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Fuels Reduction Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is a hazardous fuel treatment?

A: Hazardous fuel is a combustible material such as vegetation that promotes the spread and intensity of a wildland fire. The BLM is planning to treat the hazardous fuel problem of non-native invasive grasses (i.e. red brome and cheatgrass) in Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area through the use of herbicides. This project will:

- better provide for visitor and firefighter safety by reducing the spread and intensity of wildland fires
- protect both public and private infrastructure
- protect and enhance native vegetation and habitat and reduce annual grass expansion

Q: How will it impact my visit?

A: Crews reducing the future threat of wildland fire by using herbicides to reduce non-native plants will be working in this area. Some areas, roads or trails may become temporarily inaccessible during treatment. Please avoid treated areas. Additional information on areas of application is available at the visitor center and www.nv.blm.gov/redrockcanyon.

Q: Why does the vegetation appear blue after it has been treated?

A: A temporary colorant is added to herbicide to aid workers in tracking where the herbicide application has been completed. The colorant helps to ensure that no excess herbicide is applied in a treatment area. The colorant will dissipate under sunlight and/or moisture.

Q: What herbicides will be used?

A: The application of two herbicides will be utilized to target invasive annual grasses and their seeds in the soil. Imazapic (Plateau®) will be used to create 150-300 feet wide fuel breaks along roads, trails and natural features. In addition, an herbicide mixture of glyphosate (Roundup Pro Concentrate®) and imazapic (Plateau®) will be applied within existing burn scars (such as the Loop and Scenic Fires) to reduce the competitive pressure of invasive annual grasses and help native plants re-establish on these sites. The herbicide mixture is an equivalent formulation to the herbicide Journey had been proposed for the project but is no longer commercially available.

Q: Are these herbicides safe for humans and wildlife?

A: The herbicides are safer than most household chemicals. The U.S. EPA gives a warning label of Category 1 to the most acutely toxic pesticide products and Category 4 to the least acutely toxic pesticide products. Both herbicides are labeled as Category 3, Slightly Toxic, and carry a warning label of Caution. For comparison, a Raid® flea collar for dogs is labeled as Category 2, Moderately Toxic, and carries a warning label of Warning, and Lysol® brand disinfectant toilet bowl cleaner is labeled as Category 1, Highly Toxic, and carries a warning label of Danger.