

NEWS Release

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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BLM Releases Final Plan for Vegetation Treatments

Portland, Ore. – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Oregon State Office today announced the release of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Vegetation Treatments Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in Oregon.

This action expands herbicide use beyond noxious weed treatments to include: the treatment of all invasive plants; the control of pests and diseases; the control of native vegetation in rights-of-way, administrative sites, and recreation sites; and the treatment of vegetation to achieve habitat goals specified in interagency Conservation Strategies for Federally-listed and other Special Status species.

“Weeds are spreading on BLM lands in Oregon at an alarming rate, and this planning document is going to give us another tool in our toolbox to help with this fight,” said Oregon/Washington State Director Ed Shepard. “Invasive plants also spread to adjacent non-BLM lands, and that increases control costs for affected landowners and degrades their land values,” continued Shepard.

The selected alternative (Alternative 4 in the FEIS) would add nine of the nationally-approved herbicides west of the Cascades and twelve herbicides east of the Cascades to the four approved herbicides already in use. In spite of an aggressive vegetation management program where weeds are treated using manual, mechanical, biological and herbicide methods, weeds are still spreading on BLM lands in Oregon at an estimated rate of 12 percent per year, or 144,000 acres per year. The herbicide options available under the selected alternative should slow the spread rate of weeds by half, and over the next 15 years could prevent the infestation of 2.2 million acres when compared to the No Action Alternative.

Noxious and invasive weeds displace native plants; reduce habitat and forage for wildlife and livestock; increase soil erosion; reduce water quality; reduce soil productivity; reduce wilderness and recreation values; and change the intensity and frequency of fires. Preventing noxious and invasive species from entering BLM lands that are currently weed-free is of critical importance not only to the species that depend on these unique systems but to the broader objective of promoting and maintaining biological diversity and ecosystem health.

Additional information, and a copy of the Final Environmental Impact Statement, is available online at:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/plans/vegtreatmentseis/>

About the BLM: The BLM manages more land – 245 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, 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. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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