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BLM to Burn Noxious Weed Medusahead

(Roseburg, OR) - In an effort to control an annual grass known as Medusahead, the Bureau of Land Management is planning to conduct a 34 acre prescribed burn on the north boundary of the North Bank Habitat Management Area approximately 3 miles southeast of Sutherlin and ten miles northeast of Roseburg.

The burn is being designed and accomplished in cooperation with Douglas Forest Protective Association, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The burn is currently scheduled for the end of June, most likely during the week of the 18th, depending on favorable weather conditions.

Timing of this particular invasive noxious weed control project is critical. In order to be effective, the Medusahead seed must be burned after it has developed on the plant, but before it can harden and fall to the ground.

Medusahead, or as it is scientifically known *Taeniatherum caput-medusae* was accidentally introduced into the United States in the 1880s. It is officially designated as a noxious weed. It crowds out native plant grasses and forbs and more desirable livestock forage plants. After seed set, the silica-rich plants persist as a dense litter layer that prevents germination and survival of native plant species, and contributes to fire danger in the summer. Due to its high silica content, Medusahead is not a good forage plant for livestock or wildlife, except very early in the growing season.

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