



American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

Grasshopper Suppression

Category: Habitat Restoration

BLM
Wyoming

Analysis Addresses Impacts of Grasshopper Treatments

The BLM estimates 1.2 million of the 18 million acres that the BLM manages in Wyoming are threatened by a predicted infestation of grasshoppers. This could result in substantial loss of vegetation and ground cover vital to providing food and habitat to wildlife and livestock populations and maintaining properly functioning ecosystems. Grasshoppers are voracious feeders, eating approximately one-half of their body weight in green forage per day. At densities of 30 per square yard, grasshoppers will consume all the green forage available and at higher densities, they may also consume shrubs, woody material, and even paint on buildings.



Grasshoppers can severely reduce the forage value of rangeland. Their feeding causes direct damage to plant growth and seed production, thus reducing valuable feed for wildlife and livestock. Other effects include soil erosion and degradation, disruption of nutrient cycles, introduction of invasive plants, interference with water filtration and potentially irreversible changes in the flora and fauna of the rangeland ecosystem. In addition, populations can invade adjacent high value cropland.

To analyze impacts of grasshopper treatments conducted by county weed and pest districts on BLM Wyoming lands, the BLM hired a consulting firm,

North Wind, Inc., to prepare a state-wide programmatic grasshopper suppression Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA was completed in April under a \$107,621 ARRA contract.

North Wind, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of an Alaska Native Corporation, CIRI, which is a women-owned, small disadvantaged business. It has won awards as a small business leader in the environmental management, engineering, and construction service industries.

Preparing in advance for grasshopper invasions could reduce economic hardships in rural areas throughout Wyoming. If nothing is done, economic impacts to owners of rangeland and cropland adjacent to infested public lands could result from landowners having to treat outbreaks originating on untreated public lands. Communities in outbreak areas could also suffer losses in agriculture, wildlife, and rangeland vegetation.



The EA is available at:

http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/wy/information/NEPA/rfodocs_ghopper.Par.68920.File.dat/2010_ea.pdf.

For information on grasshoppers: http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/programs/weeds_pests/grasshopper.html

BLM Contact: Cindy Wertz, Wyoming State Office, 307-775-6014

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

