

**DECISION NOTICE and**  
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**HALL/SCHUTTPELZ LAKES TRAILS & DAY USE AREA**

**Plan Amendment #11**

USDA Forest Service  
Siuslaw National Forest  
Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area

T23S; R13W; Section 1

The Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (ODNRA) of the Siuslaw National Forest is proposing two actions in the Hall/Schuttpelz Lakes area of the ODNRA. The first is to make a non-significant amendment to the Oregon Dunes Management Plan (Dunes Plan) to resolve conflicting direction in the Dunes Plan. The amendment will change the management area designation for a three acre area adjacent to Hall Lake from MA 10-A, Non-Motorized Undeveloped Areas to MA 10-D, Developed Corridors. This change would allow development of the site as recommended in the Resource Schedule, Appendix B, of the Dunes Plan. The second action is to reconstruct/construct trails and a day-use facility in the Hall/Schuttpelz Lakes area.

The Environmental Assessment (EA) identifies the need for the proposed action, describes the analysis process and the alternatives considered during that process, and discusses the environmental impacts of each of the designed alternatives. That document is available for public review at the Oregon Dunes NRA office in Reedsport, Oregon and at the Siuslaw National Forest Supervisor's Office in Corvallis, Oregon.

**DECISION**

It is my decision to implement the preferred alternative, Alternative 2. Alternative 2 changes three acres currently designated Management Area 10(A) – Non-Motorized Undeveloped Area to Management Area 10(D) – Developed Corridor. This change allows development of Day Use Facilities as planned in the Dunes Management Plan.

Alternative 2 also includes removal of all existing structures and construction of a 40 persons at one time (PAOT) facility. However, by this Decision Notice I am modifying the alternative by reducing the amount of development as follows:

Twelve parking places (instead of 16) will be provided, including two accessible spaces near the unisex vault toilet to be located just above the cabin site. Parking will be confined to previously compacted areas except for 6-8 parking slots that will be created by filling the ditch along a short segment of the access road, just south of the turn-off to the cabin site.

The host site, septic tank and drainfield, water system and upper loop road will not be developed at this time. The need for these developments and the need for additional parking north of the turnoff to the cabin site will be determined at a later date if public use warrants it. At such time, a separate decision will be made pending further environmental analysis and design considerations.

The remainder of alternative 2 is unchanged except for the addition of two mitigation measures:

1. Use of concrete for facility construction will be limited to fire rings and the vault toilet. Soil compaction will be minimized. Except for the vault toilet, foundations will be limited to post and beam construction, or other means that maintain hydrologic flow.

2. On EA page 11, under Management Requirements for Alternatives paragraph 6, the paragraph is changed to read:

“Final placement and design of project components (trails, bridges, structures, parking, etc.) that are within Riparian Reserves shall be reviewed and assessed by a qualified biologist and hydrologist prior to construction. Bridge placements shall not constrict or alter the natural flow of a stream course or impact fish passage. Appropriate sediment traps and management actions, such as BMPs, shall be used in these areas. Trail and bridge placements shall be designed to minimize potential for trail widening and uncontrolled user access to sensitive stream/lakeside areas. Work crews shall refrain, where possible, from repeatedly walking through wet areas and stream channels to avoid compaction.”

3. The accessible trail, including any branches to picnic sites, will be designed to maintain the direction of hydrologic flow and avoid the edge of the lake except to access a viewing platform. The accessible trail will not be a loop.

The effects of these changes are anticipated to be similar to, but slightly less than, those described for alternative 2.

The remaining developments include approximately 1.9 miles of hiking trails, including nearly 0.1 mile of accessible trail; day-use area with a vault toilet, moderate-sized picnic/environmental education shelter (on or near existing cabin site), picnic tables, fire rings; and interpretive signing. The Forest Service will work with the State of Oregon to eliminate unsafe parking adjacent to Wildwood Drive and this tract. The landscape near the southeast corner of Hall Lake will be partially rehabilitated. A detailed description of alternative 2 is in the EA.

This project responds to management direction established in the 1994 Management Plan for the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. Implementation of the selected alternative may be completed in stages, pending funding.

## REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Four specific needs for the project were identified and the selected alternative meets each of them. They are:

- Resolve inconsistencies in current plans. There is a need to resolve the inconsistencies within the Dunes Plan of siting a 100 PAOT facility in a management area intended for smaller developments. The selected alternative provides a facility with a capacity of 40 PAOTs rather than the 100 PAOTs identified in the Dunes Plan Resource Schedule. The non-significant amendment moves the existing developed three acres from Management Area 10-A which provides for facilities of 15 PAOTs to Management Area 10-D which provides for larger capacities.
- Manage existing facilities near Hall Lake to be consistent with public recreation use. There is a need to deal with existing structures near Hall Lake which are inconsistent with safe public recreation use and which are inconsistent with MA 10-A standards and guidelines. The selected alternative removes the existing structures and moves the developed three acre parcel to MA 10-D, Developed Corridors which better fits both existing and planned uses and developments on site.
- Provide for the public use and enjoyment of the Hall/Schuttpelz area consistent with Dunes Plan. The Dunes Plan calls for a developed day use facility at Hall/Schuttpelz Lakes (Dunes Plan, page III-5&6). Planning for this project was guided by direction in the Dunes Plan, Watershed Analysis, and the Northwest Forest Plan.
- Manage expected increase in public use of, and user conflicts in, the Hall/Schuttpelz area when the 25 year reserve right of use and occupancy by the former owner expires in May, 2000. Public use is expected to increase over time. The combination of increasing public use and the absence of private use will exacerbate current problems including user conflicts, safety, night parties, sanitation, littering, sign damage, and erosion. The selected alternative eliminates safety hazards, reconstructs/constructs facilities, and in general, increases management presence in the area.

Fourteen issues were identified in the EA, and the selected alternative addresses each of these, as summarized below.

Capacity of Recreation Facilities. The selected alternative, as modified, provides for a mixture of uses such as hiking, picnicking, swimming, fishing, and environmental education. It provides 1.9 miles of hiking trails and parking .

Recreation Experience Levels. The selected alternative, as modified, provides an intermediate level of Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized (SPNM) recreation experience balanced with a similar level of Roaded Natural (RN) recreation experience. By limiting development to existing disturbed and developed areas, the natural character of the area is largely retained.

Fully Accessible Facilities Provided. The selected alternative provides fully accessible facilities and trail at the day-use site.

Safe/Sanitary Facilities. An accessible vault toilet at the day use area and within a reasonable distance from a popular swimming location is provided in the selected alternative. It also provides safe parking in proximity to the day use site.

Vandalism. Existing structures will be removed and replaced with appropriate facilities for public use at the day use site in the selected alternative.

Protection of Natural Resources. The selected alternative will protect natural resources in this area. Relative to other alternatives, it is intermediate in protection, slightly less than alternatives 5 and 6 and more than alternatives 3 and 4.

Consistency with the ACS. The selected alternative is consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy.

Non-Native Plants. The selected alternative provides a relatively high level of protection from introduction of non-native plants.

Roadless Character. The selected alternative, as modified, should cause very little change in roadless character relative to existing conditions.

Fishing Opportunities. Existing fishing opportunities, including hike-in access only to Schuttpelz Lake, will be provided in the selected alternative.

Effects on RNA. The selected alternative is anticipated to have little, if any, effect on the Tenmile Research Natural Area relative to existing conditions.

Cost-Effectiveness. The development cost is intermediate among the alternatives but the cost-effectiveness per new PAOT is low to moderate.

Environmental Education. The selected alternative provides interpretive signing at the day-use area, a shelter, and environmental education opportunities for organized groups.

Parking on Wildwood Drive. The selected alternative moves parking from unsafe areas along Wildwood Drive to safe spaces in proximity to the day use area.

I have selected Alternative 2, as modified, because it best meets specific project needs and the above issues. In modifying the alternative I have confined development to previously disturbed areas. In doing so I have attempted to strike a balance between the standards and guidelines in the Northwest Forest Plan which require maintenance and restoration of Riparian Reserves and the purposes of the Oregon Dunes NRA which provide for public use and enjoyment. I feel the modified alternative accommodates expected public use without compromising the natural beauty and resources of the area. We plan to monitor the site after it is developed and if public use and impacts exceed its capacity, we will re-evaluate this decision and may make further improvements to accommodate use and minimize adverse effects. This decision is also responsive to public input which generally supported maintaining the natural beauty of the area and avoiding large developments.

## ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Five alternatives to the selected alternative were considered. Alternative 1, the no action alternative, was not selected because it is not responsive to the Dunes Plan direction to develop this area. It was also likely to result in uncontrolled use and impacts on resources, littering, and sanitation problems. Alternative 3, the moderate development option, was not selected because it constructed the tie trail north of Schuttpelz Lake-completing a loop around the lake. It also had greater PAOT capacity which would increase resource impacts and not meet the requirements of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy outlined in the Northwest Forest Plan. Alternative 4, the high development alternative, was not selected for similar reasons to alternative 3. In this case, it would have resulted in greater impacts to natural resources and did not meet the requirements of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy. Alternatives 5 and 6 provided less recreation capacity, 15 PAOTs, and marginally greater protection of natural resources.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public was involved during the entire process, beginning with development of the Dunes Plan. That plan provided direction for development of public facilities in the Hall/Schuttpelz Lakes area. Public input was solicited early in the project planning process for this project through news releases and a public meeting. The environmental assessment was available for a 30-day public comment period in July, 1999. Twelve written and four oral responses were received. Most favored Alternative 1 or another alternative between Alternatives 1 and 2 in development scale. New toilet facilities, garbage cans, and additional cleanup and maintenance were supported strongest. There was some support for Alternative 2. Concerns identified most frequently were that the area would be open to the non-local general public, that additional use would damage the natural beauty of the area, that fees would be charged, and that the family who formerly owned the land should be allowed continued exclusive use on 3 acres. Copies of the public responses can be found in the Planning Record for this project.

Based on responses and further intensive internal review, the EA was extensively rewritten and two additional alternatives were developed and analyzed. The EA was then made available for another 30-day pre comment period in March, 2000. Seven written responses were received. The respondents stated a diversity of alternative preferences with all alternatives except alternative 3 receiving some support. Two respondents stated support for the preferred alternative 2 citing its balance of interests and the opportunities for environmental education. Two respondents stated support for alternative 1. One of those respondents felt that maintenance of the area should be improved with no physical alterations. The other felt development was not warranted, creation of another fee site was not needed, and managers should look into managing for more timber products for income instead. One respondent supported alternative 4 because the National Recreation Area should encourage and provide for public use. Another respondent supported alternative 5 stating that it would encourage people to go to the area with only minimal on-site development. The final respondent supported alternative 6, indicating her preference for the natural look and charm of the Oregon coastal area.

Copies of the public responses and a summary of comments received and responses are in the Planning Record for this project. All the public input was considered in my decision.

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have determined that this action is not a major Federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment as a result of implementation. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be needed. This determination is made considering the following factors:

Context: The project area was purchased for public use nearly 25 years ago and is within the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. Most of the area remains within Management Area 10-A which provides non-motorized recreation opportunities in a generally natural setting with relatively small developed facilities and resource protection. The cabin and access road area comprising about 3 acres is moved into Management Area 10-D via a non-significant amendment in this decision. Recreation use, upon completion of the project, is expected to continue most existing recreational uses--hiking, swimming, fishing, picnicking. The character of the area will change little under the selected alternative. The project is not expected to have any significant effect on the surrounding locale. Therefore, with respect to context, this project is not significant.

Intensity: Both beneficial and adverse effects have been taken into consideration when making this determination of significance. Information available from past actions of similar intensity in the Oregon Dunes NRA indicates that no significant impacts should be anticipated from this project. *(Section III, Environmental Consequences, pages 29-42)*

Characteristics of the geographical area are not common-place but are also not unique. The area contains second growth forest, two lakes, open sand, and a stream. The area is not particularly sensitive but rather resilient. Virtually the entire area has been previously disturbed by logging, road and skid road construction, facilities construction, and stream rerouting. The project will not affect any unique geographic characteristic such as a wild and scenic river or a particularly ecologically-sensitive area. Nor would it affect floodplains, prime farmland, or range. *(Pages 1-2; 29-42)*

Public response to this has been mixed. Early in the lengthy planning process, most participants indicated support for small improvements or no action. During the March/April, 2000 thirty day predecisional comment period only seven people responded. Cumulatively, the seven respondents stated preferences for five of the six alternatives. Only two alternatives, the preferred alternative 2 and alternative 1 got as many as two supporters. None of the response has shown that the action will cause effects which are highly controversial on a broader scale. *(Pages 5-9; analysis file)*

Irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources and adverse cumulative or secondary effects are consistent with those discussed and evaluated in the Dunes Plan. *(Pages 29-42)*

The Biological Evaluation (BE) for this project was completed in two segments. The BE found no suitable habitat for listed Threatened or Endangered species in the project area. It also found the project area is not located in designated critical habitat for marbled murrelets or northern spotted owls, nor does it impact Designated Critical Habitat for either species. It found no effect on any sensitive, proposed, threatened, or endangered aquatic fauna or critical habitat. Some impacts to red legged frogs and white-footed voles are anticipated, however there are no impacts to any sensitive species that would cause them to be driven closer to listing. The aquatics portion of the BE found "no effects" for alternatives 1 and 2 and "may effect" for alternatives 3 and 4. The BE also found there are no sensitive plants in the project area and therefore, no impacts anticipated for any sensitive flora. (Pages 32-37)

The selected alternative has been determined to be consistent with the Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives of maintaining ecosystem functions and health, with mitigation measures identified in the environmental assessment. (Pages 10, 35-37)

The Cultural Resource Assessment completed for this project found that "the project will not impact any cultural resources either on or potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The project will have 'No Effect' on cultural resource values, as per 36 CFR 800.5." (Page 41)

There will be no adverse impacts on consumers, civil rights, minority groups, or women.

Implementing this project will follow guidelines to ensure that public health and safety are not significantly affected. (Page 31)

This project does not set a precedent, nor does it involve unique, unknown, or highly uncertain risks. (Pages 1-3; 29-42)

This project does not violate federal, state, or local laws or regulations imposed for the protection of the environment. It is consistent with the Coastal Zone Management Act. (Pages 29-42)

### **FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS**

Based on the analysis and discussion in the EA and BE, I find this decision is consistent with, and implements direction established in, the 1994 Management Plan for the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (Dunes Plan) and associated Record of Decision. It is consistent with the 1990 Siuslaw National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the 1994 Northwest Forest Plan.

### ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AND APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. Any written appeal of this decision must be fully consistent with 36 CFR 215.14, "Content of an Appeal", including the reasons for appeal. It must be postmarked or received by:

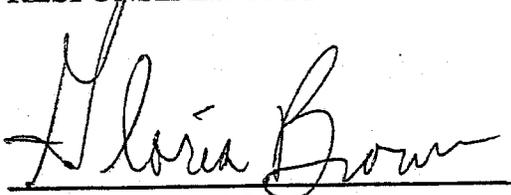
Regional Forester  
ATTN: 1570 APPEALS  
P.O. Box 3623  
Portland, OR 97208-3623

(Appeal Deciding Officer), within 45 days of the date legal notice of this decision appears in the Corvallis Gazette-Times newspaper. This project will not be implemented until 5 days after the end of the 45-day period or, in case of appeal of the decision, 15 days after final disposition of the appeal.

### CONTACT PERSON

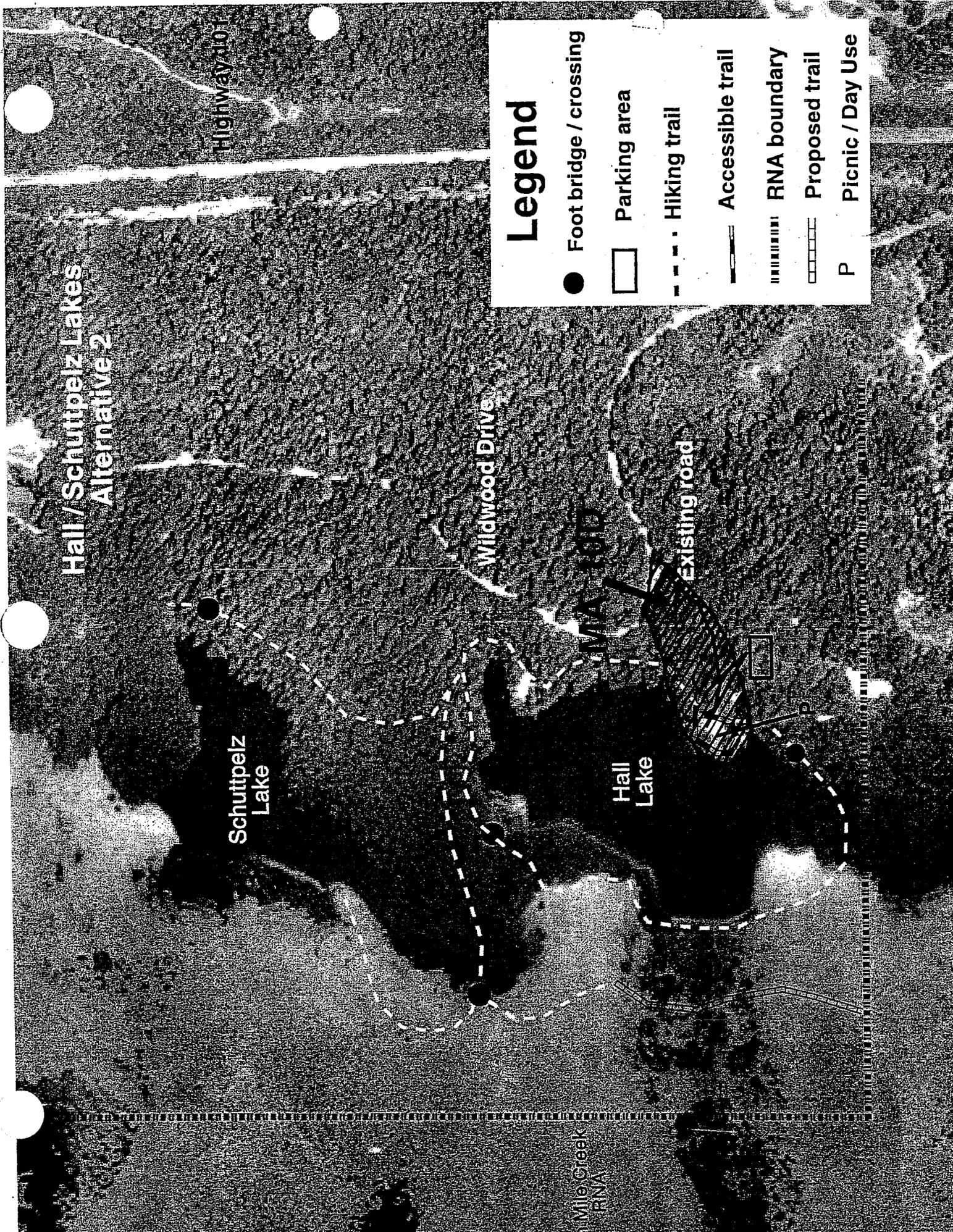
For additional information regarding this project, contact: Recreation Assistant, Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area, 855 Highway 101, Reedsport, OR 97467, or phone at (541)-271-3611.

### RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL



GLORIA BROWN  
Forest Supervisor  
Siuslaw National Forest  
P.O. Box 1148  
Corvallis, OR 97339

5/2/00  
Date



Highway 101

Hall / Schuttpeitz Lakes  
Alternative 2

Wildwood Drive

Existing road

Schuttpeitz  
Lake

Hall  
Lake

Ten Mile Creek  
RNA

# Legend

- Foot bridge / crossing
- Parking area
- - - Hiking trail
- Accessible trail
- ||||| RNA boundary
- ▤ Proposed trail
- P Picnic / Day Use

