



**Phipps Meadow Buck and Pole Exclosures  
Aquatic Restoration Checklist  
USDA Forest Service  
Blue Mountain Ranger District, Malheur National Forest  
Grant County, Oregon**

## Implementation Description

### Project Information

<b>Project Information</b>	
Category 9: Livestock Fencing, Stream Crossings and Off-Channel Livestock Watering	
Lead Preparer: Cody Lund	
Location: Township 11 south, Range 35.5 east, Section 28; HUC 1707020301; USGS Quad: Austin	
Lease/ Case File/ Serial number: 01032023	
Begin Date: 12/19/2022	Due Date: 5/1/2023

Please see <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/malheur/landmanagement/?cid=STELPRD3817723&width=full>.

### Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to improve riparian floodplain and aquatic habitat within Phipps Meadow along Summit Creek, Wiwaanaytt Creek, and Middle Fork John Day River. This area includes critical habitat for threatened Middle Columbia River steelhead and sensitive Chinook salmon and redband trout. Juvenile rearing and spawning habitat for these species is currently limited within these streams. This project would increase productivity for rearing Middle Columbia River steelhead, redband trout, and culturally important Chinook salmon, and would restore riparian plant communities within the meadow.

Portions of these streams and their floodplains lack riparian shrubs (see Figure 3 and Figure 4) or what shrubs are present are over-browsed, stunting all growth. (see Figure 5). Riparian vegetation provides streambank shading to help maintain cool water temperatures; nutrients for aquatic macroinvertebrates which become fish food; and root reinforcement providing streambank stability. Currently, riparian shrubs are limited in this area due to over-browsing and entrenched stream channels. Water temperature, shade, and bank stability are important aquatic habitat features (riparian management objectives) identified in the Malheur Forest Plan (USDA Forest Service 1990) as amended by PACFISH.

Past efforts in 2015 to protect existing willows in Phipps Meadow from over-browsing have been effective using small wire cages (USDA Forest Service 2015) (see Figure 6 and Figure 7). However, these willows have since exceeded capacity of the wire cages and any parts of the willows sticking out are getting heavily browsed, reducing future growth (see Figure 7, Figure 8, and Figure 9).

This project proposes to continue these efforts by fencing portions of Phipps Meadow, Summit Creek, and Wiwaanaytt Creek to promote growth, distribution, and protection of existing riparian hardwoods. Six-foot buck and pole fencing (see Figure 10) would be constructed around five specific areas to allow existing riparian hardwoods to passively establish and expand.

Desired conditions for this project include:

- Improving growth of established caged and uncaged riparian hardwoods;
- Promoting expansion of riparian hardwoods;
- Cooling water temperatures;
- Improving bank stability by increasing root reinforcement; and
- Improving juvenile rearing habitat for Middle Columbia River steelhead, redband trout, and Chinook salmon.

Reaching these desired conditions requires improvements of riparian vegetation and hardwoods to enhance stream shade, riparian vegetation composition and vigor, adequate rearing habitat, and streambank stability. While improving riparian hardwoods and vegetation through this project would not reach all desired conditions for Phipps Meadow and surrounding streams, future restoration plans are being developed to address incised channels and fully reconnect the floodplain with the water table. This project would enhance riparian hardwood and vegetation before the next phase of restoration to reduce future revegetation efforts and cost.

Fencing maintenance on all enclosures would be the responsibility of Blue Mountain Ranger District aquatics staff and all enclosures would be in place for at least five years after implementation of instream restoration. Instream restoration currently being developed is proposed for implementation in 2026 or 2027. After five years, we would monitor hardwoods within enclosures with an objective of 50 percent of measured hardwoods having more than 50 percent of the current year's leaders above seven feet in height (using Multiple Indicator Monitoring). Seven feet is the average height considered unavailable browse for elk (USDI, BLM 1992). After five years, if the above objective is met for all or specific enclosures, maintenance shall cease on sections of fence, or sections of fence may be removed to allow for passage of wildlife. If the objective is not met after five years, an interdisciplinary team shall evaluate why the objective is not being met and modify the existing strategy or develop an adaptive management strategy.

## Land Use Plan Conformance

The project falls under management area 3B - Anadromous Riparian Areas and management area 14 - Visual Corridors of the Malheur National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Malheur Forest Plan; USDA Forest Service 1990).

The goal of management area 3B is to “manage riparian areas to protect and enhance their value for wildlife, anadromous fish habitat and water quality... Design and conduct management in all riparian areas to maintain or improve water quality and beneficial uses” (USDA Forest Service, 1990). This project is consistent with management area 3B standards to provide necessary habitat to maintain or increase populations of management indicator species; manage composition and productivity of key riparian vegetation to protect or enhance riparian-dependent resources; plan, design, and implement riparian habitat improvement activities to upgrade riparian areas that are not in condition to meet management objectives or desired condition; improve rate of recovery in riparian areas not in a condition to meet management objectives by eliminating or reducing impacts of management activities that may slow riparian recovery; and maintain or enhance water quality or fish habitat through instream or riparian improvements (USDA Forest Service 1990, management area 3B standards 5, 8, 9, 10, and 11, page IV-63).

Management area 14 standard 6 states “design and implement fish and wildlife improvement/maintenance projects to meet visual quality objectives.” This project has been designed using buck and pole fencing which is preferred and consistent with visual standards (USDA Forest Service 1990, page IV-108).

Summit Creek, Wiwaanaytt Creek, and Middle Fork John Day River are within category 1 riparian habitat conservation areas (fish bearing streams) as designated by PACFISH/INFISH1, and contain critical habitat for Middle Columbia River steelhead as designated by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Juvenile Chinook salmon also use these streams for rearing habitat.

## Proposed Action and Implementation Plan

The following project activities would occur in Phipps Meadow as part of this proposal (see Figure 1). In-channel work and stream crossing would occur during the in-water work period from July 15 to August 15, unless an in-water work variance is granted.

Specific actions proposed within this project are:

- Construct 6 buck and pole enclosures enclosing approximately 17.9 acres and 0.8 miles total of Middle Columbia River steelhead critical habitat along Middle Fork John Day River (0.2 miles), Summit Creek (0.3 miles), and Wiwaanaytt Creek (0.3 miles) (see Figure 2).
- Remove sections of barbed wire fence within the project area that are no longer used for management and are deteriorating due to lack of maintenance.
- Remove two aspen buck and pole enclosures that have met objectives for establishing young aspen growth.

## Project Timeline

### Pre-Project Work (March to June 15)

- Submit pre-project reporting into the Aquatic Restoration Regulatory Reporting System (ARRRS) for notification to regulatory agencies;
- Identify and flag botany avoidance areas and invasive weed treatment areas;
- Identify and flag heritage avoidance areas; and
- Arrange field trip with interdisciplinary team to review fence construction and final configuration to best reduce impacts to sensitive areas from wildlife and livestock movement.

### Phase I (June 15 to July 14)

Buck and pole fencing material would be staged at large pullout off National Forest System road 2622240 (primary) and if needed, on short non-numbered spur road off Highway 26 (secondary) (see Figure 2). Two old sections of barbed wire livestock fencing would be removed to allow construction of buck and pole fence. Construction of buck and pole fence may start, but no instream work or stream crossings would occur until phase II during the in-water work period.

### Phase II (July 15 to August 15)

Construction of buck and pole fences would continue. Any part of the fences could be constructed during this phase. All sections of fence that cross a stream must be completed during this phase.

## Phase III (August 16 to November 1)

Construction of exclosures may continue as long as there is no instream equipment work associated with fence and crossing construction. An in-water work variance may be requested if there is still construction work associated with crossing streams.

## Project-Specific Project Design Criteria

- Ensure the National Forest Boundary Line Policy and Direction is reviewed prior to project implementation and adjacent landowners are adequately notified.
  - Coordinate with lands special use permit holders (Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative and Oregon Telephone Company) prior to implementation to ensure authorized improvement protections.
  - Protect existing irrigation ditch from project disturbances.
  - Contact 811 for buried line locates prior to excavations.
- If vehicles or heavy equipment will be used to transport fencing materials across meadow, ensure 15a under “General Aquatic Conservation Measures” below is followed to protect the soil resource when wet soil conditions are present and avoid detrimental soil rutting, compaction, and puddling.
- Construction of exclosures must be completed before any rifle elk hunting season and no construction may take place during any rifle elk season.
  - During fence construction, at least 10% of the exclosure and gates must be completed in the final workday for each exclosure to avoid wildlife entrapment during construction.
  - Each exclosure shall have multiple buck and pole sections constructed with only the lower four rails. This will allow for wildlife escapement in the event of entry. Aquatics and wildlife shall install monitoring game cameras at these locations to make sure wildlife are not chronically entering exclosures at these locations. If wildlife is consistently entering exclosures at these locations, aquatics and wildlife will discuss options to reduce these instances.

# Figures

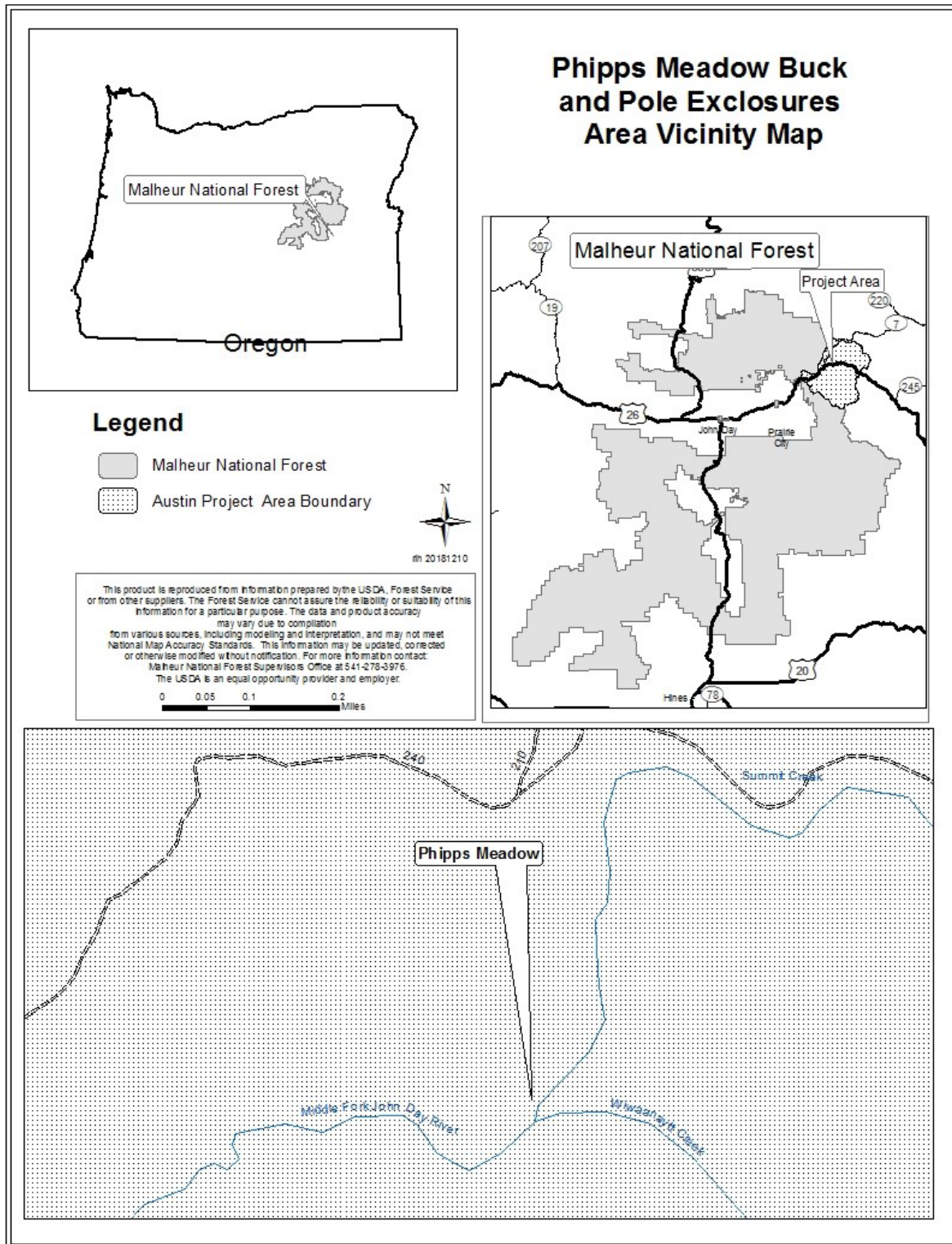


Figure 1. Phipps Meadow vicinity map.

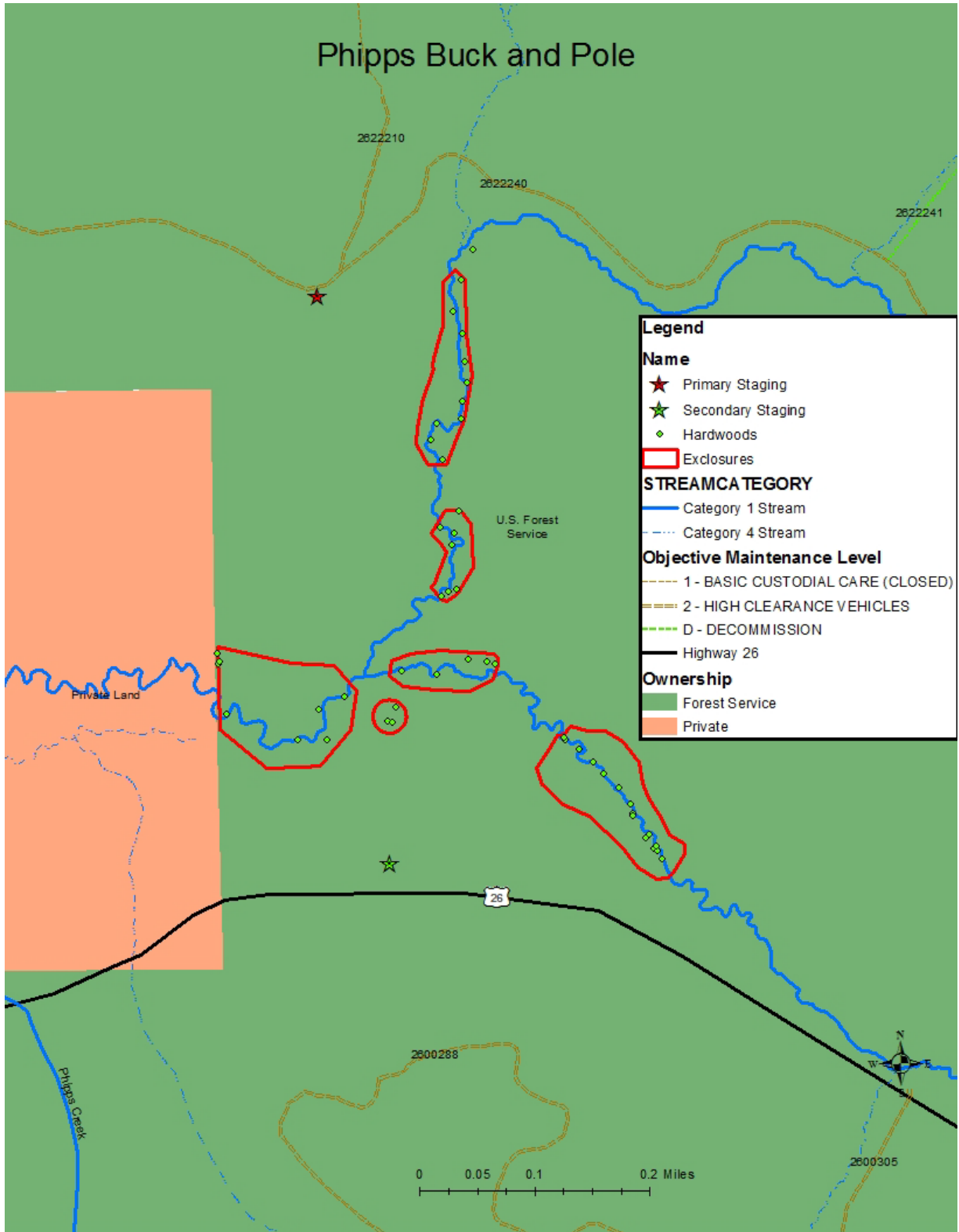


Figure 2. Phipps Meadow Buck and Pole Exclosures Project area showing fencing and staging locations.



**Figure 3. Phipps Meadow lacking riparian hardwoods looking upstream towards the confluence of Summit and Wiwaanaytt Creeks.**



**Figure 4. Phipps Meadow lacking riparian hardwoods looking downstream towards the confluence of Summit and Wiwaanaytt Creeks.**



**Figure 5. Alder along Summit Creek. Most new growth is browsed, restricting potential growth.**



**Figure 6. Willows protected with wire cages since 2015 in Phipps Meadow.**



**Figure 7. Willow protected with a wire cage since 2015 in Phipps Meadow. Willow has outgrown cage, but any growth outside of cage gets over-browsed, reducing future growth.**



**Figure 8. Willows protected with wire cages since 2015 in Phipps Meadow. Any growth outside the cage or above where wildlife can reach gets browsed.**



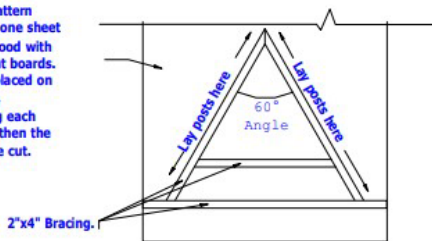
**Figure 9. Willows protected with wire cages since 2015 in Phipps Meadow. Any growth outside the cage or above where wildlife can reach gets browsed.**

**Buck and Pole Fence**

Construction Notes: Upright posts shall be 7' long x 5"-8" in diameter. Rails shall be 3"-5" in diameter, 12' long, and 12" apart. Back rail shall be 3"-5" in diameter, and placed between every other pair of bucks. Secure rails with spikes long enough to ensure 3" nail penetration into the post.

**Figure 1**

A-Frame Pattern consists of one sheet of 3/4" plywood with 2"x4" layout boards. Posts are placed on the boards, overlapping each other, and then the notches are cut.

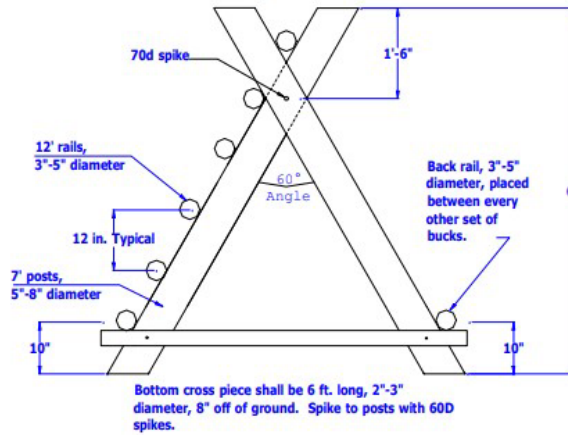


**Figure 2**

Notch both posts to a depth of 1/3 the diameter of the post, at the point at which they cross. Posts shall fit together snugly.



**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**

Construction Notes: For sliding gate, fasten 6' x 2"-3" holding poles to rails on adjacent bucks. Slide 12' long poles in between rails and holding poles. The gate poles can easily be slid out and removed for access.

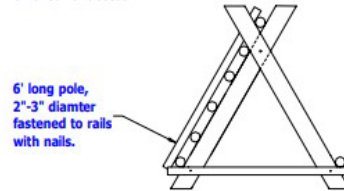


Figure 10. Specifications for buck and pole fence.

## References Cited

- USDA Forest Service. 1990. Malheur National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. John Day, OR: USDA Forest Service, Malheur National Forest. Available online: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/malheur/landmanagement/planning>.
- USDA Forest Service. 1994. Amendment 29, Management Area 3B. In USDA Forest Service 1990. Land and resource management Plan (LRMP), appendices, and amendments: Malheur National Forest, John Day, Oregon.
- USDA Forest Service. 1995a. Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice for the implementation of interim strategies for managing anadromous fish-producing watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and portions of California (PACFISH). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region. Available online: [https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/malheur/landmanagement/projects/?cid=fsbdev3\\_033813](https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/malheur/landmanagement/projects/?cid=fsbdev3_033813).
- USDA Forest Service. 1995b. Environment Assessment for the Inland Native Fish Strategy; Interim Strategies for Managing Fish-producing Watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, Western Montana, and Portions of Nevada. (INFISH). Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service Intermountain, Northern, and Pacific Northwest Regions.
- USDA Forest Service. 2014. Malheur National Forest aquatic restoration environmental assessment and decision notice. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Malheur National Forest, John Day, OR.
- USDA Forest Service. 2015. Malheur National Forest Phipps Meadow Beaver Forage project. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Malheur National Forest, John Day, OR.
- USDI Bureau of Land Management. 1992. Rangeland inventory and monitoring supplemental studies. Technical Reference 4400-5. Denver, CO. 87 pp.

# Project Review

## Malheur National Forest Aquatic Restoration Project NEPA Compliance and Implementation Checklist

**Project Number:** 01032023      **Date:** 12/19/2022      **Location:** Phipps Meadow  
**Category:** 9. Livestock fencing, stream crossings and off-channel livestock watering  
**Project Description:** Construct six buck and pole exclosures totaling 17.9 acres and 0.8 stream miles. See project proposal for full description.

**Heritage** (to be completed by heritage specialist)

Y / N    Initial

**Y**      *KW*    Specific PDC for heritage addressed (heritage surveys; avoidance areas).

**Botany** (to be completed by botany specialist)

Y / N    Initial

**Y**      *JB*      Specific PDC for botany addressed (sensitive plant surveys).

**Y**      *JB*      Specific PDC for noxious weeds addressed.

**Land Management Consistency** (is the proposed project within the management area? Check yes or no. If yes, comments should indicate whether proposed actions are consistent with the standards for the management area.)

Y / N    Initial

- N**    *SLP*    4A big game winter range
- N**    *SLP*    6A and 6B wilderness
- N**    *SLP*    7 scenic area
- N**    *SLP*    8 special interest areas

Y / N    Initial

- N**    *SLP*    9 research natural areas
- N**    *SLP*    10 semi-primitive non-motorized recreation areas
- N**    *SLP*    22/22A wild and scenic river
- N**    *SLP*    inventoried roadless areas

**Comments:** The closest wilderness is North Fork John Day Wilderness which is 9.5 miles to the northwest. The closest research natural area is Dixie Butte research natural area which is 9.5 miles to the west. The closest inventoried roadless area is Dixie Butte which is 6.2 miles to the west. This project also lies within Management Area 14 – Visual Corridor.

I have reviewed this project and have determined it is compliant with the Malheur Forest Plan and Aquatic Restoration environmental assessment project design criteria identified for my resource.

**Table 1. Projects design criteria and Malheur Forest Plan compliance checklist**

Resource	Signature	Date	Comments (additional PDCs may be noted if necessary) *May continue on next page
Heritage	<i>/s/ Katee R. Withee</i>	3/8/2023	No effect to Historic Properties
Botany	<i>/s/ Jessi Brunson</i>	3/14/2023	No effect on sensitive plant species or their habitat
Invasive	<i>/s/ Jessi Brunson</i>	3/14/2023	No effect on invasive species.
Wildlife	<i>/s/ Jenny Henning</i>	3/22/2023	Construction of exclosures must be completed before any rifle elk hunting season and no construction may take place during any rifle elk season. During fence construction, at least 10% of the exclosure and gates must be completed in the final workday for each exclosure to avoid wildlife entrapment during construction. Each exclosure will have multiple buck and pole sections constructed with only the lower four rails. This will allow for wildlife escapement if wildlife was to enter the exclosure. Aquatics and wildlife will install monitoring game cameras at these locations to make sure wildlife are not chronically entering the exclosure at these locations. If wildlife is consistently entering the exclosure at these locations, aquatics and wildlife will discuss options to reduce wildlife entering the exclosure.
Fish*	<i>/s/ Dan Armichardy</i>	3/20/2023	Consistent with ARBO II and Malheur National Forest Aquatic EA. Beneficial effect for ESA threatened Mid-Columbia River steelhead.
Hydrology*	<i>/s/ Mary L. Welby</i>	3/30/2023	Expected to move water quality in favorable direction which may not be measurable.
Range	<i>/s/ Ardin Hoyt</i>	3/30/2023	No Range Concerns
Soils	<i>/s/ Leslee Crawford</i>	3/9/2023	If vehicles or heavy equipment will be used to transport fencing materials across meadow ensure 15a under "General Aquatic Conservation Measures" below is followed to protect the soil resource when wet soil conditions are present and avoid detrimental soil rutting, compaction, and puddling.
Recreation	<i>/s/ Kevin Green</i>	3/6/2023	Click here to enter comments
Special Uses	<i>/s/ Stacia Kimbell</i>	3/16/2023	Coordinate with the following Lands Special Use Permit Holders prior to implementation to ensure authorized improvement protections: OTEC (overhead utility); OTC (buried utility). Protect existing irrigation ditch from project disturbances. Contact 811 for buried line locates prior to excavations.
Lands	<i>/s/ Stacia Kimbell</i>	3/16/2023	Ensure the National Forest Boundary Line Policy & Direction is reviewed prior to project implementation and adjacent landowners are adequately notified.
Mining	<i>/s/ Matthew Smith</i>	3/20/2023	No mining issues.
Engineering	<i>/s/ Matthew Smith</i>	3/6/2023	No concerns
Fuels / Fire	<i>/s/ Rick Snodgrass</i>	3/27/2023	No concerns
Silviculture	<i>/s/ Zane Murray</i>	3/7/2023	No concerns

\* Ensure that an experienced fisheries biologist or hydrologist is involved in the design of all projects covered by Aquatic Restoration Biological Opinion II. The experience should be commensurate with technical requirements of a project.

District Environmental Coordinator: */s/ Sean Levin-Pompetzki*

Date: 4/13/2023



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Line Officer Signature: /s/ *Sally Christensen* Date: 4/24/2023

# Appendix to the Aquatic Restoration EA

## Implementation Description

**Project name:** Phipps Meadow Buck and Pole Enclosures

**Project number:** 01032023

**Category 9:** Livestock Fencing, Stream Crossings and Off-Channel Livestock Watering

The following information will guide actions for this project that is taking place within the bounds of the Decision Notice for the 2014 Malheur National Forest Aquatic Restoration Environmental Analysis to maintain that all conservation measures, guidelines, and project design criteria are met under this guiding document.

Much of the information below is reproduced from the Decision Notice for Aquatic Restoration Project Appendix A (pages 7 through 44), and may cite project design criteria (PDC) numbers, literature, or other documents not referenced further in this proposal document. Please refer to the Decision Notice for more information.

## Program Administration

1. Integration of project design criteria and conservation measures and terms and conditions into project design and contract language
  - a. This document is to outline the conservation measures and PDCs that will be used during project implementation to remain compliant with the aquatic restoration biological assessment as well as ARBO II.
2. Project notification: The following information will be provided to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Level 1 aquatics members 30 days prior to implementation as a Project Notification Form 7.
  - a. Action identifier – 01032023
  - b. Project name – Phipps Meadow Buck and Pole Enclosures
  - c. Location – Township 11 south, Range 35.5 east, Section 28

**Table 2. Project location information**

Project Location	Phipps Meadow Buck and Pole Enclosures
Stream name	Middle Fork John Day River, Summit Creek, Wiwaanaytt Creek
6th field HUC	1707020301
Latitude (decimal degrees)	44.584479
Longitude (decimal degrees)	-118.429669

- d. Agency contact – Cody Lund, [cody.a.lund@usda.gov](mailto:cody.a.lund@usda.gov)
  - e. Timing – Start date: 6/15/2023 End date: 11/30/2028
  - f. Activity category –
- Category 9:** Livestock Fencing, Stream Crossings and Off-Channel Livestock Watering
- g. Project description – Project description is available in the Proposed Action and Implementation Plan section above.
  - h. Species affected –
    - i. Listed species: Middle Columbia River Steelhead
    - ii. Critical Habitat: Yes
    - iii. MIS Species: Yes
  - i. Date of submittal – To be completed in Spring of 2023, at least 30 days prior to implementation.

- j. Site assessments – Assessment for contaminants is not required at these locations.
  - k. Review – NMFS fish passage review and Restoration Review Team review are not required.
  - l. Verification – [Click here to enter text.](#)
  - m. SOD project notification – [Click here to enter text.](#)
3. Minor Variance: No variances are proposed for this project.
  4. NMFS Fish Passage Review and Approval: This work does not require review by the NFMS level 1 team member.
  5. Restoration Review Team: This work does not require review by the restoration review team.
  6. Project Completion Report: To be completed after implementation
  7. Annual Program Report: This project will be completed within 2 years, completion and annual reporting will occur in the winter of FY25 before February 15th.

## General Aquatic Conservation Measures

8. **Technical skill and planning requirements:**
  - a. An appropriately qualified fisheries biologist or hydrologist will be involved in the design of this project.
  - b. The scope of this project is limited in both space and context. Field evaluations and site-specific surveys will require little work. Appropriate time will be allotted for these actions, prior to implementation. Planning and design will involve appropriate expertise.
  - c. The assigned fisheries biologist or hydrologist will make sure that any applicable conservation measures and project design criteria are met through the contracting process.
9. **Climate change:** due to the small scale of this work, future climate changes impacts will not have dramatic effects on this work
10. **In-water work period:** In-stream activities will occur between July 15th and August 15th.
11. **Fish passage:** Not applicable.
12. **Site assessment for contaminants:** In developed or previously developed sites, such as areas with past dredge mines, or sites with known or suspected contamination, a site assessment for contaminants will be conducted on projects that involve excavation of greater than 20 cubic yards of material. The action agencies will complete a site assessment to identify the type, quantity, and extent of any potential contamination. The level of detail and resources committed to such an assessment will be commensurate with the level and type of past or current development at the site. The assessment may include the following:
  - a. Review of readily available records, such as former site use, building plans, records of any prior contamination events.
  - b. Site visit to observe the areas used for various industrial processes and the condition of the property.
  - c. Interviews with knowledgeable people, such as site owners, operators, occupants, neighbors, local government officials, etc.
  - d. Report that includes an assessment of the likelihood that contaminants are present at site.
13. **Pollution and erosion control measures:** Implement the following pollution and erosion control measures:
  - a. **Project contact:** Identify a project contact (name, phone number, an address) that will be responsible for implementing pollution and erosion control measures.
  - b. List and describe any hazardous material that would be used at the project site, including procedures for inventory, storage, handling, and monitoring; notification procedures; specific clean-up and disposal instructions for different products available on the site;

proposed methods for disposal of spilled material; and employee training for spill containment.

- c. Temporarily store any waste liquids generated at the staging areas under cover on an impervious surface, such as tarpaulins, until such time they can be properly transported to and treated at an approved facility for treatment of hazardous materials.
- d. Procedures based on best management practices to confine, remove, and dispose of construction waste, including every type of debris, discharge water, concrete, cement, grout, washout facility, welding slag, petroleum product, or other hazardous materials generated, used, or stored on-site.
- e. Procedures to contain and control a spill of any hazardous material generated, used or stored on-site, including notification of proper authorities. Ensure that materials for emergency erosion and hazardous materials control are onsite (for example, silt fence, straw bales, oil-absorbing floating boom whenever surface water is present).
- f. Best management practices to confine vegetation and soil disturbance to the minimum area, and minimum length of time, as necessary to complete the action, and otherwise prevent or minimize erosion associated with the action area.
- g. No uncured concrete or form materials will be allowed to enter the active stream channel.
- h. Steps to cease work under high flows, except for efforts to avoid or minimize resource damage.

#### 14. Site preparation:

- a. **Flagging sensitive areas:** Prior to construction, clearly mark critical riparian vegetation areas, wetlands, and other sensitive sites to minimize ground disturbance.
- b. **Staging area:** Establish staging areas for storage of vehicles, equipment, and fuels to minimize erosion into or contamination of streams and floodplains.
  - i. No topographical restrictions: Place staging area 150 feet or more from any natural water body or wetland in areas where topography does not restrict such a distance.
  - ii. Topographical restrictions: Place staging area away from any natural water body or wetland to the greatest extent possible in areas with high topographical restriction, such as constricted valley types.
- c. **Temporary erosion controls:** Place sediment barriers prior to construction around sites where significant levels of erosion may enter the stream directly or through road ditches. Temporary erosion controls will be in place before any significant alteration of the action site and will be removed once the site has been stabilized following construction activities.
- d. **Stockpile materials:** Minimize clearing and grubbing activities when preparing staging, project, or stockpile areas. Any large wood, topsoil, and native channel material displaced by construction will be stockpiled for use during site restoration. Materials used for implementation of aquatic restoration categories (for example, large wood, boulders, and fencing material) may be staged within the 100-year floodplain.
- e. **Hazard trees:** Where appropriate, include hazard tree removal (amount and type) in project design. Fell hazard trees when they pose a safety risk. If possible, fell hazard trees within riparian areas towards a stream. Keep felled trees on site when needed to meet coarse large wood objectives.

#### 15. Heavy equipment use:

- a. **Choice of equipment:** Heavy equipment will be commensurate with the project and operated in a manner that minimizes adverse effects to the environment (for example, minimally-sized, low pressure tires, minimal hard turn paths for tracked vehicles, or temporary mats or plates within wet areas or sensitive soils).
- b. **Fueling and cleaning and inspection for petroleum products and invasive weeds:**

- i. All equipment used for instream work will be cleaned for petroleum accumulations, dirt, plant material (to prevent the spread of noxious weeds), and leaks repaired prior to entering the project area. Such equipment includes large machinery, stationary power equipment (for example, generators and canes), and gas-powered equipment with tanks larger than 5 gallons.
  - ii. Store and fuel equipment in staging areas after daily use.
  - iii. Inspect daily for fluid leaks before leaving the vehicle staging area for operation.
  - iv. Thoroughly clean equipment before operation below ordinary high water or within 50 feet of any natural water body or areas that drain directly to streams or wetlands and as often as necessary during operation to remain grease free.
- c. **Temporary access roads:** Existing roadways will be used whenever possible. Minimize the number of temporary access roads and travel paths to lessen soil disturbance and compaction and impacts to vegetation. Temporary access roads will not be built on slopes where grade, soil, or other features suggest a likelihood of excessive erosion or failure. When necessary, temporary access roads will be obliterated or revegetated. Temporary roads in wet or flooded areas will be restored by the end of the applicable in-water work period. Construction of new permanent roads is not permitted.
  - d. **Stream crossings:** Minimize number and length of stream crossings. Such crossings will be at right angles and avoid potential spawning areas to the greatest extent possible. Stream crossings shall not increase the risk of channel re-routing at low and high water conditions. After project completion, temporary stream crossings will be abandoned and the stream channel and banks restored.
  - e. **Work from top of bank:** To the extent feasible, heavy equipment will work from the top of the bank, unless work instream would result in less damage to the aquatic ecosystem.
  - f. **Timely completion:** Minimize time in which heavy equipment is in stream channels, riparian areas, and wetlands. Complete earthwork (including drilling, excavation, dredging, filling and compacting) as quickly as possible. During excavation, stockpile native streambed materials above the bankfull elevation, where it cannot reenter the stream, for later use.

#### 16. Site Restoration:

- a. **Initiate rehabilitation:** Upon project completion, rehabilitate all disturbed areas in a manner that results in similar or better than pre-work conditions through removal of project related waste, spreading of stockpiled materials (soil, large wood, trees, etc.) seeding, or planting with local native seed mixes or plants.
- b. **Short-term stabilization:** Measures may include the use of non-native sterile seed mix (when native seeds are not available), weed-free certified straw, jute matting, and other similar techniques. Short-term stabilization measures will be maintained until permanent erosion control measures are effective. Stabilization measures will be instigated within three days of construction completion.
- c. **Revegetation:** Replant each area requiring revegetation prior to or at the beginning of the first growing season following construction. Achieve reestablishment of vegetation in disturbed areas to at least 70 percent of pre-project levels within three years. Use an appropriate mix of species that will achieve establishment and erosion control objectives, preferably forb, grass, shrub, or tree species native to the project area or region and appropriate to the site. Barriers will be installed as necessary to prevent access to revegetated sites by livestock or unauthorized persons.
- d. **Planting manuals:** All riparian plantings shall follow Forest Service direction described in the Regional letter to Units, Use of Native and Nonnative Plants on National Forests and Grasslands May 2006 (Final Draft), and/or Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2001-014, Policy on the Use of Native Species Plant Material.

- e. **Decompact soils:** Decompact soil by scarifying the soil surface of roads and paths, stream crossings, staging, and stockpile areas so that seeds and plantings can root.
17. **Monitoring:** Monitoring will be conducted by action agency staff, as appropriate for that project, during and after a project to track effects and compliance with this opinion.
- a. **Implementation:**
    - i. Visually monitor during project implementation to ensure effects are not greater (amount, extent) than anticipated and to contact Level 1 representatives if problems arise.
    - ii. Fix any problems that arise during project implementation.
    - iii. Regular biologist/hydrologist coordination if biologist/hydrologist is not always on site to ensure contractor is following all stipulations.
  - b. **401 Certification:** To minimize short-term degradation to water quality during project implementation, follow current 401 Certification provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act for maintenance or water quality standards described by the following: Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (Oregon BLM, Forest Service, and BIA); Washington Department of Ecology (Washington BLM); and the Memorandum of Understanding between the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and Forest Service regarding Hydraulic Projects Conducted by Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region (WDFW and USDA-Forest Service 2012); California, Idaho, or Nevada 401 Certification protocols (BLM and Forest Service).
  - c. **Post project:** A post-project review shall be conducted after winter and spring high flows.
    - i. For each project, conduct a walk through/visual observation to determine if there are post-project affects that were not considered during consultation. For fish passage and revegetation projects, monitor in the following manner:
    - ii. Fish Passage Projects: Note any problems with channel scour or bedload deposition, substrate, discontinuous flow, vegetation establishment, or invasive plant infestation.
    - iii. Revegetation: For all plant treatment projects, including site restoration, monitor for and remove invasive plants until native plants become established.
    - iv. In cases where remedial action is required, such actions are permitted without additional consultation if they use relevant PDC and aquatic conservation measures and the effects of the action categories are not exceeded.
18. **Work Area Isolation, Surface Water Withdrawals, and Fish Capture and Release:** Isolate the construction area and remove fish from a project site for projects that include concentrated and major excavation at a single location within the stream channel. This condition will typically apply to the following aquatic restoration categories: Fish Passage Restoration; Dam, Tidegate, and Legacy Structure Removal; and Channel Reconstruction/Relocation.
- a. **Isolate capture area:** Install block nets at up and downstream locations outside of the construction zone to exclude fish from entering the project area. Leave nets secured to the stream channel bed and banks until construction activities within the stream channel are complete. If block nets or traps remain in place more than one day, monitor the nets or traps at least on a daily basis to ensure they are secured to the banks and free of organic accumulation and to minimize fish predation in the trap.
  - b. **Capture and release:** Fish trapped within the isolated work area will be captured and released as prudent to minimize the risk of injury, then released at a safe release site, preferably upstream of the isolated reach in a pool or other area that provides cover and flow refuge. Collect fish in the best manner to minimize potential stranding and stress by

- seine or dip nets as the area is slowly dewatered, baited minnow traps placed overnight, or electrofishing (if other options are ineffective). Fish must be handled with extreme care and kept in water the maximum extent possible during transfer procedures. A healthy environment for the stressed fish shall be provided—large buckets (five-gallon minimum to prevent overcrowding) and minimal handling of fish. Place large fish in buckets separate from smaller prey-sized fish. Monitor water temperature in buckets and well-being of captured fish. If buckets are not being immediately transported, use aerators to maintain water quality. As rapidly as possible, but after fish have recovered, release fish. In cases where the stream is intermittent upstream, release fish in downstream areas and away from the influence of the construction. Capture and release will be supervised by a fishery biologist experienced with work area isolation and safe handling of all fish.
- c. **Electrofishing:** Use electrofishing only where other means of fish capture may not be feasible or effective. If electrofishing will be used to capture fish for salvage, NMFS's electrofishing guidelines will be followed (NMFS 2000).
    - i. Reasonable effort should be made to avoid handling fish in warm water temperatures, such as conducting fish evacuation first thing in the morning, when the water temperature would likely be coolest. No electrofishing should occur when water temperatures are above 18 °C or are expected to rise above this temperature prior to concluding the fish capture.
    - ii. If fish are observed spawning during the in-water work period, electrofishing shall not be conducted in the vicinity of spawning fish or active redds.
    - iii. Only direct current (DC) or pulsed direct current shall be used.
    - iv. Conductivity less than 100, use voltage ranges from 900 to 1100. Conductivity from 100 to 300, use voltage ranges from 500 to 800. Conductivity greater than 300, use voltage to 400.
    - v. Begin electrofishing with minimum pulse width and recommended voltage and then gradually increase to the point where fish are immobilized and captured. Turn off current once fish are immobilized.
    - vi. Do not allow fish to come into contact with anode. Do not electrofish an area for an extended period of time. Remove fish immediately from water and handle as described above (PDC 20b). Dark bands on the fish indicate injury, suggesting a reduction in voltage and pulse width and longer recovery time.
    - vii. If mortality is occurring during salvage, immediately discontinue salvage operations (unless this would result in additional fish mortality), reevaluate the current procedures, and adjust or postpone procedures to reduce mortality.
  - d. **Dewater construction site:** When dewatering is necessary to protect species or critical habitat, divert flow around the construction site with a coffer dam (built with non-erosive materials), taking care to not dewater downstream channels during dewatering. Pass flow and fish downstream with a by-pass culvert or a water-proof lined diversion ditch. Diversion sandbags can be filled with material mined from the floodplain as long as such material is replaced at end of project. Small amounts of instream material can be moved to help seal and secure diversion structures. If Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed-fish may be present and pumps are required to dewater, the intake must have a fish screen(s) and be operated in accordance with NMFS fish screen criteria described below (in part e.iv) of this section. Dissipate flow energy at the bypass outflow to prevent damage to riparian vegetation or stream channel. If diversion allows for downstream fish passage, place diversion outlet in a location to promote safe reentry of fish into the stream channel, preferably into pool habitat with cover. Pump seepage water from the de-watered work area to a temporary storage and treatment site or into upland areas and allow water to filter through vegetation prior to reentering the stream channel.
  - e. **Surface water withdrawals:**

- i. Surface water may be diverted to meet construction needs, but only if developed sources are unavailable or inadequate. Where ESA-listed fish may be present, diversions may not exceed 10 percent of the available flow and fish screen(s) will be installed, operated, and maintained according to NMFS's fish screen criteria (NMFS 2011e).
  - ii. For the dewatering of a work site to remove or install culverts, bridge abutments etc., if ESA-listed fish may be present, a fish screen that meets criteria specified by NMFS (2011e) must be used on the intake to avoid juvenile fish entrainment. If ESA-listed salmon, steelhead, eulachon, or green sturgeon may be present, the action agencies will ensure that the fish screen design is reviewed and approved by NMFS for consistency with NMFS (2011e) criteria if the diversion (gravity or pump) is at a rate greater than 3 cubic feet per second (cfs). NMFS approved fish screens have the following specifications: (1) An automated cleaning device with a minimum effective surface area of 2.5 square feet per cfs, and a nominal maximum approach velocity of 0.4 feet per second (fps), or no automated cleaning device, a minimum effective surface area of 1 square foot per cfs, and a nominal maximum approach rate of 0.2 fps; and (2) a round or square screen mesh that is no larger than 2.38 mm (0.094 inches) in the narrow dimension, or any other shape that is no larger than 1.75 mm (0.069 inches) in the narrow dimension.
- f. **Stream re-watering:** Upon project completion, slowly re-water the construction site to prevent loss of surface water downstream as the construction site streambed absorbs water and to prevent a sudden release of suspended sediment. Monitor downstream during re-watering to prevent stranding of aquatic organisms below the construction site.

## Applicable Project Design Criteria

### Project Design Criteria for Aquatic Restoration Activity Categories

#### 9. Livestock Fencing, Stream Crossings and Off-Channel Livestock Watering Facilities

Livestock fencing, stream crossings and off-channel livestock watering facilities projects will be implemented by constructing fences to exclude riparian grazing, providing controlled access for walkways that livestock use to transit across streams and through riparian areas, and reducing livestock use in riparian areas and stream channels by providing upslope water facilities. Such projects promote a balanced approach to livestock use in riparian areas, reducing livestock impacts to riparian soils and vegetation, streambanks, channel substrates, and water quality. Equipment such as excavators, bulldozers, dump trucks, front-end loaders, and similar equipment may be used to implement projects.

**a. Livestock fencing:**

- i. Fence placement must allow for lateral movement of a stream and to allow establishment of riparian plant species. To the extent possible, fences will be placed outside the channel migration zone.
- ii. Minimize vegetation removal, especially potential large wood recruitment sources, when constructing fence lines.
- iii. Where appropriate, construct fences at water gaps in a manner that allows passage of large wood and other debris.

**b. Livestock stream crossings:**

- i. The number of crossings will be minimized.

- ii. Locate crossings or water gaps where streambanks are naturally low. Livestock crossings or water gaps must not be located in areas where compaction or other damage can occur to sensitive soils and vegetation (for example, wetlands) due to congregating livestock.
  - iii. To the extent possible, crossings will not be placed in areas where ESA-listed species spawn or are suspected of spawning (for example, pool tailouts where spawning may occur), or within 300 feet upstream of such areas.
  - iv. Existing access roads and stream crossings will be used whenever possible, unless new construction would result in less habitat disturbance and the old trail or crossing is retired.
  - v. Access roads or trails will be provided with a vegetative buffer that is adequate to avoid or minimize runoff of sediment and other pollutants to surface waters.
  - vi. Essential crossings will be designed and constructed or improved to handle reasonably foreseeable flood risks, including associated bedload and debris, and to prevent the diversion of streamflow out of the channel and down the trail if the crossing fails.
  - vii. If necessary, the streambank and approach lanes can be stabilized with native vegetation or angular rock to reduce chronic sedimentation. The stream crossing or water gap should be armored with sufficient-sized rock (for example, cobble-size rock) and use angular rock if natural substrate is not of adequate size.
  - viii. Livestock crossings will not create barriers to the passage of adult and juvenile fish. Whenever a culvert or bridge—including bridges constructed from flatbed railroad cars, boxcars, or truck flatbeds—is used to create the crossing, the structure width will tier to project design criteria listed for Stream Simulation Culvert and Bridge Projects under Fish Passage Restoration (PDC 21).
  - ix. Stream crossings and water gaps will be designed and constructed to a width of 10 to 15 feet in the upstream-downstream direction to minimize the time livestock will spend in the crossing or riparian area.
  - x. When using pressure-treated lumber for fence posts, complete all cutting or drilling offsite (to the extent possible) so that treated wood chips and debris do not enter water or flood-prone areas.
  - xi. Riparian fencing is not to be used to create livestock handling facilities or riparian pastures.
- c. Off-channel livestock watering facilities:**
- i. The development of a spring is not allowed if the spring is occupied by ESA-listed species.
  - ii. Water withdrawals must not dewater habitats or cause low stream flow conditions that could affect ESA-listed fish. Withdrawals may not exceed 10 percent of the available flow.
  - iii. Troughs or tanks fed from a stream or river must have an existing valid water right. Surface water intakes must be screened to meet the most recent version of NMFS fish screen criteria (NMFS 2011e)(NMFS 2011e)(NMFS 2011e)(NMFS 2011e)(NMFS 2011e)(NMFS 2011e)(NMFS 2011e), be self-cleaning, or regularly maintained by removing debris buildup. A responsible party will be designated to conduct regular inspection and as-needed maintenance to ensure pumps and screens are properly functioning.
  - iv. Place troughs far enough from a stream or surround with a protective surface to prevent mud and sediment delivery to the stream. Avoid steep slopes and areas where compaction or damage could occur to sensitive soils, slopes, or vegetation due to congregating livestock.
  - v. Ensure that each livestock water development has a float valve or similar device, a return flow system, a fenced overflow area, or similar means to minimize water withdrawal and potential runoff and erosion.
  - vi. Minimize removal of vegetation around springs, wet areas.
  - vii. When necessary, construct a fence around the spring development to prevent livestock damage.

## Project Design Criteria by Resource

### Fisheries and Hydrology

Fisheries and hydrology resources will follow all mitigation measures and project design criteria for aquatic restoration activities as shown in the ‘Aquatic Restoration Project Categories, Program Administration, General Aquatic Conservation Measures, and Project Design Criteria for Aquatic Restoration Activity Categories on the Malheur National Forest.’

Additional Aquatic project design criteria were developed for the following elements: tree tipping and felling, juniper treatments, tree hauling, and prescribed burning.

#### *General For Inside Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas*

All snags will be maintained within the RHCA unless deemed a hazard to the restoration activity.

#### *Tree Tipping and Tree Felling for Large Wood Projects*

Source trees being extracted (either by tipping or felling) as part of this project for instream restoration will not be harvested from within the primary shade zone.

**Table 3. Primary shade zone width slope distance (feet), based on adjacent hillslope (percent)**

Hillslope less than 30 percent	Hillslope 30 to 60 percent	Hillslope greater than 30 percent
50 feet	55 feet	60 feet

The Temperature Implementation Strategies allow the distances in the above table to be less (but not less than 25 feet.) if any of the following conditions applies:

- The trees are located on a south facing slope (175 to 185 degree azimuth) and therefore do not provide stream shade;
- An appropriate level of analysis is completed and documented, such as shade modeling, using site-specific characteristics to determine the primary shade tree width; and/or
- Field monitoring or measurements are completed to determine the width where optimum angular canopy density (65 percent or greater) is achieved (see TMDL Implementation Strategies).
- If trees are being felled for safety reasons they can be felled towards the stream.
- Source trees should come from but are not limited to: over or fully stocked upland and riparian stands, hazard trees, trees generated from administrative sites (maintenance, expansion, or new construction), and hardwood restoration.

There is no DBH (diameter at breast height) restriction for large wood, but consider the following before removing and placing trees:

#### Diameter:

- The key to establishing a logjam is utilizing larger diameter wood that resists decay. These pieces of wood are often called “key pieces,” and serve as the anchors for the logjam structure. Wood can improve fish habitat only if the wood is large enough to stay, influence flow patterns, and sediment sorting. Larger diameter wood retains its size longer as abrasion and decay occurs over the years. Larger diameter wood is more effective in creating pools and complex channels that improve fish populations. The minimum diameter required for a key piece of wood depends on the bankfull width of the stream is found in the following table:

**Table 4. Bankfull widths and minimum diameter of logs to be considered key pieces**

Bankfull width* (in feet)	Minimum diameter* (inches)
0 to 10	10

Bankfull width* (in feet)	Minimum diameter* (inches)
10 to 20	16
20 to 30	18
Over 30	22

\*This table was taken from '1995 A Guide to Placement of Large Wood in Streams.

#### Length:

- The length of the wood is also important to stability. To be considered a key piece a log with a rootwad still attached should be at least 1 1/2 times (1.5 times) the bankfull or a log without a rootwad should be twice (2 times) the length of the stream's bankfull width. As the best fish habitat is formed around jams composed of three to seven logs, at least two key pieces should be used at each structure.
- Mimic natural accumulations of large woody debris based on stream type, valley setting, and community type and ensure future large woody debris recruitment
- Tailholds as part of tree tipping operations are permitted across perennial, intermittent and ephemeral streams, but the use of protective straps will be required to prevent tree damage.

#### *Juniper Treatments*

The majority of the juniper treatment areas would be within the riparian habitat conservation areas and adjoining uplands. For each area evaluated for juniper treatments, interdisciplinary teams would discuss the following questions in order to identify the attributes of an area and select the appropriate treatments:

- What kind of site (potential natural vegetation, soils)?
- Successional state of site?
- Components that need to be restored?
- How units may fit into the overall landscape mosaic?
- Long-term goals and objectives?

Utilize the "Western Juniper Field Guide: Asking the Right Questions to Select the Appropriate Management Actions (Bates et al. 2007, Circular 1321) (see <http://pubs.usgs.gov/circ/1321/pdf/circ1321.pdf>).

#### *Tree and Boulder Hauling*

- Apply mitigation and best management practices for dust abatement (water, lignosulfonate, calcium, and magnesium chlorides) dry conditions, and erosion control as directed by physical scientist or road engineer (see road maintenance project design criteria #6 for application).
  - ◆ Haul on gravel and native-surface roads will be limited to dry conditions.

#### **Haul Restrictions to Prevent Fine Sediment Delivery to Streams**

- Haul or maintenance is permitted on roads under the following conditions:
  - ◆ During haul, weather conditions are monitored daily for the chance of precipitation by the hydrologist or fish biologist.
  - ◆ No rutting of the road surface is occurring, indicating the subsurface is wet.
  - ◆ Frozen ground conditions.
  - ◆ Haul will cease at any time when the travelway of the road is wet and turbid water or fines are observed moving off the road surface to ditchlines that deliver to stream channels regardless of time of year.

#### **Roads Exempt from Haul Restrictions Include (Due to No Mechanism for Sediment Delivery):**

- Paved roads

- Surfaced Ridge top roads
- Surfaced outsloped roads with no ditch or stream crossings

### **Prescribed Burning and Related Activities**

- Mechanical piling and burning of large piles will be restricted to existing roads and landings.
- Include all relevant PDC in silviculture prescriptions and burn plan objectives for all fuel treatment activities within RHCAs.
- Use all available fuel treatments and preparation activities as necessary (for example, multiple entries, slash pull-back, modified ignition methods, locations, timing, and sequence, thinning of small green trees, pruning of green trees and snags, prescribed fire, fire suppression, jack pot burning, etc.) to achieve the specific PDC. Suppression should be used only as a last resort to achieve other PDC.

### **For Perennial and Fish-Bearing Stream Channels:**

- Avoid removing trees along stream banks (for example, don't cause bank instability or increase erosion).
- Within primary shade zone retain 100 percent of the overstory canopy closure with the exception of hardwood treatment.
- For intermittent, non-fish-bearing stream channels:
  - ◆ Within 50 feet of the stream channel backing fire is preferred.
- For the maintenance and use of water sources and draft sites:
  - ◆ Minimize disturbance of existing riparian vegetation to the greatest extent practical; in particular, maintain shade, bank stability, and large woody material recruitment potential.
  - ◆ Use sediment control measures such as straw bales, filter cloth, or sediment fences when conditions warrant.
  - ◆ Maximize maintenance activities during late summer and early fall to best avoid wet conditions.
  - ◆ Do not pump from streams that do not have continuous surface flow. When pumping water in all situations from streams, ensure that at least one-half of the original streamflow remains below the pump site.
  - ◆ Refuel power equipment, or use absorbent pads for immobile equipment, and prepare concrete at least 150 feet ( or as far as possible from the water body where local site conditions do not allow a 150 foot setback) from water bodies to prevent direct delivery of contaminants into associated water bodies.
  - ◆ Fisheries, hydrology or other qualified personnel must work with engineering/fire personnel to review proposed activities to minimize potential effects to fish, stream channel conditions, and water quality.
  - ◆ Use and develop off-channel ponds outside of stream channels were feasible and appropriate. Work with fire folks to prioritize and decommission unnecessary in-stream drafting sites.
  - ◆ Water withdrawal equipment must have a fish screen installed, operated and maintained in accordance to NOAA Fisheries guidelines.

### **Wildlife**

#### ***Threatened, Endangered or Sensitive Species***

- If wolves become established (denning) while project implementation is occurring, measures will be taken to avoid activity in that vicinity

- If any evidence of wolverines is discovered during project implementation, measures will be taken to provide protection. If a den is found we would protect it from human disturbance.

### *Raptors*

- No activities will occur within currently known goshawk or other raptor nest stands. To conserve nesting habitat and to minimize disturbance to nesting individuals, restrictions would be executed according to the requirements of the species involved.
- With all newly discovered raptor nests, a buffer zone would be established by the wildlife biologist to restrict activities near the nest area during occupancy.
- Where possible, retain trees with inactive nests that may be important to secondary nesters (for example, great gray owl).
- Any snags in riparian areas or uplands will be protected from disturbance, removal, or use in stream restoration activities unless deemed a safety hazard at a specific work site.

### *Big Game*

- Within big game winter range a wildlife biologist will be consulted between December 1 and April 1 to determine if activities should be restricted for big game needs.

### *Botany*

Note: Pre-implementation planning project design criteria are identified.

### *Rare and Sensitive Plants and Habitats*

- ***Pre-Implementation:*** Proposed restoration projects shall be completely surveyed early in the implementation planning process by a qualified botanist or rare plant technician, to identify and assess any sensitive or rare plant populations or habitats.
- ***Pre-Implementation:*** Proposed restoration projects shall develop restoration plans for degraded sensitive species habitats and/or mitigation plans in areas where sensitive plant populations are documented. This shall be accomplished by a journey-level Forest Service botanist in collaboration with the interdisciplinary team and other stakeholders.
- Heavy equipment, vehicle operation, road construction, staging areas, stockpile areas, piling of slash, fence construction, recreation sites, prescribed fires, fire lines, and other operational activities shall not be allowed in any documented sensitive plant sites unless it is for the demonstrated benefit or protection of the site. All sensitive plant populations should be buffered 100 feet from all operational activities where topography does not restrict such a distance. Sensitive plant sites and associated buffers shall be identified as areas to protect.

### *Sensitive and Unique Habitats*

- The integrity of unique habitats shall be maintained. Unique habitats [may] include meadows, rimrock, talus slopes, cliffs, animal dens, wallows, bogs [fens], seeps and springs. This shall be accomplished by incorporating cover buffers approximately 100 feet in width.
- Heavy equipment, vehicle operation, road construction, staging areas, stockpile areas, piling of slash, fence construction, recreation sites, prescribed fires, fire lines, and other operational activities shall not occur within, or at the interface of lithosols (scablands).
- Cutting of old-growth juniper shall be prohibited. Old-growth characteristics include: sparse limbs, dead limbed or spiked-tops, deeply furrowed and fibrous bark, branches covered with bright-green arboreal lichens, noticeable decay of cambium layer at base of tree, and limited terminal leader growth in upper branches.

### *Groundwater-Dependent Ecosystems*

- The integrity of groundwater-dependent ecosystems shall be maintained. Spring developments shall not dewater groundwater-dependent ecosystems. Spring developments shall not be allowed if the spring is occupied by rare or sensitive plant species, or in peatlands, fens, or where histic soils are present. These sites should be buffered 100 feet from all operational activities where topography does not restrict such a distance, and be identified as areas to protect.
- Heavy equipment, vehicle operation, road construction, staging areas, stockpile areas, piling of slash, fence construction, fire lines, and other operational activities shall not be allowed in springs, seeps, or any other groundwater dependent ecosystem, unless it is for the benefit or protection of the groundwater dependent ecosystems or development of the spring.
- Spring developments should not disturb the spring orifice (point where water emerges). Spring head boxes should be placed in a location that will cause the least amount of disturbance to the soils and vegetation of the groundwater dependent ecosystems. Preferable locations for spring head boxes should be in an established channel downstream from the orifice or a location where flowing water becomes subsurface.
- When necessary, construct fenced exclosures around spring developments to prevent damage from wild ungulates and livestock.
- Spring developments shall have a return flow system to minimize the diversion of surface and subsurface water from the catchment area. Consider using a float valve or similar device to reduce the amount of water withdrawn from the groundwater dependent ecosystems.
- When developing springs, place troughs far enough away from groundwater-dependent ecosystems, wetlands, and other sensitive or unique habitats to prevent erosion, compaction, or degradation to sensitive soils and vegetation due to livestock congregation.

### *Invasive Plant Species*

- ***Pre-Implementation:*** Proposed restoration projects shall be surveyed for invasive plants early in the implementation planning process by a qualified invasive plant specialist /technician, to identify and assess any undocumented invasive plant infestation.
- ***Pre-Implementation:*** For project areas that overlap or are adjacent to invasive plant infestations, assure that there is sufficient time prior to develop a long-term site strategy for control, eradication, and revegetation of the site. This shall be accomplished by a qualified invasive plant specialist in collaboration with the interdisciplinary team and other stakeholders.
- All activities shall be conducted in a manner as to minimize or prevent the potential spread or establishment of invasive species.
- Actions conducted on National Forest System Lands that will operate outside the limits of the road prism, require the cleaning of all heavy equipment (bulldozers, skidders, graders, backhoes, dump trucks, etc.) prior to entering the Malheur National Forest. Cleaning will be inspected and approved by the forest officer in charge of administering the project.
- Assure that all materials are weed-free. Use weed-free straw and mulch for all projects conducted or authorized by the Forest Service on National Forest System Lands. If State certified straw or mulch is not available, individual national forests should require sources certified to be weed-free using the North American Weed Free Forage Program standards or a similar certification process.
- Inspect active gravel, fill, sand stockpiles, quarry sites, and borrow material for invasive plants before use and transport. Treat or require treatment of infested sources before any use of pit material. Use only gravel, fill, sand, or rock that are judged to be weed free by District or Forest weed specialists.

- Prohibit heavy equipment operation, vehicle travel, staging areas, fire-control lines, and any other operational activities in invasive plant infestations, unless the activities are for the express purpose of eradicating the infestation or INV1 and INV2 have been completed.
- Conduct post-implementation monitoring for invasive plants. Continue monitoring, treating, and removing invasive plants until all infestations are eradicated and native plant species are well established.

### *Native Plant Materials and Revegetation*

- **Pre-Implementation:** Where the need for native plant materials is anticipated, assure that there is sufficient time for the plant materials specialist to develop a native plant materials plan and/or prescription prior to implementation of planned revegetation, rehabilitation, and restoration projects. This may include allowing for enough time to harvest and store hardwood cuttings, produce suitable quantities of native seed, and/or grow-out container stock.
- Locally adapted, genetically appropriate native plant materials are the first choice for use in revegetation, restoration, and rehabilitation, where timely natural regeneration of the native plant community is not likely to occur. Use a diverse assemblage of species that have the potential to naturally occur in the project area. Acquire native seed or plant sources as close to the watershed as possible. Examples of areas that may need treatment include: habitat restoration efforts, log decks, staging areas, landing zones, temporary roads, slash piles, culvert replacements, severely burned areas, skid trails, decommissioned roads, invasive species treatments, and other disturbances.
- Non-native, non-invasive plant species may be used in the following situations: (1) when needed in emergency conditions to protect basic resource values (for example, soil stability, water quality, and to help prevent the establishment of invasive species), (2) as an interim, non-persistent measure designed to aid in the re-establishment of native plants, (3) if native plant materials are not available or not economically feasible, and (4) in permanently altered plant communities.
- Under no circumstances shall non-native invasive plant species or noxious weeds be used for revegetation.
- Development, review, and/or approval of revegetation, rehabilitation, and restoration prescriptions, including species selection, genetic heritage, growth stage, seed mixes, sowing guidelines, and any needed site preparation, shall be accomplished by a plant materials specialist who is knowledgeable and trained or certified in the plant community type where the revegetation will occur.
- Concentrate plantings above the bank-full elevation. Sedge and rush mats should be placed and sized to prevent their movement during high flow events.
- Newly planted or seeded areas should be protected from animals and activities that may prevent, retard, or slow the establishment and recovery of native vegetation. Site-specific measures may include building fences, piling slash, jackstrawing, closing areas to vehicles, and/or temporarily changing grazing regimes until the desired condition is sufficiently achieved.

### **Soils**

- For projects involving heavy machinery off roads, the project proponents shall inspect the site for existing impacts to the soil. If existing impacts appear to be heavy on the Malheur National Forest or moderate on the Ochoco National Forest, they shall contact a soil scientist, who shall determine what site specific project design criteria are necessary to meet Forest Plan and Forest Service Manual standards and guidelines. (If a soil scientist is not available, a silviculturist or hydrologist can do the work.) If standards and guidelines cannot be met, heavy machinery shall not be used.
- Erosion would be minimized by following General Aquatic Conservation Measures (see section, above) and by implementing the appropriate project design criteria based on the type of activity (see Appendix A).

- Erosion from heavy machinery use would be minimized; by minimizing compaction and puddling, rutting would be minimized.
- For Livestock Stream Crossings and Off-Channel Watering Facilities, out-of-channel erosion would be minimized.
- For Road Erosion Control, erosion would be minimized.
- For Juniper Removal, erosion would be minimized. It is possible that juniper removal would increase ground cover within a few years, and thereby reduce erosion.
- Prescribed fire (including for disposal of slash after juniper removal) can involve only low- and moderate-severity fire, and erosion from fire lines would be minimized, so erosion from prescribed fire would not be significant.

## Fire and Fuels

- Mechanical tools may be necessary to prepare fire control lines for these burns, but would be limited, and typically no heavy equipment would be used. Prescribed burns or wildfires could temporarily affect air quality.
- The project design criteria for both Juniper Removal and Riparian Vegetation Treatment (controlled burning) would be followed. National, state, and local policies regarding prescribed fire implementation will be met.
- Activities that are expected to create smoke emissions would follow the State of Oregon Smoke Management Plan. Prior to burning, approval will be obtained from the Oregon Department of Forestry, who determines compliance with the Clean Air Act. State smoke forecasts, which predict wind direction and smoke mixing height, will be obtained prior to all burning to ensure smoke intrusions will not occur in the local smoke sensitive receptor areas.
- Burning will follow the guidance provided by the Oregon Smoke Management Plan (Directive 1-4-1-601, Operational Guidance for the Oregon Smoke Management Program), which is an agreement between federal land management agencies in northeast Oregon and Oregon Department of Forestry limiting smoke emission amounts. Oregon Department of Forestry monitors activity, and if a limit is reached it will shut down prescribed fire activity.

## Heritage Resources

- Compliance with section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for activities authorized under this analysis will be completed and concurred with by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office before any ground disturbing action takes place. For each potential activity the district or zone archaeologist will determine which of the criteria in the 2004 Programmatic Agreement with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office best fit the particular project. This will vary somewhat project to project based on the scale of the particular activity, the location on the landscape, and the nature of associated cultural resources, if any.
- The district or zone archaeologist will document their findings on a programmatic agreement form with a project description, rationale and location map which will be attached to the Forest Service Heritage Event database. The forest archaeologist will review and sign off on the programmatic review form if concurred with. For appendices A, B and C projects as defined in the 2004 Programmatic Agreement, the Forest will retain the documentation and provide the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office with the annual summary of projects as described in the Preservation Act.
- For full inventories the district or zone archaeologist will complete an inventory report meeting current Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) standards which will be reviewed by the forest archaeologist. The forest archaeologist will forward the completed inventory report to the

Oregon State Historic Preservation Office for review and concurrence signature or further discussion as appropriate.

- Consultation with Native American tribes is conducted under the terms of the Memorandums of Understanding the Forest has with each individual tribe. The Forest regularly consults with the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation.
- For work requiring a full inventory under the terms of the 2004 Programmatic Agreement any identified cultural resources sites will generally be avoided. For cases where site avoidance is impractical mitigation procedures will be developed in consultation with the Oregon SHPO before project work begins.
- If any previously unidentified cultural resources are located during project implementation, ground disturbing work will be halted until the resources are evaluated by the district or zone archaeologist. If the cultural resources are determined to be potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places work will either be permanently halted or a mitigation plan will be developed in consultation with the Oregon SHPO before work continues.

## Recreation

- Motorized aquatic restoration methods would not be used within wilderness, wild portions of wild and scenic rivers, and inventoried roadless areas.
- Mechanized aquatic restoration methods would not be used within wilderness or wild portions of wild and scenic rivers.

## Grazing

### *General*

- Range and fire specialists and permittees would coordinate activities including scheduling of burning activities in grazing units.
- Utilize the Forest Post-Fire Interim Grazing Guidelines to aid in determining when to resume grazing activities.
- Whenever possible, units to be rested would be burned in the spring of the year to be rested or in the fall prior to the rest year.
- If a rest period is required following a burn the permittee has the option to exclude cattle grazing from those portions of a pasture that were burned through the use of fencing and could continue to graze the unburned areas of a unit.

### *Protection of Government and Permittee Investments*

- All existing structural range improvements (fences, gates, spring developments, etc.) and permanent ecological plots would be contractually protected.
- Maintain structural integrity of range improvements.
- If structural improvements are damaged during project operations they would be repaired to Forest Service standards prior to livestock scheduled use by the party responsible for causing the damage. Repairs would be required of the purchaser if damage were done during thinning or fuel treatment contractors or by force account where appropriate.
- Three or more splices to a single wire within a distance of 20 feet will be replaced with a single splice.
- Fence right-of-ways (6 feet either side of fence), trails, other developments and access to them would be cleared of slash produced by project activities.

### *Aspen Restoration*

- New aspen enclosure fences would have gates installed in proper locations to allow for removal of stray livestock. Aspen fences would be maintained each year and repaired whenever necessary. Plans for aspen enclosures will define when restoration of the protected stand has been achieved and who has responsibility for maintenance of the structure. When fences are no longer needed, aspen fences should be removed.
- Alternate livestock water sources to those being used in aspen stands would be developed off-site before fencing aspen or re-evaluate fencing of the aspen site. Coordinate with range specialist and permittee.

### *Notification*

- During the planning stage of each individual project all potentially impacted grazing permittees will have notice of action and opportunity to provide input that may lessen impacts to their livestock operation well in advance of implementation.
- Prior to implementation all potentially impacted grazing permittees will be given notice of dates when work will start.

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