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Department of
Agriculture

**Forest
Service**

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Environmental Assessment

Upper McKenzie Boat Launch Projects

**McKenzie River Ranger District
Willamette National Forest**

Legal Location:

**T.16S, R.6E, Section 1; Frissell Boat Launch);
T.16S, R.6E, Section 9; (Paradise Boat Launch), and
T.16S, R.5E, Section 19; (Bruckart Boat Launch); Willamette Meridian;
Lane County, Oregon**

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Figure 1. Vicinity Map

Upper McKenzie Boat Launch Project

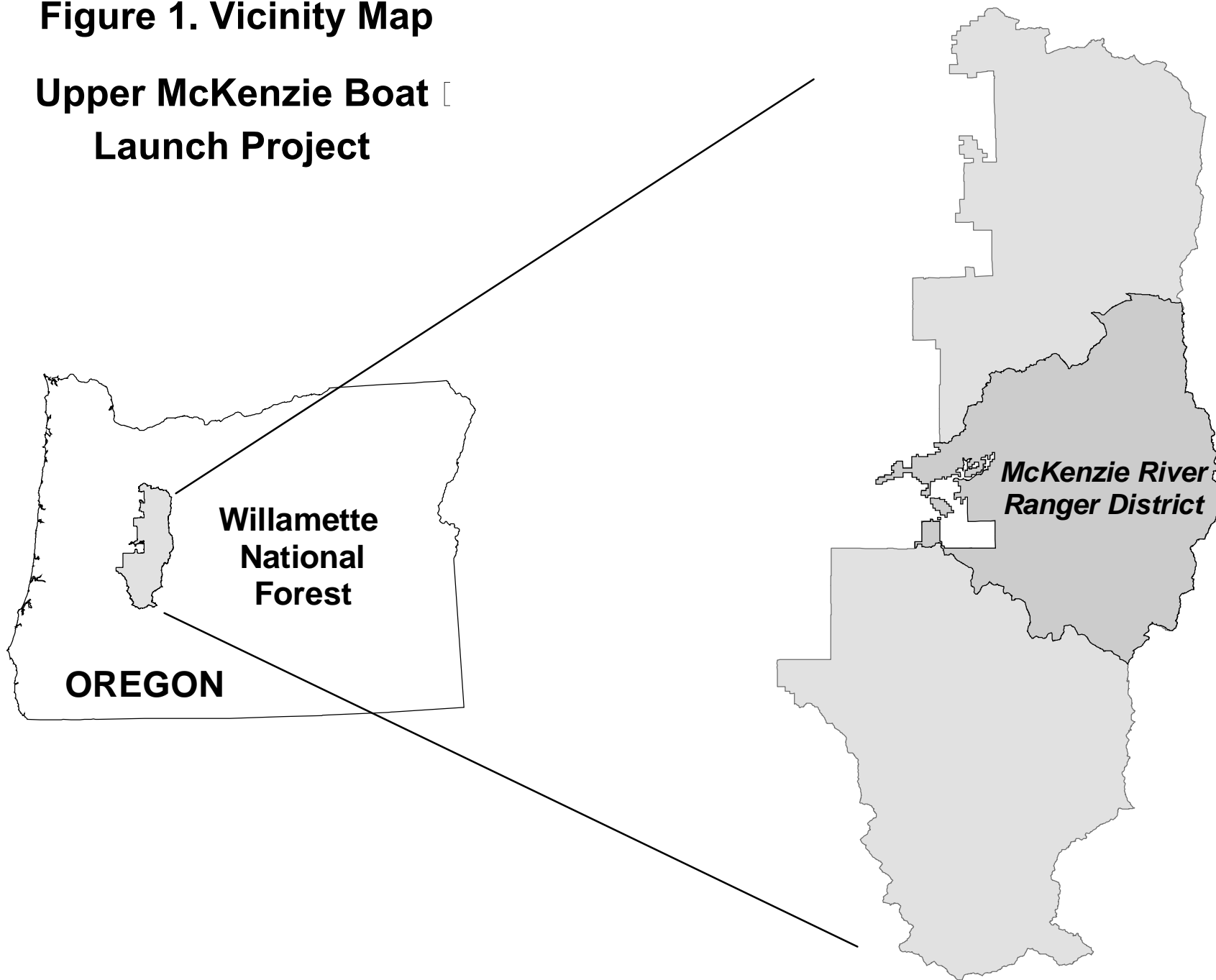


Figure 2. Vicinity Map

**Upper McKenzie
Boat Launch Project
McKenzie River
Ranger District**

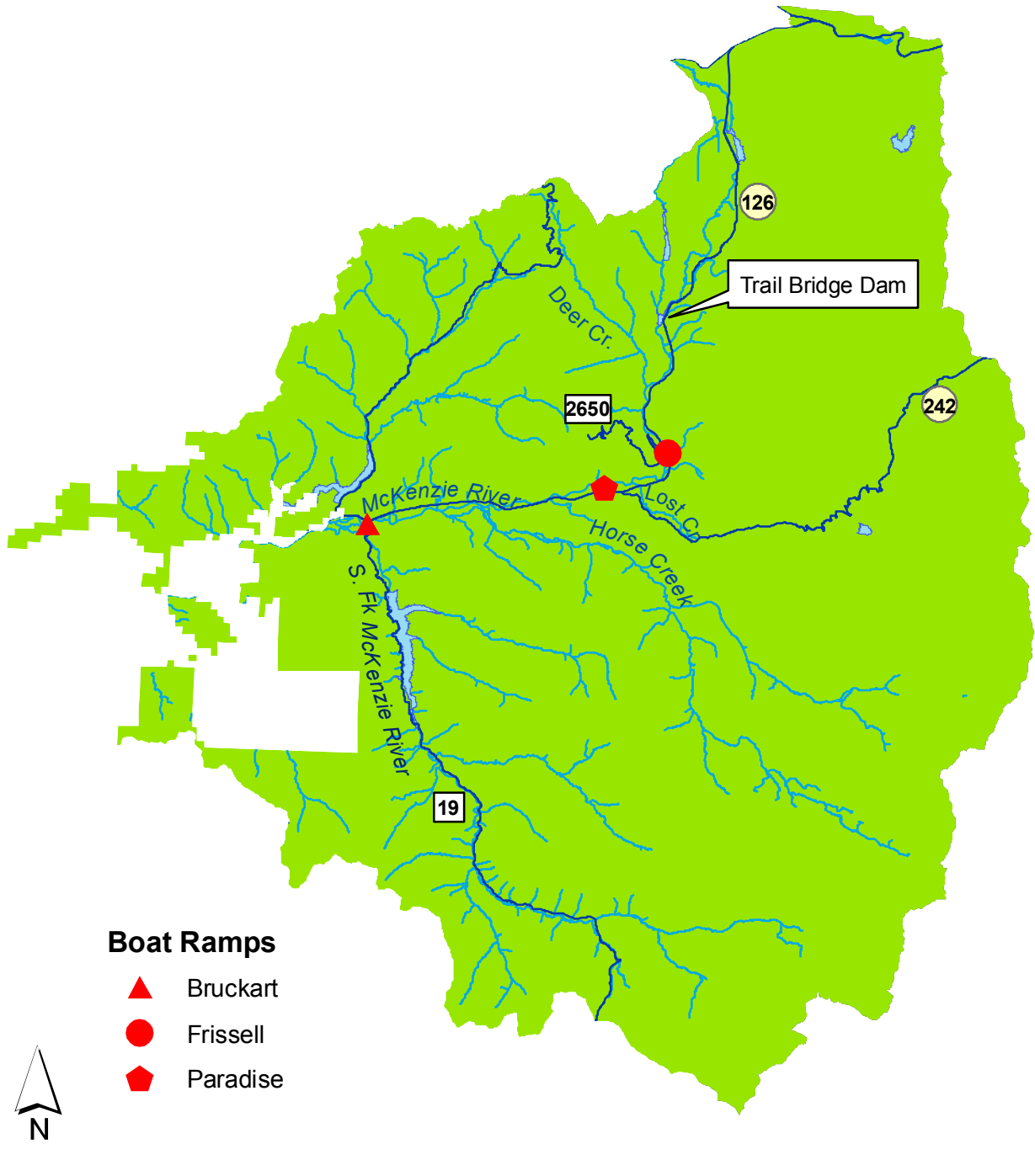


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CHAPTER 1. PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

Document Structure ---

The Forest Service has prepared this Environmental Assessment in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other relevant Federal and State laws and regulations. This Environmental Assessment discloses the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts that would result from the proposed action and the two other alternatives. The document is organized into four parts:

- *Purpose and Need for Action:* The section includes information on the history of the project proposal, the purpose of and need for the project, and the agency’s proposal for achieving that purpose and need. This section also details how the Forest Service informed the public of the proposal and how the public responded.
- *Comparison of Alternatives, including the Proposed Action:* This section provides a more detailed description of the agency’s proposed action as well as alternative methods for achieving the stated purpose. These alternatives were developed based on significant issues raised by the public and other agencies. This discussion also includes design measures and mitigation measures. Finally, this section provides a summary table of the environmental consequences associated with each alternative.
- *Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences:* This section describes the environmental effects of implementing the proposed action and other alternatives. This analysis is organized by resource area. Within each section, the affected environment is described first, followed by the effects of the No Action Alternative that provides a baseline for evaluation and comparison of the other alternatives that follow.
- *Other Governments, Agencies, and Persons Consulted:* This section provides a list of agencies and other governments consulted during the development of the environmental assessment. It also includes mailing list for public scoping, and the list of document preparers.
- *Appendices:* The appendices provide more detailed information to support the analyses presented in the environmental assessment.

Additional documentation, including detailed analyses of project-area resources, may be found in the project planning record located at the McKenzie River Ranger District Office in McKenzie Bridge, Oregon.

Introduction

The McKenzie River is an important and valuable river to Oregon in terms of challenge to the skills of whitewater rafters, kayakers, and drift boat users. The upper McKenzie River, from Olallie Campground to Bruckart Bridge, is popular for Recreationists from the Willamette Valley and Central Oregon. Oregon state law prohibits any motorized boating on the upper McKenzie River. Frissell, Paradise and Bruckart boat launches on this section of river receive moderate to heavy seasonal use and are the subject of this analysis (see Figure 2).

Information collected during calendar year 2005 indicates that Paradise Boat Launch served 6,566 clients of commercial trips and 331 non-commercial clients; Frissell Boat Launch served 2,509 commercial clients and 190 non-commercial clients; while Bruckart Boat Launch served 3,861 commercial clients and 184 non-commercial clients. There were a total of 2,250 commercial crafts using these three launches and 302 non-commercial crafts. Information on commercial use is obtained through McKenzie River Ranger District records for the special use permits holders operating as outfitter/guides. Non-commercial use is determined by a voluntary boater registration card system.

Frissell Boat Launch, the most upstream of the three sites, is located within the upper McKenzie River National Wild and Scenic River and Oregon State Scenic Waterway corridors. It is on river left (looking downstream), and just upstream of the Frissell-Carpenter bridge (or Buck Bridge) and is adjacent to Oregon State Highway 126 – a National Scenic Byway in this location. The boat ramp is steep and comprised of loose gravels with buttress logs, and is oriented at a perpendicular angle to the river where boats launch into fast water.

Paradise Boat Launch, located in the Paradise Campground and which is a day use complex, lies within the Oregon State Scenic Waterway corridor, but not in the Upper McKenzie National Wild and Scenic River corridor. The boat launch is located on river left (looking downstream) and is comprised of compacted gravels with a paved approach. The launch is located at the downstream end of a cobble bar and is oriented at a perpendicular angle to the river where boats launch into slow water.

Bruckart Boat Launch is the furthest downstream of the three sites and is located approximately 500 feet upstream of Bruckart Bridge on Forest Road 19. The launch site is adjacent to Oregon State Highway 126, which is within a National Scenic Byway in this location. The boat ramp is on river right (looking downstream) and is considered steep. The ramp is comprised of deteriorating concrete pads and loose gravel, and it is oriented at a perpendicular angle to the river where boats launch into fast water.

This project was initiated because of deteriorating conditions at these three ramps. Other concerns included the steepness of the angle with which boats launch into the river, and the need to improve access to each of the boat launches. In addition, uncertainties about the long term navigability of the McKenzie River through a perennial log jam located downstream of Bruckart Bridge is also an important factor in assessing the suitability of the Bruckart Boat Launch.

In 2003, funds were provided through the Secure Rural Schools Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, to conduct an assessment of Frissell, Paradise, and Bruckart boat launches and to determine the effects of reconstructing or relocating these sites.

Legal description of the project: T.16S., R.6E., Sec. 1, (Frissell Boat Launch); T.16S., R.6E., Sec. 9, (Paradise Boat Launch); and T.16S., R.6E., Sec. 18, (Bruckart Boat Launch); Willamette Meridian; Lane County, Oregon.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose and need for action for this initiative is to meet direction in the amended 1990 Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (USDA Forest Service, 1990), to provide and maintain opportunities for river-oriented recreation activities on the upper McKenzie River. The Willamette Forest Plan recognizes the need to provide access to the river in the form of boat launch facilities for whitewater rafting, kayaking, and drift boating in. (See *Relationship to the Willamette Forest Plan* in this chapter.)

Frissell, Paradise and Bruckart launch facilities do not currently provide the level of developed recreation opportunities that is commensurate with projected need (Forest-wide Standards and Guideline, FW-006). Peak season boat launch use at these developed sites often results in over-crowded ramp areas, inadequate access roads and approaches to the ramps, and lack of vehicle parking. Large groups, primarily associated by permitted river outfitter-guides under Forest Service special-use permits, place a heavy demand on these launch sites in the summer.

The boat ramps are in need of repair or relocation to meet projected needs. Since the boat ramps are constructed with mostly compacted gravel and have slopes into the river in excess of 15%, unstable conditions exist for both pedestrians and vehicles attempting to launch inflatable rafts and drift boats. Each year, fluctuations in river levels and flow removes gravel at all three ramps, and specific to Bruckart ramp, also erodes the gravel around concrete and asphalt ramp additions. The ramps typically require annual maintenance to replace gravel, particularly at Frissell and Bruckart, which are more exposed to the main current of the McKenzie River.

Frissell Boat Launch has been identified for relocation and improvement in the Upper McKenzie River Management Plan (USDA Forest Service, 1992). This plan, which amended the Willamette Forest Plan in 1992, includes a set of actions designed to resolve issues and help attain the desired future condition for the upper McKenzie River. The Plan identifies the need to develop a Capital Investment Program proposal for Buck Bridge dispersed recreation area (including Frissell launch), which would include re-establishment of restroom facilities, consideration of building a new boat launch on the west side of the McKenzie River, and closing the boat launch on the east side (on Oregon State Highway 126).

Proposed Action

In response to the need for action, the District Ranger of the McKenzie River Ranger District proposes to relocate boat launches at Frissell and Bruckart launch sites, and reconstruct the existing boat launch at Paradise. This proposed action is represented as Alternative 2 in this assessment, and it satisfies the need to provide and maintain opportunities for river-oriented recreation activities on the upper McKenzie River, as directed by the amended Willamette Forest Plan.

Actions Specific to Frissell Boat Launch

- Relocate by constructing a new launch site on river-right, across the McKenzie River from the existing site and downstream from the Frissell-Carpenter Bridge (see Appendix F, Figure 3). A new pre-fabricated concrete ramp would be installed measuring approximately 16 feet wide by 40 feet long (640 square feet). The ramp would extend into the river approximately 10 to 15 feet. Approximately 12 to 20 red alder trees would be felled. These red alders would be spread in the floodplain to serve as down woody material where it is feasible to do so without creating greater disturbance.
- Construct a new paved access road with a loop at the ramp, a staging area along the road, and a concrete pad to seasonally locate portable toilets on (see Appendix F, Figure 4). The new road would require felling and removal of approximately 52 conifer trees and 4 hardwoods, which would be decked and used for in-stream fish habitat or spread in the riparian reserve to serve as down woody material where it is feasible to do so without creating greater disturbance.
- Improve two pull outs along Forest Road 2650 to provide parking for vehicles and trailers. Improvements would include blading the existing shoulders to ensure proper drainage and safety, conducting some brushing, and adding aggregate.
- Decommission the existing boat launch on river-left and restore the river bank and a portion of the terrace. The existing buttress logs and cable would be removed from the site. A portion of the existing pull-out access would remain for motor vehicles along State Highway 126 (see Appendix F, Figure 5). The existing boat launch and pullout area are along the Santiam Pass-McKenzie Pass National Scenic Byway. The decommissioned boat ramp location and a portion of the highway pullout would be restored by shaping a berm to divert or contain runoff and seeding with native grasses. The large pull out would be rehabilitated by importing topsoil and re-shaping the surface.

Actions Specific to Paradise Boat Launch

- Install a new pre-fabricated concrete ramp at the existing ramp site that is wide enough to serve as two ramps (see Appendix F, Figures 6 and 7). The ramps would measure approximately 40 feet by 32 feet (1,280 square feet) and would extend into the river approximately 10 to 15 feet. Connect the existing approach road to the concrete ramp with new asphalt apron (approximately 710 square feet of new pavement). Relocate approximately 20 small boulders (16 inches to 24 inches in diameter) that would block use of the extended ramp width during low flow months.

- Pave an additional 130 feet of road-side parking in the day-use area near the ramp. The proposed location is currently unpaved native surface, and used by the public for parking.
- Designate an additional staging area adjacent to the launch area at a historic camp site established by the CCC with signing.
- Improve an existing user trail within the bank-full width of the river, adjacent to and downstream from the boat ramp. The trail is used to facilitate unloading large groups during “take out” activities. Actions include moving one 20” log and minor brush cutting.

Actions Specific to Bruckart Boat Launch

- Relocate by constructing a new launch site on the same side of the river (river-right) downstream from Bruckart Bridge (see Appendix F, Figure 8). A new pre-fabricated concrete ramp would be installed measuring approximately 16 feet wide by 40 feet in length (640 square feet). The ramp would extend into the river approximately 10 to 15 feet. Approximately 12 to 20 red alder trees would be felled. The cut alders would be spread in the floodplain to serve as down woody material where it is feasible to do so without creating greater disturbance.
- Construct a new paved access road with a loop at the ramp, including turnouts, parking stalls, a staging area, and concrete toilet pad to seasonally locate portable toilets on at the new site (see Appendix F, Figure 9). The construction of an access and loop road, staging area, and toilet pad would require the felling of approximately 47 conifers and numerous vine maple. Those trees that are suitable for fish habitat enhancement projects would be staged in a location separate from the new launch location and used in future projects. Those trees that were not suitable would be spread out in the terrace area to serve as down woody material where it is feasible to do so without creating greater disturbance. All stumps would be flush cut.
- Provide additional parking along Forest Road 19 by widening the shoulders. Fill material would be required to widen the shoulders prior to paving. One parking area would be 90 feet long by 10 feet wide (900 square feet), and the other would be 150 long by 10 feet wide (1,500 square feet) on the opposite side of Road 19 (2,400 square feet in total).
- Decommission the existing boat launch site and an existing native surfaced road that connects Bruckart landing to Forest Road 19 (see Appendix F, Figure 10). Decommissioning would include scarifying 2 to 4 inches deep and seeding with native grasses.

Decision Framework

The Responsible Official for this proposal is the McKenzie River District Ranger. While considering the purpose and need to provide and maintain opportunities for river-oriented recreation activities on the upper McKenzie River, as directed by the amended Willamette Forest Plan, the responsible official shall review the proposed action and the other alternative actions, and may decide to:

- select the proposed action, or
- select another action alternative that has been considered in detail, or
- modify an action alternative, or
- select the no-action alternative.

The Responsible Official would also determine if the selected alternative is consistent with the Willamette Forest Plan or if the Forest Plan should be amended in this action.

Relationship to the Forest Plan

In April 1994, the Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, (USDA Forest Service, 1990) was amended by the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Spotted Owl, April 1994 (USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management, 1994). The Northwest Forest Plan modified the Willamette Forest Plan by overlaying management areas and their accompanying standards and guidelines.

In order to eliminate repetition and focus on site-specific analysis, this EA is tiered to the following documents as permitted by 40 CFR 1502.20:

- The Willamette National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) FEIS and Record of Decision (ROD) dated July 31, 1990, and all subsequent NEPA analysis for amendments, including the April 1994, Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Spotted Owl, or Northwest Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service and USDI Bureau of Land Management, 1994), and the accompanying Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended. The Forest Plan guides all natural resource management activities and establishes management standards and guidelines for the Willamette National Forest. It describes resource management practices, levels of resource production and management, and the availability and suitability of lands for resource management.
- This EA also tiers to a recent broader scale analysis for invasive plants (the Pacific Northwest Region Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Invasive Plant Program, 2005, hereby referred to as the R6 2005 FEIS) (USDA Forest Service, 2005). The R6 2005 FEIS culminated in a Record of Decision (R6 2005 ROD) that amended the Willamette National Forest Plan by adding management direction relative to invasive plants. This project is intended to comply with the new management direction. Proposed actions would also incorporate measures contained in the December 1988, Record of Decision and FEIS for Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation, and the requirements of the Mediated Agreement, signed May 24, 1989 by USFS, NCAP, OFS, et al.

The Willamette Forest Plan includes the following resource management goals, which are the basis for Forest management. The following are pertinent to recreation:

- Meeting the goals and objectives of the National Recreation Strategy.
- Maintaining and protecting existing and potential recreation sites, consistent with public demand, through operation, maintenance, and rehabilitation activities.
- Providing for distribution of a broad spectrum of developed recreation opportunities and experiences consistent with Forest use patterns and public demand.
- Providing for the protection, management and, where practicable, enhancement of the “outstandingly remarkable values” of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers.

Watershed Analysis

Two watershed analyses have been conducted in the project areas to meet direction in the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan. These analyses develop and document a scientifically-based understanding of the processes and interactions occurring within the Upper McKenzie Watershed and Quartz Creek and Minor Tributaries Watershed (see Appendix F, Figure 11).

Frissell and Paradise Boat Launches are in the Upper McKenzie Watershed. The Upper McKenzie Watershed Analysis was completed in August 1995. Bruckart Boat Launch lies within the Quartz Creek and Minor Tributaries watershed. The Quartz Creek and Minor Tributaries Watershed Analysis was completed in April 1998.

Key Watersheds

Key Watersheds are not a designated management area, but overlay all management areas. All 24.455 million acres of Forest Service, BLM, and other federally-administered lands within the range of the northern spotted owl are also allocated into one of three watershed categories: Tier 1 Key Watersheds, Tier 2 Key Watersheds, or non-Key Watersheds (all others). Key Watersheds overlay portions of all six categories of designated areas and matrix found in the Northwest Forest Plan Record of Decision. In Key Watershed areas additional management requirements are placed on activities.

Key Watersheds contribute directly to conservation of at-risk anadromous salmonids, bull trout, and resident fish species. They also have a high potential of being restored as part of a watershed restoration program.

Frissell Boat Launch lies within the Upper McKenzie River Tier 1 Key Watershed. Both Paradise and Bruckart launches are within non-Key Watersheds. The new road construction proposed for Frissell Boat Launch would add approximately 0.1 mile of new road construction in this Key Watershed. Since 1994, other projects have cumulatively decommissioned approximately 11.14 miles of road in the Upper McKenzie Watershed, a majority of which was done with the Robinson-Scott Landscape Management Project. The total mileage of already decommissioned roads is enough to offset 0.1 mile of new road

construction at Frissell Boat Launch to meet the “No Net Increase” in roads in this Key Watershed as directed by the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan ROD (B-19).

Management Areas

Management Areas (MAs) are units of land with boundaries that can be located on the ground, each having specific direction for management as detailed in the Forest Plan. Management Area direction consists of an emphasis statement, goals, desired future condition, and a description of Standards and Guidelines. In addition, the Forest Plan contains Forest-wide standards and guidelines that apply to all management areas unless specifically exempted by Management Area direction.

The table below displays Willamette Forest Plan Management Areas and Northwest Forest Plan Land Allocations that are within the boat launch project action areas. Action areas are those sites where proposed activities could take place, or sites designated for fueling or fuel storage. The following table displays Management Area designations in the 1990 Willamette Forest Plan, and the overlying designations from the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan.

Table 1. Management Areas within the McKenzie River Boat Launch Project

Willamette Forest Plan Management Areas	Northwest Forest Plan Management Areas	Boat Launches
MA-5a – McKenzie River Special Interest Area (SIA)	Administratively Withdrawn	Bruckart, Paradise
MA-6d – McKenzie River Wild & Scenic River (Recreation Classification)	Congressionally Reserved	Frissell
MA-11a – Scenic (Modification Middleground)	Matrix	Bruckart
MA-11f – Scenic (Retention Foreground)	Matrix	Paradise
MA-14a – General Forest	Matrix	Frissell
MA-15 – Riparian Area	Riparian Reserve	Bruckart, Frissell, Paradise
MA-17 – Adaptive Management Area	Adaptive Management Area	Bruckart, Frissell, Paradise

MA-5a, McKenzie River Special Interest Area (SIA)

The goals of this Management Area are to preserve lands in Special Interest Areas that contain exceptional scenic, cultural, biological, geological or other unusual characteristics; and to foster public use and enjoyment in selected SIAs through facility development.

Special Interest Area development activities could include roads, trails, trailheads, sanitation facilities, interpretive signing, or others as appropriate. Bruckart Boat Launch is within MA-5a.

MA-6d, Designated Wild and Scenic River – Upper McKenzie River

The McKenzie River is designated as a Wild and Scenic River (WSR) with a “Recreation” River Class, because it possesses numerous outstandingly remarkable values (ORV) such as: prominent recreational

opportunities, spectacular scenery, unique geological and hydrologic attributes, outstanding water quality, and diverse fish populations and habitat. In 1992, the Upper McKenzie River Management Plan and accompanying Environmental Assessment was completed to comply with law established by the 1968 National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This comprehensive River Management Plan tiered to the 1990 Willamette Forest Plan.

In 1988, the upper McKenzie River was designated as Wild and Scenic from Clear Lake to Scott Creek, a 12.7 mile stretch. The upper terminus is established where the McKenzie River flows out of Clear Lake. The lower terminus is at the confluence of Scott Creek and the McKenzie River. The McKenzie River is divided into three WSR segments (A, B, and C) omitting the existing hydroelectric developments: Segment A is a 1.8 mile segment from Clear Lake to the head of maximum pool at Carmen Reservoir. Segment B is a 4.3 mile segment from a point 100 feet downstream from Carmen Dam to the maximum pool at Trail Bridge Reservoir. Segment C is a 6.6 mile segment from the developments at the base of the Trail Bridge Reservoir Dam to Scott Creek.

The legislation required the USDA Forest Service to develop a management plan for this designated river in three years. In 1992, the Willamette National Forest released the Upper McKenzie River Management Plan Environmental Assessment and Management Plan and Decision Notice (USDA Forest Service, 1992) to meet Federal and State laws and provide a guide to management of both the Federal and State designated portions of the McKenzie River. Federal management goals for this project can be found in the Upper McKenzie River Management Plan (1992). This project works toward meeting those goals by providing opportunities for a wide range of river-oriented recreation activities, and by striving for a balance of resource use and protection and permitting other activities to the extent that they protect and enhance the river's outstandingly remarkable values and special attributes.

The plan also included distinct actions designed to resolve the major issues identified and to help attain the desired future condition for the upper McKenzie River. One of the actions was the development of a Capital Investment Program proposal for Buck Bridge (Frissell) dispersed recreation area. As discussed in the Purpose and Need for action, proposals that were foreseen in that analysis include re-establishment of restroom facilities, consideration of building a new boat launch on the west side of the McKenzie River, and closing the boat launch on the east side (on Oregon State Highway 126).

Actions within this management area must protect the river's free flowing character and maintain and enhance its outstandingly remarkable values and special attributes.

The Frissell Boat Launch is located within Segment C of the Upper McKenzie Wild and Scenic River.

Oregon State Scenic Waterway

Segments of the McKenzie River within this project area are also within portions of the Oregon State Scenic Waterway, administered by the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission. The Scenic Waterway Act and Commission rules require the evaluation of proposed development within ¼ mile from

each side of the river. Concurrence of project effects with Oregon State Parks and Recreation Division is necessary through Section 7 Wild and Scenic River analysis. An analysis of potential project effects to the outstandingly remarkable values of the Wild and Scenic River (Section 7 Wild and Scenic River analysis) has been prepared for this project proposal.

The termini and boundaries of the State Scenic Waterway designation are different from the Federal Wild and Scenic McKenzie designation. Approximately 16 miles of the upper McKenzie are designated as State Scenic Waterway. The boundaries are ¼ mile on both sides of the river. The upper terminus is established where the McKenzie River flows out of Clear Lake. The State Scenic Waterway omits the stretch from Carmen Reservoir to Tamolitch Falls, and also omits the hydroelectric developments. The lower terminus is Paradise Campground. The State Scenic Waterway has three unnumbered segments. The first is 1.8 miles from Clear Lake downstream to Carmen Reservoir. The second is approximately 2 miles long from Tamolitch Falls to Trail Bridge Reservoir. Finally, the third segment is approximately 12 miles long from Trail Bridge Dam downstream to Paradise Campground. The segments have a dual classification. The west side of the McKenzie River is classified as Scenic River Area, and the east side of the river is classified as Recreation River Area.

Goals of the State Scenic Waterway Program for this project can be found in the Upper McKenzie River Management Plan (1992). The following are those that are directly applicable to this project:

- To protect the free flowing character of designated rivers for fish, wildlife, and recreation.
- To protect and enhance the scenic, aesthetic, natural, recreation, scientific, and fish and wildlife values along scenic waterways. New development or changes of existing uses proposed within a scenic waterway are reviewed before they may take place.

Frissell and Paradise Boat Launches both lie within the Oregon State Scenic Waterway. In the proposed action, Frissell is relocated to the west side of the river (Scenic River classification). In Alternative 3, Frissell remains on the east side of the river (Recreation River classification). Paradise Boat Launch remains in its current location in both action alternatives (Recreation River classification). Bruckart Boat Launch is not located within either the federal Upper McKenzie Wild and Scenic River corridor or the Oregon State Scenic Waterway.

MA-11a Scenic (Modification Middleground)

The goal of this management area is to create and maintain desired visual characteristics of the forest landscape through time and space. Visually sensitive landscapes will be managed for a modest level of scenic quality. This area will also be managed for other resource goals including timber production, recreation opportunities, watershed protection, and maintenance of wildlife habitat.

MA-11f Scenic (Retention Foreground)

The goal of this management area is to create and maintain desired visual characteristics of the forest landscape through time and space. Visually sensitive landscapes will be managed for a high level of scenic quality. This area will also be managed for other resource goals including maintenance of wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, watershed protection, and timber production.

MA-14 General Forest / Matrix

The primary goal of this management area is to produce an optimum and sustainable yield of timber based on the growth potential of the land that is compatible with multiple use objectives and meets environmental requirements for soil, water, air and wildlife habitat quality. In addition this area can provide many opportunities for public use and enjoyment.

MA-15 Riparian Area / Riparian Reserves

The primary goal in this management area is to maintain the role and function of rivers, streams, wetlands, and lakes in the landscape ecology. Riparian Reserves are one of the six designated management areas identified in the Northwest Forest Plan.

Riparian Reserves usually include at least the water body, inner gorges, all riparian vegetation, 100-year floodplain, landslides, and landslide-prone areas. Reserve widths are based on some multiple of a site-potential tree, or a prescribed slope distance, whichever is greater. Reserve widths may be adjusted based on watershed analysis to meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS) objectives from the Northwest Forest Plan. The ACS was developed to restore and maintain the ecological health of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems on public lands by maintaining and restoring ecosystem health at watershed and landscape scales. The intent is to protect habitat for fish and other riparian-dependent species and to restore currently degraded habitats.

Frissell, Paradise, and Bruckart boat launches are within riparian reserves. The proposed relocation areas in the proposed action also include riparian reserves.

MA-17 Central Cascades Adaptive Management Area

Adaptive Management Areas (AMAs) are landscape units designated to encourage the development and testing of technical and social approaches to achieving desired ecological, economic, and other social objectives. The overall objective for AMAs is to learn how to manage on an ecosystem basis in terms of both technical and social challenges, and in a manner consistent with applicable laws.

The specific emphasis for the Central Cascades AMA are intensive research on forest management in experiments and demonstrations at the stand and watershed level; approaches for integrating forest and stream management objectives and on implications of natural disturbance regimes; and management of young and mature stands to accelerate development of late-successional conditions. Bruckart Boat launch is within the Central Cascades AMA.

Issue Development

Scoping and Public Involvement

Scoping is the process for determining issues relating to a proposed action and includes review of written comments, distribution of information about the project, interdisciplinary Team (IDT) meetings, and local news releases.

The Project was initiated in January 2003 and was listed in the spring 2003 issue of the Willamette Forest Focus--the quarterly schedule of proposed actions (SOPA) for the Willamette National Forest. Information on the project appeared in the local McKenzie River newspaper, The River Reflections, on February 12, 2003. The information appeared in the Register-Guard Discovery Magazine (May 22, 2003) requesting public input. Scoping letters were sent to interested parties including the Tribal Governments on February, 10, 2003 and May 29, 2003. A field trip was held for the public on Saturday, September 20, 2003 to review proposals and visit the launch locations. Several comments were received from letters during scoping and as a result of the field trip. These comments contributed to the design of the proposed action and to Alternative 3. Interdisciplinary Team responses to comments are found in Appendix G.

Significant Issues

Forest Service regulations (1950, chapter 11(3)) require that issues that are not significant to the project or that have been covered by prior environmental review be identified and eliminated from detailed study. Discussion of these issues should be limited to a brief statement of why they will not have a significant effect on the human environment or a reference to their coverage elsewhere. The issues will be listed as “Significant Issues,” and “Other Issues”.

The public and IDT identified many issues. The responsible official considered these pertinent issues and determined which are significant to the project. The following Significant Issues drove the development of an alternative to the proposed action. The Significant Issues are tracked through issue identification (in this chapter), alternative description in Chapter 2, and environmental consequences in Chapter 3.

Recreation Capacity

Issue: The design of the launch facilities may affect the number of people and number of crafts that can be accommodated at each site at one time, and the amount of crowding that occurs at each facility.

Unit of Measure: Qualitative. The effects are based on the degree to which the alternatives affect the number of people and number of crafts that can be accommodated at the site at one time. Factors considered when assessing each of the alternatives included degree of crowding at each facility, amount of vehicle parking area available at each launch site, amount of staging area space available at each launch

site, and numbers of people and craft accommodated.

Safety and Access

Issue: High velocity river flows at Frissell and Bruckart sites make it hazardous to launch or land at these facilities.

Unit of Measure: Qualitative description of river velocity in the immediate area of the launch and proposed locations. A qualitative estimate is needed due to safety considerations. Velocities will be described qualitatively in the immediate vicinity of existing ramps and proposed relocation sites.

Issue: The steep condition of the ramps at Frissell and Bruckart make it hazardous for people to access the boats.

Unit of Measure: grade of ramp, location of ramp, and surface type of ramp existing ramps in relation to proposed designs.

Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive (TES) Fish, and Management Indicator Species (MIS) Fish

Issue: The location of boat ramps could affect some life history stages of TES and MIS fish, and migratory, spawning, or rearing habitat.

Unit of Measure: Qualitative. Describe the quality of migratory, spawning, and rearing habitat of TES listed fish species (spring Chinook salmon and bull trout) and fisheries MIS (rainbow and Coastal cutthroat trout) in current locations and proposed relocation sites, and qualitatively describe the effects of project implementation.

Other Issues: _____

These *other issues* were addressed in project development. The issue statements below are followed by reasons why they were not considered significant to the development of alternatives and not fully analyzed. However, they may serve as important tools that are used to qualitatively evaluate differences between alternatives.

Vehicle Capacity and Design

The design of the boat launches and the staging areas may affect the types of watercraft that can be accommodated at each site at the number of launches that may occur at one time. This issue was not considered significant for the development of alternatives because the proposed action and the other action alternative are designed to accommodate the types of craft currently using the facilities.

In addition, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) provided input to the project during a field trip to Frissell and Bruckart launch sites on January 8, 2003. ODOT's design features are based on Oregon law and their input to re-designed turnout at Frissell Boat Launch is incorporated into Alternative 3.

Water Quality

The project could affect stream banks and beds, river dynamics, riparian and upland vegetation during boat launch site reconstruction, relocation, and rehabilitation activities. Stream temperatures could potentially be affected by the removal of riparian vegetation.

This issue was not considered significant to the formation of alternative because the effects on water quality from through disturbance would be short term and mitigation measures would limit effects on riparian resources (see Chapter 2, Mitigation Measures and Project Design Measures).

Heritage Resources

The proposed boat launch reconstruction, relocation, and rehabilitation activities could potentially affect heritage resources in the immediate vicinity.

Surveys of the proposed project area have been completed. No historic properties were identified. The Zone Archaeologist would evaluate any properties discovered during the course of project implementation for significance.

Noxious Weeds

The project poses a concern for the introduction of noxious weeds due to the ground disturbing nature of the activities.

Mitigation measures will be used to mitigate the potential introduction of noxious weeds (see Chapter 2, Mitigation and Project Design Measures.)

Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive, or Other Wildlife Species of Concern

The proposed action may have the potential to disturb TES wildlife species either directly affecting habitat or from disturbance during implementation.

This issue was not considered significant because any potential impacts to known TES wildlife species in the area can be avoided through mitigation such as survey and monitoring, and requiring seasonal restrictions during implementation (see Chapter 3, TES Wildlife).

Wildlife Management Indicator Species (MIS)

The proposed action may have the potential to disturb wildlife MIS species either directly affecting habitat or from disturbance during implementation.

This issue was not considered significant because any potential impacts to MIS wildlife species in the area can be avoided through survey and monitoring and mitigation requiring seasonal restrictions during implementation. (see Chapter 3, TES Wildlife).

Wild and Scenic River and State Scenic Waterway

The proposed action could affect the outstandingly remarkable values and attributes within designated river segments. This issue was not considered significant because a Section 7, Wild and Scenic Rivers Act analysis has been completed, and it determined that the proposed actions would not diminish the outstanding remarkable values and attributes for which the upper McKenzie River segment was designated (see Appendix E).

West Cascades and Santiam Pass – McKenzie Pass National Scenic Byways

Both Frissell Boat launch and Bruckart Boat Launch are currently situated along the West Cascades National Scenic Byway. Frissell Boat Launch is also along the Santiam Pass – McKenzie Pass National Scenic Byway, which coincides with the West Cascades Scenic Byway on this segment. In 1997, the West Cascades Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan was completed (USDA Forest Service. 1997).

One of the goals and objectives of the management plan is to coordinate management of public use sites to further protect and enhance natural and cultural resources, and to provide continuity of design. The proposed action would relocate both Frissell Boat Launch sites to the opposite side of the river from State Highway 126 but within view of the highway. Bruckart Boat Launch would be relocated away from State Highway 126, but within view from Forest road 19, also along the West Cascades National Scenic Byway. The design of these new boat ramps has been done to retain native vegetation and to be consistent with Willamette Forest Plan standards and guidelines for development of recreation sites.

Relocating the launch facilities includes actions to restore the existing boat ramps and parking areas. Design features have been incorporated enhancement measures protect scenic quality along the frontage view of the Scenic Byway. (See Chapter 2 and 3 for details.)

