

Deschutes & Ochoco National Forests Crooked River National Grassland

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SCHEDULE OF PROJECTS

PROJECT INFORMATION

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✦ **Forest Health, Fire, Fuels, Vegetation Management**

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✦ **Miscellaneous**

PLANS, ANALYSES, ASSESSMENTS

The Federal Highway Administration has entered into an agreement with the Ochoco National Forest and the Oregon Department of Transportation to improve the Bandit Spring Rest Area by installing a safe drinking water system. The project is funded under the Federal Highway Administration's Forest Highway Enhancement Program.

Summary of actions proposed:

▶ Evaluate Our Service

We welcome your comments on our service and your suggestions for improvement.

Forest

Deschutes National Forest

1001 SW Emkay Drive
Bend, OR 97702

(541) 383-5300

Ochoco National Forest

3160 N.E. 3rd Street
Prineville, OR 97754

(541) 416-6500

Crooked River National Grassland

813 S.W. Hwy. 97
Madras, OR 97741

(541) 475-9272



Location: Bandit Spring Rest Area is located in Section 36, T.12S., R.19E., approximately 25 miles northeast of Prineville, Oregon on U.S. Highway 26. The wayside comprises a parking lot west of highway 26 with two vault toilets.

Maintenance: The Rest Area is maintained by Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) under a Special Use Permit from the Forest Service and the proposed drinking water system will also be maintained by ODOT.

Decision: I have decided to enhance the Bandit Spring Well rest area by installing an all-season potable water system to replace the one removed in 1994. The system will include a well, a cistern, a submersible pump, pipe for the system, and a frost-free, self-closing faucet. After drilling is conducted to determine if water bearing zones are present and hydraulic properties productive, further study will ensue to determine whether solar or electrical energy will power the pump. In the meantime, the Forest Service will apply for the water right for the system.

Seating for relaxing outdoors will be provided on a low round stone masonry wall that complements the natural aesthetics.

Proposed Action Activities

The well and cistern will be positioned out of sight from the parking area. The estimated depth of the well is 120-350 feet with the cistern measuring approximately 8 feet by 12 feet and 5 feet deep. The cistern will be buried about two feet with excavation material mounded around the cistern and graded to facilitate drainage. The pipeline from well head to cistern and connection from cistern to faucet will be buried 30 inches deep. An estimated 125-200 feet of pipe will be needed from wellhead to cistern; an estimated 500 feet of pipe from cistern to faucet, with the majority of that pipe along the existing trail. An estimated 100-200 feet of pipe will also be installed downslope for drainage. After construction, the site will be re-seeded with complementary native vegetation obtained through a tested, weed free source.

Scoping and Public Involvement

The public involvement process for the Bandit Spring Well project was initiated on March 29, 2002 with the mailing of the scoping letter. Two written responses were received.

One commenter expressed an interest in site upgrade capabilities such as picnic tables, restrooms with flush toilets and pet exercising areas. This project does not preclude activities such as these in the future. The other respondent merely supported the proposed action.

The proposal was listed in the quarterly Schedule of Projects from the Spring 2002 edition through Fall 2003.

Background:

The Bandit Springs Rest Area in the Marks Creek Watershed is a popular site that for years, had a drinking fountain that dispensed potable water from Bandit Spring via a spring box and waterline system. This site is popular during the winter, since it is designated a Sno-Park under the State of Oregon's Winter Recreation Permit system.

However, in 1994, when the State water quality standards were raised, the drinking water at the site exceeded the minimum bacterial count. Thus, when ODOT modified the site to Americans with Disabilities Act specifications and

replaced the pit toilets, the drinking fountain had to be removed. Now, as proposed, traveling motorists, Nordic skiers and other forest recreationists could enjoy drinking water from the all-season, frost-free water faucet.



Reasons for categorically excluding the proposed action:

This action falls under Chapter 30-Categories of Actions Excluded from Documentation (40 CFR 1508.4) of Forest Service Handbook 1909.15-Environmental Policy and procedures Handbook: sub-section 31.1b Categories Established by the Chief. Category #3 relates to repair and maintenance of administrative sites. 31.2 (8) addresses short-term (one year or less) mineral, energy or geophysical investigations and incidental support activities that could require vehicle cross-country travel and fewer than one mile of low standard road.

No extraordinary circumstances were identified by the resource specialists

who analyzed this proposal. The site has been field reviewed and there are no steep slopes, highly erosive soils, floodplains, wetlands, municipal watersheds, congressionally designated areas, inventoried roadless areas, research natural areas, Native American religious, cultural or archeological sites present.

Botany

Surveys in or near the Bandit Spring Well project documented the Peck's mariposa lily (*Calochortus longebarbatus* Wats. Var. *peckii* Ownbey) as present. (1999 R-6 list). However, the location for the proposed water well is outside the *Calochortus* zone and not in the flood plain.



The surveys also indicate that habitat is present for these sensitive species:

- interior sedge (*Carex interior* Bailey)
- ascending moonwort (*Botrychium ascendens* W.H. Wagner)
- crenulate moonwort (*Botrychium crenulatum* W.H. Wagner)
- Mingan's moonwort (*Botrychium minganense* Vict.)
- mountain moonwort (*Botrychium montanum* W.H. Wagner)
- twin-spike moonwort (*Botrychium paradoxum* W.H. Wagner)
- pinnate moonwort (*Botrychium pinnatum* St. John).

Habitat for these species is generally non-forested, very moist to wet. This habitat would be avoided; thus, no impact is expected to any sensitive plant species.

Cultural Resources and Heritage

An inventory was taken in the project area and no sites were discovered that would be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Protection for the Oregon State Champion

On the wayside of the project site stands the Oregon State Champion lodge pole pine. (dbh 38.4") Mitigation employed will be to keep the disturbance two lengths of the tree's height away. Consequently, only the smaller roots would possibly be affected and the risk to the primary roots, the tree's life source, would be small.



Minerals and Geology

From a geologic perspective, there is a 50/50 probability that drilling at the current Bandit Spring water well will intersect water-yielding strata with productive yield. The lithology comprises landslide terrain, terminology describing the Clarno formation, but poses no threat. If water is located through drilling, it will be in the grey/green claystone within 200 to 300 feet of the surface at the Bandit Spring site, most likely within the first 60 feet; within the alluvium/sedimentary layers. Because this water to be found would be in an unconfined aquifer-meaning the aquifer is subject to direct

surface influence--it may be challenging to meet and maintain State water quality standards and daily water testing may be necessary.



Water Quality

Effects of exploratory drilling on water quality will be measured by sediment sources and delivery per feet of pipeline.

If water is located during drilling, the amount of groundwater withdrawn will be minimal. Normal use should be fewer than 500 gallons per day. Minimal water may be released from the faucet, and flow down the pipe if the faucet is propped open. Cumulative effects of the Bandit Spring Well will contribute to water volume already withdrawn by private wells in the vicinity--minor, compared to current domestic use.

During drilling, water will flow down the ditch line towards Highway 26. Straw weed-free hay bales and similar measures will be used to capture the drill fluids which will contain suspended sediment to minimize the effects. Overall, sediment and water generated during the drilling phase will be negligible.

Soils

For the most part, soil disturbance will be linear and will re-vegetate quickly by native on-site vegetation. Drainage from backfilled trench area will be dispersed by small waterbars. Topsoil will be removed and sidecast separately. Topsoil will be replaced after trenches are filled with subsoils. This method augments rapid recovery from seeds, organic matter, roots and soil fungus.



Rest Area at Bandit Spring Well

Findings of Consistency

This action is consistent with the Ochoco National Forest Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision signed August 1, 1989; suitability and vegetation management required by the National Forest Management Act (FSM 1922.41 and FSH 1909.12, Sec 5.3); the Inland Native Fish Strategy Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact 1995 (INFISH); and the Joint Aquatic and Terrestrial Programmatic Biological Assessment April 2001-April 2003, for Federal Lands within the Deschutes Basin Administered by the Bureau of Land Management Prineville Office and for Federal Lands Administered by the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forest, April 30, 2001.

This decision is not subject to an administrative review or appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.8.

For further information, contact Cathy Lund at the Ochoco National Forest, Lookout Mountain Ranger District, 3160 NE Third Street, Prineville, OR 97754. Phone: 541-416-6451. Or, contact Richard G. Foltz at the Oregon Department of Transportation 541-388-6220. You may also e-mail your comments to: comments-pacificnorthwest-ochoco@fs.fed.us

Arthur J. Currier
District Ranger

Dec. 31, 2003

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