



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Mt. Hood  
National Forest

Barlow Ranger District  
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File Code:2080/1950  
December 30, 2002

To: Planning Record

Re: Noxious Weed Risk Assessment for the Juncrock Timber Sale

**Summary of Finding:**

The Juncrock Timber Sale has a MODERATE to HIGH risk of introducing or spreading known populations of noxious weeds. Weed control measures are identified under the MITIGATIONS section of this document.

Forest Service Manual (FSM) direction requires that Noxious Weed Risk Assessments be prepared for all projects involving ground-disturbing activities. For projects that have a moderate to high risk of introducing or spreading noxious weeds, recent Forest Service policy requires that decision documents must identify noxious weed control measures that will be undertaken during project implementation (FSM 2081.03, 11/29/95).

Aggressive non-native plants, or noxious weeds, can invade and displace native plant communities causing long-lasting management problems. Noxious weeds can displace native vegetation, increase fire hazards, reduce the quality of recreational experiences, poison livestock, and replace both wildlife and livestock forage. By simplifying complex plant communities, weeds reduce biological diversity and threaten rare habitats.

In addition to noxious weeds, which are designated by the State, there is a group of non-native plants that are also aggressive though are not officially termed "noxious". These species populate areas throughout the district, and will be discussed where deemed appropriate.



## **RISK RANKING**

Factors considered in determining the level of risk for the introduction or spread of noxious weeds are:

### X   HIGH

Has to be a combination of the following three factors:

1. Known weeds in/adjacent to the project area, in large quantities (> 25% of area).
2. Any three or more of vectors\* # 1 - 5 present in the project area (# 1, 3, & 4).
3. Project operation in/adjacent to these large weed populations.

### X   MODERATE

Has to be a combination of the following three factors:

1. Known weeds in/adjacent to the project area, in moderate quantities (6-25% of area).
2. Any two or more of vectors\* # 1 - 5 present in the project area (# 1, 3, & 4).
3. Project operation in/adjacent to these moderate weed populations.

### LOW

Has to be one or the other factor:

1. Any of vectors\* # 1 - 8 present in the project area.
2. Known weeds in/adjacent to the project area without vector presence.

\* Vectors (if contained in the project proposal) ranked in order of weed introduction risk:

1. Heavy equipment (implied ground disturbance)
2. Importing soil/cinders
3. OHV's (mountain bikers)
4. Grazing (long-term disturbance)
5. Pack animals (short-term disturbance)
6. Plant restoration
7. Recreationists (hikers, hunters, camping)
8. Forest Service project vehicles

## **DISCUSSION OF RANKING**

The Juncrock Timber Sale was given a MODERATE to HIGH risk ranking. The logging system prescribed is a ground based system, thus with minimal ground disturbance and given the same machinery will be utilized throughout the entire sale area, there can be some assumptions that noxious weeds will have an opportunity to migrate from one unit to another and establish in these newly disturbed areas. The MODERATE to HIGH risk ranking was given because some identified treatment areas do have noxious weeds presently in them, and with the prescribed ground disturbance by tractor, and seed dispersal next spring this can be the perfect conditions for new infestations to occur. The species of concern for this area are Tansy ragwort, Scotch broom, and Common houndstongue.

## **MITIGATION**

Every reasonable effort should be made to prevent the spread of noxious weeds to any uninfested land, including all federal, state or private lands. Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 dated February 3, 1999, President Clinton issued direction for the Implementation of Invasive Plants Contract Provisions.

These provisions require the cleaning of off-road equipment related to logging operations, road construction and reconstruction, and road maintenance. Based upon the existing noxious weed inventories in this area, the purchaser/contractor will be required and shall certify in writing that all off-road equipment is free of Invasive Plants prior to each start-up of timber sale or road related operations, and for each subsequent move of equipment onto National Forest lands. Purchaser/Contractor shall employ whatever cleaning methods are necessary to ensure that off-road equipment is free of soil, seeds, vegetative matter, or other debris that could contain or hold seeds prior to coming onto National Forest lands. Purchaser/Contractor shall notify the Forest Service at least 5 days prior to moving each piece of off-road equipment onto National Forest lands. Inspection of equipment prior to off-loading will be conducted by an authorized Forest Official, with knowledge to identify invasive plant materials. These contract provisions WO-C/CT6.36 will become part of the timber sale contract where deemed appropriate and necessary.

Site inspections, monitoring and treatments should occur for at least three to five years following the completion of harvest activities. In the event noxious weeds are identified in these disturbed areas, immediate eradication methods will be coordinated by district personnel. This immediate action can prevent any new infestations from getting established, since the district has the means to effectively eradicate new small populations. The funding mechanism for this activity will come from both KV and operational dollars.

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