

For immediate release:
June 29, 2007

Contacts: Heather Feeney, (202) 452-5031
Brian Amme, (775) 861-6645
Gina Ramos, (202) 452-5084

Project Overview with Success Stories www.blm.gov/wo/en/prog/more/veg_eis/0.html

BLM Releases Final EIS on Vegetation Treatment and Fuels Reduction on Western Public Lands

As part of ongoing efforts to combat the spread of invasive and noxious weeds and reduce fire-prone fuels on public lands, the Bureau of Land Management today released its Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) comprehensively analyzing the environmental effects of various methods for treating and managing vegetation. The Final PEIS will be available for public review and comment through July 30, 2007.

The PEIS presents detailed, national-level analysis of the risks of herbicide use to humans and sensitive species, as well as to other resources and activities. An accompanying programmatic environmental report (PER) evaluates additional treatment methods to reduce the risk of wildland fire by reducing highly flammable vegetation such as pinyon, juniper, and dead or downed woody materials. The two reports will guide field-level planning and projects using mechanical, manual and biological techniques to meet fuel-reduction goals under the National Fire Plan. Both documents are national in scope and contain supporting analysis and data.

“Noxious weeds and other invasive vegetation threaten the health and economic productivity of millions of acres of public land across the West,” said BLM Acting Director Jim Hughes. “Recent experience in New Mexico shows that the carefully planned use of herbicides combined with prescribed fire and mechanical treatments can restore land health in as little as one or two years.”

In 2006 on public lands in the Pecos District of New Mexico, 145,000 acres of BLM lands were treated under the Restore New Mexico project. Lands selected for one-time treatment with herbicide can now be maintained with prescribed fire. The Vegetation PEIS will support the Interior Department’s Healthy Lands Initiative to restore and conserve watersheds and habitats using similar techniques on BLM-managed lands elsewhere in the West.

The *Final Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)* and the *Final Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Report (PER)* are available at http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/more/veg_eis.html and in printed form and on CD-ROM from BLM field offices.

Comments on the Final PEIS and PER will be accepted only in writing and should be mailed to the following address, postmarked on or before July 31, 2007:

Mr. Brian Amme, Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management
P.O. Box 12000
Reno NV 89520-0006

Substantive comments will be used to develop the final decision action to implement the PEIS, as expressed in the Record of Decision (ROD) to be signed later this summer.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

-BLM-