

DECISION RECORD/FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

for

Noxious Weed Management Program

EA OR-020-98-05

DECISION: It is my decision to implement a noxious weed program, the proposed action, on the Burns District as described in the Noxious Weed Management Program Environmental Assessment (EA) with one minor correction; the herbicide mix glyphosate and 2,4-D would not be used. This herbicide is not currently approved by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for use. It was incorrectly identified in the EA.

This decision would implement a seven-goal program as outlined in the Partners Against Weeds (an Action Plan for the BLM), January 1996. These goals are:

1. Prevention and Detection
2. Education and Awareness
3. Inventory
4. Planning
5. Integrated Weed Management
6. Coordination
7. Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Technology Transfer

Goals 1-4 provide the greatest opportunity to control and contain the noxious weed problem over time through early detection and reducing the spread and introduction of new weeds to the District.

Goal 5 deals with the direct treatment of weeds. An appropriate combination of methods including cultural, physical, biological, and chemical would be used to control noxious weeds.

Cultural methods may include management activities to prevent noxious weed introduction or to minimize spread.

Biological control would include the use of insects and pathogens to control specific noxious weeds.

Physical control methods would include manual control by hand pulling or grubbing with hand tools, mechanical methods such as mowing, and prescribed burning.

Chemical treatments include the use of herbicides. Any chemical use would be in accordance with the Record of Decision for the Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (1991), the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program EIS, any new Agency direction, and the manufacturer's label. Application would be done by certified applicators.

Goal 6 would be achieved through the development of partnerships with other landowners (government, private, tribal).

Goal 7 establishes monitoring to assess the effectiveness of Goals 1-6 and provides information to evaluate the program and share new information with others.

If noxious weeds are found in Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), they will be controlled in accordance with provisions of Chapter II.C.2 of the Bureau's Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review.

The areas proposed for treatment will be reviewed annually to avoid impacts to Special Status plants and animals as well as cultural resources.

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the EA, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an EIS is not required. This determination is based on the following factors:

1. Beneficial, adverse, direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts discussed in the EA have been disclosed. The physical and biological effects are limited to the Burns District and adjacent lands.
2. Public health and safety would not be adversely impacted.
3. There would be no adverse impacts to wetlands, floodplains, areas with unique characteristics or ecologically critical areas.
4. There are no highly controversial effects on the environment.
5. There are no effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risk. Sufficient information on risk is available based on information in the EA and other past actions of a similar nature.
6. This alternative does not set a precedent for other projects that may be implemented in the future to meet the goals and objectives to the District's Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

7. No cumulative impacts related to other actions that would have a significant adverse impact were identified or are anticipated.
8. Based on previous and ongoing cultural resource surveys, and through the mitigation of avoidance, no adverse impacts to cultural resources were identified or anticipated.
9. No adverse impacts to any threatened or endangered species or their habitat that was determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act was identified. If at a future time there could be the potential for adverse impacts, treatments would be modified or mitigated not to have an adverse effect or a new analysis would be conducted.
10. This alternative is in compliance with relevant Federal, State, and local laws, regulations and requirements for the protection of the environment.

Rationale for Decision: I have selected the proposed action for the following reasons:

The proposed action puts emphasis on prevention, detection, education, and awareness.

It protects water resources.

It provides for the safety of human health.

It promotes and sustains healthy ecosystems.

The current plan has expired and is not adequate to deal with the current situation.

The proposed action is flexible to deal with the dynamic nature of the noxious weed problem which includes many different plant species, changing populations and plant locations, and changing inventory and treatment technologies.

It provides a variety of treatment methods to deal with infestations of various sizes from single plants to thousands of acres and to individual plant characteristics.

It is in compliance with Federal laws that mandate the management of noxious weeds (Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974).

It is in conformance with District management plans, the Northwest Area Noxious Weed Control Program EIS as supplemented (March 1987) and the EIS, Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States (1991).

It includes coordination with local government and tribal entities and private landowners.

Public involvement consisted of direct mailing to over 350 individuals, organizations, tribes, and agencies and notification in the local newspaper. I received no comments negative to the proposed action during scoping or the EA review period.

The decision does not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation.

I have also considered alternatives to the proposed action including:

- a) The proposed action without permitting the aerial application of herbicides. This alternative was not selected because certain noxious weed species currently cover several hundred to thousands of acres. In order to adequately deal with these situations, it may be necessary to use systems that can treat large areas in a cost-effective manner.
- b) The proposed action without the use of any herbicides. This alternative was not selected because nonherbicide treatments alone have not been adequate to deal with the existing and expected conditions.
- c) No action. I considered no action and determined that this course did not meet a number of legal land management mandates and allows for the continued spread of weeds.

Mike Green - Signature on File
District Manager, Burns

04/16/1998_____
Date