

**Decision Notice  
And  
Finding of No Significant Impact**

**Paulina Falls Overlook Environmental Assessment**

**Deschutes National Forest  
Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District  
Deschutes County, Oregon**

**Decision**

I have decided to authorize implementation of **Alternative B of the Paulina Falls Overlook Environmental Assessment (EA)** with mitigation measures. **Alternative B** is the preferred alternative identified in the 30-day public review and comment period notice, published February 25, 2002 in The Bulletin. I have decided that Alternative B best meets the purpose and need for action.

This Decision will:

- Construct an approximate 16 feet x 16 feet (260 square feet, outside dimension) rock overlook on the north side of the creek. The creek side of the proposed overlook would angle slightly to the center to soften the design. Ground disturbance for this structure would be approximately 18 feet long by 18 feet wide and up to 3 1/2 feet deep. The structure would consist of concrete footings, a concrete floor, and a concrete block wall with rock fascia on the face of the block wall fastened with mortar. The rock wall would be approximately 2 feet wide and 2 feet high with a metal railing on top. The wall would be constructed on the east, south, and west sides with the north side remaining open to allow entry into the overlook.
- Construct approximately 700 feet of new non-motorized trail, which would relocate the existing trail approximately 150 feet away from the north rim edge of Paulina Creek where the existing trail is located. The proposed trail would be cleared of vegetation 4 feet wide and the tread would be 18 inches wide.
- Approximately 600 feet of existing trail along the north rim would be obliterated and re-vegetated. Obliteration would include placing large rocks and logs on the trail, transplanting small trees and shrubs, and seeding with native grasses.
- An additional 150-foot trail would be constructed to access the rim overlook from the relocated trail. This trail would be cleared 6 feet wide and the tread would be 2-3 feet wide.

- Construct a juniper split-rail fence, one rail high on either side of the 150-foot rim overlook access trail.
- Remove approximately 400 feet of existing chain link fence from the bluff along the north side of Paulina Creek. Some of these posts may be cut off as they are imbedded in rock.
- One white fir approximately 32 inches DBH (diameter at 4.5 feet above the ground) would be topped and limbed for snag retention. This would improve public safety and reduce the risk of damage to the proposed overlook.

## **Decision Rationale**

I have chosen Alternative B as it meets direction in the Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan and in the Newberry National Volcanic Monument Management Plan and Master Recreation Strategy. The project will accomplish the purpose and need for action by:

- Providing Safe access for Paulina Falls viewing along the north rim of Paulina Creek.
- Providing for day use activities such as sight seeing and picnicking.
- Completing the reconstruction project at Paulina Falls Day Use area.
- Protecting water quality.
- Enhancing soils and vegetation through rehabilitation of disturbed areas.
- Providing consistency with visual objectives of the Day Use Area.

Alternative A (No Action) was not chosen because it does not meet the purpose and need for action and would not provide safe and aesthetically pleasing viewing and use of the Paulina Falls Day Use Area. The existing chain link fence would not be consistent with the visual objectives of the Day Use Area.

## **Public Participation and Administration Review**

Approximately 70 letters outlining the proposed action were mailed to interested parties on the Project mailing list on September 27, 2001. No comments were received concerning this proposal during the 30-day review.

A summary of the proposed action was included in the Schedule of Projects (SOP) since spring of 2001.

The project was discussed with representatives from a wide range of trail users, who have formed a group that meets monthly with the Bend Fort Rock Ranger District.

A 30-day notice and opportunity for comment was published in The Bulletin on January 22, 2002. No

other expression of interest was received during the comment period (CFR 215.6). The Responsible Official's decision did not modify the proposed action. Therefore, pursuant to CFR 215.8(a)(3) this decision is not subject to appeal.

## **Finding of No Significant Impact**

Based on the site-specific analysis documented in the EA, I have determined that this decision does not constitute a major Federal action, individually or cumulatively, that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be necessary.

Beneficial and adverse direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts discussed in the Environmental Assessment have been disclosed within the appropriate context (see effects section, EA, Pages 7-11. No significant effects to the human environment have been identified. This determination is based on the mitigation measures, Page 5-7, EA, designed into the selected alternative and the following factors:

- (1) Based on the analysis, I only expect slightly adverse, short duration (hours/days) impacts from implementation of this alternative. These have been disclosed in the analysis. This and other impacts are limited in scope and intensity and can be considered negligible. Short-term impacts include noise and dust from construction. Longer-term benefits include improving public safety and protection of resources.
- (2) No adverse effects to public health or safety have been identified through implementation of this project. This finding is based on past similar projects and no adverse effects to public health or safety have been identified.
- (3) There will be no significant adverse impacts to unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.
- (4) The effects of implementation of this alternative do not rise to the level of scientific controversy as defined by the Council of Environmental Quality.
- (5) Based on previous similar actions in the area, the probable effects of this decision on the human environment, as described in the Environmental Assessment, are well known and do not involve unique or unknown risks.
- (6) This action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, nor does it represent a decision in principle about a future consideration. Construction of rock overlooks or trail relocation/obliteration does not establish a need for other actions.

(7) This decision is made with consideration of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions on National Forest land and other ownerships within potentially affected areas that could have a cumulatively significant effect on the quality of the human environment. I find there to be no such cumulative significance.

(8) The Forest Archeologist applied criteria of effect and adverse effect as found in 36 CFR 800.9, and determined that implementation of this decision will have no adverse effect to sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.

(9) The Biological Evaluation for the area indicates that the proposed project will have no significant adverse impacts on any Proposed, Endangered, Sensitive or Threatened plant or animal species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (see Biological Evaluation and EA, Pages 8, 9, and 10).

(10) This decision is in compliance with relevant Federal, State, and local laws, regulations, and requirements designed for the protection of the environment. Effects from this action have the potential to meet or exceed state water quality standards. This project is consistent with Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA) in the Inland Native Fish Strategy Environmental Assessment, (1995).

## **Other Findings**

This action is consistent with the goals, objectives, and direction contained in the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Deschutes LRMP and accompanying Final Environmental Impact Statement dated August 27, 1990.

## **Implementation Schedule**

Implementation of the Paulina Falls Overlook EA will begin immediately. It is important to begin implementation in order to facilitate funding objectives and to begin sanitation improvements prior to the summer recreation season. In accordance with CFR 215.10(C) implementation of the proposed action may occur immediately upon publication of the decision as provided in CFR215.9.

For additional information, contact Marv Lang, Bend-Fort Rock Ranger District, 1230 NE Third, Ste. A-262, Bend Oregon, 97701, (phone 541-383-4793, fax 541-383-4700, or email [melang@fs.fed.us](mailto:melang@fs.fed.us)).

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WALTER C. SCHLOER, JR  
Bend-Ft. Rock District Ranger

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Date

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[Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests Website](http://www.fs.fed.us/centraloregon/manageinfo/nepa/documents/bendfort/paulinafalls/decision.html)

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Last Update: 4/12/02

R.A. Jensen