



Date: June 2, 2008

CD-08-02-S

**DECISION MEMO and CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION for
STRUCTURE REMOVAL AND SITE RESTORATION**

USDA Forest Service, CRGNSA NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

Greg Cox, Project Manager

PROPOSED ACTION: Remove the existing structures and utilities located on the subject parcel, stabilize and restore the area with the following actions:

Driveway Work:

- Remove the culvert under the existing driveway,
- Dig and grade small ditch where culvert was located,
- Grade out the gravel in the driveway and spread a thin layer of top soil, and
- Install large rocks at the entryway.

Demolish and remove the following existing structures:

- 1200 sq. ft. house and shed,
- Basement to 18" below grade. Fill in basement with concrete debris,
- 8' satellite dish (cut up and place in dumpster,
- Small 8 x 8 foot slab,
- Cistern walls (top of the hill – 15 X 20 feet). Fill with concrete, soil and grade,
- Poles, barbed wire and various fencing

Site restoration after structure removal:

- Clean area of debris and trash
- All areas disturbed by equipment and demolition will be re-graded and seeded or planted with native vegetation.
- Approximately 8-10 loads of clean top soil will be hauled in and graded where previous structure and drive way existed. Will also be used to cover the cistern on the hill and any ruts or disturbance of the ground from equipment or vehicles.

LOCATION: The project is located at 390 Old Hwy 8, T3N, R12E, Section 30 in Klickitat County, Washington.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to restore and enhance the general habitat conditions and values of this site. The existing structures reduce the quality of plant and wildlife habitat on the subject parcel.

DECISION

I have decided to approve the proposed action as described above and with the conditions described below for consistency with the CRGNSA Management Plan. The rationale for my decision is based on the proposed action fully meeting the purpose and need, its consistency with the Gifford Pinchot NF Forest Plan and the CRGNSA Management Plan; a review of the enclosed Findings of Fact; and a review of the public comments received during scoping.

SCOPING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This project has appeared on the CRGNSA Schedule of Proposed Actions (SOPA) for 2008. A notice to interested parties was sent on February 13, 2006 for a 30-day comment period. One comment letter was received and was considered during the consistency review process. The enclosed findings of fact respond to public comment.

REASONS FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

It is my determination that this action may be categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS as it is within February 15, 2007 Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, Section 31.12, category 6 “Timber stand and/or wildlife habitat improvement activities which do not include the use of herbicides or result in vegetation type conversion”. The purpose of removing these structures and the restoration plan is to “restore and enhance the general habitat conditions and values of this site. The existing structures reduce the quality of plant and wildlife habitat on the subject parcel”.

EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES

I have determined that the proposed action is consistent with the Forest Plan and CRGNSA Management Plan and that there are no extraordinary circumstances that indicate a presence of possible significant effects as supported by the enclosed findings of fact as well as biological and cultural evaluations.

GIFFORD PINCHOT NF LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN and the COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA ACT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN and OTHER APPLICABLE LAWS.

Based on the enclosed Findings of Fact, I also find that this project is consistent with applicable laws, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act and Management Plan and the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Plan as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan provided that it is implemented as described in the enclosed CRGNSA Consistency Determination Findings of Fact, referenced as CD-08-02-S, and that the following conditions are applied:

1. Should any historic or prehistoric cultural resources be uncovered during project activities, the applicant shall cease work and immediately notify the CRGNSA office and the Washington Office of Archeology and Historical Preservation. The applicant should also notify the Indian Tribal governments within 24 hours if the resources are prehistoric or otherwise associated with Native American Indians.
2. The project manager shall follow the mitigations required in the April 23 report by Marge Dryden, CRGNSA archeologist, and shall contact the CRGNSA archeologist before ground disturbing activity commences.
3. The power poles not needed to service adjacent properties shall be removed as part of this project.
4. Disturbed soil shall be seeded with native species and erosion shall be controlled until plants are established.

Implementation Date: This project may begin immediately as long as it complies with the conditions as described in item 1-4 above. This decision expires on June 2, 2010. If implementation has not commenced before that date, a new consistency review or extension shall be required.

Appeal Opportunities: A written request for review of the Consistency Determination, with reasons to support the request, must be received within 20 days of the date shown with the Area Manager signature below. Requests for review are addressed to: Request for Review, Regional Forester, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208.

Contact Person: The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area staff prepared an analysis file in conjunction with this project. For further information, contact Diana Ross at the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, 541.308.1716, e-mail: dlross@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Daniel T. Harkenrider

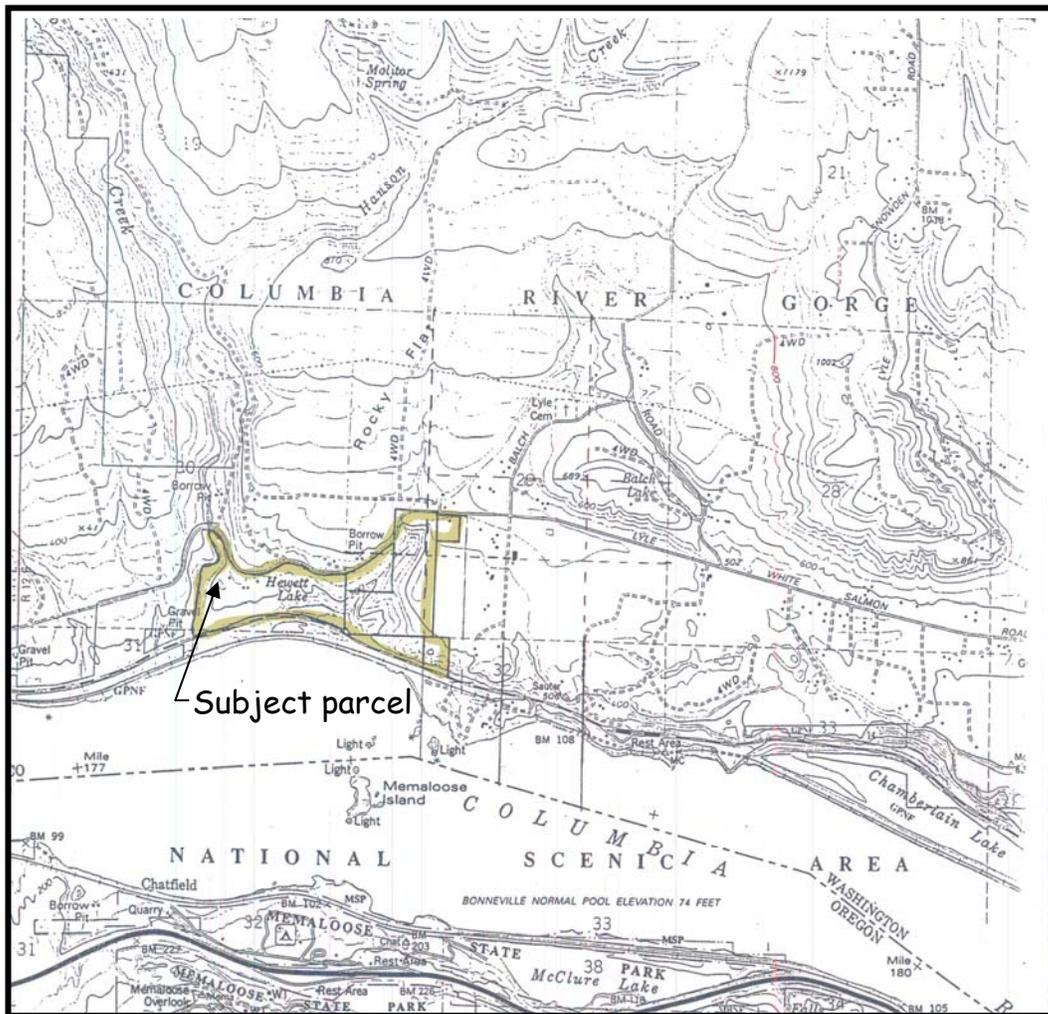
DANIEL T. HARKENRIDER
Area Manager

Date: June 2, 2008

cc: Jill Arens, Executive Director, Columbia River Gorge Commission
Rick Till, Friends of the Columbia Gorge

FINDINGS OF FACT

LANDOWNER:	USA, USDA Forest Service
TITLE PROPOSED ACTION:	Structure Removal and Site Restoration
LOCATION:	390 Old Hwy 8, T3 N, R12 E, Section 30, Klickitat County, WA UTM: 628706 5063234 QUAD: Lyle-18
NATIONAL SCENIC AREA DESIGNATION:	Special Management Area (SMA)
LAND USE DESIGNATION:	SMA Agriculture
LANDSCAPE SETTING:	Pastoral



Introduction

The following findings of fact contain the applicable standards and guidelines from the CRGNSA Management Plan. The CRGNSA Management Plan standards and guidelines are displayed in **bold type**. The findings are displayed in regular type.

Management Plan policy requires that projects on National Forest lands also be consistent with the Land and Resource Management Plans of the adjacent National Forest. The Forest Service applies the more protective standard of either the CRGNSA Plan or the Land and Resource Management Plan. Where standards of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan are more protective than the CRGNSA Plan, they are included for review.

A. Public Comment

One public comment letter was received from Friends of the Columbia Gorge on May 9, 2008. Friends supports the project but is concerned that the project follows applicable guidelines of the Management Plan. Friends is also concerned that a grading plan was not submitted. The following Findings of Fact address these concerns.

B. Project Proposal

Remove the existing structures and utilities located on the subject parcel, stabilize and restore the area with the following actions:

Driveway Work:

- Remove the culvert under the existing driveway,
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Site restoration after structure removal:

- Clean area of debris and trash
- All areas disturbed by equipment and demolition will be re-graded and seeded or planted with native vegetation.
- Approximately 8-10 loads of clean top soil will be hauled in and graded where previous structure and drive way existed. Will also be used to cover the cistern on the hill and any ruts or disturbance of the ground from equipment or vehicles.

C. Land Use Designations

The Management Plan, Part II, Chapter 1 (Agricultural Land) SMA Guidelines, states:

Review Uses

- Z. Removal/demolition of structures that are 50 or more years old, including wells, septic, tanks and fuel tanks.**

Findings: Although the structure is less than 50 years old, the project required a reconnaissance survey and cultural resource mitigations. Thus it is not eligible for expedited review and becomes a review use. Grading Plans are required on slopes greater than 10 per cent. The area where the house is located is relatively flat and the grading will be minimal.

D. Scenic Resources

The Management Plan, Part I, Chapter 1, Scenic Resources, states:

SMA Guidelines for Development and Uses Visible from KVAs

- 1. The guidelines in this section shall apply to proposed developments on sites topographically visible from key viewing areas.**
- 2. New developments and land uses shall be evaluated to ensure that the required scenic standard is met and that scenic resources are not adversely affected, including cumulative effects, based on the degree of visibility from key viewing areas.**
- 3. The required SMA scenic standards for all development and uses are summarized in the following table:**

REQUIRED SMA SCENIC STANDARDS		
LANDSCAPE SETTING	LAND USE DESIGNATION	SCENIC STANDARD
Pastoral	Forest, Agriculture, Public Recreation, Open Space	Visually Subordinate

- 8. Proposed developments shall not protrude above the line of a bluff, cliff, or skyline as seen from key viewing areas.**
- 9. 11. Unless expressly exempted by other provisions in this chapter, colors of structures on sites visible from key viewing areas shall be dark earth-tones found at the specific site or the surrounding landscape. The specific colors or list of acceptable colors shall be included as a condition of approval. The Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook will include a recommended palette of colors as dark or darker than the colors in the shadows of the natural features surrounding each landscape setting**

Findings: Key Viewing Areas: The project is topographically visible from the Columbia River, I-84, the Historic Columbia River Highway (HCRH), Rowena Plateau, Tom McCall Point, and SR-14. The project will be most visible from the foreground distance zone of Old Highway 8 (County Road 1230). The project will meet scenic standards in the required time frame because it is designed to remove the discordant visual features that currently exist and will be re-graded and replanted with native vegetation. In order to ensure that visual subordination visual quality objective is met, a condition should be placed requiring that the power poles not needed for service to adjacent properties be removed.

E. Cultural Resources

The Management Plan, Part I, Chapter 2, Cultural Resources, states:

1. SMA Policies
2. New developments or land uses shall not adversely affect significant cultural resources.
7. The Forest Service shall be responsible for performing steps 1 through 5 under guideline 4 for forest practices and National Forest system lands.
8. The Forest Service shall consult with the Indian tribal governments and other consulting parties in performing steps 1 through 5 under guideline 4.

Finding: The project area was surveyed by CRGNSA archeologist Marge Dryden who stated in a April 23, 2008 evaluation that the Finding of Effect is that there will be “no adverse effect” provided that the required mitigations are followed. Any changes to the proposed action may alter this finding. These findings were supported by the State of Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation on May 5, 2008.

A condition should be placed requiring that the mitigations in the April 23, 2008 report be followed, that the CRGNSA archeologist be notified before work commences, and that any historic or prehistoric cultural resources uncovered during project activities shall cause the applicant to cease work and immediately notify the CRGNSA office and the Oregon Office of Archeology and Historical Preservation. The applicant should also notify the Indian Tribal governments within 24 hours if the resources are prehistoric or otherwise associated with Native American Indians.

F. Natural Resources

The Management Plan, Part I, Chapter 3, Natural Resources, states:

WATER RESOURCES (WETLANDS, STREAMS, PONDS, LAKES, AND RIPARIAN AREAS)

A. All Water Resources shall, in part, be protected by establishing undisturbed buffer zones as specified in 2.A.(2)(a) and 2(b) below. These buffer zones are measured horizontally from a wetland, stream, lake, or pond boundary as defined below.

(1) All buffer zones shall be retained undisturbed and in their natural condition, except as permitted with a mitigation plan.

The following buffer zone widths shall be required:

- (a) A minimum 200 foot buffer on each wetland, pond, lake, and each bank of a perennial or fish bearing stream, some of which can be intermittent.**
- (b) A 50-foot buffer zone along each bank of intermittent (including ephemeral), non-fish bearing streams.**

Finding: No water resources are within 200 feet of the project activities. A spring associated with property is 500 feet from the project area.

B. When a buffer zone is disturbed by a new use, it shall be replanted with only native plant species of the Columbia River Gorge.

Finding: No buffer zones will be disturbed.

G. Buffer zones shall be undisturbed unless the following criteria have been satisfied:

(1) The proposed use must have no practicable alternative as determined by the practicable alternative test.

Finding: No buffers will be disturbed.

WILDLIFE AND PLANTS

A. Protection of sensitive wildlife/plant areas and sites shall begin when proposed new developments or uses are within 1000 ft of a sensitive wildlife/plant site and/or area.

Finding: CRGNSA botanist Robin Dobson determined that no sensitive flora are recorded for the project area and that the probability of effects to flora are low considering the extent of the project and the location in previously disturbed area residential area.

CRGNSA biologist Chuti Fiedler stated in a biological evaluation for this project it will have a low likelihood of adverse effects to wildlife. No known wildlife sites are in the project area, and it will have long term beneficial effects due to the restoration of the area and the removal the dwelling. A restoration plan was prepared by the interdisciplinary team and is part of the project description.

The project meets the required protection guidelines for natural resources.

SOIL PRODUCTIVITY

A. Soil productivity shall be protected using the following guidelines (1)-(4)

Findings: A condition should be placed requiring that any disturbed soil shall be seeded with native species and erosion shall be controlled until plants are established. With this condition, the project will meet the soil criteria.

G. Recreation Resources

The Management Plan, Chapter 4, Recreation Resources, SMA Guidelines, states:

1. New developments and land uses shall not displace existing recreational use.

Finding: The project will not affect existing recreation use because the property was in private ownership until recently and no recreation use was allowed.

H. Conclusion

The proposed structure removal and restoration as described above for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, is consistent with the National Scenic Area Management Plan Policy and Guidelines provided the project as implemented meets the criteria and conditions listed in the Findings of Fact and Consistency Determination.