

DEC 14 1992

DECISION NOTICE  
and  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Spodue Mountain Electronic Site  
Forest Plan Amendment #4

USDA Forest Service  
Fremont National Forest  
Bly Ranger District  
Klamath County, Oregon

INTRODUCTION:

Pacific Power and Light Company (PP&L) has requested a special use permit to construct a communication facility on Spodue Mountain. The Forest Service agreed to accept their request as a proposed action and consider the environmental effects of the proposed activities. The Forest Service is, therefore, proposing to amend the Fremont National Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) to designate Spodue Mountain as an electronic site and issue a special use permit to PP&L to construct a microwave communication facility on Spodue Mountain.

The purpose for this action is to allow PP&L to link their Beth's Butte site with a site on Dead Indian Mountain with microwave transmissions. This Spodue Mountain site is needed to allow PP&L to fulfill their contractual obligations to the Northwest Power Planning Council and the U.S. Department of Energy to provide system control and monitoring of major transmission lines and substations.

An amendment to the Forest Plan is needed because the Forest Plan currently states that Spodue Mountain will not be designated as an electronic site and prohibits any further development on the mountain (Forest Plan, page 186).

An Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared by PP&L, summarizing the analysis of the proposed action and alternatives. This document is available at the Bly Ranger District Office, Post Office Box 25, Bly, Oregon 97622.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT:

Letters were sent out to adjacent land owners, those thought to be interested or affected by this project, and other government agencies in March 1992. Comments were solicited from specialists on the Bly Ranger District and the Fremont National Forest Headquarters' Office at the same time. Public notice was also published in the *Herald and News* (Klamath Falls, Oregon). Responses were received from 16 individuals and the Klamath Tribe.

Based on the comments received, the following four issues were determined to be significant. Measuring criteria, listed with each issue, were also developed to be used in the analysis process.

- \* Additional development on Spodue Mountain may impact the view from the fire lookout tower, hindering fire detection efforts. The lookout tower is essential to the detection of fires on the north and east portions of the Bly District. Impacts to detection will be measured by the percent of view area blocked by structures associated with the communication site.

- \* Additional ground disturbance and development may impact the religious value of Spodue Mountain to the Klamath Tribe. Spodue Mountain is within the former reservation lands of the Klamath Tribe and has religious significance for tribal members. Impacts on the tribal members use of the area will be based on their evaluation of impacts in narrative form.
- \* Additional structures on Spodue Mountain may impact the visual quality of the mountain from the surrounding area. Spodue Mountain is a prominent, physical feature in the area viewed from Highway 140, the town of Beatty, and several surrounding ranches and residences. Impacts to the visual quality will be based on a subjective interpretation by the Forest Landscape Architect and comparison to the established Visual Quality Objectives set for the area in the Forest Plan.
- \* Installation of additional electronic equipment may interfere with existing electronic equipment on Spodue Mountain. Currently the Forest Service, MCI, and the Klamath County Schools use Spodue Mountain for communication. Any additional development should not interfere with existing use. Impacts to existing users will be determined based on analysis of frequency and direction of existing communication.

#### ALTERNATIVES:

In planning the communication site, PP&L considered several methods and routes. Most of these were dropped from further consideration for a variety of reasons. Alternatives not considered in detail are outlined in the EA (pages 3-6). Alternatives developed in the EA and considered in detail are listed below.

**Alternative 1: No Action** - This alternative is required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide a basis for comparison. Under this alternative, the site would not be designated as an electronic site and additional communication facilities would not be constructed.

**Alternative 2:** Under this alternative, the Forest Plan would be amended to designate Spodue Mountain an electronic site, and a special use permit would be issued to PP&L for construction of a communication facility on the east portion of the summit.

**Alternative 3:** This alternative is the same as Alternative 2 except that the communication facility would be constructed on the west portion of the summit.

**Alternative 4:** This alternative used Medicine Mountain as a repeater site. The Forest Plan would not be amended and no additional facilities would be constructed on Spodue Mountain.

#### DECISION:

It is my decision to select **Alternative 2** for implementation.

This decision will:

- 1) Designate .45 acres on Spodue Mountain as an electronic site:
- 2) Amend page 186 of the Fremont Forest Plan as described below (A revised page 186 is attached):
  - \* Add Spodue Mountain to a list of areas allocated as electronic sites.
  - \* Delete the sentence, "Other public service users will be allowed if the facilities can be reasonably enclosed within the MCI security fence."

- \* Replace the above sentence with "Electronic facilities other than those that can be accommodated with the existing MCI and Pacific Power & Light Company facilities will not be allowed. Any additional uses must comply with the Spodue Mountain Electronic Site Plan."
- \* Delete the sentence, "Spodue will not be dedicated as an electronic site."

This decision will also authorize the issuance of a special use permit to PP&L for construction of a 90 foot tower and small building to house needed equipment on Spodue Mountain.

#### REASONS FOR THE DECISION:

Alternative 2 will provide an economical link to complete the needed network required to meet PP&L's obligation to monitor the major transmission lines and substations. Alternatives 4 and 5 would allow monitoring, but at a much increased cost.

Alternative 1 was not selected as it would not allow monitoring and result in reduced power transmission through the major transmission lines and substations or result in additional sites being constructed at much greater expense.

The site for construction of the facility in Alternative 2 would require only minimal ground disturbance as the existing road will be used for access and most clearing necessary for the facility has already been done in relation to the existing facilities. Alternative 3 would require .5 miles of new road construction as well as clearing and leveling of approximately .15 acres.

The analysis shows that Spodue Mountain is the most logical place for this site, and that there are no reasonable alternatives for meeting the purpose off National Forest lands. I believe it has also been shown that Forest programs and resources will not be significantly damaged or impaired. This is an appropriate use of National Forest system land, as it will concentrate electronic users at a minimum cost and provide efficient use of major transmission lines that provide power to the general public.

#### FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT:

The analysis of alternatives considered for this project included all past, present, and foreseeable projects planned for Spodue Mountain. Based on the information contained in the analysis file and the EA, I find that, given the context and intensity of the proposed actions, this is not a major Federal Action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary. This finding is based on the following factors:

- \* A biological evaluation was conducted and determined that there would be no effect on any Proposed Endangered, Threatened, or Sensitive species of plant or animal or its habitat.
- \* A Cultural Resource inventory was conducted by both the Forest Service and the Klamath Tribe, which determined that no sites would be affected by this project. This determination considered the National Register of Historic Places, significant scientific, cultural, and historic resources, and sites of concern to the Klamath Tribe. The Klamath Tribe was involved in the development of the site plans and indicated that the planned facilities would be acceptable to them, given the purpose and need for the project.
- \* The activities associated with this action are consistent with applicable Federal, State, and Local laws and regulations and would not affect any wetlands, floodplains, prime farmlands, rangelands, wild and scenic rivers, or forestland.

- \* The planned activities will not have a significant impact on public health and safety or on consumers, minority groups, American Indians, women, or the civil rights of any person.
- \* This action is not a unique activity and the effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial, nor are they highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
- \* Only minor vegetation manipulation will be involved and the activities planned meet the requirements of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) as well as the Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation Final EIS and its mediated agreement.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

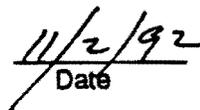
Implementation of this decision will take place no sooner than 7 days from the date the legal notice is published in *The Oregonian*, published in Portland, Oregon.

**APPEAL RIGHTS:**

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 217. Any written Notice of Appeal of this Decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 217.9 (Content of a Notice of Appeal) and must include the reasons for appeal. A written Notice of Appeal, in duplicate, must be filed with the Reviewing Officer who is F. Dale Robertson, Chief of the Forest Service, USDA Forest Service, Auditors Building, 201 14th Street SW, Washington, DC 20250.

For additional information, contact Linda Barker, District Resources Assistant, Bly Ranger District, Post Office Box 25, Bly, OR 97622; phone number (503) 353-2427.

  
JOHN E. LOWE  
Regional Forester

  
Date

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## MANAGEMENT AREA 12

**Emphasis:** Utility and Transportation Corridors and Single Use Areas

**Goals:** Provide for and administer necessary special purpose corridors across National Forest System lands to ensure safe, efficient use of the facilities necessitating use of these lands, and minimize impacts upon Forest resources, landscape, and environment.

Consider Forest Service, other agency, and private sector needs for sites for special purposes, while minimizing adverse impacts upon the productive land base, aesthetics, and other environmental factors.

**Discussion:** Lands in this management area consist of special use sites (such as microwave stations, work camps, and substations), as well as utility and transportation corridors for electrical transmission lines, roads, and railroads. The physical and biological characteristics of these lands vary widely. The primary objective of Management Area 12 is to provide for the safe and efficient operation of these facilities, while minimizing environmental impacts and encouraging compatible resource use.

Special use sites will be managed to concentrate developments on small areas, with minimal damage to the site and surrounding environment. Such sites may be developed to meet Forest Service, other agency, or private sector needs. However, the Forest Service must approve the appropriate special use permits and site plans for developments proposed by other agencies or by the private sector. When possible, overhead and/or buried transmission lines will be managed to share right-of-way with roads.

All electronic sites with previously approved site plans will remain dedicated to electronic uses. In addition, Cox Peak, T.V. Hill, Shake Butte, Bald Mountain, *and Spodue Mountain* will be allocated as electronic sites pending preparation and approval of electronic site plans.

Spodue Mountain will continue as a site for the MCI microwave facility. *Electronic facilities other than those that can be accommodated with the existing MCI and Pacific Power & Light Company facilities will not be allowed. Any additional uses must comply with the Spodue Mountain Electronic Site Plan.* No facilities impairing fire detection activities from or adjacent to Spodue Lookout will be permitted.

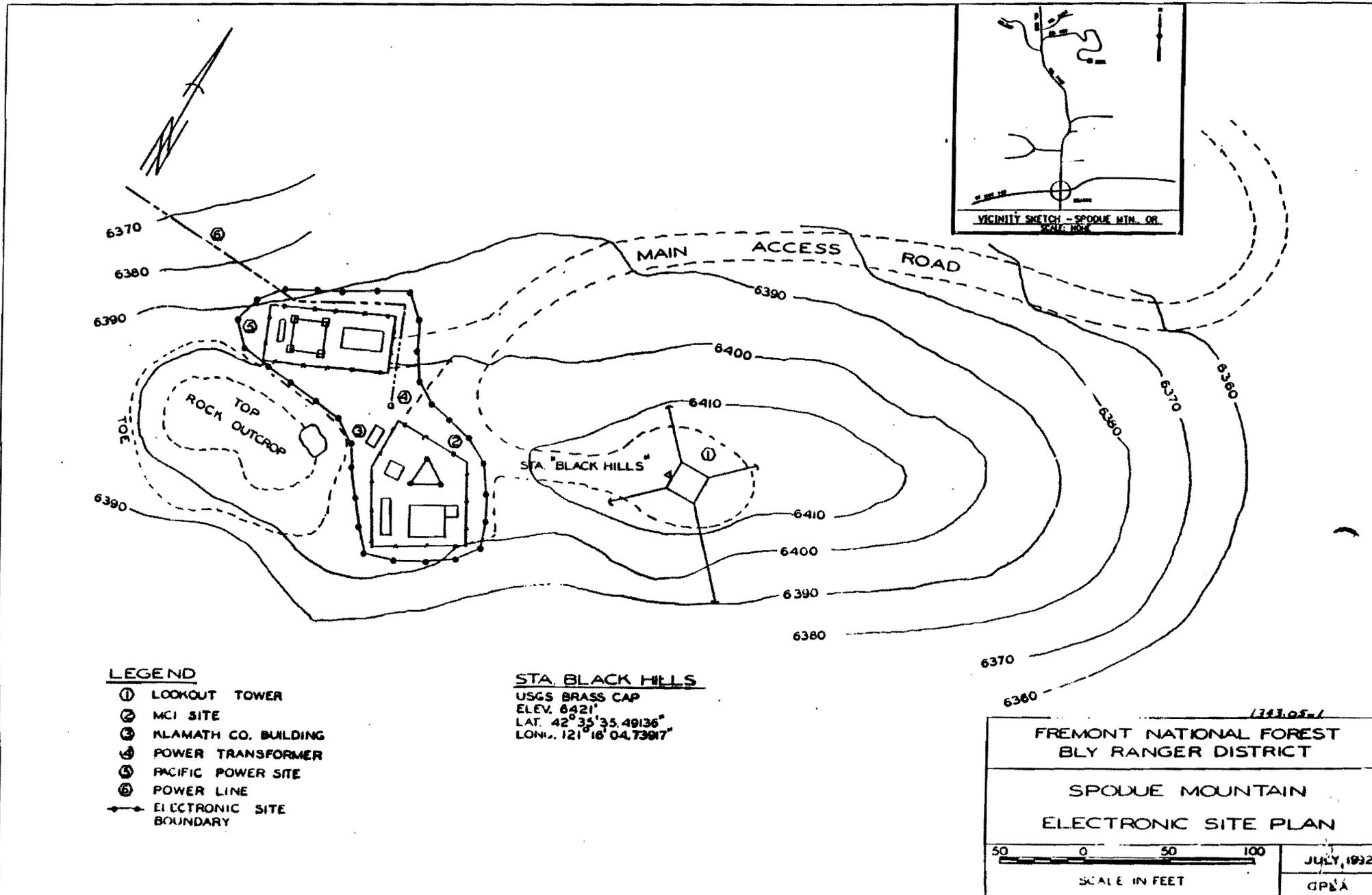
Slide Mountain, the primary feature of the Slide Mountain Special Management Area, will not be considered for electronic uses.

None of the high points in the Drake-McDowell Roadless Area will be considered for electronic uses.

Utility and/or transportation corridors will also be managed for complementary resource objectives, if conditions permit. For example, lands within transmission line corridors can be used to produce forage for livestock and wildlife. Forage growth also stabilizes soils within the corridor.

### Prescription

This prescription is applicable to strips of land or other relatively small land areas which are, or may be, occupied by high to moderately high investment facilities authorized by memorandums of understanding, easements, or special use permits. These lands are, or may become, primarily occupied for purposes other than renewable resource production. Although these lands are included in a management area which aggregates all special purpose lands outside the suitable land base, some multiple-use benefits may be derived within the corridors upon lands not actually occupied by improvements.



**LEGEND**

- ① LOOKOUT TOWER
- ② MCI SITE
- ③ KLAMATH CO. BUILDING
- ④ POWER TRANSFORMER
- ⑤ PACIFIC POWER SITE
- ⑥ POWER LINE
- ELECTRONIC SITE BOUNDARY

**STA. BLACK HILLS**

USGS BRASS CAP  
 ELEV. 6421'  
 LAT. 42° 35' 35.49136"  
 LONG. 121° 16' 04.73917"

1223.05-1

**FREMONT NATIONAL FOREST  
 BLY RANGER DISTRICT**

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**SPODUE MOUNTAIN  
 ELECTRONIC SITE PLAN**

50 0 50 100  
 SCALE IN FEET

JULY, 1992  
 GP&A