Scenic Research Area Final Environmental Impact Statement and Management Plan, (USDA Forest Service 1977).

This project is not expected to have significant adverse effects on minority or low-income populations. American Indian rights, including those conferred by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, will not be affected. All Tribes that could be affected by the project were consulted. The biological evaluation and cultural resource clearance report are on file at the Supervisor's office.

## **Reasons for Categorically Excluding this Project**

Based on a review of the expected impacts and consultation with District and Forest resource specialists, I have determined that: (1) this action will have limited context and intensity; (2) there will be no irreversible commitment of resources or irretrievable loss of site productivity in the permitted areas; (3) there will be no apparent adverse cumulative or secondary effects. There are no known conflicts with any other planned or proposed activities on National Forest land in the area. Therefore, this action is categorically excluded from documentation in either an Environmental Assessment or and Environmental Impact Statement. The category for this action is found in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedure Handbook, Section 31.2, #6, *Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or do not require more than one mile of low standard road construction.*

**Implementation Date**

This project will be implemented in August or September 2007.

**Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities**

This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.

**Contact Person**

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Frank Davis, Siuslaw National Forest, 4077 SW Research Way, Corvallis, OR 97333, 541-750-7077

*George Buckingham*\_\_\_\_\_

June 5, 2007

GEORGE BUCKINGHAM  
Hebo District Ranger

Date

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