

DECISION NOTICE  
and  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

NOXIOUS WEED MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL PROGRAM  
for the  
HUMBOLDT-TOIYABE NATIONAL FOREST  
AUSTIN, BRIDGEPORT, CARSON, AND TONOPAH RANGER DISTRICTS  
and  
SPRING MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA  
in

Carson, Clark, Douglas, Esmeralda, Eureka, Lander, Lyon, Mineral, Nye, and Washoe  
Counties, Nevada

**Introduction**

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to document the analysis used to assess its noxious weed control program on the Austin, Bridgeport, Carson, and Tonopah Ranger Districts and the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area. A Noxious Weed Control Program Environmental Analysis was developed in 1996 for the Ely, Mountain City, Santa Rosa, Ruby Mountains, and Jarbidge Ranger Districts. Therefore, these districts will not be effected by this decision. The Forest Service is proposing to update its existing noxious weed control program by using an expanded Integrated Pest Management System (IPMS).

**Decision**

I have reviewed this EA, including the issues and methodology involved in selecting and implementing the potential treatment methods, the biology of the noxious weeds known to occur on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, and the relative effectiveness of the proposed treatments in their control, and the environmental effects of those treatments on the surrounding vegetation, soils, water, wildlife, and people.

Based on the results of the analysis documented in the Environmental Assessment, it is my decision to implement Alternative B - Implementation of Integrated Weed Management with Herbicides. This alternative applies to noxious weed treatments on lands administered by the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada only.

My decision to implement alternative B also provides for:

- The use of all available control methods (including selected herbicides) to provide the most effective and cost efficient means to address noxious weed management objectives. Mitigation measures will guide the appropriate control methods to be used on a site by site bases.

- Continuation of a prevention and education program designed to stem the further spread of noxious weeds on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and adjacent areas.
- Continuation of ongoing survey programs to document the occurrence of noxious weeds on National Forest System lands.
- A monitoring program to evaluate and document effectiveness of noxious weed treatments.
- Amend the Spring Mountains National Recreation Area, Management Plan Standard 0.39, to read: Allow use of herbicides for controlling noxious weed populations. When applied, use only formulation registered by the EPA for the intended use, at minimum effective rates, and using selective methods. Avoid use in habitat for threatened, endangered, or sensitive species, or species of concern whenever possible.

### **Scoping**

An interdisciplinary team was formed on February 10, 1999 conduct an analysis of weed management on the project area. On February 17, 1999, 737 scoping letters were sent to forest users, private individuals or groups, and county, state and other federal agencies that expressed interest or may be affected by this action. From this mailing over 125 responses were received. Additional comments were accepted through forest planning efforts on the Sierra front.

### **Other Alternatives Considered**

Two other alternatives were also considered in the environmental analysis. These alternatives are:

Alternative A: No Action. No action is defined as no change in current system of treatment. The current use of preventive, manual, mechanical, biological and/or chemical measures would continue.

Alternative C: Partial Integrated Pest Management . The partial weed management alternative would not allow use of herbicides.

### **Finding of No Significant Impact**

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulation for significant (40 CFR 1509.27) and have determined this is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared. This determination was made considering the following factors of context and intensity:

1. The proposed action will have no adverse effects on public health and safety. All chemical application rates will be below a No Observed Effect Level.
2. Unique characteristics in the area will not be adversely affected. There are no park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers or ecologically critical areas in the project area that will be adversely affected by this decision
3. Based on public participation, the effects on the quality of the human environment are not likely to be highly controversial.
4. There are no known effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
5. The action is not expected to establish a precedence for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
6. This decision is not related to other actions which individually have insignificant effects, but that cumulatively have the potential to result in significant impacts upon the human environment.
7. There is no potential for adverse effects of the action upon sites that are listed in, or eligible to be listed in, the National Register of Historic Places, or, could cause a loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.
8. The proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any sensitive, listed or proposed endangered or threatened plant or animal species, or its critical habitat. A Biological Evaluation has been prepared and resulted in a determination of not likely to adversely affect these species.
9. The action does not threaten the violation of federal, state or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

### **Appeal Requirements and Implementation**

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to Forest Service regulations at 36 CFR 215.7. A written Notice of Appeal must be postmarked or received by the Appeal Deciding Officer within 45 days of the publication of this notice in the Reno Gazette-Journal (Reno, NV). The Appeal Deciding Officer is Regional Forester, Jack A. Blackwell, 324 24th St., Ogden, UT 84401. Appeals must meet the content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14. A copy must be sent simultaneously to the Deciding Officer, Forest Supervisor, Robert L Vaught, 1200 Franklin Way, Sparks, NV 89431.

If no appeal is received, implementation of this decision may occur on, but not before 5 business days from the close of the appeal filing period. If an appeal is received, implementation may not occur for 15 days following the date of appeal disposition.

Information

For further information concerning this decision, please contact:

Terry Nevius		Jerry Grevstad
Austin Ranger District		Supervisors Office
100 Midas Canyon Road	OR	1200 Franklin Way
Austin, NV 89301		Sparks, NV 89431
(775) 964-2671		(775) 355-5399

The EA and all supporting documentation is available at the Supervisors Office in Sparks. Additional EAs are available at the Austin, Bridgeport, Carson, and Tonopah Ranger Districts, and Spring Mountains National Recreation Area offices.

Signed

/s/ Robert L. Vaught  
Approved: Robert L, Vaught, Forest Supervisor

April 30, 2001  
Date