

Dear Interested Party,

I am writing to bring to your attention the current efforts of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in dealing with the issue of noxious weeds on the Prineville District.

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 (EIS)* and Record of Decision (ROD) that addressed the use of up to 17 herbicides in Oregon. However, because the ROD was a programmatic decision, specific projects must still undergo site-specific analysis and decision-making at the field level.

Thus, the Prineville District is beginning the planning process to assess the site-specific effects of herbicide use, to control weeds and invasive vegetation to improve the ecological health of our plant communities. As part of the planning effort, the District is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) titled, *Environmental Assessment for Vegetation Treatments using Herbicides on the Prineville District*, which will focus on the effects of using 17 herbicides authorized in the ROD.

The Prineville District manages over 1.6 million acres of public lands in Oregon, of which about 350,000 acres are infested with noxious and other weeds and invasive vegetation. The District treats approximately 13,000 acres of noxious and other weeds and invasive vegetation each year. Of those, about 1,000 acres are treated with herbicides and the remaining 12,000 acres are treated using non-herbicide methods, including manual, mechanical, and biological (insects and livestock) control methods, and fire for resource objectives.

Currently, the Prineville District uses only four herbicides approved for use in Oregon. Being able to use 13 additional herbicides would allow the District to use herbicides that are more target-specific and effective than the four herbicides it is currently using. 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.

Public scoping for the EA planning process will be open until July 15, 2011. A news release has been distributed to the media, interested groups, and state agencies notifying them of the planning and scoping process. Environmental Assessments are also being prepared by the eight other BLM Districts in the state as part of their planning processes for the use of herbicides. While these EAs will be done concurrently, each will be District-specific.

The BLM will be seeking public comments on this planning effort throughout the scoping period, which runs through July 15th, 2011. Comments on the Prineville District EA can be



submitted by mail to: Sarah Canham, District Weed/Invasive Plant Coordinator, Bureau of Land Management, Prineville District, 3050 NE Third Street, Prineville, Oregon 97754; by electronic mail (email) to [BLM\\_OR\\_PR\\_Mail@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_OR_PR_Mail@blm.gov) attention "Herbicide EA"; by facsimile to (541) 416-6798; or in person at the Prineville District office.

A summary of the proposal and comment forms will be provided at the BLM Prineville District office for the public to learn more about the proposal and to submit written comments.

Written comments should be received by July 15, 2011, to ensure consideration. The public will also have the opportunity to comment on the proposal during public comment periods associated with the Draft EA, which should be available in spring 2012. Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

