

Invasive Plant Environmental Impact Statement

for the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and
the Crooked River National Grassland

USDA Forest Service

Pacific Northwest Region

www.fs.fed.us/r6/invasiveplant-eis/site-specific



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Fast Facts about the **Invasive Plant Treatment Environmental Impact Statement** planning underway on the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and Crooked River National Grassland:

The Pacific Northwest has a serious invasive plant problem. Invasive plant populations have increased, and are threatening to permanently degrade millions of acres of wildlife habitat, eliminate rare and endangered plants and animals, reduce water quality and watershed health, affect habitat for cultural plants, and adversely impact a wide variety of other resource values.

The harmful impacts of invasive plants include:

- displacement of native plants
- reduction in functionality of habitat and forage for wildlife and livestock
- loss of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species
- loss of habitat for Management Indicator Species
- loss of migratory bird nest and forage habitat
- loss of potential habitat for cultural plants
- increased soil erosion and reduced water quality
- increased cost to maintaining transportation systems
- alteration of physical and biological properties of soil, including reduced soil productivity
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- high cost (dollars spent) of controlling invasive plants
- loss of recreational opportunities
- increased cost to maintaining transportation systems
- changes to the intensity and frequency of fires

Invasive plants are impacting Central Oregon Forests and Grasslands.

The Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and Crooked River National Grassland are considering treatments on approximately 1,890 inventoried invasive plant sites.

The invasive plant problem has taken a long time to develop; there are no quick solutions. But we all must recognize our opportunity to be part of the solution. Prevention, early detection, and early treatment are our best and most cost-effective tools for combating invasive plants, and will have the highest success rate. We propose to treat invasive plant problem sites we know about today and also to treat invasive plant problems we become aware of over time.

The proposal includes combining available tools for invasive plant treatments as appropriate: chemical and manual, cultural, and mechanical. Chemical herbicides are proposed for careful use, and reliance on herbicides will decrease over time as the infestations are brought under control. Existing APHIS approved releases of biological agents are part of the integrated treatment program and will help reduce the spread of some invasive species.

Project prescriptions are holistic, site-specific and are consistent with all applicable management direction, including federal, state and local laws, the Region 6 ROD for managing Invasive Plants, the Northwest Forest Plan, individual Forest Plans, and other regulations and policies.

Newly approved herbicides are proposed as part of the integrated weed treatment program – some invasive plant sites cannot be effectively treated without them.

No aerial spraying is being proposed. Broadcast spraying is limited to areas that can't be efficiently treated otherwise.

Protecting human health and drinking water sources are top priorities in the treatment of invasive plants and the use of herbicides.

- ✓ People will be informed prior to herbicide use on request.
- ✓ Public use areas will be posted before and after herbicide treatment.
- ✓ Native American Indian Tribes will be consulted to ensure subsistence gathering/gatherers and culturally important plants are not adversely affected.
- ✓ Special forest product users will be consulted to ensure mushroom gathering and other areas are adequately posted and public contact with sprayed vegetation is avoided.

The Forest Service is preparing an Environmental Impact Statement to assess the potential environmental effects from our proposed treatment on about 1,892 inventoried invasive plant sites.

A draft of the impact statement will be available for public review in September 2006. The document will be available to you. You can elect to receive a hard copy or CD-ROM in the mail; read it on the internet; or read it at a local Forest Service office.

Contact Beth Peer, Project Team Leader, if you would like to be informed of the availability of the draft environmental impact statement: 541-383-5572 or bpeer@fs.fed.us.