

Decision Memo

Dry Creek Culvert Replacement

USDA Forest Service
Mount Adams District, Gifford Pinchot National Forest
Skamania County, Washington

S. 6, 7, 8, & 17
T. 5 N, R. 7 E, W.M.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this action is to repair road drainage in various locations along Forest Roads 64 and 6400201 in the vicinity of Dry Creek, Mount Adams District, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Skamania County, Washington. The sites are located within Sections 6, 7, 8, and 17, T.5N, R.7E, W.M..

The need for this action is allow the flow of sediment and debris that is typically trapped upstream of the culvert. The existing ditch relief pipes are undersized and present a potential to accumulate debris following high flow events which would obstruct the inlets and cause damage to road surfaces, erode areas adjacent to roads, and potentially cause excess sediment delivery to Dry Creek. Dry Creek is a steelhead-bearing tributary to the Wind River.

Categorical Exclusion

This action is categorically excluded from further analysis and documentation in an environmental impact statement or an environmental analysis. The nature of the action is road maintenance. This action may appropriately be categorically excluded pursuant to FSH 1909.15, 13.12 (4) "Repair and maintenance of roads, trails, and landline boundaries." This category of actions does not require documentation in a Decision Memo except at my discretion. I have determined that the proximity of this project to anadromous fish bearing streams and the potential of the culvert removal and replacement to generate sediment warrant disclosure of the scope, extent, and duration of potential effects.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to replace undersized culverts in the following locations and armor slopes and outlets, as indicated:

64 ROAD

MP 1.27	place riprap on fill slope
MP 1.33	remove and replace 15" cmp w/18" plastic; riprap splash apron
MP 1.41	remove and replace 36" cmp w/72" cmp; shift outlet approx 20' rt
MP 2.06	remove and replace 18" cmp w/36" plastic
MP 2.45	remove and replace 15" cmp w/18" plastic
MP 2.91	remove and replace 18" cmp w/24" plastic
MP 3.25	remove and replace 15" cmp w 18" plastic
MP 3.40	remove and replace 15" cmp w 18" plastic

6400201 ROAD

MP 1.20	remove and replace 24" cmp w/36" plastic
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Work would be conducted during the summer months, within the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) in-water work window. At that time, the small tributaries within the construction area that feed Dry Creek are all likely to be dry or nearly dry at that time of year.

Decision

I have decided to approve the proposed action to replace a total of nine undersized culverts, and associated actions, as listed above.

I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances that would cause any potential effects to be significant. I considered the potential effects to water quality, listed fish and wildlife species, botanical and cultural resources. The resource specialists' findings are documented in the project file.

Required Mitigation

As a part of this decision, the following required mitigation measures were developed. All applicable state and federal requirements associated with the Clean Water Act (CWA) will be met through planning, application, and monitoring of Best Management Practices (BMP's) in conformance with the CWA and Federal guidance and management direction. Activities will comply with provisions described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the WDFW and the individual HPA provided by the WDFW. The HPA may contain mitigation measures in addition to standard HPA provisions WDFW guidelines for timing of in-water work will be followed, except where the potential for greater damage to water quality and fish habitat exists.

Applicable construction methods and conservation measures are considered required mitigation for the purposes of this decision. Required terms and conditions provided by the *Programmatic Biological Assessment for On-going USDA Forest Service Activities Affecting Lower Columbia River Steelhead within the Southwest Washington Provinces* (December 2003) and the *Endangered Species Act Section 7 Formal Consultation and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for USDA Forest Service Programmatic Activities, Gifford Pinchot National Forest Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Washington* (July 26, 2004). Terms and conditions from the Biological Opinions (BO) are considered required mitigation for purposes of this decision.

Conservation measures and design criteria will also be consistent with WDFW HPA provisions. A Forest Service representative has been assigned to this project and will monitor its progress.

1. All stream culvert work described in this document will limited to the time period allowed in the WDFW HPA, and the *MOU between the WDFW and the USDA Forest Service Regarding Hydraulic Projects Conducted by the USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region* (January 2003) to protect fish populations and to minimize erosion and sediment delivery to streams.
2. Erosion control measures will be kept current as practicable with ongoing operations. Disturbed sites adjacent to streams will be protected from erosion within seven days of project completion by the application of seed and mulch, and other erosion control devices. Within one year of project completion, any disturbed stream banks shall be revegetated with native grasses or woody species that have been approved by the district hydrologist or district botanist.
3. Disturbed areas will be seeded with native grasses and covered with weed-free straw mulch. The objective is to provide immediate, short-term soil protection, and to accelerate development of ground cover to protect soils in the longer term. Native grass mixes shall be approved by the district botanist.
4. If 24-hour rainfall accumulation exceeds 0.5 inches at the nearest precipitation gauging station, sediment-generating activities will cease until precipitation stops and soils drain.
5. Disposal of excess material will be at designated areas, outside of Riparian Reserves.
6. Replaced culverts will be removed from the national forest.
7. Service and refueling areas will be located at least 100 ft. away from stream courses or wet areas (including chainsaws and other hand powered tools). A Forest Service approved spill containment plan that includes requirements for on-site spill containment materials will be in place before operations begin. A spill containment kit will be located where equipment is stored. Equipment will be scrubbed so it is free of external petroleum-based products and invasive plant seeds or biomass. Hydraulic/oil/fuel leaks will be repaired prior to operating on National Forest System lands. Equipment will be checked daily for leaks and any necessary repairs shall be completed prior to commencing work activities along the stream. Equipment storage locations will be approved by the project administrator. Equipment will

not be stored adjacent to or in stream channels when not in use, which will avoid potential effects of vandals, accidents, or natural disasters.

8. Accumulation of soils or debris shall be removed from the drive mechanisms and undercarriage of equipment prior to its working below the ordinary high water line of stream courses. Vehicle or equipment wheels, tracks, or tires shall not operate within the wetted perimeter of streams, although the equipment appendages may operate within the wetted perimeter. Stream crossings in general are not allowed except as specified in the HPA (limited to one pass, including “across and back”).
9. Minimize disturbance of existing vegetation in ditches and at stream crossings to the extent necessary to restore the hydrologic function of the road.
10. Culverts at intermittent or perennial streams will be installed to maintain structural integrity in the event of a 100-year peak flow event with consideration of the debris likely to be encountered, as required by the NWFP ROD standards and guidelines. Rock will be used for culvert protection within the road prism.
11. To limit introduction of fill material to stream, all fill will be removed from around culvers before culverts are removed and replaced. Fill will be temporarily stored on the road surface or previously disturbed areas away from the stream.
12. Prevent off-site sediment movement by use of filter materials or catchments. Turbidity levels will be maintained below state standards by routing sediment toward sediment traps consisting of silt fencing and/or straw bales.
13. All off-road (operating off of existing open and maintained roads) equipment and vehicles must be cleaned prior to entering the easement to remove all soil, seeds, vegetation, or other debris that could contain seeds or reproductive portions of plants. Equipment operator may employ whatever cleaning methods are necessary to ensure that off-road equipment is free of the above material prior to entering the easement portion of the access road. The equipment will be inspected prior to off-loading.
14. Before the ground disturbing phase of project implementation begins, control Washington State Class A weeds (required by law) within the project vicinity, in order to prevent further spread of these species into newly disturbed areas.
15. Project activity will not be permitted before July 1 to reduce noise disturbance to northern spotted owls.

Scoping

An interdisciplinary team was formed for this project consisting of a hydrologist, wildlife biologist, archeologist and botanist. The Gifford Pinchot National Forest fisheries biologist provided input concerning the project consistency with the provisions of the Programmatic Biological Opinion. The decision was published in the quarterly schedule of proposed actions for the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Findings Required by Other Laws

This project is located within the road prism of Forest Road 64 and Forest Road 6400201. The culverts drain into Dry Creek, a tributary of the Wind River, an important source of high-quality water containing at-risk fish stocks.

I find that all applicable state and federal requirements associated with the Clean Water Act (CWA) will be met through planning, application, and monitoring of BMP's in conformance with the CWA and Federal guidance and management direction. Activities will comply with provisions described in the Memorandum of Agreement with the Washington State Department of Ecology (MOA), and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (MOU), and the individual HPA provided to the landowner by WDFW.

As mitigated, this action *may affect but is not likely to adversely affect* threatened Lower Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). The Wind River sub-basin which has been designated as essential fish habitat (EFH) for steelhead (*O. mykiss*), coho salmon (*O. kisutch*) and chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*). Because steelhead occupy Dry Creek, construction activities may affect Essential Fish Habitat. As mitigated, I find this action would improve aquatic habitat. Essential and critical habitat will be protected.

I find this project to be consistent with the *Programmatic Biological Assessment for On-going USDA Forest Service Activities Affecting Lower Columbia River Steelhead within the Southwest Washington Provinces* (December 2003) and the *Endangered Species Act Section 7 Formal Consultation and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat Consultation for USDA Forest Service Programmatic Activities, Gifford Pinchot National Forest Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Washington* (July 26, 2004).

As mitigated this action would have *no effect* to federally listed wildlife species. There will be *no impact* to sensitive animal species. The project *may impact individuals or habitat, but will not likely contribute to a trend towards federal listing or cause a loss of viability to* *Tetraphis geniculata* *populations or species*. The proposed project would not affect habitat for neotropical migratory birds and there would be no impact to habitat for Gifford Pinchot National Forest management indicator species.

I find that this project is consistent with the National Historic Preservation Act. The project area was surveyed and there will be no effect to culturally or historically significant sites.

Implementation Date

This project will be implemented immediately.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is not subject to administrative appeal.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Cynthia Henschell, South Zone Planning Team Leader (phone: (509) 395-3411 or email: chenchell@fs.fed.us).

/s/ Nancy Ryke 4/14/2005

NANCY RYKE Date
District Ranger

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