



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Oregon State Office
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, Oregon 97208

IN REPLY REFER TO:

9015 (OR932)

October 1, 2010

Dear Reader,

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administers 15.7 million acres of public lands in Oregon, or about 25 percent of the State. Using a variety of tools, the BLM manages vegetation on thousands of acres per year to meet various objectives. Because of a 1984 court injunction, herbicides have not been used for any of this management with the exception of the use of four herbicides to control noxious weeds.

In 2008, the BLM began work on an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) examining a proposal to increase the number of herbicides available, and to expand on the types of management activities for which those herbicides could be used. That analysis, building upon a similar west-wide analysis conducted by the BLM in 2007 that includes detailed herbicide Risk Assessments prepared for the BLM and/or U.S. Forest Service, indicates that additional herbicide use, limited by BLM Standard Operating Procedures and a variety of mitigation measures, presents little risk to workers, the public, or the environment. Today I am selecting a slightly modified version of Alternative 4 from that EIS.

To the four herbicides already in use, my decision makes an additional 10 herbicides available to BLM districts in Oregon west of the Cascades, and 13 herbicides east of the Cascades. In most cases, these additional herbicides are newer, can be used in lower quantities, and are more target-specific than the four currently being used. My decision also broadens the management objectives for which these herbicides may be used, to include: the control of all invasive plants; the control of plants as necessary to control pests and diseases in State-identified control areas; the control of vegetation to meet safety and maintenance objectives within rights-of-way, administrative sites, and recreation sites; and, the treatment of vegetation to achieve specific habitat goals for Federally Listed and other Special Status species.

The decision does not permit aerial application of herbicides west of the Cascades, nor herbicide use specifically for livestock forage or timber production. The decision only makes the herbicides available for additional consideration; actual projects would take place only after site-specific analysis and decision-making at the district level, tiered to the Record of Decision and the Final EIS.

I wish to thank everyone who participated in preparation of the Final EIS and encourage your continued involvement in project-level planning at the district or project level.

Sincerely,

Edward W. Shepard
State Director
Oregon/Washington