



File Code: 2370-CD-07-01-G

Date: April 27, 2007

James R. Clapp, Refuge Manager  
Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge  
PO Box 1136  
Washougal, Washington 98671

Mr. Clapp:

As you know, the US Fish and Wildlife Service is required to be consistent with the purposes of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act as determined by the Forest Service pursuant to Section 14(d) of the Act. A consistency review application was received by this office requesting a new service road in the Open Space land use designation portion of the refuge. This one-lane gravel road would begin at an existing gated entrance currently overgrown with blackberries into the refuge from SR 14. Off of SR 14, a turn-around area would be constructed by removing blackberries and placing gravel in a Y shape measuring about 20 feet wide by 100 feet in length at each section of the Y. This space is required to safely transport the refuge excavator, which is periodically required to clean out the beaver mud and debris at a water control structure. The road and turn-around were proposed as non-ground disturbing and would become re-grown with grass.

We received your amended application on April 10, 2007. This amendment withdrew the road portion of the proposal. This consistency determination, therefore, is relevant only to the turn-around.

I find that the gravel placement for a turn-around and re-setting of an existing gate is consistent with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) Management Plan provided that it is implemented as described in the CRGNSA Consistency Determination Findings of Fact, referenced as CD-07-01-G, and the following conditions are applied:

1. The color of the gravel shall be dark earth-tones found at the specific site or the surrounding landscape.
2. The gate shall be placed at the edge of the existing bank vegetation.
3. Retain all vegetation directly adjacent to and providing screening for the turn-around area.
4. Native shrubs shall be planted at both ends of the reset gate and shall be at least one-gallon size.
5. All materials shall be are non-reflective or of low reflectivity. The gate shall be painted a flat black.
6. If any historic or prehistoric cultural resources are uncovered during project activities, work shall cease and the CRGNSA archeologist shall be notified. The Forest Service shall also notify the Washington State Historic Preservation Office and the Indian Tribal Governments within 24 hours if the resources are prehistoric or otherwise associated with Native American Indians.

**Implementation Date:** This project may begin immediately as long as it complies with the conditions as described in item 1-6 above. This decision expires on April 27, 2009. 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](mailto:dlross@fs.fed.us).

*/s/ Daniel T. Harkenrider*

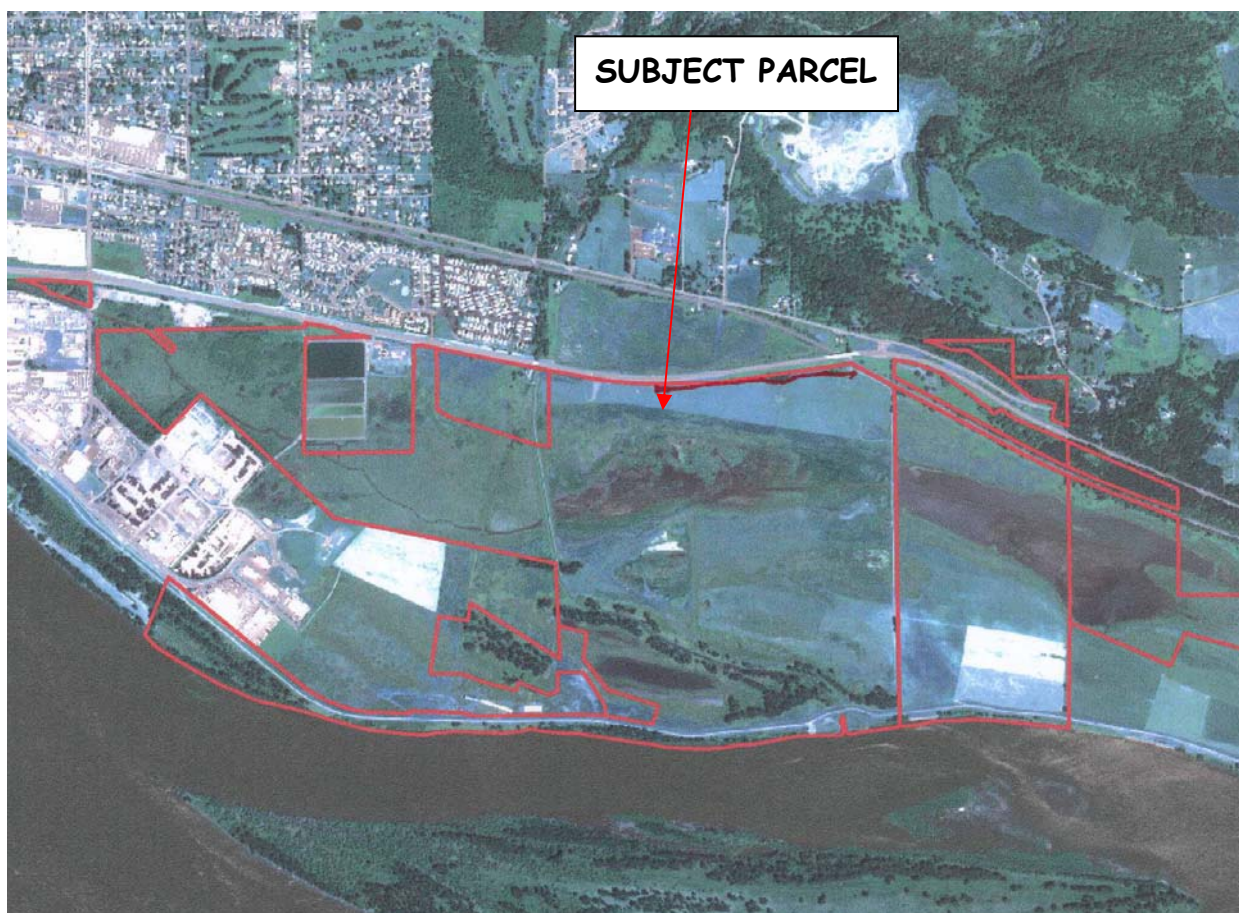
DANIEL T. HARKENRIDER  
Area Manager

Date: April 27, 2007

cc: Jill Arens,  
Columbia River Gorge Commission;  
Rick Till and Nathan Baker, Friends of the Columbia River Gorge

## FINDINGS OF FACT

<b>LANDOWNER:</b>	USA--USFW
<b>PROPOSED ACTION:</b>	Create a gravel turn-around near SR-14 for safety.
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Clark County, Washington. Township 1N, Range 4E, Section 49 Parcel ID: 132408 Quad 2 UTM: 553950 5046366
<b>NATIONAL SCENIC AREA DESIGNATION:</b>	General Management Area (GMA)
<b>LAND USE DESIGNATION:</b>	Open Space
<b>LANDSCAPE SETTING:</b>	River Bottomlands



## **FINDINGS OF FACT:**

The following findings of fact contain the applicable standards and guidelines from the CRGNSA Management Plan. The Management Plan, as revised and adopted in 2004, is in effect. The CRGNSA Management Plan standards and guidelines are displayed in **bold type**. The findings are displayed in regular type. Guidelines that are not applicable to this project as indicated as N/A or are not included.

### ***Public Comment***

The application was sent out for public comment in order to gather some insights into the issues surrounding the proposal since new roads are not an allowed use in Open Space. We received one comment letter in support of the project stressing its importance to safety. We also received a comment letter from Friends of the Columbia River Gorge (FOCG) on March 15, 2007 strongly indicating that the road should be denied. We suggested that USFW meet with FOCG to discuss the issues on-site. We received an amended application on April 10, 2007. This amendment withdrew the road portion of the proposal. These findings, therefore, are relevant only to the turn-around.

### ***A. Project Proposal***

Off of SR 14, a turn-around area would be constructed by removing blackberries and placing gravel in a Y shape measuring about 20 feet wide by 100 feet in length at each section of the Y. This space is required to safely transport the refuge excavator, which is periodically required to clean out the beaver mud and debris at a water control structure. The turn-around is proposed as non-ground disturbing and would become re-grown with grass.

### ***B. Land Use Designations***

The Management Plan, Part II, Chapter 3 (Open Space),GMA guidelines, states:

- 1. The following uses may be allowed on all lands designated Open Space, subject to compliance with guidelines for the protection of scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources:**

- D. Removal of timber, rocks or other materials for purposes of public safety and placement of structures for public safety.**

**Findings:** The current entry to the area of the refuge needing maintenance (a service road over the railroad) is being recalled by the railroad. There is a need for this turn-around in order to facilitate the safe movement of maintenance equipment from SR-14 to the refuge. SR-14 does not have a shoulder large enough in this area for large equipment to safely pull off or park by the road. Therefore, it is a use allowed under section 1.D. above.

## ***C. Scenic Resources***

The Management Plan, Part II, Chapter 1 (Scenic Resources), GMA guidelines, states:

### **KEY VIEWING AREAS**

**The guidelines in this section shall apply to proposed developments on sites topographically visible from key viewing areas.**

- 2. Each development shall be visually subordinate to its setting as seen from key viewing areas.**
- 3. Determination of potential visual effects and compliance with visual subordination policies shall include consideration of the cumulative effects of proposed developments.**
- 4. The extent and type of conditions applied to a proposed development to achieve visual subordination shall be proportionate to its potential visual impacts as seen from key viewing areas.**

**Findings:** The proposed turn-around is topographically visible, according to electronic viewshed analysis maps, in the foreground distance zone of SR-14, the middleground of the Historic Columbia River Highway, the middleground and background of I-84 and the background of Crown Point, Larch Mtn. and road, Portland Women's Forum, and Rooster Rock State Park. The overall visual impact of the existing development from key viewing area is low and it is expected that the new turn-around also be of low impact and visually subordinate to all of the middleground and background views due to distance and vegetative screening. Conditions are necessary to meet visual Off of SR 14, a turn-around area would be constructed by removing blackberries and placing gravel in a Y shape measuring about 20 feet wide by 100 feet in length at each section of the Y. This space is required to safely transport the refuge excavator, which is periodically required to clean out the beaver mud and debris at a water control structure. The road and turn-around were proposed as non-ground disturbing and would become re-grown with grass. The following conditions should be placed to meet visual subordination from the foreground of SR-14:

- The gravel placed should be dark earth tone in color such as basalt pit-run.
- The gate should be reset at the edge of the vegetative growth along the road and new native shrubs planted at both ends of the gate.
- The gate should be painted flat black.

No cumulative effects are expected due to the size and minimal impact of this project.

- 5. New development shall be sited to achieve visual subordination from key viewing areas...**
- 6. New development shall be sited using existing topography and/or existing vegetation as needed to achieve visual subordination from key viewing areas.**
- 7. Existing tree cover screening proposed development from key viewing areas shall be retained...**
- 8. The silhouette of new buildings shall remain below the skyline of a bluff, cliff, or ridge as seen from key viewing areas.**

**Findings:** See findings above for visual subordination from key viewing areas. The proposed project will not break the skyline from key viewing areas. It is located at a much lower elevation than the surrounding landscape from key viewing areas. The proposal requires the removal of some blackberries along SR-14. A condition should be placed requiring that all screening vegetation along the road adjacent to the new turn-around be retained and that new native shrubs are planted to replace the removed blackberries.

9. N/A

10. **The following guidelines shall apply to new landscaping used to screen development from key viewing areas-**

**Findings:** The proposal requires the planting of new native shrubs at the gate. A condition should be placed requiring that the shrubs planted be of at least the one gallon pot size to ensure that they reach mature height in five years and shall be planted at the time the gate is reset or the closest planting season to that time (fall or spring). The gate was sited to be screened by existing vegetation and topography from SR-14.

11. **Conditions regarding new landscaping or retention of existing vegetation for new developments on lands designated GMA Forest ...N/A**

12. **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 in 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.**

13. **The exterior of buildings on lands seen from key viewing areas shall be composed of nonreflective materials or materials with low reflectivity, unless the structure would be fully screened from all key viewing areas by existing topographic features... N/A**

14. **In addition to the site plan requirements in "Review Uses" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines), applications for all buildings visible from key viewing areas shall include a description of the proposed building(s)' height, shape, color, exterior building materials, exterior lighting, and landscaping details (type of plants used; number, size, locations of plantings; and any irrigation provisions or other measures to ensure the survival of landscaping planted for screening purposes).N/A**

**Findings:** A condition should be placed requiring that the colors correspond to the recommended colors from the Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook at page 18 and 19 as follows:

- The gravel placed should be dark earth tone in color such as basalt pit-run.
- The gate should be reset at the edge of the vegetative growth along the road and new native shrubs planted at both ends of the gate.
- The gate should be painted flat black (A-16 on page 19 of the handbook).

With conditions, the colors and materials will meet the guidelines.

15. **Mining N/A**

16. Exterior lighting shall be directed downward and sited, hooded, and shielded such that it is not highly visible from key viewing areas. Shielding and hooding materials shall be composed of non-reflective, opaque materials. N/A
17. Additions...N/A
18. Rehabilitation of or modifications to existing significant historic structures...N/A
19. New main lines... N/A
20. New communication facilities-N/A
21. New communications facilities-N/A
22. Overpasses-N/A
23. Except for water-dependent development and for water-related recreation development, development shall be set back 100 feet from the ordinary high water mark of the Columbia River below Bonneville Dam, and 100 feet from the normal pool elevation of the Columbia River above Bonneville Dam, unless the setback would render a property unbuildable. In such cases, variances to this guideline may be authorized.
24. New buildings shall not be permitted on lands visible from key viewing areas with slopes in excess of 30 percent...N/A
25. Driveways and buildings shall be designed and sited to minimize visibility of cut banks and fill slopes from key viewing areas.
26. All proposed structural development involving more than 200 cubic yards of grading on sites visible from key viewing areas shall include submittal of a grading plan...

**Findings:** The proposed turn-around is over 1,000 feet from the Columbia River. The turn-around will be placed where grading is not required.

- 27-30. Expansion of existing quarries and new production and/or development of mineral resources... N/A

## LANDSCAPE SETTINGS

### River Bottomlands

#### Design Guidelines

1. In portions of this setting visible from key viewing areas, the following guidelines shall be employed to achieve visual subordination for new development and expansion of existing development:
  - A. Except as is necessary for site development or safety purposes, existing tree cover screening the development from key viewing areas shall be retained.
  - B. At least half of any trees planted for screening purposes shall be species native to the River Bottomland setting. Public recreation developments are encouraged to maximize the percentage of planted screening vegetation native to this setting. Such species include black cottonwood, big leaf maple, red alder, Oregon white ash, Douglas-fir, western red cedar and western hemlock (west Gorge), and various native willow species.
  - C. At least one-quarter of any trees planted for screening purposes shall be coniferous for winter screening.

**Findings:** The proposal will use native plantings as proposed in the refuge management plan. Most of the existing vegetation will be retained. Additional screening at the gate will be shrubs native to the area, not trees. There are no trees in the immediate vicinity of the turn-around. With conditions, the project meets all scenic resource guidelines.

### ***D. Cultural Resources***

The Management Plan, Part II, Chapter 2 (Cultural Resources),GMA guidelines, states:

1. **New developments or land uses shall not adversely affect significant cultural resources.**
2. **Federal agencies shall follow steps 1 through 5 under guideline 4, below, for new developments or land uses on all federal lands, federally assisted projects, and forest practices.**
4. **Reviewing agencies shall use the following steps under 36 CFR 800 (4.9) for assessing potential effects to cultural resources.**

**Step 1: Literature Review and Consultation**

**Step 2: Field Inventory**

**Step 3: Evaluations of Significance**

**Step 4: Assessment of Effect**

**Step 5: Mitigation**

**Findings:** The cultural resources survey and report was completed on December 5, 2006 by Alex Bourdeau, USFW Cultural Resource Team. No sites were found.

A condition should be placed requiring that if any historic or prehistoric cultural resources are uncovered during project activities, work shall cease and the CRGNSA archeologist shall be notified. The Forest Service shall also notify the Washington State Historic Preservation Office and the Indian Tribal Governments within 24 hours if the resources are prehistoric or otherwise associated with Native American Indians.

With conditions, the project meets the cultural resources guidelines.

### ***E. Natural Resources***

The Management Plan, Part II, Chapter 3 (Natural Resources),GMA guidelines, states:

#### **WETLANDS, STREAMS, PONDS, LAKES, AND RIPARIAN AREAS WILDLIFE HABITAT, AND RARE PLANTS**

**Ensure that new uses do not adversely affect sensitive wildlife area and sites**

**Findings:** The turn-around is over 1,000 ft from the Columbia River and its wildlife habitat and is over 700 feet from the refuge wetlands. No plants other than blackberries and grass are in the vicinity. It over 1,000 feet from any mapped plant or wildlife sites. Joseph D. Engler, USFW wildlife biologist stated in his December 12, 2006 review of the project that “The pasture consists of non-native pasture grass, with scattered patches of Canada thistle and Himalayan blackberries...the proposed road will occur approximately at the toe of the SR 14 embankment along the northern edge of the pasture...infrequent use by refuge staff is anticipated to have minimal impact on the wildlife using this area.” He also states that the numbers of wildlife



species using the area are “relatively low and consist of opportunistic and relatively common species.” The project meets natural resource guidelines.

**NATURAL AREAS- N/A**

**Uses Allowed Outright for Lands Designated Agriculture—Special- N/A**

**Review Uses for Lands Designated Agriculture--Special N/A**

**Uses Prohibited on Lands Designated Agriculture--Special N/A**

**Range Conservation Plans N/A**

***F. Recreational Resources***

The Management Plan, Part II, Chapter 4 (Recreation Resources),GMA policy, states:

**Protect and enhance recreation resources**

**Findings:** This use will occur in the Open Space, rather than Recreation land use designation on the refuge. The use of the turn-around will occur intermittently and timed so as not to disturb any public use on the property, according to the applicant. Therefore, the project meets the intent of the policy to project recreation resources.

The Management Plan, Part II, Chapter 4 (Recreation Resources),GMA guidelines, states:

**4. Recreation Intensity Class 4 (High Intensity)**

**A. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Classes 1, 2, and 3.**

**1. Recreation Intensity Class 1 (Very Low Intensity)**

**L. Restrooms/comfort facilities-**

**Findings:** This is not a recreation project.

**Approval Criteria for Recreation Uses-N/A**

**Facility Design Guidelines for All Recreation Projects**

**1.-3.-N/A**

**4. Existing vegetation, particularly mature trees, shall be maintained to the maximum extent practicable, and used to screen parking areas and campsites from key viewing areas and satisfy requirements for perimeter and interior landscaped buffers.**

**5.-11.N/A**

**12. All structures shall be designed so that height, exterior colors, reflectivity, mass, and siting enable them to blend with and not noticeably contrast with their setting. N/A**

**13.-21-N/A**

**Findings:** This is not a recreation project.

***G. Conclusion***

The proposed gravel placement for a turn-around as described above for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, is consistent with the National Scenic Area Management Plan Policy and Guidelines provided they meet the criteria and conditions listed in the Findings of Fact and Consistency Determination.