

ISSUE #3

How will noxious weeds and other invasive species be controlled on public lands, and what conditions will apply to permitted activities?

Control of noxious and other invasive species is critical in the management of public land. There are a number of opinions about appropriate methods of control, as well as the types of terms and conditions that should be placed on users of public lands. Implementation of the North American Weed Management Association inventory and monitoring standards and policies and strategies detailed in the Montana Weed Management Plan, approved in 2001, will be adopted by the RMP. The RMP will also integrate information from the National Vegetation Treatment, Conservation and Restoration EIS being prepared by the BLM if possible. The plan will also review the types of treatment available and where they may be applied, and will identify any areas requiring additional rehabilitation or restoration beyond control methods.

Practices or stipulations to be applied to all resource activities and uses will also be proposed in the plan. One example would be the required use of certified weed seed free forage for reclamation and restoration practices.

Some major factors and considerations in alternative formulation and estimation of effects include:

- mechanical control impacts
- biological control impacts
- use of herbicides adjacent to riparian habitats
- impacts on commercial users
- permitting commercial use of noxious weeds adjacent ownerships
- coordination with other agencies and landowners
- travel considerations
- reestablishment of desired species
- spot control vs. area treatments
- treatment impacts on threatened and endangered species
- treatment impacts on sensitive species
- treatment impacts on native plant communities