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Invasive Plant Treatments

Final Environmental Impact Statement

Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests, Crooked River National Grassland

Deschutes, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Crook, Wheeler, Grant Counties, Oregon

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Final Environmental Impact Statement
Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and Crooked River
National Grassland
Deschutes, Jefferson, Crook, Klamath, Wheeler, and Grant Counties,
Oregon

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Abstract: This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) contains the Forest Service's proposal for treatment of Invasive Plants within the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests and the Crooked River National Grassland. It also contains two alternatives to that proposal including a "No Action" alternative.

The overall purpose of and need for action is to reduce the extent of specific invasive plant infestations at identified sites, and to protect areas not yet infested from future introduction and spread of invasive plant species from these sites. As a connected action, there is sometimes a need to restore treatment sites with non-invasive vegetation to prevent the re-infestation of those sites. There is a need to provide a mechanism to allow quick detection and response to spreading invasive plant infestations.

The basis for accomplishing this project is contained in Federal Laws, Forest Service Policy Directives, The Deschutes National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (1990), and the Ochoco National Forest and Crooked River National Grassland Land and Resource Management Plan (1989). Analysis will tier to the R6 Invasive Plant Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (USFS 2005a).

Three alternatives were analyzed in this FEIS:

1. A No-Action Alternative, which does not meet the purpose and need, but forms a basis for comparison with the action alternatives. No Action includes any invasive plant treatments approved in previous NEPA documents.
2. The Proposed Action, which was designed to address the Purpose and Need with the treatment of about 1,892 inventoried weed sites across the Forests and Grassland with integrated prescriptions that combine the use of herbicides with mechanical, manual, and cultural control methods. An early detection/rapid response strategy is also included.
3. An alternative designed to address the Purpose and Need in the same manner as the Proposed Action, with an emphasis on reducing the risk of herbicides entering the water.

The issues studied in this FEIS include: Concerns associated with chemical herbicides and their effects on human health, a desire to see the Forest Service utilize the methods necessary to implement effective treatment (i.e. more herbicides used where they are the most effective treatment, and to avoid delay), concerns for economics when choosing methods of treatment,

concerns with impacts to water quality and fish from applying herbicides and other treatment methods, concerns with impacts to non-target vegetation and wildlife from applying herbicides.

The preferred alternative, Alternative 2, is designed to meet the Purpose and Need in this way:

It allows for the effective treatment across 52,015 acres of Project Area Units, which accounts for 1,892 inventoried invasive plant sites totaling about 14,500 acres, plus the areas around and in between them having a high potential of being infested.

The treatments identified are expected to be effective in reaching the objectives (e.g. eradicate, control, suppress, contain) of the sites and will lead to a reduction in the use of herbicides over time.

It provides a framework for annual implementation planning, early detection/rapid response of new infestations, and monitoring.

Reader's Guide

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) contains information about project proposals that will address the problems posed by invasive plants that compromise our ability to manage native ecosystems, and will adopt new treatment strategies for invasive plants made available for use in Region 6 by the R6 Invasive Plant Program Final Environmental Impact Statement (USFS 2005a).

The information in this FEIS is organized to facilitate consideration of the environmental effects by the public, and by the Forest Supervisors of the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests, who are responsible for deciding whether or not to implement the Proposed Action or alternatives to this proposal.

Understanding the structure of this document is important to an overall understanding of the information required in an EIS. The following provides an overview of the components of this document.

Executive Summary: The summary of the Final EIS provides a brief overview of the Purpose and Need for action, the Key Issues studied herein, and a comparison of the three alternatives.

Table of Contents: A table of contents is presented at the beginning of the document. Lists of tables, figures, and appendices is included.

Chapter 1 – Purpose and Need: Chapter 1 describes the Purpose and Need for the proposal, and the Proposed Action. It includes Management Direction for the project, and the Decision Framework. Public Involvement and the Issues generated by public comments are explained here.

Chapter 2 – Alternatives: Chapter 2 includes a description of the alternative development process, and discussions on alternatives and actions considered but eliminated from detailed analysis. The focus of this chapter is Alternatives Considered in Detail, including the No Action (Alternative 1), the Proposed Action (Alternative 2), developed by the Forest Service that drove analysis for this project, and one additional alternative developed by the Forest Service, Alternative 3, which responds to the issue of fish and water quality. The measures incorporated to reduce impacts (Project Design Features) are documented in this chapter. The final section of this chapter includes a summary of data and a comparison of alternatives considered in detail, in a table format.

Chapter 3 – The Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences: Chapter 3 describes current physical, biological, and social and economic environments within the area of influence of the Proposed Action (termed the Project Area Units). This information provides the

baseline for assessing and comparing the potential impacts of the action alternatives. In addition, this chapter provides a comprehensive scientific and analytical comparison of the potential environmental impacts of Alternatives 2 and 3 relative to the No Action Alternative. In order to facilitate comparison of information provided, this chapter is organized and subdivided into resource areas/disciplines in a manner appropriate to the affected environment for this area.

Chapter 4 – List of Preparers and Coordination: Chapter 4 lists the individuals, Federal, State and local agencies and tribes that the Forest Service consulted during the development of this FEIS. It also discloses the distribution of the document including Federal Agencies, federally recognized tribes, State and local governments and organizations representing a wide range of views. The references, glossary, and index are in the last part of this chapter.

Appendices: The appendices provide more detailed information to support the analyses presented in the EIS.

Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project area resources, may be found in the project planning record located at Deschutes National Forest Headquarters in Bend, Oregon.

Appendix A – Table of Project Area Units with Species Present, Objectives, and Treatment

Appendix B – Treatment Options and Common Control Measures

Appendix C – Management Direction and Compliance with Forest Plan

Appendix D – Herbicide Information and PDF Crosswalk

Appendix E – Revegetation Planning and Implementation; Excerpts from 2003 Draft Guidelines for Revegetation

Appendix F – Annual Implementation Guide Including Mandatory and Optional Forms

Appendix G – Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests Invasive Plant Species Prevention Practices

Appendix H – Fisheries Analysis by Watershed and Tabular Data

Appendix I – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS

Appendix J – Watershed Information

Appendix K – Inventory and Monitoring Framework

List of Frequently Used Acronyms

AI	Active Ingredient
APHIS	Agricultural Plant Health and Insect Service
BCF	Bioconcentration Factor
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
EA	Environmental Assessment
EDRR	Early Detection / Rapid Response
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
HQ	Hazard Quotient
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
IDT	Interdisciplinary Team
INFISH	Inland Native Fish Strategy
IWM	Integrated Weed Management
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NF	National Forest
NFMA	National Forest Management Act
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOA	Notice of Availability
NOI	Notice of Intent
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NPE	Nonylphenol Polyethoxylate
NRIS	Natural Resource Information Systems
NWFP	Northwest Forest Plan
ODA	Oregon Department of Agriculture
OHV	Off Highway Vehicle
OR	Oregon
PACFISH	Pacific Fish Strategy
PAU	Project Area Unit
PDF	Project Design Feature
PNW	Pacific Northwest
RHCA	Riparian Habitat Conservation Area
ROD	Record of Decision
RR	Riparian Reserve
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
TES	Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDI	U.S. Department of Interior
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WCM	Water Concentration Model