

DECISION
Documentation of NEPA Adequacy
PARADISE VALLEY MEDUSAHEAD PROJECT
DNA#DOI-BLM-NV-W010-0200-DNA

Introduction/Background

The U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Winnemucca District (WD) has prepared this Decision based on the Documentation of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) DNA#DOI-BLM-NV-W010-0200-DNA for the Paradise Valley Medusahead Project.

According to the Paradise Valley Weed District approximately 5,000 - 6,000 acres of land within Paradise Valley has been infested by patches Medusahead. Medusahead is an aggressive annual invasive species that produces a heavy thatch cover that promotes seed germination and out competes native species necessary for wildlife habitat. In addition, the species can affect productivity of agricultural lands. Uncontrolled Medusahead infestations could affect economic and environmental sustainability within Paradise Valley.

The WD has analyzed the environmental effects for use of the BLM approved herbicide Imazapic to control invasive species on two projects located in the vicinity of Paradise Valley. The Santa Rosa Fuelbreak (EA#NV-WO10-2010-0003-EA) and the Paradise Valley Fuelbreak Maintenance (EA#NV-WO10-2010-0009-EA) projects both proposed the use of the herbicide Imazapic and analyzed the associated impacts from using the herbicide. In addition, the BLM prepared and approved the use of Imazapic, including aerial application, in the Final Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), Record of Decision released in September 2007.

Compliance/Conformance

Implementation of the proposed action complies with requirements of the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and the Clean Water Act. The proposed action is in conformance with the Paradise-Denio Management Framework Plan (MFP), July 1982. The proposed action conforms to wildlife objectives, fire management objectives, and standard operating procedures per the following:

Standard Operating Procedure - .46(4) Soil-Water-Air

When carrying out large-scale crested wheatgrass seedings or herbicidal spray projects, wildlife areas to be given special consideration include ...Mitigating measure; "making no disturbed area wider than ¼ mile."

Range Management MFPIII Decision RM 2.1 P.D.:

All vegetation manipulations in sage grouse habitat will be done in accordance with the guidance supplied by the Nevada Department of Wildlife.

Wildlife MFPIII Decisions WL-1.21 P.D:

Maintain and improve habitat for sensitive, protected, threatened and endangered species listed on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered and Threatened List, BLM-Nevada Department of Wildlife Sensitive Species List and those existing Federal and state laws and regulations.

**Wildlife MFPIII Decisions WL-1.28 P.D and Standard Operating Procedures
Appendix I .46 (1)**

Protect sage-grouse strutting grounds and give proper consideration to other sage grouse-habitat by accepting as guidance Nevada Department of Wildlife's Guidelines for Vegetal Control Programs in Sage-Grouse Habitat in Nevada.

DECISION

On the basis of the information contained in the DNA Worksheet (attached), it is my decision to implement the proposed action to treat up to 1,500 acres of public lands annually for a three year period with the herbicide Imazapic. Treatment methods include; utilizing truck or ATV with a boom mounted sprayer, applying by hand using backpack pumps, or by aircraft. The implementation of the proposed action will not have environmental impacts beyond those already addressed in the following EAs or EIS.

- Santa Rosa Fuelbreak Project EA No.: DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-2010-0003-EA (February 2010)
- Paradise Fuelbreak Maintenance EA No.: DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-2010-0009-EA (July 2010)
- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States EIS (1991)
- Vegetation Treatment Using Herbicide on BLM Lands in Seventeen Western States EIS (2007)
- Winnemucca Field Office Integrated Weed Management EA No.NV-020-04-21 (August 2004)

This decision is subject to the following:

- All environmental protection measures, mitigation and monitoring identified in the DNA will be adhered to.
- A qualified BLM Project Inspector will be on site during treatment activities
- Drift cards will be placed to monitor for possible herbicide drift outside of established buffer zones.
- Dyes will be added to herbicide when applying herbicide by ground application methods in areas adjacent to buffer zones.
- When applying herbicide aerially there will be a 50 foot buffer zone between private lands and the aerially treated area.
- Avoid applying herbicide in areas where or when livestock is present.

Public Outreach/Involvement

Scoping letters were sent out to multiple interested publics on both the The Santa Rosa Fuelbreak (EA#NV-WO10-2010-0003-EA) and the Paradise Valley Fuelbreak Maintenance (EA#NV-WO10-2010-0009-EA) projects requesting public comment. The Santa Rosa scoping letter was sent on May 14, 2009. The Paradise Valley Fuelbreak Maintenance scoping letter was sent in March of 2009. In addition, a scoping letter was sent out on the proposed Paradise Valley Medusahead project on August 23, 2011.

The BLM received correspondence supporting the proposed Medusahead project and one letter that included a number of comments on the proposed project.

BLM has organized these comments into three summary categories: 1) NEPA compliance, 2) Rangeland Management and 3) Request for more detailed information.

NEPA compliance comments included; the BLM should prepare an EIS. The attached Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) presents the rationale why BLM considers an EIS is not warranted.

A number of comments were received based on management of livestock and other projects. These comments included removal of livestock for 10 years and issues associated from construction of fuelbreaks and promoting the spread of invasive species.

BLM considered these comments and determined they are outside the scope of this analysis and do not require further agency response. It is noted that the above fuelbreak projects include maintenance actions to treat vegetation within fuelbreaks to prevent the establishment and spread of invasive annual species.

Comments also included concerns relating to herbicide drift. BLM has included in the proposed action buffer zones to protect sensitive resource areas and decision requirements to monitor for aerial drift to include draft card placement.

Rationale:

- There are no known sage-grouse leks located within the treatment areas. Implementation of the proposed action would not adversely affect sensitive species habitat and threatened or endangered (T&E) species habitat for Lahontan cutthroat trout. Treatment of Medusahead should improve habitat conditions for sensitive species and T&E species habitat.
- Controlling infestations of Medusahead would improve other wildlife habitat conditions.
- Based on the environmental analysis, it is determined that the proposed action will not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation of the public lands and is consistent with federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and plans.
- Application of BLM approved herbicides has been fully analyzed.

The BLM has complied with the requirements of NEPA through the preparation of the two EA's. There were no "significant" impacts identified in the analysis which would require the preparation of an EIS (See attached FONSI).

Appeal

If you feel you are adversely affected by this decision, you may appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals per the appeal form 1842-1 attached. You must file your appeal along with a statement of reasons, within 30 days from receipt of this decision.

 Acting FMO
Donovan Walker, Acting Fire Management Officer

10/7/11
Date

2 Attachments

1. Form 1842-1
2. DNA#DOI-BLM-NV-W010-0200-DNA

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR
THE SANTA ROSA COOPERATIVE
FUELS TREATMENT PROJECT
DNA#DOI-BLM-NV-W010-0200-DNA**

I have reviewed DNA # NV-WO10-0200-DNA, dated October 2011. The environmental effects as described in the proposed action have been addressed in the following NEPA compliance documents.

- Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States EIS (1991)
- Winnemucca Field Office Environmental Assessment (EA) Herbicide Application for Control of Noxious Weeds EA No. NV-020-99-10 (January 19, 1999)
- Winnemucca Field Office Integrated Weed Management EA No. NV-020-04-21 (August 2004)
- Vegetation Treatment Using Herbicide on BLM Lands in Seventeen Western States EIS (2007)
- Programmatic EA of Integrated Weed Management on BLM Lands EA No. NV-020-08-11 (2008)
- Santa Rosa Fuelbreak Project EA No.: DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-2010-0003-EA (February 2010 and May 2010)
- Paradise Fuelbreak Maintenance EA No.: DOI-BLM-NV-WO10-2010-0009-EA (July 2010)

Based on implementation of mitigation measures and standard operating procedures identified in the DNA, I have determined that the proposed action will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to be prepared pursuant to Section 102 (2) (C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Rationale:

The proposed action is in conformance with the approved Paradise-Denio Management Framework Plan and is consistent with the plans and policies of neighboring local, county, state, tribal and federal agencies and governments.

This finding and conclusion is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and the intensity of impacts described in the EA.

Context: The project area is located on in Paradise Valley, along the east flank of the Santa Rosa Range. Undisturbed areas are characterized as being dominated with Wyoming sagebrush and perennial grass understory. Medusahead infestations have established within this area.

Intensity:

1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

The DNA and associated NEPA documents have considered both beneficial and adverse impacts of this project. The project will improve wildlife habitat and overall improve the health of the watershed.

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2) *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.*

Implementation of the proposed action and mitigation measures will not result in potentially significant impacts to public health. All registered herbicide labels will be followed and adhered to as required by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and Pesticide Use Proposals will be completed and approved per the BLM Manual 9015, prior to any chemical herbicide applications.

It has been determined that proper application of the Imazapic in the course of BLM vegetation management activities, presents no unusual or significant risk to workers or public health or safety.

3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

There would be no known impacts to the unique characteristics of the geographic area from the proposed action based on implementation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's), label directions, and mitigation measures identified.

4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

The effects applying Imazapic are well known and documented and are not highly controversial. The use of the herbicide to control infestations of Medusahead would improve wildlife habitat.

5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

There are no known effects of the proposed action which are considered uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

The proposed action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

No significant cumulative impacts have been identified

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

No known adverse effects would occur. The selected alternative will not cause the loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural or historical resources.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the ESA of 1973.*

The EA has identified that no significant or adverse impacts would result to these species from implementing the proposed action. The proposed action would improve overall wildlife habitat in Paradise Valley.

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10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The proposed action will not violate or threaten to violate any Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

 *Acting FMO*

Donovan Walker, Acting Fire Management Officer

10/7/11

Date