

**DECISION NOTICE
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

Crescent Ranger District Administrative Site Project

**USDA Forest Service
Crescent Ranger District – Deschutes National Forest
Klamath County, Oregon**

Decision and Rationale

I have decided to authorize the Crescent Ranger District Administrative Site Project. The primary reason for this decision is to consolidate the entire workforce onto a single administrative site in a new energy efficient, modern office complex and multi-bay engine building while remaining a vital part of the local community.

The project area is located in the community of Crescent, Oregon near the junction of County Road 61 (Crescent Cut-off) and State Highway 97. The legal location is Township 24S, Range 9E, Section 30, Willamette Meridian.

Management activities within the project area are guided by direction described in the Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management (LRMP 1990) as amended. The entire six acre planning area contains one land allocation as described in the Land and Resource Management Plan, which is Administrative Buildings and Sites (AD). The Land and Resource Management Plan established the following goal for the AD allocation:

- AD - “to provide cost-effective, safe, functionally efficient buildings and related improvements needed for conducting the work of the Forest.”

After careful consideration of the public comments and weighing the environmental factors displayed in the EA, I believe Alternative B would best meet the Purpose and Need and be an excellent opportunity to consolidate the workforce onto a single administrative site. I considered the benefits of visible presence, public access, increased efficiency, improved lines of communication and a higher level of project collaboration, and cost effectiveness.

Safety was an important consideration and this decision was designed to reduce the amount of time crews will spend on Highway 97 traveling between the Ranger District Office and the Rosedale Compound. It also took into account public access to the administrative site and how to provide a safe means of ingress and egress off of and onto a busy highway.

I have also considered the age and use of all the structures on the administrative site and the feasibility of continued use. Deterioration of these structures (as many are past their service life) would continue to increase resulting in rising maintenance costs. Alternative B site-specific changes would include:

- Construction of a new modern office building (approximately 12,000 ft²) on the current Crescent Administrative Site.
- Removal of the current arrangement of buildings/structures on the site.
- Construction of a multi-bay engine building.

- Installation of new security fencing to enclose all of the non-public areas of the site.
- Redesigning the parking lot for fleet vehicles and employee parking.
- Redesigning the public parking (off Highway 97) to improve visitor services.
- Limited removal of vegetation across the six acre site, as all of the ground is previously disturbed.

I have incorporated all the Project Design Features and Mitigation Measures from the Environmental Assessment into the decision (EA, page 10).

Public Involvement

On September 2, 2011, a letter announcing the proposed project was sent to organizations and individual citizens on the Crescent Ranger District mailing list requesting their comments on the project. An article ran in *The Bulletin*, Bend, Oregon, on September 17, 2011 and the project also appeared in the Fall 2011 and Winter/Spring 2012 issues of the *Schedule of Proposed Actions for the Deschutes National Forest*, which also appears on the Deschutes National Forest's website.

There were two responses to this scoping; one respondent was in favor of the proposal. Another respondent asked the Forest Service to ensure that its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act were complied with.

A 30-day comment period for the preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) was provided for interested and affected publics, including appropriate local, state, and federal government agencies and Tribes in accordance with 36 CFR 212.5. This period started when the legal ad appeared in the paper of record, *The Bulletin*, Bend, Oregon on December 14, 2011. It was also posted simultaneously on the Deschutes National Forest/central Oregon website:

<http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/centraloregon/landmanagement/projects>.

The comment period ended January 13, 2012. During this period, the Forest Service received two comments, one that was supportive of the new facility and the second respondent wanted to inform us of the economic, environmental, and community advantages of utilizing a pellet boiler to heat the new facility (EA, page 9).

Tribal consultation for the Crescent Ranger District Administrative Site project was initiated on August 30, 2011. The Forest Service initiated government-to-government contact with the Tribal Chairs and Cultural Staffs of the Burns-Paiute Tribe, the Klamath Tribes, and The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

Alternatives Considered

Only one other alternative, No Action, was considered in detail. There were no key issues that had potential to meet the Purpose and Need (EA, pages 7, 9), although there were several analysis issues that were brought forward into the Environmental Consequences section. There was a variety of Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Detailed Analysis (EA, page 12). These included: 1) Move the office location to the Forest Service Rosedale Compound; 2) Relocate the Ranger station to Crescent Lake Junction; 3) utilize the existing vacant facilities in the Gilchrist mall; and 4) look at privately-owned locations in Crescent, Oregon. However, after examining all the options I believe that the existing administrative site location contains all the key components to support the main goals of the Forest Service by consolidating the work force, remaining a vital member of the Crescent community, protecting public and employee well being with safe ingress and egress from the highway to the facility and utilizing existing infrastructure.

If I had selected No Action, Alternative A, there would be no consolidation of the work force in a new administrative office building and the District would continue to use the existing stick and modular configuration for workspace. Several of the small outbuildings would continue to be utilized for storage. Deterioration of the buildings (as many are past their service life) would increase resulting in rising maintenance costs. Additionally, there would be no opportunity for the Forest Service to better serve the public interest with an American Disabilities Act compliant facility or accommodate the community needs with a conference room designed with a large enough capacity to comfortably hold a meeting.

Finding of No Significant Impact and Other Laws and Regulations

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 adverse or beneficial effects that is not biased or offset by a combination of actions. This is a six acre administrative site that is highly developed with buildings and structures (EA, Figure 2, page 6), it receives very little recreation use, it provides marginal habitat for wildlife and plant species with very few species present (EA, pages 14-50). Potential adverse effects are limited to the site itself (EA, pages 14-50).
2. There will be no significant effects on public health and safety because this action is relatively benign to the human environment and would have no measurable effect to water or air quality (EA, pages 51-52). A new modern energy efficient building would reduce operating costs and comply with American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, allowing better access and maneuverability for the visiting public, and retain a safe ingress and egress for visitors from Highway 97 (EA pages 8, 53).
3. There will be no significant effects on unique characteristics of the area, because it is a designated administrative site with no existing unique characteristics or ecologically critical areas such as park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers because none are nearby (EA, pages 54-55) or within the project area. The nearest Wild and Scenic River is Crescent Creek approximately seven and one-half mile to the west of the project area (EA, page 54).
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. The CEQ defines scientific controversy as when experts disagree with the Forest Service cited science. There has been no public comment or disagreement on how science was used for this project (EA, page 9).
5. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk. The Forest Service has considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented and has assigned routine Project Design Features that have been extensively used on other similar projects with no unexpected consequences (EA, starting on page 10).
6. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because the dismantling activities and construction of the new office facility and multi-bay engine building is a site-specific activity and does not represent a decision in principle that causes future considerations.

7. Cumulative impacts are absent or are not significant. Effects are very limited in context and intensity to the administrative site itself with a duration of an approximately one year construction window. Disturbance will cease once construction is completed and the facilities are on the landscape for the foreseeable future.
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 or cause loss of or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. Based on pre-disturbance surveys and record search of the Administration site project area, a finding of "*No Historic Properties Affected*" was determined under Stipulation III(B)1 of the Programmatic Agreement (EA page 14). The Forest finds that there are historic properties but the undertaking would have no effect on them as defined by 36 CFR 800.16(i). Project Design Features (EA page 10) provide guidance for protection of any sites discovered or reported during construction activities.
9. Due to their absence, the action will not adversely affect any Threatened, Endangered or Candidate species or its habitat (EA, page 16 for Wildlife, page 36 for Botany, and page 48 for Fisheries). Biological Evaluations have been prepared and are available in the project record at the Crescent Ranger District.
10. The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment and is consistent with the Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (DLRMP) and Deschutes Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Applicable laws and regulations were considered in the EA starting on page 51.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

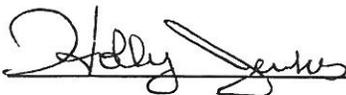
This decision is not subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.12(e)(1). No substantive comments expressed concerns or only supportive comments were received during the comment period for a proposed action analyzed and documented in this EA (36 CFR 215.6). This decision may be implemented immediately.

Implementation

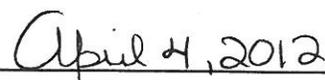
Proposed implementation would begin in the spring of 2013 with final completion summer 2014.

Contact Person

For additional information concerning this decision, please contact Lillian Cross at the Crescent Ranger District, PO Box 208, Crescent, OR 97733; or by phone at (541) 433-3200.



HOLLY JEWKES
District Ranger
Crescent Ranger District



DATE