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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT LV-11-04
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BLM to Analyze Effect of Herbicide Use on Public Lands

Lakeview, Ore -Noxious and other weeds and invasive plants infest millions of acres in Oregon and are spreading at a rate of 10 to 15 percent per year. To address this issue, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently completed a *Vegetation Treatment Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Oregon Environmental Impact Statement* and Record of Decision (ROD) that addressed the use of up to 17 herbicides in Oregon. These herbicides can be applied aerially in eastern, but not in western Oregon, and cannot be used for commercial timber enhancement or livestock forage production. However, because the ROD was a programmatic decision, specific projects must still undergo site-specific analysis and decision making at the field level.

The BLM is initiating scoping for a planning process to analyze the site-specific effects of herbicide use on BLM lands in the Lakeview District, Oregon, as one of several tools to control weeds and invasive vegetation to achieve landscape health objectives. As part of the planning effort, the District is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) titled, *Environmental Assessment for Vegetation Treatments using Herbicides on BLM Lands, Lakeview District, Oregon*, which will focus on the effects of using 17 herbicides authorized in the ROD.

The Lakeview District manages about 3.4 million acres of public lands in Oregon, of which about 7,000 acres are infested with noxious and other weeds and invasive vegetation. The District treats approximately 5,500 acres of noxious and other weeds and invasive vegetation each year. Of those, about 2,000 acres are treated with herbicides and the remaining 3,500 acres are treated using non-herbicide methods, including manual, mechanical, and biological (insects and livestock) control methods, and fire for resource objectives.

Currently, the Lakeview District uses only four herbicides approved for use in Oregon. Being able to use 13 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 using. Used in combination with other management practices, herbicide



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treatments can slow the spread of noxious and other weeds and invasive plants, which in turn helps to restore ecosystem health and watershed functions.

The BLM will be seeking public comments on this planning effort throughout the scoping period, which begins June 13 and runs through July 12. Environmental Assessments are also being prepared by the eight other BLM Districts in the state as part of their planning process for the use of herbicides. While these EAs will be done concurrently, each will be District-specific. Comments on the Lakeview District EA can be submitted by mail to: Brennan Hauk, District Weed/Invasive Plant Coordinator, Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District Office, 1301 South G Street, Lakeview, Oregon 97630; by electronic mail (email) to OR_Lakeview_Mail@blm.gov; by facsimile to (541) 947-6399; or in person at the Lakeview District BLM office.

Written comments should be received by July 12, to ensure consideration. The public will also have the opportunity to comment on the proposal during the public comment period associated with the Draft EA, which should be available in early 2012. For more information about the Lakeview District EA, please call Brennan Hauk at (541) 947-6156.

About the BLM: The BLM manages 245 million acres of public land known as the National System of Public Lands. The lands are primarily located in 12 Western states, including 75 million acres in Alaska. With a budget of about \$1 billion, 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.

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