

Decision Notice
& Finding of No Significant Impact
Pierre Lake Campground Improvement

USDA Forest Service
Three Rivers Ranger District, Colville National Forest
Stevens County, Washington
T36N, R37E, Section 5

Decision and Reasons for the Decision

Background

The proposed action is intended to bring Pierre Lake Campground into compliance with all current laws and regulations, and the Colville National Forest Plan and its amendments, and to provide a safe and user-friendly campground and road system. This action is needed, because the aging facilities require updating to reach compliance with current laws and regulations such as the Highway Safety Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-564), the Inland Native Fish Strategy (INFISH, 1995), the American Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Colville National Forest Noxious Weed Guidelines (2000). The proposed action responds to the goals and objectives outlined in the Colville National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1988), and the Recreation Site Facility Master Plan (2006), and helps move the project area towards desired conditions described there in.

The environmental assessment (EA) documents the analysis of the proposed action and no action alternatives.

Decision

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement proposed action and its modification which includes road and trail modification (construction and reconstruction); construction of a new picnic shelter, septic system and shoreline docks; and placement or relocation of barriers, gates, signs and picnic tables and fire rings (see figure 2 in EA, page 6). Included in this decision are all mitigations and monitoring requirements listed on page 9 of the EA. This project is expected to take place over multiple years and as funding allows (see EA page 13).

Modifications to the Proposed Action

A warning sign will be posted indicating that the southern section of campsites are not suitable for cars and trucks towing trailers, nor for large RVs.

Currently safety is the main concern at this location due to outdated road systems and an inability to control traffic flow. When compared to the no action alternative this alternative will

improve safety by upgrading site access and egress to meet current State Highway standards, improve line of site and traffic flow along roads within the site, and provide, through gates, a way to control site use patterns. Improvements at the campground will also allow for the presence of a campground host during peak user periods. This is expected to contribute toward improved safety, and reduced maintenance needs at the site. Additionally, improvements will bring the site into compliance with the Forest Plan INFISH objectives.

Other Alternatives Considered

Under the law (NEPA section 102(2)(E)) the Forest is directed to "study, develop and describe appropriate alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal which involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources." Because there were no significant issues identified, and no unresolved conflicts, alternatives (other than the No Action) were not developed nor considered.

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area. No road improvements, campground improvements or other activities would be implemented to accomplish project goals. Secondary trails and user created roads will continue to impact soil and vegetation in the campground, particularly in areas subject to INFISH requirements. No improvements to user safety would be made; road systems and parking will continue to be awkward and line of site along roads poor. Ingress and egress from the campground will continue to violate the State Highway Safety Act. There will be no increase in campground security because the site does not accommodate a campground host, and user access is difficult to control. Vandalism of vegetation and other facilities would remain as is or increase as conditions decline. Maintenance needs and costs will maintain or increase.

Public Involvement

The proposal was first listed on the Colville National Forest public website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/sopa/>) in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on 01/01/2007.

On March 19, 2007 letters were sent to the Chairs of the Kalispell Tribe of Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Spokane Tribe. This letter described the proposed action, location, and purpose and need. It met requirements of official consultation under Executive Order 13175. No response was received.

Legal notices of the opportunity to comment on this project were posted in the *Colville Statesman-Examiner* newspaper, the newspaper of record for this decision on April 4, 2007, and in the *Republic News Miner* on March 29, 2007. The legal notice

included a general description of the project, the project location, and purpose and need. It also described the comment process and gave contact information for interested parties. The legal notice in the *Colville Statesman-Examiner* began a 30-day comment period which ended May 4th, 2007.

Scoping letters were sent to eleven (11) local land owners in the project area, the Northeast Washington Forestry Coalition, The Lands Council, and Conservation Northwest, and Senator Bob Morton. These letters described in more detail, the project location, proposed actions, timelines and the comment procedure.

Two responses were received: (1) a phone call to Jean Lavell, the Colville National Forest West Zone Planning Leader, and (2) a visit to the Three Rivers District Office where the concerned party spoke with Carmen Nielsen, the Outdoor Recreation Planner in the West Zone planning area. Both parties were in support of the project, though some non-significant public concerns were identified (see following *Issues* section).

The EA was made available to the public March 24, 2008 through a posting in the legal section of the *Colville Statesman-Examiner* newspaper, the paper of record for the Three Rivers Ranger District. In addition, letters were sent to the two (2) parties who commented during scoping and to a third party who inquired about the project after seeing it in the paper. The latter party asked for and received an email copy of the EA to which they sent comments. The comment resulted a minor change to the Proposed Action (described above).

Finding of No Significant Impact

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 environmental effects is not biased by the beneficial effects of the action.
2. (Executive Order 12898) – This Order requires consideration of whether projects would disproportionately impact minority or low-income populations. This decision complies with this act. Public involvement occurred for the project, the results of which I have considered in this decision-making. Public involvement did not identify any adversely impacted local minority or low-income populations.
3. The project area is not currently included in a grazing allotment. There will be no effect to permittees or grazing management.

4. We have considerable experience with the types of activities to be implemented. The effects analysis shows the effects are not uncertain, and do not involve unique or unknown risk (see EA pages 10-14).
5. The action is not likely to establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects, because there are no significant effects (see EA pages 10-14).
6. This is not a major Federal action. It will have limited context and intensity (40 CFR 1508.27), individually or cumulatively, to the biological, physical, social or economic components of the human environment. It will have no adverse effect upon public health or safety, consumers, civil rights, minority groups and women, prime farm land, rangeland and forestland, roadless areas, or to old growth forest options (see EA page 13).
7. The action will have no significant adverse effect on objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, because the Preferred Alternative is an "Appendix B" undertaking. A qualified archaeologist or cultural resource technician must be present when new ground disturbing activity occurs (see EA page 12).
8. The action will not adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species act of 1973. A biological evaluation of the potential impact of the Proposed Action on threatened, endangered, and sensitive species was completed on July 6, 2007. The project has no effect to any federally listed species. This project could impact Common Loon nesting, though proposed timing of the activities, and coordination with the District Wildlife Biologist will reduce or eliminate potential negative effects to nesting loons. No other USDA Forest Service (Region 6) sensitive animal or plant species would be impacted.
9. The project would have no effect on congressionally designated areas such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas. The project is not located in an inventoried roadless area. The project would not be located in an existing or proposed research natural area.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

The action will not violate Federal, State, and local laws or requirements for the protection of the environment. This project complies with the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), Clean Water Act, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. The project is consistent with standards and guidelines in the Colville National Forest Land and Resources Management Plan (Forest Plan) as amended by the Regional Forester's forest Plan Amendments 1 and 2 (1993 and 1995) and INFISH (1995), and is tiered to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Forest Plan (1988). The Pierre Lake Campground project would take place in a developed site within Management Area 5, an area of Scenic/Timber emphasis. The Colville National Forest Plan states the management goal of this area is to provide a natural appearing foreground, middle and background along major

scenic travel routes while providing wood products. Under the Forest Plan, developed sites are allowed in this Management Area.

Implementation Date

If no appeals are filed within the 45-day time period, implementation of the decision may occur on, but not before, 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. When appeals are filed, implementation may occur on, but not before, the 15th business day following the date of the last appeal disposition.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 215. The appeal must be filed (regular mail, fax, email, hand-delivery, or express delivery) with the Appeal Deciding Officer, Rick Brazell, Forest Supervisor, Colville National Forest at 765 S Main, Colville WA 99114 or FAX to (509) 684-7280.

The office business hours for those submitting hand-delivered appeals are: 7:30am-4:30pm Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. Electronic appeals must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), or Word (.doc) to comments-pacificnorthwest-colville-threerivers@fs.fed.us. In cases where no identifiable name is attached to an electronic message, a verification of identity will be required. A scanned signature is one way to provide verification.

Appeals, including attachments, must be filed within 45 days from the publication date of this notice in the Colville *Statesman-Examiner*, the newspaper of record. Attachments received after the 45 day appeal period will not be considered. The publication date in the Colville *Statesman-Examiner*, newspaper of record, is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an appeal. Those wishing to appeal this decision should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. Individuals or organizations who submitted substantive comments during the comment period specified at 215.6 may appeal this decision. The notice of appeal must meet the appeal content requirements at 36 CFR 215.14.

Contact

For additional information concerning this decision or the Forest Service appeal process, contact Jean Lavell, West Zone Plannign Team Leader, Three Rivers Ranger District, 255 West 11th, Kettle Falls, WA 99141 and (509) 738-7700.

/s/ Fred L. Way
Fred L. Way
District Ranger
Three River Ranger District

May 6, 2008
Date

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD). To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (voice). TDD users can contact USDA through local relay or the Federal relay at (800) 877-8339 (TDD) or (866) 377-8642 (relay voice). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.