

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
DOLLY SODS WILDERNESS ORDNANCE REMOVAL PROJECT**

1. I have conducted an environmental assessment, in the overall public interest, concerning implementation of the Dolly Sods Wilderness Ordnance Removal Project. The purpose of this project is to reduce the risk to the public, wildlife, and to the environment from the uncontrolled detonation of unexploded ordnance.

The project is authorized as part of the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) as described in Section 160, Environmental Restoration of Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). One of the goals of this program is the "correction of other environmental damage (such as detection and disposal of unexploded ordnance) which creates an imminent and substantial endangerment to the public health or the environment." The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was designated as the executive agent for the Department of Defense in implementing the program. The program is administered by the Ordnance and Technical Program Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntsville Division, Huntsville Alabama. The environmental assessment is administered by the Huntington District, Huntington, West Virginia.

2. An assessment was conducted by the Huntington District to evaluate the potential environmental, cultural, and social well-being impacts of the proposed ordnance removal action within the Dolly Sods Wilderness. Consideration was given to public safety, environmental effects, cultural effects, wilderness use and preservation, local public opinion, and compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. The proposed alternative actions and mitigation plans were evaluated regarding potential impacts, either beneficial or adverse. The project was also reviewed to confirm that it met the needs of public for which it was proposed.
3. Three alternatives were considered.

Alternative 1 - Searching 20 feet on each side of Forest Service designating hiking trails, and detonating ordnance in place. Searching Forest Service inventoried campsites and detonating ordnance in place. This alternative would involve approximately 105 acres. This is the selected alternative.

Alternative 2 - Searching 20 feet on each side of Forest Service designated hiking trails, and detonating ordnance in



place. This alternative would involve 103.8 acres. This would be no search of campsites.

Alternative 3 - No action-No search for ordnance. Disposal of ordnance found and reported by users of Dolly Sods.

Other alternatives considered in the very early stages of the project, such as searching and clearing the entire wilderness area, deemed too aggressive for a wilderness area by the Forest Service and were not evaluated in the Environmental Assessment. The three alternatives are considered by the managers of the wilderness, i.e., the Forest Service, to be appropriate for the area.

4. An evaluation of the impacts of the selected alternative produced the following conclusions:

a. Environmental Considerations. The Huntington District has taken reasonable measures to assemble and present the known or foreseeable environmental impacts of the project. The Environmental Assessment has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Army Regulations (AR) 200-2. The environmental considerations include potential impacts in the following issue areas:

- botanical resources,
- zoological/wildlife resources,
- wilderness resources,
- environmental resources-air quality, water quality, soils, noise,
- cultural resources,
- socioeconomic resources, and
- public safety.

In addition to the Environmental Assessment, a Biological Assessment was prepared by Dr. Tom Pauly of Marshall University to provide a more detailed evaluation of potential impact on biological species of concern.

Detailed procedures have been developed to mitigate all potentially adverse effects of the project. As a result, it has been concluded by experts contributing to the Environmental Assessment that adverse effects resulting from project implementation will be insignificant. Furthermore, in a review by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, it is concluded that "... the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect" endangered, threatened, and sensitive species.

- b. Social Well-Being Considerations. Analysis of cultural, social, and economic issues were conducted. The project will have a positive impact on cultural resources, as a survey will be conducted to identify potential sites of significance prior to removal of ordnance, and sites identified during ordnance removal will be evaluated by an archaeologist. Such an evaluation would not be undertaken if the project were not to occur.

From a special perspective, the project will have a positive impact. Ordnance presents a significant risk to public safety. Its presence and potential for harm are not readily recognizable by the public. Clearance of ordnance from trails and campsites will ensure that wilderness users will have a safe area. Access to one of the most popular and accessible wilderness areas in the east will be maintained.

From an economic perspective, the project will have no short-term impact. In the longer term, the ordnance removal project will have a positive economic impact. With ordnance removed from trails and campsites, the United States Forest Service will be able to allocate its maintenance funds in a fashion that would otherwise not be possible.

For example, with ordnance removed from trails and campsites, crews will be able to work on trail maintenance projects without attempting to locate ordnance first. Work will proceed more quickly, and therefore, limited funds for such activities will be stretched further.

- c. Coordination With Resource Agencies. In accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and the Endangered Species Act, there has been coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Other agencies consulted included the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service.

The Dolly Sods Wilderness is part of the Monogahela National Forest. It is managed by the USDA Forest Service. Since the inception of the project in 1991, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has closely coordinated all activities with responsible Forest Service officials.

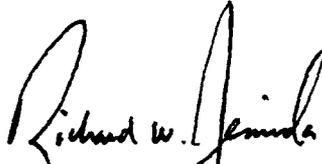
- d. Other Pertinent Compliance. No prime or unique farmland under

the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) would be involved. The project is also in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, (Section 106 - 36 CFR 800), Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), and Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands).

- e. Other Public Interest Considerations. No opposition to the Ordnance removal project has been expressed by the state or local governments or organized environmental groups, and there are no unresolved issues regarding the implementation of the project.
5. I find the Dolly Sods Wilderness Ordnance Removal Project has been planned in accordance with current authorization as described in the Environmental Assessment. The project is consonant with national policy, statutes, and administrative directives. This determination is based on thorough analysis and evaluation of the project and alternative courses of action. In conclusion, I find the proposed Dolly Sods Wilderness Ordnance Removal Project will have no significant adverse affect on the quality of the human and/or natural environmental.

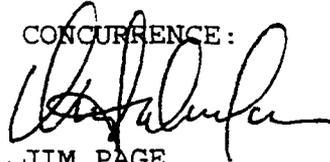
15 Sep 95

DATE



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CONCURRENCE:



for JIM PAGE  
Supervisor  
Monangahela National Forest

22 Sept 95

DATE