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Decision Notice & Finding of No Significant Impact

Big Marsh Creek - 6020 Road Crossing Replacement

USDA Forest Service
Crescent Ranger District, Deschutes National Forest
Klamath County, Oregon
Township 25 South, Range 7 East, Section 6

Decision and Reasons for the Decision

Background

The Forest Road 6020-Big Marsh Creek crossing was identified as one of the top five priorities for replacement, according to the Region 6 Culvert Inventory on the Deschutes National Forest. In order to improve the crossing and provide upstream passage for juvenile redband trout, the existing crossing structure would need to be replaced.

Decision

Based upon my review of the alternatives, I have decided to implement Alternative 2,

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

Forest

Deschutes National Forest

1001 SW Emkay Drive
Bend, OR 97702

(541) 383-5300

Ochoco National Forest

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

(541) 416-6500

Crooked River National Grassland

813 S.W. Hwy. 97
Madras, OR 97741

(541) 475-9272



the proposed action, which will replace the current 4-culvert structure at the stream crossing with a single, open-bottom arch structure.

The current crossing structure, which consists of four culverts, will be removed to streambed elevation. Footing sites will be dewatered using channelizing, sheet piling, or other techniques depending on stream discharge rate, and concrete footings would then be formed and poured. When the concrete structural strength requirements have been met, the new culvert, which measures approximately 30 feet wide and 5 to 6 feet high, would be bolted together and backfilled. The crossing will then be paved.

When compared to the no action alternative this alternative will remove a barrier to upstream passage of juvenile redband trout and providing increased access from the river to the meadow reach upstream. It will also improve hydrologic functions on this reach of Big Marsh Creek. Also, by paving the crossing, the risk of sediment entering the stream will be reduced. I am choosing Alternative 2 because it meets the purpose and need as well as provides for public safety and water quality (EA page 5).

Other Alternatives Considered

In addition to the selected alternative, I considered the No Action Alternative. A comparison of these alternatives can be found in the EA on pages 6 through 11.

Alternative 1 No Action

Under the No Action alternative, current plans would continue to guide management of the project area and the existing crossing structure would remain in place.

Public Involvement

The need for this action arose in September 2000 with the Deschutes National Forest's Report on Fish Passage at Road Crossings Assessment. A proposal to replace the crossing structure was listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions in December 2001. The proposal was provided to the public and other agencies for comment during scoping that took place in December 2001.

The interdisciplinary team did not identify any key issues regarding the effects of the proposed action. Support for the project was provided by the Oregon Department of Fish and wildlife during the scoping period.

The Environmental Assessment or notice of its availability was provided to the public by letter, notice in the Bend Bulletin, and was also posted to the Deschutes National Forest web site during the 30-day comment period. No comments were received during the 30-day Notice and Comment period.

Finding of No Significant Impact

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA, I have determined that these actions will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts (40 CFR 1508.27). Thus, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. I base my finding on the following:

1. My finding of no significant environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.
2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety, because the duration and extent of the action is such that no health concerns exist and public safety concerns were considered during project design (see EA page 5).
3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area. Effects to the characteristics for which Big Marsh Creek was included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System were evaluated and no adverse impacts will occur. No other characteristics or ecologically critical areas are present. (see EA page 10).
4. The effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial. Because there is no known scientific controversy over the impacts of the project (see EA pages 6 through 11).
5. We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk (see EA pages 6 through 11).
6. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects because replacement of inadequate crossing structures is not without precedence on National Forest Land. Any future proposals would be evaluated through the NEPA process to determine the level of effects.
7. The cumulative impacts are not significant (see EA pages 8 through 10).
8. The action will have no significant adverse effect on districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, because no such objects are present at the project site (see EA page 10). The action will also not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. (see EA page 10).
9. The Biological Evaluation determined that no proposed, threatened, or endangered species, or their habitat will be adversely affected by the actions of this project. (see EA pages 6, 7, and 9).
10. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA (see EA pages 1, 2, and 5).

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

This decision to replace the crossing on Big Marsh Creek at Forest Road 6020 is consistent with the intent of the Forest's management goals listed on page 4-2 of the Deschutes National Forest LRMP. The project was designed in conformance with land and resource management plan standards and incorporates appropriate land and resource management plan guidelines for stream crossings (Land and Resource Management Plan, pages 4-68).

An evaluation of project as it relates to Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives of the Northwest Forest Plan determined that project activities would be consistent with aquatic conservation strategy and would not retard or prevent attainment of the nine objectives.

The project was evaluated in accordance with Section 7 of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The Section 7 determination found no adverse effects would be occur to the outstandingly remarkable values for which Big Marsh Creek was designated as Wild and Scenic.

Implementation Date

This project will be implemented after June 30, 2003

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to appeal in accordance with 36 CFR 215.8 because there was no expression of interest received during the 30-day comment period and the decision maker did not modify the proposed action.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Beth Peer, Crescent Ranger District, PO Box 208, Crescent, Oregon, 97733; 541-433-3200.

_____/s/ Phil

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Q2 _____

PHIL

CRUZ

Date

District Ranger

Crescent Ranger District

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