



File Code: 1950

Date: September 17, 2007

The Heber Ranger District of the Uinta National Forest has received a request to harvest corn lily roots (*Veratrum californicum*) for pharmaceutical research purposes in the Lake Creek/Heber Mountain area (Township 4S, Range 7E Sections 30, 31 & 6, Township 1S, Range 11W, Sections 5, 6 map attached). Corn lily is a native plant, which is often invasive in roadside areas and other areas of disturbance. It develops in thick stands which do not include other native vegetation. It has been considered by some land managers to be a threat to native ecosystems. It has been studied in recent years and has been found to contain a promising chemical component that has been effective in treating cancer. If approved this proposal would result in a Forest Products permit which would allow the pharmaceutical company to harvest roots in order to study the plant and what factors influence the presence of the active chemical and eventually grow it under artificial conditions.

Harvesting would be conducted among different sites to limit the impact on a single area; the total area involved would be 1-4 total acres depending on the volume of root material present. Ground disturbance and harvest would occur in individual patches of dense corn lily and be less than 100 X 100 feet in size. A machine which undercuts roots and is used in commercial nurseries would be used along with some hand digging. The machine would maintain top soil and not till the layers of soil which would facilitate recovery. Straight lines or square segments would not be created, more random natural lines would be used in harvesting to lessen the visible area of disturbance and facilitate regrowth. All of the sites proposed for harvesting occur immediately adjacent to existing roads and limited vehicle would occur on treatment areas. Digging and on-site activities will not be conducted when soils are wet which may cause unnecessary compaction and surface disturbance. No areas proposed for treatment are located near streams or active drainages. In addition, confining digging to small units will limit any off-site surface flow of water when soils are initially exposed. Lifting and removal of plants would be expected to be completed from each site within 1-3 days depending upon weather and soil conditions. Additional hand digging may be required to remove some roots if the soil remains hard and roots are not freely separated. The disturbed areas will be seeded with an approved mix and corn lily roots will be left to regenerate in the area. If approved this activity would be authorized under a Forest Products permit for the amount of material removed.

PURPOSE AND NEED OF PROPOSED ACTION

The purpose of this project is to obtain samples of *Veratrum californicum* roots across the spectrum of settings it occurs within the Lake Creek area of the Heber Ranger District. Research would be conducted on the samples to discover common denominators in the physical



environment and genetics which are related to the production of the active ingredient which has shown promise as a cancer drug treatment. The need of the project is to understand these factors to cultivate the plant and grow it domestically (not on National Forest) for development and supply of a cancer drug treatment.

PRELIMINARY ISSUES

The preliminary issues that will be considered in the environmental analysis are as follows:

- Effects of harvesting corn lily roots upon cultural or biological resources that would result from implementation of the proposed action.
- Effects of harvesting corn lily roots to wetlands and riparian areas.
- Effects of harvesting corn lily roots on dispersed recreation activities.

PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES

The preliminary alternatives that will be considered in the environmental analysis are as follows:

- No Action – The proposed action would not be approved.
- Proposed Action – The proposal to harvest corn lily roots for cancer research would be authorized and a Forest Products permit issued.

The Forest Service is seeking public comment on the proposed action. All comments and inquires concerning this proposal should be addressed to: Julie King, District Ranger, Heber Ranger District, P.O. Box 190, Heber City, Utah 84032, or call (435) 654-0470. Comments may also be faxed to (435)654-5772 or by e-mailing comments-intermtn-uinta-heber@fs.fed.us. E-mail comments must be submitted in MS Word (*.doc) or rich text format (*.rtf). Oral comments as well as written comments may also be submitted at the above address during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday, excluding federal holidays. To ensure full consideration, please provide comments within 30 days of publication of this legal notice.

Sincerely,

/s/ Julie K. King

JULIE K KING
District Ranger

Enclosure