



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Phoenix District
21605 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85027
www.blm.gov/az/

In Reply Refer To:
9015 (AZP000)
DOI-BLM-AZ-P000-2015-0001-EA

DECISION

Phoenix District Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment DOI-BLM-AZ-P000-2015-0001-EA

INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Phoenix District Office has prepared the Phoenix District Integrated Weed Management Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOI-BLM-AZ-P000-2015-0001-EA) to evaluate the potential impacts related to implementing an integrated weed management program across all land managed by the BLM Phoenix District.

The Phoenix District proposes to treat target weed species identified from field reconnaissance and/or potential weed species that could occur in the district. The target weed species include Arizona state-listed weeds and other invasive plant species, as defined by the Arizona Department of Agriculture Noxious Weed List and the BLM National List of Invasive Weed Species of Concern, found on BLM-administered lands.

BACKGROUND

The Phoenix District Lower Sonoran and Hassayampa Field Offices manage approximately 2.4-million acres of public land (Figure 1). These lands include approximately 1.4-million acres of federal land in the Lower Sonoran Field Office in south-central Arizona, including the 486,400-acre Sonoran Desert National Monument, and approximately 1-million acres of federal land in the Hassayampa Field Office north of US Interstate 10, including the 70,900-acre Agua Fria National Monument. The Phoenix District includes all or portions of the following counties: Apache, Navajo, Coconino, Yavapai, Maricopa, Pinal, and Pima.

BLM has made ecosystem health a priority on the lands it manages and uses the Land Health Standards as described in Arizona Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Grazing Administration in achieving proper functioning of ecological processes (i.e., soils, riparian-wetland sites, upland and riparian-wetland plant communities). One of the greatest obstacles of healthy ecosystems is the rapid expansion of weeds across public lands. Weeds can dominate and often cause permanent damage to native plant communities and jeopardize the overall health of public lands and activities that occur on them. Weeds can also reduce the quality and quantity of

habitat and forage for wildlife and livestock, alter soil productivity, increase the potential for soil erosion and adverse impacts on water quality, and may cause a loss of riparian area function.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to manage weed infestations on BLM-administered lands within the Phoenix District using early-detection and rapid-response strategies and an integrated approach. An integrated weed management protocol would primarily utilize manual, mechanical, biological, chemical, and revegetation treatment methods.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The public was provided the opportunity to participate in this EA in compliance with 43 CFR 1610.2. Public scoping meetings were held on December 14, 2010 at the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) and on December 15, 2010 at the Gila Bend Community Center. The meetings were advertised via local newspapers, radio, and a press release.

One person attended the public meeting at the AZGFD with no comments. A total of three people attended the public meeting at the Gila Bend Community Center. BLM management was present to answer questions. Maps were available that showed the location of the proposed weed management area and potential site-specific project areas. In addition to the opportunity to attend a public meeting, written comments were solicited and received via email.

The BLM made the EA available for public comment for 30 days between August 6, 2015 and September 7, 2015. No comments were received.

DECISION

After reviewing the analysis presented in the Phoenix District Integrated Weed Management EA, making a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and carefully considering the comments and input received from the public, it is my decision to approve Alternative B – Proposed Action, as described in Section 2.2 of the EA.

RATIONALE

The rapid expansion of invasive plant species across public lands continues to be a primary cause of ecosystem degradation and control of these species is one of the greatest challenges in land management. Integrated weed control would improve ecosystem health, thereby working toward achieving land health standards; reduce hazardous fuels; and restore fire-damaged lands by:

- 1) Controlling weeds and invasive species, and
- 2) Manipulating vegetation to benefit fish and wildlife habitat, improve riparian and wetland areas, and improve water quality in priority watersheds.

Alternative C does not allow the use of chemical treatments, which is a major component of a fully integrated weed management program. Alternative A would not support achievement of the purpose and need for this EA.

AUTHORITY

This Decision is in conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (P.L. 91-190) as amended (72 USC 4321 et. seq.) and the General and Title V of the Federal Land Management Policy Act of 1976 (FLPMA).

APPEAL OF THE DECISION

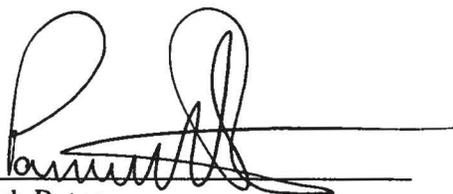
This decision may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA), Office of the Secretary, in accordance with the regulations contained in 43 CFR, Part 4 and the enclosed Form 1842-1. If an appeal is taken, your notice of appeal must be filed in this office at the above address within 30 days from receipt of this decision. The appellant has the burden of showing that the Decision appealed from is in error.

If you wish to file a petition pursuant to regulation at 43 CFR 3256.11 or 43 CFR 3200.5 for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Board, the petition for a stay must accompany your notice of appeal. A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the notice of appeal and petition for a stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the IBLA and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (see 43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed in this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted.

Standards for Obtaining a Stay

Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulation, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal must show sufficient justification based on the following standards:

1. The relative harm to parties if the stay is granted or denied.
2. The likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits.
3. The likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted.
4. Whether the public interest favors granting the stay.



Patrick Putnam
Acting District Manager
Phoenix District Office

9-16-15
Date

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

INFORMATION ON TAKING APPEALS TO THE INTERIOR BOARD OF LAND APPEALS

DO NOT APPEAL UNLESS

1. This decision is adverse to you,
AND
2. You believe it is incorrect

IF YOU APPEAL, THE FOLLOWING PROCEDURES MUST BE FOLLOWED

1. NOTICE OF APPEAL	A person who wishes to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals must file in the office of the officer who made the decision (not the Interior Board of Land Appeals) a notice that he wishes to appeal. A person served with the decision being appealed must transmit the <i>Notice of Appeal</i> in time for it to be filed in the office where it is required to be filed within 30 days after the date of service. If a decision is published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, a person not served with the decision must transmit a <i>Notice of Appeal</i> in time for it to be filed within 30 days after the date of publication (43 CFR 4.411 and 4.413).
2. WHERE TO FILE	Bureau of Land Management Phoenix District Office 21605 N. 7th Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85027
NOTICE OF APPEAL.....	
WITH COPY TO SOLICITOR...	Office of the Field Solicitor Sandra Day O'Connor US Courthouse, Suite 404 401 West Washington Street, SPC-44 Phoenix, AZ 85003-2151
3. STATEMENT OF REASONS	Within 30 days after filing the <i>Notice of Appeal</i> , file a complete statement of the reasons why you are appealing. This must be filed with the United States Department of the Interior, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Interior Board of Land Appeals, 801 N. Quincy Street, MS 300-QC, Arlington, Virginia 22203. If you fully stated your reasons for appealing when filing the <i>Notice of Appeal</i> , no additional statement is necessary (43 CFR 4.412 and 4.413).
WITH COPY TO SOLICITOR.....	Office of the Field Solicitor Sandra Day O'Connor US Courthouse, Suite 404 401 West Washington Street, SPC-44 Phoenix, AZ 85003-2151
4. ADVERSE PARTIES	Within 15 days after each document is filed, each adverse party named in the decision and the Regional Solicitor or Field Solicitor having jurisdiction over the State in which the appeal arose must be served with a copy of: (a) the <i>Notice of Appeal</i> , (b) the Statement of Reasons, and (c) any other documents filed (43 CFR 4.413).
5. PROOF OF SERVICE	Within 15 days after any document is served on an adverse party, file proof of that service with the United States Department of the Interior, Office of Hearings and Appeals, Interior Board of Land Appeals, 801 N. Quincy Street, MS 300-QC, Arlington, Virginia 22203. This may consist of a certified or registered mail "Return Receipt Card" signed by the adverse party (43 CFR 4.401(c)).
6. REQUEST FOR STAY	Except where program-specific regulations place this decision in full force and effect or provide for an automatic stay, the decision becomes effective upon the expiration of the time allowed for filing an appeal unless a petition for a stay is timely filed together with a <i>Notice of Appeal</i> (43 CFR 4.21). If you wish to file a petition for a stay of the effectiveness of this decision during the time that your appeal is being reviewed by the Interior Board of Land Appeals, the petition for a stay must accompany your <i>Notice of Appeal</i> (43 CFR 4.21 or 43 CFR 2801.10 or 43 CFR 2881.10). A petition for a stay is required to show sufficient justification based on the standards listed below. Copies of the <i>Notice of Appeal</i> and Petition for a Stay must also be submitted to each party named in this decision and to the Interior Board of Land Appeals and to the appropriate Office of the Solicitor (43 CFR 4.413) at the same time the original documents are filed with this office. If you request a stay, you have the burden of proof to demonstrate that a stay should be granted. Standards for Obtaining a Stay. Except as otherwise provided by law or other pertinent regulations, a petition for a stay of a decision pending appeal shall show sufficient justification based on the following standards: (1) the relative harm to the parties if the stay is granted or denied, (2) the likelihood of the appellant's success on the merits, (3) the likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm if the stay is not granted, and (4) whether the public interest favors granting the stay.

Unless these procedures are followed, your appeal will be subject to dismissal (43 CFR 4.402). Be certain that all communications are identified by serial number of the case being appealed.

NOTE: A document is not filed until it is actually received in the proper office (43 CFR 4.401(a)). See 43 CFR Part 4, Subpart B for general rules relating to procedures and practice involving appeals.

43 CFR SUBPART 1821--GENERAL INFORMATION

Sec. 1821.10 Where are BLM offices located? (a) In addition to the Headquarters Office in Washington, D.C. and seven national level support and service centers, BLM operates 12 State Offices each having several subsidiary offices called Field Offices. The addresses of the State Offices can be found in the most recent edition of 43 CFR 1821.10. The State Office geographical areas of jurisdiction are as follows:

STATE OFFICES AND AREAS OF JURISDICTION:

- Alaska State Office ----- Alaska
- Arizona State Office ----- Arizona
- California State Office ----- California
- Colorado State Office ----- Colorado
- Eastern States Office ----- Arkansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri
and, all States east of the Mississippi River
- Idaho State Office ----- Idaho
- Montana State Office ----- Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota
- Nevada State Office ----- Nevada
- New Mexico State Office ---- New Mexico, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas
- Oregon State Office ----- Oregon and Washington
- Utah State Office ----- Utah
- Wyoming State Office ----- Wyoming and Nebraska

(b) A list of the names, addresses, and geographical areas of jurisdiction of all Field Offices of the Bureau of Land Management can be obtained at the above addresses or any office of the Bureau of Land Management, including the Washington Office, Bureau of Land Management, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240.