USDA United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Wallowa-Whitman National Forest | 1550 Dewey Avenue, Suite A
Baker City, OR 97814

File Code: 1900
Date: March 6, 2017

Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee
Honorable Mary Jane Miles, Chairman
Nez Perce Tribe
PO Box 305
Lapwai, ID 83540

Dear Chairman Miles:

The Forest is proposing to amend the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) Invasive Restoration Standard 16 by adding the herbicide aminopyralid to the list of approved herbicides. This amendment would entail a minor modification to the Invasive Plant Program. A forest plan amendment would not, in itself, approve any projects, activities, or commit the Forest Service to take action.

Background

In 2005, the Pacific Northwest Regional Forester issued a record of decision (ROD) for the *Invasive Plant Program - Preventing and Managing Invasive Plants* that amended all forest plans in Region 6 providing updated management direction related to invasive plant management. This 2005 amendment superseded portions of direction from the 1988 ROD for *Managing Competing and Unwanted Vegetation* and the1989 Mediated Agreement for invasive plant management. In particular, the 2005 ROD allows for the use of ten herbicide active ingredients. See the table below for currently approved herbicides and the proposed amendment. Specifically, Standard 16 allows for future additions to the herbicide list at either the forest plan or project level through appropriate risk analysis and NEPA/ESA [National Environmental Policy Act/Endangered Species Act] procedures. (2005 ROD at Appendix 1-5).

Since the 2005 ROD was signed, a new herbicide (aminopyralid or Milestone™) has become available. Milestone was specifically developed for wildland treatment of invasive plants. In 2007, the Forest Service completed a risk assessment for aminopyralid. The risk assessment indicates aminopyralid is expected to pose less risk to people and the environment, specifically when compared to picloram and clopyralid, which are currently used for invasive plant control on the forest. Use of aminopyralid is expected to be more effective than these other chemicals, and it is applied at lower concentrations. Additionally, aminopyralid does not contain hexachlorobenzene (HCB), a carcinogenic by-product of the manufacture of picloram and clopyralid. Aminopyralid is effective on hard-to-control invasive plant species such as hawkweed, knapweed, and Canada thistle. It is preferred by invasive plant specialists at the state and county level. See attached summary table for information about aminopyralid.

Current and Proposed Management Standard

I propose adding aminopyralid to the list of approved herbicides. This addition is needed to provide a reduced-risk herbicide that is considered, based on the best available peer-reviewed science, to be a reliable control of a broad spectrum of difficult to control noxious weeds and invasive plants on national forest system lands.

This proposed plan amendment is in accordance with the Forest Service 2012 Planning Rule 36 Part 219—Planning. A preliminary assessment of the proposed need for change pursuant to Forest Service planning regulation 36 CFR §219.5 has concluded that adding aminopyralid will provide reduced risks to natural resources and increased effectiveness of proposed invasive plant treatments. I have determined that a full plan assessment pursuant to 36 CFR 219.6 is not necessary for this action. I anticipate that, as a result of this amendment, the Forest will examine projects where herbicide use has been previously authorized and consider substituting aminopyralid for some of the older herbicides. I also anticipate that future projects for invasive plant management where herbicide use is not currently authorized on the Forest will consider using aminopyralid.

2005 ROD Standard #16 for the Wallowa-Whitman Forest Plan	**Proposed Standard #16 Amendment for the Wallowa-Whitman Forest Plan**
Select from herbicide formulations containing one or more of the following 10 active ingredients: chlorsulfuron, clopyralid, glyphosate, imazapic, imazapyr, metsulfuron methyl, picloram, sethoxydim, sulfometuron methyl, and triclopyr. Mixtures of herbicide formulations containing 3 or less of these active ingredients may be applied where the sum of all individual Hazard Quotients for the relevant application scenarios is less than 1.0. . . .	Select from herbicide formulations containing one or more of the following **11** active ingredients: **aminopyralid**, chlorsulfuron, clopyralid, glyphosate, imazapic, imazapyr, metsulfuron methyl, picloram, sethoxydim, sulfometuron methyl, and triclopyr. Mixtures of herbicide formulations containing 3 or less of these active ingredients may be applied where the sum of all individual Hazard Quotients for the relevant application scenarios is less than 1.0. . . .

Note: Proposed amended language is included above in bold.

As the forest supervisor, I am the responsible official for the proposed Forest Plan amendment. For specific information about the proposal, please contact Sitka Pence, environmental coordinator (email: sitkapence@fs.fed.us; phone: 541-426-5689). Information may also be obtained at the project website: https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=51119.

Consultation and Comment

I am seeking your assistance to determine if this proposal would have an effect on the use of forest lands and resources for traditional and religious purposes by the Nez Perce Tribe. I also would like to know if the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee have any concerns or suggestions regarding the proposed amendment.

Please submit comments concerning this action within **60-calendar days** following the date on this letter. A 30-day public scoping is planned to start 30 days after the date on this letter.

This action is subject to the objection procedures at 36 CFR §219, Subpart B—Pre-Decisional Administrative Review Process. Individuals and entities who have submitted substantive formal comments related to this proposed plan amendment during any of the opportunities for public participation will have standing to file an objection to the draft decision, issued at a later date, pursuant to 36 CFR §219.53.

If you would like to discuss traditional or cultural information or submit comments regarding this proposal that are not subject to FOIA per United States Code Title 25 Indians, Chapter 32A Cultural and Heritage Cooperation Authority, Section 3051-3057 (previously under the 2008 Farm Bill); please contact myself at (541) 523-6391, or by email: tmontoya@fs.fed.us or the Forest Archeologist Sarah Crump at (541) 523-1249, or email scrump@fs.fed.us.

Thank you for your interest in this proposal.

Sincerely,

THOMAS MONTOYA
Forest Supervisor

Enclosure

cc: Amanda Rogerson, Aaron Miles, Dave Johnson