



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Rogue River  
National  
Forest

Ashland Ranger District  
645 Washington St.  
Ashland, OR 97520

**Reply to: 1950**

**Date: July 25, 2000**

**To: Individuals/Organizations Interested in the Ashland Watershed Trails Management Project**

This letter will transmit to you a copy of the Decision Notice, and the Forest Service Response to Comments received during the planning process and 30-day public Comment Period for the Ashland Watershed Trails Management Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment (EA) was made available for review from June 17, 2000 through July 17, 2000. Our records indicate that you participated in the planning process or have requested to be informed of the decision in this project.

On July 25, 2000, I made the decision as the Responsible Official, to implement Alternative 2 as described in the EA. This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR 215. A written notice of appeal must be filed with the Regional Forester, (Attn: 1570 Appeal, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR, 97208-3623) within 45 days of publication in the Mail Tribune. An appeal may be filed by any person or group that has provided comment or otherwise expressed an interest in the action by the close of the comment period. Please contact Mike Ricketts, Kristi Mastrofini, or myself at the Ashland Ranger District (541) 482-3333, if you have any questions concerning this decision.

Sincerely,

**Linda Duffy**  
**Ashland District Ranger**

**Enclosures:** Ashland Watershed Trails Management Decision Notice  
Ashland Watershed Trails Management Response to Comments

**DECISION NOTICE**  
**and**  
**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**ASHLAND WATERSHED TRAILS**  
**MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

**USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region**  
**Rogue River National Forest**  
**Ashland Ranger District**  
**Jackson County, Oregon**

## Introduction

This document describes my decision and the reasons for it regarding the Ashland Watershed Trails Management Project within the Ashland Ranger District of the Rogue River National Forest. It also describes my finding regarding the need to prepare an environmental impact statement in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). My decision and finding are based on the Ashland Watershed Trails Management Environmental Assessment (EA), which documents the results of an environmental analysis of this action and is available for review at the Ashland Ranger District office, in Ashland, Oregon. This EA summarizes the analysis of site-specific effects of implementing the proposed action and alternatives to it.

The Ashland Watershed Trails Management EA was prepared by an interdisciplinary team and describes the purpose and need for action, the three alternatives considered in detail, the environmental effects of implementing each alternative, and those persons and agencies consulted. The alternatives include a range of actions to address recreation access and travel within the Ashland Creek Watershed and adjacent drainages. The range of alternatives considered include some alternatives, or actions within alternatives, that were originally considered and later eliminated from detailed study. Rationale for eliminating alternatives or actions from detailed study is discussed in the EA p. II-1 through II-2.

The Ashland Watershed Trails Management Project is designed under the *Rogue River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (RRNF LRMP)*, as amended by the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (Northwest Forest Plan)*.

The Ashland Watershed Trails Management Project is partially located within the Ashland Creek Watershed with portions located within the Neil Creek, Tolman Creek, and Hamilton Creek watersheds. The legal description is: T. 39 S., R. 1 E.; in sections 17, 20, 21, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 34, and 35; T. 40 S., R. 1 E.; in sections 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, 15; Willamette Meridian; surveyed Jackson County, Oregon.

The project area is located on lands allocated by the Rogue River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan to Restricted Watershed, Research Natural Area, and to Foreground and Middleground Partial Retention. The Northwest Forest Plan allocates the project area to Late-Successional Reserve and Riparian Reserve. In some cases concurrent direction applies, e.g., most of the Ashland Watershed was allocated to Restricted Watershed by the Rogue River National Forest Plan, and to Late-Successional Reserve by the Northwest Forest Plan. The project area is **not** located within a Key Watershed. The project area is adjacent to but not located within the McDonald Peak Inventoried Roadless Area.

## The Decision

As the Responsible Official, it is my decision to implement **Alternative 2** as described in the Ashland Watershed Trails Management Environmental Assessment.

*My decision to authorize the Implementation of Alternative 2, will result in the following actions:*

An estimated 3.9 miles of new trail will be constructed, and 7.3 miles of existing trail will be reconstructed within the project area.

Four existing trailheads on National Forest System lands will be enhanced to improve parking areas, forest visitor information, and resource protection; one trailhead will be developed in coordination with the City of Ashland on lands owned and administered by the City.

An estimated 6.9 miles of existing Forest roads will be closed year round, excluding vehicle access except for administrative use; another 7.3 miles of existing Forest roads will be closed winter only (except for administrative use); an estimated 2.6 miles of existing Forest roads will be decommissioned.

Approximately 0.7 mile of existing unauthorized trail extending from the Lamb Mine Trail Head to Reeder Reservoir will be deactivated.

*Mitigation measures and management requirements, and monitoring* are designed to minimize environmental impacts and are incorporated into project design. Mitigation measures and monitoring will be implemented as outlined in the EA, Chapter II, Mitigation and Management Requirements (p. II-11 through II-13). The Standards and Guidelines contained in the RRNF-LRMP, including Best Management Practices (BMP's), shall be implemented and monitored.

## Reasons for the Decision

In making this decision, it was necessary to weigh the relative merits and consequences of each alternative as well as to consider the resource issues and concerns, and public comments. No single factor determined the decision; rather, all factors were considered and balanced in reaching the decision. This decision, along with the mitigation specified in the EA, provide the best combination of physical, biological, social and environmental benefits with acceptable resource impacts.

*I have chosen to implement Alternative 2 for the following reasons:*

- **The actions included in Alternative 2 are consistent with Forest Plan goals, objectives, and standards and guidelines for this area (see page DN-6 of this Decision Notice).**
- **The actions included in Alternative 2 meet the stated purpose and need and they have acceptable environmental impacts in regard to the relevant issues identified in the EA.**

## **A. Response to Purpose and Need**

Currently, recreation facilities in the Ashland Watershed and adjacent watersheds of the urban/wildland interface area are not meeting needs associated with the level of recreation use occurring in the project area; as a result, unauthorized trail construction (by trail users) and resource damage is occurring. Additionally, some trail damage resulting from the 1997 Flood is still in need of repair. The overall purpose for the Ashland Watershed Trails Management Project is to respond to the community's desire for an increase in recreation trail opportunities, the Forest Service need to continue with maintenance of 1997 flood damaged trails, and the need to protect the City of Ashland's domestic water supply and Late-Successional Reserve values.

*I have chosen to implement Alternative 2, as it meets the stated overall purpose and need by providing an increase in the miles of trail and recreation opportunities in the project area.*

*By providing well-designed interconnected trails and trailhead facilities, the potential for resource damage from recreation use would be reduced, and ideally, unauthorized trail construction will be interrupted.*

*By authorizing the implementation of Alternative 2, maintenance and repair of flood related trail damage would occur.*

*Closing 6.9 miles of roads to vehicle access year round, and 7.3 miles of roads winter only will reduce road-related sedimentation and maintenance needs, contributing to improved watershed conditions.*

*By closing the segment of Forest Road 2060 from the Forest Boundary to Four Corners:*

- incidents of unauthorized trail use from Lamb Mine Trail to Reeder Reservoir and trespass on City administered lands surrounding the reservoir will be reduced;*
- the potential for unauthorized camping and campfires in areas immediately adjacent to Reeder Reservoir will be reduced, thus, managing fire risk; and*
- the incidents of vandalism and trash dumping within the Municipal Watershed will be reduced.*

## **B. Response to Relevant Issues**

The EA documents discussion (EA pages III-1 through III-39) of relevant issues and effects that were identified during the process. In evaluating the alternatives, these issues were found to sometimes have variable effects or sometimes having common or similar effects, or were equally mitigated with all of the action alternatives considered. No significant adverse impacts to any resource or aspect of the human environment were identified during the environmental analysis process or documented in the Environmental Assessment (see Finding of No Significant Impact for detailed discussion).

## Other Alternatives Considered

**Alternative 1 – No-Action:** Under Alternative 1, No-Action, no new trails would be constructed, reconstructed, or added to the trail system. No seasonal or year round gated closures of roads would occur; no road decommissioning would occur; and no deactivation of unauthorized trails would occur. Routine trail maintenance and management on existing system trails and roads would continue under the No-Action Alternative.

*This alternative was not selected because:*

*It would not meet the stated overall purpose and need to respond to the current level of recreation use by providing an increase in trail opportunities in the project area.*

*Resource damage from recreation use would not be reduced; and unauthorized trail construction would likely continue.*

*It would not provide for the maintenance and repair of flood related trail damage.*

*It would not provide for reduced road-related sedimentation and maintenance needs, and would not contribute to improved watershed conditions.*

*It would not close Forest Road 2060 from the Forest boundary to Four Corners; therefore:*

- incidents of unauthorized trail use from Lamb Mine Trail to Reeder Reservoir, and trespass on City administered lands surrounding the reservoir, would likely continue;*
- potential for unauthorized camping and campfires in areas immediately adjacent to Reeder Reservoir would not be reduced; and*
- incidents of vandalism and trash dumping within the Municipal Watershed would not be reduced.*

**Alternative 2** - this is the selected alternative and is fully described in The Decision section of this decision document. The rationale for its selection is described in the Reasons for the Decision section of this decision document.

**Alternative 3** - Alternative 3 would respond to the need for increased trail opportunities while responding to the issue of impacts associated with decreasing vehicle access to National Forest Lands. Alternative 3 *would not* implement the administrative closure of 6.9 miles of existing Forest roads year round or 7.3 miles winter only.

*Although this alternative would meet the stated purpose and need for increasing trail opportunities and associated trailheads, this alternative was not selected because:*

*It would not provide for reduced road-related sedimentation and maintenance needs, and would not contribute to improved watershed conditions.*

*It would not close Forest Road 2060 from the Forest boundary to Four Corners; therefore:*

- *incidents of unauthorized trail use from Lamb Mine Trail to Reeder Reservoir, and trespass on City administered lands surrounding the reservoir, would likely continue;*
- *potential for unauthorized camping and campfires in areas immediately adjacent to Reeder Reservoir would not be reduced; and*
- *incidents of vandalism and trash dumping within the Municipal Watershed would not be reduced.*

## **Public Involvement**

Scoping under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for this project began in the spring of 1998. This project appeared in quarterly editions of the Schedule of Proposed Actions, contained in the Rogue River National Forest newsletter *Rogue River Currents* since spring of 1998. A letter requesting comments on the proposed action was sent September 21, 1998 to adjacent land owners, neighboring agencies, local government, and to individuals and organizations who have expressed an interest in projects of this nature or projects in this particular area. A letter was sent December 10, 1999 to provide those interested in this project proposal an update of the planning process and additions to the proposed action. A public information meeting was held October 8, 1998 to share information concerning the project proposal as well as the purpose and need for the project. An estimated 20 to 25 people attended this meeting.

In addition, the following also occurred in support of the scoping process:

- Briefings with City of Ashland officials;
- Upon invitation, the Forest Service presented information to the Ashland Forest Commission, the Ashland Bike and Pedestrian Commission, and the Ashland Watershed Partnership;
- The Forest Service participated in monthly meetings of Ashland Trail Users Coalition to gain an understanding of recreation user needs and issues associated with recreation use in the project area;
- A standing invitation or "open door policy" for anyone interested to make an appointment with the Ashland District Ranger or other Forest Service specialists to discuss the project; and
- Local media briefings.

Issues associated with this project proposal were identified by an interdisciplinary team (IDT) throughout the scoping process. This process included a review and evaluation of information gathered through specialist input and public correspondence and interaction.

Copies of the Ashland Watershed Environmental Assessment and Appendices along with an invitation for comment, were mailed to those individuals and organizations who were involved with this project or requested a Copy of the EA. A Legal Notice was published in Medford's Mail Tribune newspaper on June 16, 2000. This notice established the comment period under 36 CFR 215, occurring from June 17, 2000, through July 17, 2000, a period of 31 days.

A "Response to Comments" section prepared under 36 CFR 215, is added to the EA Appendices containing specific responses to all substantive comments received during the comment period; this appendix is identified as Appendix F. No changes have been made to the specific proposals and provisions contained within the alternatives described in the EA, or to the analysis documented therein. A complete Appendix F will be distributed to interested parties along with this Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact.

## Consistency Findings

*The Rogue River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (RRNF Forest Plan) was amended with the adoption, May 20, 1994, of the Record of Decision (ROD) and attached Standards and Guidelines (S&G's) for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl.*

This action has been analyzed and designed under the Northwest Forest Plan and the RRNF LRMP, as applicable. **I find that Alternative 2 is consistent with the Rogue River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, as amended by the Northwest Forest Plan; and other laws, regulations and agreements applicable to the management of National Forest System lands and resources, including: 36 CFR 219.14, 36 CFR 219.27 (b) (EA Chapter III, Environmental Consequences).**

This decision is consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, 40 CFR 1500-1508, July 1, 1986, the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, the National Forest Management Act of 1976, and the Endangered Species Act.

The impacts of implementing Alternative 2 will not retard or prevent the attainment of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy (ACS). Mitigation measures and Best Management Practices were designed to minimize the potential impacts of the project on water quality and fisheries habitat and to meet the intent of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives. Detailed discussions of ACS compliance and supporting documentation is included in the EA (Chapter III, Environmental Consequences, Impacts on Water Quality and Hydrologic, Effects on Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Animal Species, Effects on Northwest Forest Plan Protected and Survey and Manage Animal Species, and Management Indicator Species, Effects on Late-Successional Associated and Other Animal Species of Concern, Effects on Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Plant Species, Effects on Northwest Forest Plan Survey and Manage and Protection Buffer Plant Species, Effects on Resident Trout Populations and Downstream Anadromous Fish Populations, and Consistency with Northwest Forest Plan—Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives).

## **Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

Based on the information contained in the EA and as further documented within this Decision Notice, I have determined this action will not individually or cumulatively significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. This determination is based on the following factors:

***1. No known significant irreversible resource commitments or irretrievable losses of vegetation, wildlife habitats, soil productivity, or water quality.***

Implementation of Alternative 2 will not create significant resource commitments or any significant irretrievable losses of vegetation, soils, water, or wildlife and fish habitats. An estimated 4.7 acres would result in detrimental soil compaction (an irreversible commitment of soil resources) from new trail construction. This represents 0.024 percent of National Forest System Lands in the Ashland, Neil, Tolman, Hamilton, and Clayton Creek Watersheds. This represents a minor insignificant impact on soils. No other irreversible resource commitments or irretrievable losses of resources were identified (EA, Environmental Consequences, Other Effects, Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitments of Resources).

There will be no significant direct or indirect impacts from implementation of this action. (EA, Environmental Consequences, pages III-1 through III-39). Although there may be slight risk for short-term sedimentation, the project design incorporates mitigation measures (also referred to as Best Management Practices) to achieve consistency with Standards and Guidelines for Riparian Reserves and Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives (EA page II-11 through II-13). Therefore, there is little if any potential for sediment to reach waterways, and there would be no adverse effects to water quality and fisheries habitat. The physical and biological effects are limited to the project action area and immediately adjacent areas. The results of implementing this action will improve resource conditions and reduce sedimentation from the project area over the long-term.

***2. There are no significant effects on public health and safety.***

All operations will comply with State and Federal Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA). Project safety on Forest Service managed lands will be guided by FS Handbook 6709.11 (Health and Safety Code Handbook).

***3. There are no unique characteristics of the geographical area that will be significantly affected by the selected action.***

No unique characteristics were identified for the project area; therefore, no impacts to unique features were identified (EA, Environmental Consequences).

***4. The environmental analysis revealed no effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.***

Activities proposed and analyzed in the Ashland Watershed Trails Management EA do not involve uncertain risks; no uncertain or unique/unknown risks were identified (EA, Environmental Consequences).

**5. *The effects of this action on the human environment are not highly controversial.***

Based on correspondence with the public and other interested parties, the projected environmental effects on the quality of the environment are not highly controversial.

**6. *This action is not precedent setting.***

This action does not establish a precedent for future actions, which may have a significant effect on the environment. It does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

This is not a major action within the context of the RRNF LRMP, nor is it a change from the historical levels of management activity for the Ashland Creek Watershed and interface area.

**7. *There are no known significant cumulative effects between this and other actions ongoing or proposed in the affected watershed.***

All known connected actions, which are likely to occur in the reasonably foreseeable future were analyzed with respect to this action, including their direct, indirect, and cumulative effects. All known connected actions associated with the selected activities or other currently implemented or planned activities which are likely to occur in the reasonably foreseeable future have been identified in the EA (Environmental Consequences).

The environmental consequences will have little direct, indirect, or cumulative impact on wildlife species affected, and will not affect the viability of any species (EA, Environmental Consequences).

**8. *There are no significant effects on cultural (heritage) resources.***

A heritage resource survey was conducted for the project proposal. Four previously undocumented cultural resource sites were found during the 1999 survey; none of the sites are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. All activities planned with this trails management proposal would have no impact on any significant or potentially significant cultural resource. The proposed action considered are determined to be "a no historic properties undertaking" (EA page III-35 through III-36).

**9. *This action will not adversely affect any threatened or endangered species or critical habitat outside of the scope of the current recovery efforts.***

Surveys to locate all threatened, endangered, sensitive species in compliance with the Endangered Species Act have been accomplished. Appropriate conferencing and consultation has been conducted with National Marine Fisheries Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. Mitigation required to protect Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species is specified on pages II-11 through II-12 of the EA. No significant adverse impacts to species or their critical habitat are anticipated (EA, Chapter III, Environmental Consequences).

***10. This action does not threaten a violation of Federal, State, or local laws or other legal requirements imposed for protection of the environment.***

Appropriate consultation and conferencing has been completed in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. Violations of any State, Federal or local laws or other legal requirements are not anticipated.

Consideration of both context and intensity were used to determine significance of the effects of this action, as described in 40 CFR 1508.27. Sufficient information is available to make a reasoned choice among alternatives based on analysis information in the Environmental Assessment and past actions of similar context and intensity in this area. The relationship of individually insignificant actions that have cumulatively significant impacts (1508.27[b][7]) was part of the analysis for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Rogue River National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan.

## **Implementation of the Decision**

The implementation of this decision is expected to occur in late summer of 2000.

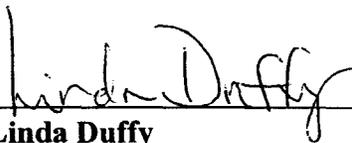
## Right to Administrative Review (Appeal)

This decision is subject to administrative review (appeal) pursuant to 36 CFR 215. A written Notice of Appeal must be filed with the Appeal Deciding Officer: Regional Forester, Attn: 1570 Appeals, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208-3623.

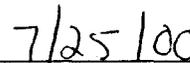
The written Notice of Appeal must be filed within 45 days of publication of the notice of decision in the legal ad section of Medford's *Mail Tribune* newspaper. An Appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215.11 may be filed by any person or group that has provided comment or otherwise expressed interest in a particular proposed action by the close of the Comment Period specified in 36 CFR 215.6.

In accordance with 36 CFR 215.14, it is the appellant's responsibility to provide the Appeal Deciding Officer sufficient evidence and rationale to show why the Responsible Official's decision should be remanded or reversed. The Notice of Appeal must include:

1. A statement that the document is an appeal filed pursuant to 36 CFR part 215.
2. The name and address of the appellant and, if possible, a telephone number.
3. Identification of the decision document being appealed, including the title and subject of the document, the date of the decision, and the name and title of the Responsible Official.
4. The specific change(s) to the decision that the appellant seeks or portion of the decision to which the appellant objects.
5. Why the Responsible Official's decision fails to consider comments previously provided, either before or during the comment period, and how the appellant believes the decision violates law, regulation, or policy.



**Linda Duffy**  
**District Ranger, Responsible Official**  
Ashland Ranger District  
645 Washington Street  
Ashland, OR 97520  
(541) 482-3333



**Date**

For further information contact:

Kristi Mastrofini  
Ashland Ranger District  
Environmental Coordinator  
645 Washington Street  
Ashland, OR 97520  
(541) 482-3333

## APPENDIX F

# Ashland Watershed Trails Management Environmental Assessment

### 36 CFR 215 NOTICE AND COMMENT (SECTIONS 215.3, 215.5, AND 215.6)

#### COMMENTS RECEIVED

Copies of the proposed Ashland Watershed Trails Management Project Environmental Assessment (EA) and Appendices, along with an invitation to comment, were mailed to those individuals and organizations who were involved with this project or who had requested a copy of the EA. A Legal Notice published in Medford's *Mail Tribune* newspaper on June 16, 2000 established a comment period under 36 CFR 215. The comment period began on June 17, 2000 and ended July 17, 2000, a period of 31 days.

Comments were received from 5 individuals during the Comment Period. Three of the letters received expressed general support of Alternative 2, as this alternative would close a segment of the 2060 road and provide a safer recreation experience, reduce unauthorized camping and campfires, reduce vandalism and litter, and reduce sedimentation from the road prism. One comment expressed support of the project proposals, as it would improve trailheads that are currently in need of improvement for resource protection and aesthetics. One comment received was opposed to certain aspects of the proposed road closures. Two comments were received that requested the Forest Service to consider additional opportunities for action.

#### FOREST SERVICE RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

Criteria used to identify comments is taken from 36 CFR 215.6(b)(3), "Specific facts or comments along with supporting reasons that the person believes the Responsible Official should consider in reaching a decision." The central points of each comment in the respective letters are incorporated herein, and presented in bold text, with the response following.

**1. Closure of the 2060 road from the white rabbit trail head to Four Corners would make it difficult for some forest visitors to use trails behind locked gates. If parked at Four Corners it would be a steep uphill hike back to your vehicle. A car shuttle system could be considered to mitigate this concern.**

The EA (p. III-9) disclosed the adverse impacts to some forest visitors of closing Forest Road 2060 from the Forest Boundary to Four Corners, and analyzed an alternative (Alternative 3) that would not close this section of road. While this section of road currently provides for vehicle access to Lamb Mine Trail and Trailhead parking, a road closure associated with Alternative 2 would limit this access to vehicles, and would add about a 1 mile hike ("easy" difficulty level)

along Forest Road 2060 from White Rabbit Trailhead to Lamb Mine Trail. The existing White Rabbit Trail and Proposed Trail #4 would provide access from White Rabbit Trail to Lamb Mine Trail, which is rated at "moderate" difficulty level. Access from Four Corners to Lamb Mine Trail would be about 1.3 miles at "moderate" difficulty level, and would occur along existing Forest Road 2060 or along Proposed Trails 1 or 3. Forest Road 2060, from Four Corners running west toward the East Fork of Ashland Creek, provides opportunity for "easy" difficulty level hiking terrain that would be accessible from Four corners.

Additionally, many miles of open roads occur elsewhere on the Rogue River National Forest that provide vehicle access to hiking trails. Beaver Dam Trail and Fish Lake Trail, both rated as "easy" difficulty level, are located off Forest Road 37 within one hour driving distance of Ashland.

The implementation of any of the actions considered would not prohibit individuals from arranging and utilizing car shuttling as an alternative means of accessing the project area. However, due to priorities for current staffing and funding levels, the idea to utilize a car shuttle operated by the Forest Service to provide easier access is not being analyzed in detail by the Forest Service at this time.

**2. Variable hours for watershed patrols should be established to reduce incidents of unauthorized and illegal activities (camping in the Watershed, campfires, vandalism, etc.) during evening hours.**

This is a reasonable suggestion, and may be considered and possibly implemented as part of the ongoing administration of National Forest System lands within the Ashland Watershed, separate from this specific NEPA process.

**3. A trail running from Grouse Gap north to the 2060 road (referred to by trail users as the 'Timewarp Trail') should be considered. A portion of the trail already exists, and was enjoyed by mountain bikers prior to its deactivation.**

This trail was considered with the project proposal. To accomplish this, a segment of trail would need to be constructed on the Klamath National Forest to link Grouse Gap with an existing segment of trail in the Ashland Watershed. Coordination with the Klamath National Forest identified additional needs for site design and survey work that would need to occur prior to additional analysis and implementation. For this reason this action was dropped from further consideration with this current environmental analysis process. Continued coordination with the Klamath National Forest is planned to explore future development of this trail opportunity (EA p. II-2).

**4. Rock surfacing along the 2060 road about 2 miles south of Lithia Park has made mountain biking across the rock-surfaced section difficult.**

This road maintenance/flood repair related road surfacing was conducted as a separate action from this project proposal. The type of surfacing used was appropriate use of authorized funding as well as appropriate for watershed resource protection. However, it has been brought to Forest Service attention by mountain bikers, hikers, and dog walkers, that the type of surfacing used has very much changed the recreation experience and ease of recreating on this section of road.

Some of these interested and affected citizens have since met with recreation staff and Forest road engineer to discuss options and solutions outside of this specific NEPA process.

**5. A seasonal closure (during fire season) of the 2060 road would reduce the incidents of unauthorized campfires and camping (and associated fire risk), vandalism, and litter from parties (along the road and near Lamb Mine Trailhead and private property).**

Alternative 2 proposes the year round closure of Forest Road 2060, from the Forest boundary to Four Corners. Since unauthorized camping and campfires, vandalism, and parties are generally associated with vehicle access, this would reduce the number of incidents of these types of activities along the section of road closed to vehicle traffic (EA, p. III-13). Currently, under all alternatives (including No-Action), Forest Order Number 2046 is enacted during periods of high fire danger, prohibiting all travel (pedestrian and vehicle) within the Ashland Creek Watershed (EA, p. III-12). Forest Road 2060 is included in the area of closure.

**6. Concern was expressed for the loss of funding to repair flood-damaged roads.**

Funding for Emergency Repair of Federally Owned (ERFO) roads was originally allocated for repair of flood-damaged roads in the Ashland Watershed. Some of this funding was later withdrawn based on the redirection of funding priorities at the National level. Flood repair work was authorized under a separate environmental analysis process and associated Decision Notice in 1998. Some flood repair work has been accomplished and additional work will be completed as new funding is received.