

Environmental Assessment
OR-014-99-02
Rock Creek Allotment Waterholes
T41S, R15E, Sec 7, NW NW
T41S, R15E, Sec 19, SW SW

NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of the proposed action is to improve livestock distribution and reduce grazing use on riparian areas in the Bureau of Land Management Rock Creek grazing allotment, (#888). Current water sources are limited on the allotment resulting in forage utilization levels that are uneven and higher than desired in some riparian and upland areas. The allotment also has about 30% private land. Most of the water sources are located on the private land. The distribution of livestock would be improved through the development of water sources on the BLM lands.

This proposed action is subject to the following land use plan: Klamath Falls Resource Area Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan and Rangeland Program Summary, June 1995.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to construct two waterholes on two small intermittent drainages. The locations of the proposed waterholes are in T41S, R15E, Sec 7, NW¹/₄, NW¹/₄ and T41S, R15E, Sec 19, SW¹/₄, SW¹/₄ (see attached maps). The reservoirs would be excavated pits with a dike height of less than 5 feet and a storage capacity of less than 1.0 acre/feet. Perennial native grass species would be seeded at the site following construction. The waterholes would be filled from spring snow melt and rainfall runoff. The spillways would be designed so that the overflow would reenter the natural stream channel. Permits and water rights would be obtained from the Oregon Water Resources Department. Construction and maintenance of the waterholes would be the responsibility of the allotment permittee.

No Action (Continue existing situation)

The waterholes would not be constructed.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Impacts of the Proposed Action

There would be some short term negative impacts from the displacement of soil and vegetation during the construction of the waterholes. Both waterhole sites are in ephemeral drainages which have upland vegetation types, mainly grasses and forbs. The impact to these vegetation types would be minor as a good seed source for the reestablishment of the species is present at the sites. Seeding of the disturbed areas with a native grass species after construction would help minimize the spread of exotic species. The net effects of the project should result in an overall improvement in

vegetative and soil conditions, especially in the riparian areas in the Rock Creek allotment. Positive benefits to upland soil and vegetation conditions should also occur with the improved livestock distribution. The waterholes would also benefit wildlife species by providing additional water and through improvements in riparian and upland vegetation and related wildlife habitat.

A cultural resources survey would be completed for the project areas. If any cultural resources are encountered during construction, the work would be stopped until appropriate mitigating measures are developed to protect the resources. This would be done in cooperation and consultation with the field office archeologist or their representative.

A botanical survey would be completed for the project site prior to any ground disturbing activities. If the proposed project sites have listed or noxious species, mitigation or a change in the site would be pursued.

No special status animal species are known to exist in the project site area.

The following critical elements would not be affected by the proposed action: air quality, ACECs, floodplains, hazardous or solid wastes, Native American religious concerns, prime or unique farmlands, water quality, Wild and Scenic Rivers, or wilderness.

No disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects are expected to result from implementation of the proposed action.

No Action

Livestock use could continue to be heavier than desired in some riparian and upland areas. This could result in a degradation of soil and vegetation conditions in these areas with a detrimental effect to wildlife habitat.

PERSONS OR AGENCIES CONSULTED

BLM, Klamath Falls Resource Area Resource Specialists.
Phil Grohs, Rock Creek allotment permittee
State of Oregon, Water Resources Department

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)
for the
Rock Creek Allotment Waterholes
EA No. OR014-99-02

FONSI DETERMINATION

On the basis of the information contained in the Rock Creek Allotment Waterholes Environmental Assessment (EA) and all other information available to me, it is my determination that the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action having a significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary and will not be prepared.

Signed **Teresa A. Raml**
Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

Date **9/16/99**

DECISION RECORD

for the
Rock Creek Allotment Waterholes
EA No. OR 014-99-02

DECISION

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action of the Rock Creek Allotment Waterholes Environmental Assessment No. OR-014-99-02.

DECISION RATIONALE

The Proposed Action is to construct two waterholes in the allotment to improve livestock distribution and reduce grazing use on riparian areas. Improvements in riparian and upland soil and vegetative conditions should result from the application of the Proposed Action. This will provide positive benefits to wildlife species from the improvement in habitat conditions.

The Proposed Action is in conformance with the Klamath Falls Resource Area Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan and Rangeland Program Summary, June 1995.

Signed Teresa A. Raml
Manager, Klamath Falls Resource Area

Date 10/25/99