



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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Roseburg, Oregon 97471
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DOI-BLM-ORWA-R000-2016-0003-EA

Roseburg Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides Environmental Assessment

Scoping Document

Dear Interested Party:

The Roseburg District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing the Roseburg Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides Environmental Assessment (EA No. DOI-BLM-ORWA-R000-2016-0003-EA). The EA will identify and analyze the site-specific effects of alternative actions for treating noxious and other weeds and invasive vegetation to restore ecosystem health in the Roseburg District. The following information briefly describes the BLM's proposed action. The BLM seeks written comments on any issues or concerns you may have regarding the proposed action.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed action is to expand and update the existing Integrated Weed Control Plan and add up to 13 herbicides to the four that are already approved for use within the District to treat vegetation to meet management objectives. The BLM proposes to use Integrated Weed Management which involves using an integrated approach of prevention, early detection, and a variety of control methods to reduce economic, health, and environmental risks. The 2010 Record of Decision for the *Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Oregon Final Environmental Impact Statement* made the following 10 additional herbicides available for use on BLM land in Western Oregon: clopyralid, dicamba+diflufenzopyr, diuron, fluridone, hexazinone, imazapic, imazapyr, metsulfuron methyl, sulfometuron methyl, and triclopyr. In addition, the *Programmatic EIS for Vegetation Treatments Using Aminopyralid, Fluroxypyr, and Rimsulfuron on BLM Lands in 17 Western States*, in preparation, may add these three herbicides to the mix. The herbicides already approved for use within the District are 2,4-D, dicamba, glyphosate, and picloram. Currently these four herbicides may only be used to treat State or County-listed noxious weeds. The proposed action is to include all of the herbicides listed above for use to treat noxious and non-native invasive plants as well as limited use on native species in specified areas to meet restoration or safety needs (i.e. treating poison oak in campgrounds). By tiering to the two above Environmental Impact Statements, the District will incorporate all project design features and constraints of each ROD into this EA. All herbicide use will be ground-based (no aerial spraying) and will not be used for commercial timber enhancement or livestock forage production.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

The Roseburg District currently implements an integrated noxious weed program as addressed in a 1995 Environmental Assessment (EA) and Decision for the Roseburg District Integrated Weed Control Plan. The District treats approximately 2,500 acres of weeds and invasive vegetation each year. Of those, the District treats about 2,000 acres with herbicides and uses non-herbicide methods, including manual, mechanical, fire, and biological (insects) control methods, to treat approximately 500 acres.

A court-ordered injunction stemming from a lawsuit in the 1980s¹ limited the use of herbicides on BLM in Western Oregon to four herbicides – 2,4-D, dicamba, glyphosate, and picloram – to treat Federal, State, or county-listed noxious weeds. The 1995 EA tiered to the 1986 Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program Record of Decision (ROD) and the 1987 Supplemental ROD. In 2007, the BLM Washington Office Rangeland Resources Division completed the Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic EIS (PEIS) and related ROD, making 18 herbicides available for a full range of vegetation treatments in 17 western states including Oregon. The BLM in Oregon could have petitioned the District Court to lift the 1980's injunction using the PEIS; however, the Oregon/Washington State Office prepared an Oregon-specific programmatic EIS, tiered to the 2007 PEIS, primarily to address the U.S. District court injunction in a single programmatic document. The resultant July 2010 Oregon Final EIS tiers to the 2007 PEIS and incorporates it in its entirety as Appendix 1. The 2010 Oregon Final EIS requires site-specific analyses with the opportunity for public comment before any Oregon BLM District may use herbicides other than 2,4-D, dicamba, glyphosate, or picloram.

Being able to use up to 13 new, additional herbicides will give the District access to a broad array of herbicides that are more target-specific and effective than the four herbicides it is currently utilizing. Used in combination with other management practices, herbicide treatments can slow the spread of noxious and other weeds and invasive plants, which in turn helps to restore ecosystem health and watershed functions and provide for public safety.

As an example of the need for additional approved herbicides: the District currently does not have a satisfactory method to treat medusahead wildrye. This noxious grass species is not palatable to wildlife or cattle for much of its lifespan and occurs in large areas of the North Bank Habitat Management Area and other grass dominated areas of the District. It crowds out native and other desirable plant species that provide habitat or food for insects, birds, and mammals such as the Columbia white tail deer. The District has conducted prescribed burns in the late spring when the medusahead seed is still developing. While this has had limited success in temporarily reducing the accumulated thatch and seed of medusahead, the District cannot burn every year due to potential impacts to nesting birds and fawning habitat and early hot weather may make burning unsafe. Livestock grazing does not appear to reduce the cover of medusahead and while glyphosate is effective, the District can only use it where medusahead occurs as a monoculture because glyphosate is non-selective. The District would like to have effective and selective herbicides available to treat this aggressive grass species.

¹ Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, et. al. v. Block, et. al. (Civ. No. 82-6273-E)

PROJECT OBJECTIVES (PURPOSE)

The District currently operates under its 1995 ROD/Resource Management Plan (RMP). The BLM is revising this ROD/RMP with an expected completion date in summer of 2016². Any action alternative the BLM implements in the planning area must meet the objectives provided in the District's ROD/RMP and applicable statutes. The action alternatives of this EA will comply with both the 1995 and the revised ROD/RMP. The proposed actions would accomplish the following objectives:

- 1) Control invasive plant species to protect native ecosystems and the flora and fauna that depend on them.
- 2) Protect the safety and function of BLM and other authorized infrastructures by controlling encroaching native and other non-invasive vegetation.
- 3) Manage native vegetation to provide sustainable habitats for wildlife, fish, and native plants, particularly those included in the Special Status Species Program.
- 4) Cooperatively control invasive plants so they do not infest or re-infest adjacent non-BLM lands.
- 5) Prevent herbicide control treatments from having unacceptable adverse effects to applicators and the public, to desirable flora and fauna, and to soil, air, and water.
- 6) Control plant pests and diseases by removing their native plant hosts when necessary to meet Oregon Department of Agriculture-identified control objectives.
- 7) Minimize treatment costs and improve treatment effectiveness, so resource and economic losses from invasive plants and other vegetation growth are reduced and the Need can be met within expected funding.

PROJECT DESIGN FEATURES

In order to tier to the 2010 Oregon FEIS, the proposed action will incorporate all relevant Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Mitigation Measures listed in Attachment A in the 2010 ROD. The following are examples of these SOPs and Mitigation Measures:

- The District will maintain herbicide-free buffer zones for herbicides not labeled for aquatic use of a minimum of 25 feet for vehicle and 10 feet for hand spray applications.
- The District will use spot applications or low-boom broadcast applications where possible to limit the probability of contaminating non-target food and water sources.
- The District will not use herbicides closer than 100 feet from human residences unless the resident grants a written waiver.
- The District will consult with tribes to locate any areas of vegetation that are significant to the tribe and will work with tribes to minimize impacts to these resources.

² Proposed Resource Management Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Resource Management Plans for Western Oregon, 2016. Website: <http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/rmpswesternoregon/>

The entire list is available on the BLM Oregon website at

http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/vegtreatmentseis/files/Veg_Treatments_ROD_Oct2010_AttachA.pdf.

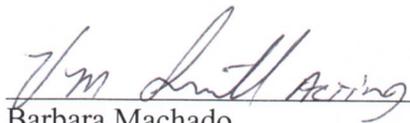
The District may develop additional project design features to minimize adverse impacts from the proposed action.

PUBLIC INPUT

I am seeking your input to help identify any issues or concerns specific to this project. To assure that the BLM can fully consider your written comments during the project analysis, please submit your comments by July 29, 2016. Send comments to Susan Carter, Roseburg District, 777 NW Garden Valley Blvd., Roseburg, OR 97471 or email BLM_OR_RB_Mail@BLM.Gov. Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., except on holidays. Please include the title of the project in your subject line.

Comments submitted will become part of the public record for this project. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your personal information from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law.

I appreciate your involvement in resource management projects. If you have any questions, or need additional information about this project, please contact Susan Carter at (541) 464-3289.



Barbara Machado
Acting District Manager
Roseburg District BLM

7-12-2016
Date