

Briefing

Draft Environmental Impact Statement Invasive Plants in the Pacific Northwest Region

On August 27, 2004 the Pacific Northwest Region (Region 6) issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the prevention and management of invasive plants. This is the first analysis of its kind nationwide. The proposal adds management direction to all existing National Forest Land and Resource Management Plans (LRMPs) in the Region. The direction seeks to increase invasive plant prevention and make a new and expanded set of invasive plant treatment tools available to the Forests.

The DEIS considers four alternatives, as follows:

1. *No Action* continues current invasive plant management direction.
2. *Alternative B* constrains current land management practices, such as grazing, road building, road maintenance, and use of off-highway vehicle. It represents a more “precautionary” approach, which proposes increasing the avoidance of invasive plant introduction and spread by further.
3. *Proposed Action* focuses the Region’s efforts on prevention, new treatment tools, and increased flexibility in treatment.
4. *Alternative D* allows local land managers more discretion in how and when invasive plant prevention measures are implemented. It proposes the use of additional, less expensive herbicides (e.g., 2,4-D and Dicamba),

Implementing any of the action alternatives described above is expected to reduce the rate of spread of invasive plants across the Region. All of the action alternatives would increase the costs and effectiveness of invasive plant management. All of the action alternatives protect human health and the environment. The second alternative, *Proposed Action*, is preferred by the Forest Service.

The DEIS is subject to a 90-day public review that ends on November 24, 2004.

The DEIS Interdisciplinary Team has completed a round of public open houses in Washington and Oregon. So far, public response is supportive of the Region’s approach and of the DEIS. Issues creating the most discussion include: (1) herbicides and the use of 2,4-D; (2) weed-free feed for horses, and (3) managing livestock grazing to reduce the spread of invasive plants.

The plan of Region 6 is to complete content analysis, respond to comments, adjust the EIS by the end of January, and release the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) in late February 2005.