

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR
ESMERALDA, LINCOLN, NYE, AND WHITE PINE COUNTIES
2020 APHIS RANGELAND GRASSHOPPER/
MORMON CRICKET SUPPRESSION PROGRAM
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT NO: NV-02-20

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 Esmeralda, Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine Counties, Nevada. The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available for review at USDA, APHIS, PPQ, 8775 Technology Way, Reno, NV 89521 and APHIS, 4700 River Road, Riverdale, MD 20737-1228.

The EA includes an analysis of the potential impacts of two alternatives: (1) No Action, (2) Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates or Reduced Agent Area Treatments (RAATs) with Adaptive Management Strategy. The alternative methods analyzed included chemical control by malathion, carbaryl and diflubenzuron sprays, carbaryl ground and aerial bait and no action. The environmental impacts of each method and potential mitigation measures are described in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA). The operational procedures and mitigation measures identified in the attached EA would ensure that no significant adverse environmental impacts other than those identified in the APHIS EIS 2019 would occur to the human environment. The alternative selected is Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates or Reduced Agent Area Treatments (RAATs) with Adaptive Management Strategy.

Reasons for the finding of no significant impact include:

1. Human Health: Potential exposures to the general public from traditional application rates are infrequent and of low magnitude. Program insecticides pose minimal risk to human health including the public and applicators based on available toxicity data, and label restrictions and Program measures that are designed to reduce exposure.
2. Non-targets: APHIS Directive 5640.1 commits APHIS to a policy of monitoring the effects of Federal programs on the environment. Environmental monitoring includes such activities as checking to make sure the insecticides are applied in accordance with the labels, and that sensitive sites and organisms are protected. The environmental monitoring recommended for grasshopper suppression programs involves monitoring sensitive sites such as bodies of water used for human consumption or recreation or which have wildlife value, habitats of endangered and threatened species, habitats of other sensitive wildlife species, edible crops, and any sites for which the public has expressed concern or where humans might congregate (e.g., schools, parks, hospitals). APHIS evaluated the risk of Program treatments to nontarget fish and wildlife. Risks are generally low for most taxa depending on the chemical and application method. APHIS reduces risk to non-target fish and wildlife through adherence to label restrictions and Program measures designed to reduce exposure to fish and wildlife. Other common mitigation measures include reduced application rates compared to label rates, the use of alternating swaths and single applications per season that collectively reduce exposure to fish and wildlife.
3. Threatened, endangered or proposed species would not likely be adversely affected under the preferred alternative. No species of concern would likely be adversely affected.

The Esmeralda, Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine Counties' analysis has disclosed the following species of concern in the vicinity of the treatment areas: Bald eagle, Desert tortoise, Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, Southwestern Willow flycatcher, Hiko White River springfish, Pahrnagat Roundtail chub, Big Spring spinedace, Ute ladies-tresses, Railroad Valley springfish, Devils Hole pupfish, Ash Meadows Amargosa pupfish, Warm Springs pupfish, White River spinedace, Lahontan cutthroat trout, Ash Meadows Speckled dace, Ash Meadows naucorio, Ash Meadows milk-vetch, spring-loving centaury, Ash Meadows sunray, Ash Meadows gumplant, Ash Meadows ivesia, Amargosa niterwort, Ash Meadows blazingstar and the Pahrump poolfish. A complete list is attached in Appendix C, Table 1.

The location of these species or their habitat, rate of spray, spray materials to be used and protection and mitigation measures will be discussed with the local land managers prior to commencement of any treatment to ensure that no adverse effects to these species or their habitat from the treatment project occur. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided APHIS with a three year concurrence (2018-2021) for the suppression of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers. After treatment blocks are established, site specific consultation with USFWS will take place before treatments are made to identify any sensitive species at a local scale.

4. Socioeconomic issues have been considered and are addressed in the EA. It is determined that grasshopper treatment would not adversely affect socioeconomic issues.

5. Cultural resources and events have been considered and are addressed in the EA. It is determined that grasshopper treatment would not adversely affect cultural resources and events.

6. Executive Orders – 12898 (low income and minorities), 13045 (children), and 13186 (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 examine the treatment site to determine if environmental issues exist that were not covered in the EA. If changes need to be made to the EA APHIS will prepare a supplemental EA describing changes and/or additional site-specific issues that were not covered in the EA. This addendum will be provided to all parties that commented on the EA.

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

05/27/2020

Date

Alana Wild
State Plant Health Director NV/UT