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Brian Amme  
Vegetation EIS Project Manager  
Bureau of Land Management  
P.O. Box 12000  
Reno, NV 89520-0006

Dear Mr Amme:

1 I am a rancher and I have 29 years of experience in federal natural resource positions.

2 Opponents of noxious weed control methods usually are aghast at the use of *chemicals*! I also prefer other means would be efficacious, but the state of the art is that chemicals are absolutely necessary. Mechanical, manual, and biological means have not yet proven to be adequate/knapweed.

3 The most environmentally damaging thing is to ban the use of chemicals for weed control. That would result in spotted knapweed becoming a monoculture. It would in a very few years eliminate *all* grasses and forbs within that monoculture. Knapweed does not hold the soil as grasses and forbs do, so the topsoil will blow away or erode with rains or spring runoff. There is very little food value for anything in mature knapweed. Grazing and browsing ungulates will lose their grass and forb diet and leave the area. There will be neither food nor cover for rodents and ground nesting birds, and therefore the food supply for owls and raptors will be gone.

4 With the knowledge that we have now, chemicals must be used to avert environmental disaster -- to protect fish and wildlife habitat.

5 Of course research should continue as should the use of all other means. I believe that the most likely methods to be successful in the long term is weed *management* by biological means (bugs and maggots, etc.) and by controlled grazing, especially by sheep and goats. While some protesters are as much against sheep as they are against chemicals, But they will likely be our major savior in the war on weeds. (I don't have any sheep or goats). For rhetorical purposes, I want to emphasize *controlled* grazing. It has proved to be useful in many areas.

1 In short, I fully support the Bureau of Land Management's proposed weed control program using *all* available methods to manage the problem.

Sincerely,

  
William H. Mattice