

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI) AND DECISION**  
**Grasshopper Control Treatment, WY-070-DNA11-242**  
**Bureau of Land Management, Buffalo Field Office**

**FONSI:** Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) Worksheet, its related pesticide use proposal (PUP) and as analyzed in the land use plans, amendments, final environmental impact statements (FEIS), and environmental assessments (EA) listed in the DNA worksheet (all incorporated here by reference) for the Buffalo resource area, I find that the activity of the Grasshopper Control Treatment, WY-070-DNA11-242 will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore there is no requirement for an EA or EIS.

**DECISION:** It is my decision to authorize the Grasshopper Control Treatment as described in the DNA WY-070-DNA11-242.

**SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Buffalo Field Office (BFO) will authorize the Johnson and / or Sheridan County Weed and Pest Boards or their duly appointed representatives to conduct grasshopper control treatment on BLM-administered land in northwestern and southeastern Sheridan County (2,750 acres) and northeastern Johnson County (1280 acres). This project will be implemented in cooperation with voluntary land owners of all statuses: private, state, and federal. Suppression goals are to lower grasshopper population densities from 8-15 grasshoppers/sq. yard to normal thresholds of about 8 grasshoppers/sq yard.

County	Township North	Range West	Section	Acres
Johnson	53	76	19	320
	53	76	20	440
	53	77	19	200
	53	78	24	320
Sheridan	53	78	1, 2, 10, 13	1880
	57	84	7	360
	58	84-86	multiple	510

\*these are general locations, not all acres will be treated

This decision is contingent on meeting all stipulations and monitoring requirements, below:

1. The pesticide used is diflubenzuron; which is an insect growth regulator that acts by inhibiting the synthesis of chitin which affects the grasshopper's ability to molt. Diflubenzuron is specific to only those insects with chitin. It primarily affects insects during larval or early instar development.
2. Suppression activities under this DNA will occur in late spring to early summer, primarily the month of June and early July.
3. The primary method of application is aerial, with certified aerial pest application specialists as determined by the Johnson and Sheridan County Weed and Pest Boards for their respective counties.
4. Pesticide applicants will use the reduced area and agent treatments (RAATs) method on BLM acres.
5. The approved rate of applying diflubenzuron is 1 oz/acre (0.012 to 0.016 pound active ingredient).

6. Pesticide applicants will use the following protective measures to minimize the potential for pesticides from entering water bodies:

- Pesticides would not be directly applied to water bodies (defined herein as reservoirs, lakes, ponds, pools left by seasonal streams, springs, wetlands, and perennial streams and rivers). To the extent possible, application efforts will avoid other ephemeral or small water bodies such as intermittent streams, vernal pools, cattle tanks, and puddles.
- Buffers around all water bodies will include: 500-foot buffer with aerial liquid pesticides, 200-foot buffer with aerial bait, 50-foot buffer with ground bait. In addition, at least 25 feet of the buffer around the water body would need to be comprised of vegetation. These buffers exceed label requirements for protection of water bodies.
- Pesticides would not be applied near water bodies under high wind conditions to minimize the potential for drift.

7. Pesticide applicants will have 0.5-mile buffers around known active eagle nests for disturbing activities for aerial or ground treatments. (See BFO wildlife biologists for the data base of active nests.)

8. Pesticide applicants will implement the following mitigation measures for ground-based treatments to ensure protection of greater sage-grouse.

- Sage-grouse leks inside core areas: Disruptive activity would be restricted on or within six tenths (0.6) mile radius of the perimeter of occupied or undetermined sage-grouse leks from 6 pm to 8 am from March 15 to May 15.
- Sage-grouse leks outside core areas: Disruptive activity would be restricted on or within one quarter (0.25) mile radius of the perimeter of occupied or undetermined sage-grouse leks from 6 pm to 8 am from March 15 to May 15.

Disruptive activity would be restricted between March 15 and June 30 in suitable sage-grouse nesting and early brood-rearing habitat within designated core areas, together with suitable sage-grouse nesting and early brood-rearing habitat outside core areas. Disruptive activity would be restricted between March 15 and June 30 in suitable sage-grouse nesting and early brood-rearing habitat within designated core areas, together with suitable sage-grouse nesting and early brood-rearing habitat outside core areas within. (See BFO wildlife biologists for the data base of sage-grouse core areas.)

9. Pesticide applicants will implement the following measures into the grasshopper control activities to ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act, protect endangered or threatened species, and their habitats and pollinators:

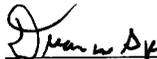
- To protect the threatened Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), diflubenzuron combined with RAATs methodology will be used within the 3 mile buffer of the plant's occupied habitat. (See BFO wildlife biologists for the data base of Ute ladies'-tress areas.)
- To ensure that there would be no impact on domestic bee production or on alfalfa leafcutter bee pollination activity, the following measure is followed: state-registered beekeepers are given notice by the pesticide applicant (county pest board or representative) of any proposed pesticide treatments in areas that contain domestic or leafcutter bees. Observation aircraft may be used to check for bee yards in the proposed treatment area.

**RATIONALE:** The decision to authorize this treatment was made in consideration of the environmental impacts of the proposed action. The action conforms to the RMPs, final environmental impact statements (FEISs), and environmental assessments (EAs) listed in the DNA worksheet, and with USDI Order 3310, as well as the re-vegetation of native plant communities and control of invasive weeds. This project area is clearly lacking in wilderness characteristics due to being less than 5,000 acres.

The treatment should reduce grasshopper population densities from 8-15 grasshoppers/sq. yard to normal thresholds of about 8 grasshoppers/sq yard. This project contributes to increasing forage available for wildlife and livestock. This treatment should also contribute to improving wildlife habitat and patterns representative of a functional grassland ecosystem.

This project is not unique or unusual, and the BFO implemented similar actions in the past. The environmental effects to the human environment were analyzed in the DNA's referenced RMPs, FEISs, and EAs, and there are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. This project involve no planned surface disturbance and any surface disturbance will be incidental. No threatened or endangered plants or animals or critical habitat are known to occur in the area.

The Johnson and Sheridan County Weed and Pest Boards or their duly representative agents coordinated, on behalf of the BFO in developing this grasshopper treatment project. This coordination is on-going requirement of this project until such time as grazing resumes on the affected BLM acres.

  
Authorized Officer (Signature)

6/15/2011  
Date of Signature

**ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES:** This decision is issued under 43 CFR 4190.1 and is effective immediately. The BLM determined that vegetation, soil, or other resources on the public lands are at substantial risk of degradation due to grasshopper infestation. Thus, notwithstanding the provisions of 43 CFR 4.21(a)(1), filing a notice of appeal under 43 CFR Part 4 does not automatically suspend the effect of the decision. Appeal of this decision may be made to the Interior Board of Land Appeals in accordance with 43 CFR 4.410. The Interior Board of Land Appeals must decide an appeal of this decision within 60 days after all pleadings have been filed, and within 180 days after the appeal was filed as contained in 43 CFR 4.416.