



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Uncompahgre Field Office
2465 South Townsend Avenue
Montrose, Colorado 81401
www.co.blm.gov



In Reply Refer To:

4400 (DOI-BLM-CO-S050-2009-0039-EA)

November 10, 2009

SCOPING NOTICE

2009-0039 EA - Programmatic Environmental Analysis for Integrated Weed Treatments throughout the Field Office

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is seeking public comment on a proposal to continue implementation of an integrated weed management program throughout the Uncompahgre Field Office (UFO), including the Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area (NCA) and portions of the Dominguez-Escalante NCA. (See the attached location map). The proposed action would include the use of herbicides and other methods (including manual, mechanical, biological, fire, and revegetation when necessary) to control noxious and invasive weeds.

Recent land health assessments and weed inventories conducted throughout the UFO indicate that an increase in noxious and invasive weeds is contributing to the declining health of native plant communities in a number of areas. The BLM would assess and utilize the most appropriate methods, including using herbicides selectively and conservatively in combination with other treatment methods, in order to reduce these adverse impacts. The purpose of this notification is to inform local landowners and other interested parties about this proposed action, as well as to identify issues and concerns for consideration during the environmental analysis and decision-making process.

The proposed action would adhere to direction provided by the 2007 *Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)*, in which the BLM analyzed the environmental effects of herbicide use and generated a list of herbicides approved for managing vegetation on western public lands, as well as an associated environmental report evaluating the general effects of non-herbicide treatments. The PEIS Record of Decision also guides the use of herbicides for projects designed to restore and sustain critical riparian, range, and wildlife habitat on public lands under BLM management. Because the PEIS decision does not authorize any specific actions on the ground, site-specific analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is still required.

A herbicide is a substance used to kill unwanted plants. Herbicides can be selective or non-selective. Selective herbicides kill specific targets and leave the desired vegetation relatively unharmed, while non-selective herbicides kill all vegetation with which they come into contact.

Once a herbicide is applied to a plant, it is taken up through the leaves, stems, or roots. The ideal outcome is for a herbicide to kill only targeted plants, and then break down into harmless components that safely dissipate throughout the environment. The herbicides used in this action would primarily be selective, but non-selective herbicides would also be used when and where appropriate.

The integrated weed management program would continue to be implemented in accordance with federal and state laws, regulations, and policies (Colorado Noxious Weed Act, §§ 35-5.5-101, Section 8 CCR 1203-19), as well as all prevailing resource management plans. In addition, the BLM would strictly abide by herbicide standard operating procedures and applicable mitigation measures during treatments to ensure that both the natural and human environments are protected.

We are soliciting comments on this proposed action in order to identify issues to be addressed in the environmental analysis and decision-making process for the EA. Please be specific when describing issues, recommendations, and potential impacts. It would be especially helpful if you would make note of specific areas of concern on the attached map and include it along with your comments. **Submit comments no later than December 18, 2009** by any of the following methods:

- Mail to Lynae Rogers, BLM Rangeland Management Specialist, 2465 South Townsend Ave, Montrose, CO 81401
- Fax to 1-970-240-5368 (Attn: Lynae Rogers)
- Email to lynae_rogers@blm.gov

This letter (including the map) is available online at:

http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/BLM_Information/nepa/ufo.html.

Please note that comments and information submitted regarding this project, including email and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review and disclosure. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name, email address, or street address from public view 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. All submissions from organizations, businesses, and individuals identifying themselves as a representative or official of an organization or business, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

For additional information about the proposed action, contact Rangeland Management Specialist Lynae Rogers at (970) 240-1068. We appreciate your interest in, and comments regarding this proposed action.

Sincerely,

/s/ Barbara Sharrow

Barbara L. Sharrow
Field Manager

Attachment - Location Map (1)