

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon cricket Suppression Program
Environmental Assessment for Mohave and Coconino County
portion of BLM District- Arizona Strip
Coconino County portions of Coconino National Forest –
Grazing Allotments within a 9 mile radius from Broliar Park and South with a 6 mile radius
along Forest Highway 3 to Highway 87.

EA Number: AZ-16-02

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes alternatives for suppressing grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks on rangeland in Mohave and Coconino County portions of BLM Arizona Strip District and Coconino County portion of Coconino National Forest – Grazing Allotments within a 9 mile radius from Broliar Park and South with a 6 mile radius along Forest Highway 3 to Highway 87.

The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available from: United States Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Plant Protection and Quarantine
3640 East Wier Ave., Phoenix, Arizona 85040.

Decision and Rationale

This EA includes an analysis of the potential impacts of three alternatives included in the EA. They included (1) No Action, (2) Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates and Complete Area Coverage, which may or may not include experimental treatments (3) Reduced Agent Area Treatments (RAATs), which may or may not include experimental treatments. The preferred alternative, (3) Reduced Agent Area Treatment will be considered. APHIS participation in this suppression program is at the official request from Federal, State and private land managers. When grasshopper populations reach a level of economic infestation in a specific area a suppression program will be considered. In an effort to reduce the further destruction to rangeland vegetation, APHIS is authorized under the Plant Protection Act (PPA) 7 (United States Code ~ 7701 *et seq.*) to protect rangeland from economic damage by grasshopper or Mormon cricket infestations.

Finding of No Significant Impact

APHIS has determined that the proposed suppression program, conducted in accordance with the Guidelines for Treatment of Rangeland Grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets, which contains the operational procedures and managerial flexibility, will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.

The finding of no significant impact was determined on the following:

1. Human health: Potential exposures from RAATs application rates are commensurately lower than from conventional application rates. These low exposures to the general public, workers, livestock, and wildlife pose no risk of direct toxicity. The areas for planned treatment on rangeland are away from the normal movement of the general public, and in general have limited or restrictive access. All APHIS treatments will strictly adhere to label requirements and further protection measures as outlined in the 2016 Treatment Guidelines and Operational Procedures. No human health effects are likely.
2. Non-targets: Chemical label instructions and APHIS Treatment Guidelines and Operational Procedures will be strictly followed. This will mitigate any adverse effect on non-targets. The use of insecticides at reduced rates and over reduced area of coverage would reduce further affect on pollinators than from conventional rates and coverage. Pre-treatment and post-treatment environmental monitoring is part of the APHIS treatment guidelines and is a strictly adhered work activity (APHIS Directive 5640.1). No adverse effects are likely for non-targets.
3. Endangered and threatened species: In accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation is conducted with Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) for any action authorized, funded, or affected by a Federal agency that may affect listed endangered or threatened species or their critical habitats. An APHIS state office Biological Assessment (BA) to determine the potential impact from the proposed treatment was prepared and submitted to FWS. Concurrence was granted March 21, 2016 by FWS Arizona Ecological Services staff.

APHIS has determined that the proposed action **will not affect**: the endangered Arizona cliff-rose (*Purshia subintegra*); endangered Arizona hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus triglochidiatus* var. *arizonicus*); endangered Brady pincushion cactus (*Pediocactus bradyi*); endangered Fickeisen plains cactus (*Pediocactus peeblesianus fickeiseniae*) with critical habitat; endangered Gierisch mallow (*Sphaeralcea gierischii*) with critical habitat; endangered Holmgren milk-vetch, (*Astragalus holmgrenorium*) with critical habitat; threatened Jones cycladenia, (*Cycladenia jonesii*); endangered Sentry milk-vetch (*Astragalus cremnophylax* var. *cremnophylax*); threatened Siler pincushion cactus (*Pediocactus sileri*); threatened Welsh's milkweed (*Asclepias welshii*) with critical habitat; threatened Mojave Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) with critical habitat.

APHIS has determined that the proposed action **may affect but is not likely to adversely affect**: the threatened Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) with critical habitat; endangered Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) with critical habitat; endangered California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*); threatened Western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) with proposed critical habitat.

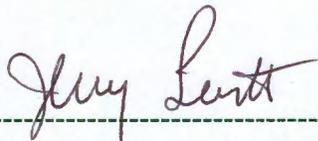
APHIS has determined that the proposed action for sensitive species of concern **may affect but not likely to adversely affect**: Northern leopard frog (*Lithobates pipiens*) (Arizona Game and Fish Department Species of Greatest Conservation Need).

All required buffers and other protective measures will be used and verified before treatment. Furthermore appropriate environmental monitoring will occur before, during and after chemical application.

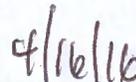
4. Socioeconomic issues: Ranchers (livestock owners) are the major social group that is economically impact by rangeland grasshopper infestations. Extensive grasshopper infestations deplete the natural plant resources. Losses occurred from reduced available range forages for livestock and wildlife can be considerable, and thus cause starvation, sickness and mortality among these animals. The general public is the main consumer segment that relies on these animal products, and can be economically affected by limited and inconstant supply. The county and state property value base for taxes purposes and supporting revenue for community services also becomes less.
5. Cultural resources and events: No county cultural resources or events will be affected negatively by the proposed treatment. In fact a suppression treatment should help reduce the insect annoyance and property damage concerns at some of these events, and be considered an actual benefit.
6. Executive Orders; 12898 (low income and minorities), 13045 (children), and 13186 (migratory birds): The proposed action should provide some assurance of stable work and income by mitigating potential disruptions in local employment. "No Affect" with children for health and safety. "No Affect" on migratory birds.

The time between the receipt of a request for treatment and the start of a suppression program is very short. In order to inform the public and give them time to submit comments on the proposed program, APHIS is making this EA available at this time. Once a treatment request is received and it has been determined that a suppression program will take place, APHIS will prepare a supplemental determination to re-examine potential program effects on the quality of the human environment. The supplemental determination will be provided to all parties that commented on the 2015 EA by APHIS.

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impact contained in the EA, the implementation of the treatment guidelines (containing the operational procedures) and the protective measures for endangered and threatened species, I have determined that the proposed suppression program will not significantly impact the quality of the human environment.



Jerry Levitt
Arizona – State Plant Health Director
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Plant Protection and Quarantine



Date