

**USDA FOREST SERVICE  
UMATILLA NATIONAL FOREST  
WALLA WALLA RANGER DISTRICT  
WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON**

**DECISION MEMO  
FOR**

**New Trail Link from NF Walla Walla Trail to Deduct Pond  
in Umatilla and Wallowa Counties, OR**

I have decided to implement the New Trail Link from NF Walla Walla Trail to Deduct Pond Project on the Walla Walla Ranger District. The area analyzed for this project is located in Umatilla County, OR and Wallowa County, OR, in portions of *T5, 6N, R39E, Sec. 5,6,32* in the Upper Walla Walla Watershed. The project will create an additional 3.5 miles of trail for Oregon Class I and III ATV's. The project will use 1.7 miles of road (already open to these classes of vehicles) with an additional construction of approximately 1850-feet of new trail.

**Purpose and Need:**

Currently, class I and III ATV users do not have a way to link between the North Fork Walla Walla Trail and the South Fork Walla Walla trail. Users must either return the way they came or ride on Forest Road 65 to link with the other trail. Forest Road 65 is designated for use by 'street legal' vehicles which do not include the above mentioned class of ATVs. Recreationists whom use FR 65 to access the other trailhead are committing an illegal use of FR 65 and face fines. Motorized recreationists have commented on the need for a 'legal' loop between trails that does not require travel on FR 65.

There is need to provide better access and a legal loop for Class I and III ATVs (quads and motorcycles that are not highway legal) between the South Fork Walla Walla and North Fork Walla Walla trails.

**Decision to be Implemented:**

This project will extend the N.F. Walla Walla trail from Forest Road 6500040 to Deduct Pond and the S.F. Walla Walla trailhead. The new route will use a combination of restricted roads (which are currently open to these classes of vehicles) for approximately 1.7 miles. It will also construct short segments of new trail to link these existing roads together. The segments measure in at approximately 693-feet and 1152-feet for a total of 1845-feet of new trail construction. Down trees and other woody debris will be removed from the tread.

**Consistency:**

Implementation of this project is consistent with the Umatilla National Forest Land and Resource management Plan (1990), as amended.

Noxious weed sites will be treated consistent with the 1995 Umatilla noxious weed decision notice and consistent with the 2005 R6 Invasive Plant ROD that amended the Umatilla NF Forest Plan in March of 2006.

The project is consistent with the Clean Water Act through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs)

**Reasons for Categorical Exclusion:**

This action is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment because it is consistent with **36 CFR 220 (e) (1) – “Construction and reconstruction of trails.”** The categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects which may significantly affect the environment. My conclusion is based on information summarized in this document and the entirety of the analysis file.

The New Trail link from NF Walla Walla to Deduct Pond project will have no effect to ESA listed aquatic or terrestrial wildlife species and no impact on Regional Sensitive species.

An interdisciplinary team of specialists’ analyzed the potential effects of the proposed action on vegetation, fish, wildlife, and heritage resources. Their Biological Evaluations (BE) and reports are in the analysis file and are summarized below:

- **Wildlife:** No effect to Threatened and Endangered Species. No effect on Management Indicator species.
- **Fisheries:** No effect to Region 6 sensitive or ESA listed species
- **Botany:** No TES plants. No effect
- **Soils:** No effect

There would be no impacts to floodplains, wetlands, American Indian cultural sites or historic property. The project is not located within congressionally designated areas (wilderness or Wild and Scenic Rivers), municipal watersheds, research or natural areas.

**Other Applicable Laws, policies, Executive Orders, and Regulations**

This action will have no adverse effects on consumers, civil rights, minority groups, environmental justice, and women; prime farm land, range land, and forest land; wetlands and floodplains; roadless areas; old growth forest options, or ecologically critical areas.

**Public Scoping:**

Public input was requested through the mailing of project descriptions to 124 individuals and organizations and the publication of a notice in the East Oregonian. The project was also published in the Umatilla National Forest’s Schedule of Proposed Actions.

During the public comment process 13 comments were received. These comments were considered and response to them can be found in the project record.

**Appeal Rights:**

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR Part 215. Only individuals or organizations that submitted comments or expressed an interest in the project during the comment period may appeal. Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in the East Oregonian newspaper. The publication date in the East Oregonian, newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source.

Any appeal of this decision must be in writing and fully consistent with content requirements described in 36 CFR 215.14. A written appeal must be filed with Appeal Deciding Officer: Kevin Martin, Forest Supervisor. Mail appeals to USDA, Forest Service, Umatilla National Forest, ATTN: Kevin Martin, Forest Supervisor, 2517 S.W. Hailey Avenue, Pendleton, Oregon 97801. Appeals can be faxed to (541) 278-3730, or delivered by hand to the Umatilla Forest Supervisor's Office in Pendleton, Oregon from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Appeals can be sent by electronic mail to: [appeals-pacificnorthwest-umatilla@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-pacificnorthwest-umatilla@fs.fed.us). Electronic appeals must be submitted as part of the actual e-mail message, or as an attachment in Microsoft Word, rich text format or portable document format only. E-mails submitted to e-mail addresses other than the one listed above or in other formats that those listed or containing viruses will be rejected. It is the responsibility of persons providing comments by electronic means to ensure that their comments have been received. Any written appeal, including attachments, must be postmarked or received (via regular mail, fax, e-mail, hand-delivery, express delivery, or messenger service) within 45 days of the date of publication of this legal notice. For further information regarding these appeal procedures, contact the District Environmental Coordinator Kimpton Cooper at 509-522-6009.

**Implementation:**

If no appeal is filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal period. If an appeal is filed, implementation may not occur for 15 business days following the date of appeal disposition. In the event of multiple appeals of the same decision, the date of the disposition of the last appeal controls the implementation date (36 CFR 215.9 (b)).

**Contact Person:**

This Decision Memo and associated project file may be reviewed at the Walla Walla Ranger District in Walla Walla, Washington. Contact Kimpton Cooper at the Walla Walla Ranger District, 1415 W. Rose St, Walla Walla, WA, 99362 or call 509.522.6009 for further information concerning this project.

*/s/ Michael Rassbach*  
**MICHAEL RASSBACH**  
**District Ranger**

**01/19/2010**  
**DATE**

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