



Weed District

"Through Partnerships"

January 31, 2006

409 Missouri Avenue - Deer Lodge, MT 59722 - 406.846.3348

**RE: COMMENTS for the Draft Vegetation Treatment Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic EIS (PEIS)**

1 The Powell County Weed Board is mandated by state statute to enforce Montana's County Noxious Weed Control Act. To fulfill this mandate, the Powell County Weed Management Plan was developed and implemented. Three purposes of the Weed Management Plan are to:

- 2 • Maintain healthy, weed resistant plant communities that meet the management objectives of public and private land managers;
- Protect the agricultural and natural resources of Powell County by preventing the spread of noxious weeds; and
- Coordinate weed control efforts with private landowners and government agencies.

3 To accomplish these purposes, 14 Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA's) have been created in Powell County to assist more than 200 active private and public participants with noxious weed management. A majority of the CWMA's either contain or border the 83,000 acres of BLM property within Powell County. The BLM has historically been a leading participant within the CWMA's.

4 Eighteen species of State of Montana listed noxious weeds have been identified in Powell County. As of 2002, an estimated 100,900 acres of Powell County was infested with noxious weeds. Current management methods are at best, slowing the growth of infestation size. New invaders are continuing to appear and are creating severe threats to the grasslands, timber and water resources of Powell County. While current BLM efforts are to be applauded, expanded measures are paramount to more effectively manage noxious weeds on BLM ground.

5 The Powell County Weed Board supports Alternative B as the most effective option in the Draft Vegetation Treatment Using Herbicides on BLM Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic EIS (PEIS). By addressing more acres and by providing an opportunity to utilize new tools in the future, the PEIS will allow BLM to more effectively manage noxious weeds and harmonize with the Powell County Weed Management Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

*William Bandy*  
William Bandy, Chairperson  
Powell County Weed Board