

Final Environmental Assessment Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program

Wyoming
EA Number: WY-20-01

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ac	acre
a.i.	active ingredient
AChE	acetylcholinesterase
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
ATV	All Terrain Vehicle
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BCF	bioconcentration factor
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CEQ	Council of Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
EA	environmental assessment
e.g.	example given (Latin, <i>exempli gratia</i> , “for the sake of example”)
EIS	environmental impact statement
E.O.	Executive Order
°F	degrees Fahrenheit
FAASSTT	Field Aerial Application Spray Simulation Tower Technique
Fl. Oz.	fluid ounce
FONSI	finding of no significant impact
FR	Federal Register
FS	Forest Service
IMP	Interim Management Policy
HHERA	human health and ecological risk assessments
i.e.	in explanation (Latin, <i>id est</i> “in other words.”)
IPM	integrated pest management
lb	pound
LWG	Local Working Group
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
ml	milliliters
MOU	memorandum of understanding
MRAATs	Modified reduced agent area treatments
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NIH	National Institute of Health
ppm	parts per million
PPE	personal protective equipment
PPQ	Plant Protection and Quarantine
RAATs	reduced agent area treatments
SGCN	Species of Greatest Conservation Need
S&T	Science and Technology
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft Systems
ULV	ultra-low volume
U.S.C.	United States Code
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFS	United States Forest Service

USFWS	United States Fish and Wildlife Services
WGFD	Wyoming Game and Fish Department
WSA	Wilderness Study Area

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I. Need for Proposed Action

A. Purpose and Need Statement

An infestation of grasshoppers or Mormon crickets may occur in Wyoming. The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and any cooperating agency, based on location of infestation may, upon request by land managers or state departments of agriculture, conduct treatments to suppress grasshopper and/or Mormon cricket infestations as part of the Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program (Program). The term “grasshopper” used in this environmental assessment (EA) refers to both grasshoppers and Mormon crickets, unless differentiation is otherwise noted.

Populations of grasshoppers that trigger the need for a suppression program are normally considered on a case-by-case basis. Participation in grasshopper suppression programs is based on potential damage, such as reduced forage, and benefits of treatments which include reduction of pest outbreak populations and control of incipient pest populations. The goal of the proposed suppression program analyzed in this EA is to reduce grasshopper populations to economically acceptable levels in order to protect rangeland ecosystems or cropland adjacent to rangeland.

This EA analyzes potential effects of the proposed action and its alternatives. This EA applies to a proposed suppression program that would take place from March 1 to August 31, 2020 in Wyoming.

This EA is prepared in accordance with the requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 United States Code § 4321 *et. seq.*) and the NEPA procedural requirements promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and APHIS. A decision will be made by APHIS based on the analysis presented in this EA, the results of public involvement, and consultation with other agencies and individuals. A selection of one of the program alternatives will be made by APHIS for the 2020 Control Program for Wyoming.

B. Background Discussion

Rangelands provide many goods and services, including food, fiber, recreational opportunities, and grazing land for cattle (Havstad et al., 2007; Follett and Reed, 2010). Grasshoppers and Mormon crickets are part of rangeland ecosystems, serving as food for wildlife and playing an important role in nutrient cycling. However, grasshoppers and Mormon crickets have the potential to occur at high population levels (Belovsky et al.,

1996) that result in competition with livestock and other herbivores for rangeland forage and can result in damage to rangeland plant species.

In rangeland ecosystem areas of the United States, grasshopper populations can build up to economic infestation levels¹ despite even the best land management and other efforts to prevent outbreaks. At such a time, a rapid and effective response may be requested and needed to reduce the destruction of rangeland vegetation. In some cases, a response is needed to prevent grasshopper migration to cropland adjacent to rangeland.

APHIS surveys grasshopper populations on rangeland in the western United States, provides technical assistance on grasshopper management to landowners and land managers, and may cooperatively suppress grasshoppers when direct intervention is requested by a Federal land management agency or a State agriculture department (on behalf of a State or local government, or a private group or individual). The need for a rapid and effective response when an outbreak occurs limits the options available to APHIS. The application of an insecticide within all or part of the outbreak area is the response available to APHIS to rapidly suppress or reduce, but not eradicate, grasshopper populations and effectively protect rangeland.

In June 2002, APHIS completed an environmental impact statement (EIS) document concerning suppression of grasshopper populations in 17 western states (Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program, Environmental Impact Statement, June 21, 2002). The EIS described the actions available to APHIS to reduce the damage caused by grasshopper populations in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. During November 2019, APHIS published an updated EIS to incorporate the available data and analyze the environmental risk of new program tools. The risk analysis in the 2019 EIS is incorporated by reference.

APHIS will follow all state laws regarding pesticide application including Wyoming State Statutes §35-7-350 through §35-7-375 (<http://legisweb.state.wy.us/lisoweb/wy statutes.aspx>) and Chapter 28 Rules and Regulations, State of Wyoming, (<http://soswy.state.wy.us/Rules/default.aspx>).

In November 2019, APHIS and the United States Forest Service (USFS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing cooperative efforts between the two groups on suppression of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets on National Forest system lands (Document #19-8100-0573-MU, November 6, 2019). This MOU clarifies that

¹ The “economic infestation level” is a measurement of the economic losses caused by a particular population level of grasshoppers to the infested rangeland. This value is determined on a case-by-case basis with knowledge of many factors including, but not limited to, the following: economic use of available forage or crops; grasshopper species, age, and density present; rangeland productivity and composition; accessibility and cost of alternative forage; and weather patterns. In decision making, the level of economic infestation is balanced against the cost of treating to determine an “economic threshold” below which there would not be an overall benefit for the treatment. Short-term economic benefits accrue during the years of treatments, but additional long-term benefit may accrue and be considered in deciding the total value gained by treatment. Additional losses to rangeland habitat and cultural and personal values (e.g., aesthetics and cultural resources), although a part of decision making, are not part of the economic values in determining the necessity of treatment.

APHIS will prepare and issue to the public environmental documents that evaluate potential impacts associated with proposed measures to suppress economically damaging grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations. The MOU also states that these documents will be prepared under the APHIS NEPA implementing procedures with cooperation and input from the USFS.

The MOU further states that the responsible USFS official will request in writing the inclusion of appropriate lands in the APHIS suppression project when treatment on national forest land is necessary. According to the provisions of the MOU, APHIS can begin treatments after APHIS issues an appropriate decision document.

In October 2015, APHIS and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing cooperative efforts between the two groups on suppression of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets on BLM lands (Document #15-8100-0870-MU, October 15, 2015). This MOU clarifies that APHIS will prepare and issue to the public environmental documents that evaluate potential impacts associated with proposed measures to suppress economically damaging grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations. The MOU also states that these documents will be prepared under the APHIS NEPA implementing procedures with cooperation and input from the BLM.

The MOU further states that the responsible BLM official will request in writing the inclusion of appropriate lands in the APHIS suppression project when treatment on BLM land is necessary. The BLM must also prepare a Pesticide Use Proposal (Form FS-2100-2) for APHIS to treat infestations. According to the provisions of the MOU, APHIS can begin treatments after APHIS issues an appropriate decision document and BLM prepares and approves the Pesticide Use Proposal.

In September 2016, APHIS and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing cooperative efforts between the two groups on suppression of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets on BIA lands (Document #10-8100-0941-MU, September 16, 2016). This MOU clarifies that APHIS will prepare and issue to the public environmental documents that evaluate potential impacts associated with proposed measures to suppress economically damaging grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations. The MOU also states that these documents will be prepared under the APHIS NEPA implementing procedures with cooperation and input from the BIA.

The MOU further states that the responsible BIA official will request in writing the inclusion of appropriate lands in the APHIS suppression project when treatment on BIA land is necessary. The request should include the dates and locations of all tribal ceremonies and cultural events, as well as “not to be treated” areas that will be in or near the proposed treatment block(s). According to the provisions of the MOU, APHIS can begin treatments after APHIS issues an appropriate decision document.

C. About This Process

The EA process for grasshopper management is complicated by the fact that there is very little time between requests for treatment and the need for APHIS to take action with respect to those requests. Surveys help to determine general areas, among the scores of millions of acres that potentially could be affected, where grasshopper infestations may occur in the spring of the following year. There is considerable uncertainty, however, in the forecasts, so that framing specific proposals for analysis under NEPA is not possible. At the same time, the program strives to alert the public in a timely manner to its more concrete treatment plans and avoid or minimize harm to the environment in implementing those plans.

The current EIS provides a solid analytical and regulatory foundation; however, it may not be enough to satisfy NEPA completely for actual treatment proposals, and the “conventional” EA process will seldom, if ever, meet the program’s timeframe of need. Thus, a two-stage NEPA process has been designed to accommodate such situations. For the first stage, this EA will analyze aspects of environmental quality that could be affected by grasshopper treatment in Wyoming. This EA and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) will be made available to the public for a 30-day comment period. If comments are received during the comment period, they will be addressed in stage two of the process. For stage two, when the program receives a treatment request and determines that treatment is necessary, the specific site within Wyoming will be extensively examined to determine if environmental issues exist that were not covered in this EA and FONSI. This stage is intended mainly to ensure that significant impacts in the specific treatment area will not be experienced. A supplemental determination will be prepared to document this finding and would also address any comments received on this EA. Supplemental determinations prepared for specific treatment sites will be provided to all parties who comment on this EA.

II. Alternatives

To engage in comprehensive NEPA risk analysis APHIS must frame potential agency decisions into distinct alternative actions. These program alternatives are then evaluated to determine the significance of environmental effects. The 2002 EIS presented three alternatives: (A) No Suppression; (B) Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates and Complete Area Coverage; and (C) Reduced Agent Area Treatments (RAATs), and their potential impacts were described and analyzed in detail. The 2019 EIS was tiered to, and updated the 2002 EIS. The 2019 EIS provides updates to the program with new information and technologies that were not analyzed in the 2002 EIS. Copies of the complete 2002 and 2019 EIS documents are available for review at USDA APHIS PPQ, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Suite 208, Cheyenne, Wyoming. These documents are also available at the Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Program website, <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/grasshopper>.

The 2019 EIS is intended to explore and explain potential environmental effects associated with grasshopper suppression programs that could occur in 17 western states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, and

Wyoming). The 2019 EIS outlines the importance of grasshoppers as a natural part of the rangeland ecosystem. However, grasshopper outbreaks can compete with livestock and wildlife for rangeland forage and cause devastating damage to crops and rangeland ecosystems. Rather than opting for a specific proposed action from the alternatives presented, the 2019 EIS analyzes in detail the environmental impacts associated with each programmatic action alternative related to grasshopper suppression based on new information and technologies.

All insecticides used by APHIS for grasshopper suppression are used in accordance with applicable product label instructions and restrictions. Representative product specimen labels can be accessed at the Crop Data Management Systems, Incorporated website at www.cdms.net/manuf/manuf.asp. Labels for actual products used in suppression programs will vary, depending on supplier. All insecticide treatments conducted by APHIS will be implemented in accordance with APHIS' treatment guidelines and operational procedures, included as Appendix 1 to this final EA.

This Final EA analyzes the significance of environmental effects that could result from the alternatives described below. These alternatives differ from those described in the 2019 EIS because grasshopper treatments are not likely to occur in most of Wyoming and therefore the environmental baseline should describe a no suppression scenario.

A. No Suppression Program Alternative

Under Alternative A, the No Suppression alternative, APHIS would not fund or participate in a program to suppress grasshopper infestations within Wyoming. Under this alternative, APHIS may opt to provide limited technical assistance, but any suppression program would be implemented by a Federal land management agency, a State agriculture department, a local government, or a private group or individual.

B. Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates or Reduced Agent Area Treatments with Adaptive Management Strategy (Preferred Alternative)

Under Alternative B, the preferred alternative, APHIS would manage a grasshopper treatment program using techniques and tools discussed hereafter to suppress grasshopper outbreaks. The insecticides available for use by APHIS include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) registered chemicals malathion, carbaryl, and diflubenzuron. These chemicals have varied modes of action: carbaryl and malathion work by inhibiting acetylcholinesterase (AChE) (enzymes involved in nerve impulses); and diflubenzuron is a chitin inhibitor. APHIS would make a single application per year to a treatment area and could apply insecticide at an APHIS rate conventionally used for grasshopper suppression treatments, or more typically as reduced agent and area treatments (RAATs). APHIS selects which insecticides and rates are appropriate for suppression of a grasshopper outbreak based on several biological, logistical, environmental, and economical criteria. The identification of grasshopper species and their life stage largely determines the choice of insecticides used among those available to the program. RAATs are the most common and preferred application method for all

program insecticides, and only rarely do rangeland pest conditions warrant full coverage and higher rates.

The RAATs strategy is effective for grasshopper suppression because the insecticide controls grasshoppers within treated swaths while conserving natural grasshopper predators in swaths not directly treated. RAATs can decrease the rate of insecticide applied by either using lower insecticide concentrations or decreasing the deposition of insecticide applied by alternating one or more treatment swaths. Both options are most often incorporated simultaneously into RAATs. Either malathion, carbaryl, or diflubenzuron would be considered under this alternative (with diflubenzuron being the preferred chemical) typically at the following application rates:

- 4.0 fluid ounces (0.31 pounds active ingredient (lb a.i.)) of malathion per acre;
- 8.0 fluid ounces (0.25 lb a.i.) of carbaryl ULV spray per acre;
- 10.0 pounds (0.20 lb a.i.) of 2 percent carbaryl bait per acre;
- 0.75 or 1.0 fluid ounce (0.012 lb a.i.) of diflubenzuron per acre.

The width of the area not directly treated (the untreated swath) under the RAATs approach is not standardized but has minimum and maximum parameters. The proportion of land treated in a RAATs approach is a complex function of the rate of grasshopper movement, which is a function of developmental stage, population density, and weather (Narisu et al., 1999, 2000), as well as the properties of the insecticide (insecticides with longer residuals allow wider spacing between treated swaths). Foster et al. (2000) left 20 to 50% of their study plots untreated, while Lockwood et al. (2000) left 20 to 67% of their treatment areas untreated. Currently the grasshopper program typically leaves 50% of a spray block untreated for ground applications where the swath width is between 20 and 45 feet. For aerial applications, the skipped swath width is typically no more than 20 feet for malathion, 100 feet for carbaryl and 200 feet for diflubenzuron. The selection of insecticide and the use of an associated swath width is site dependent. Rather than suppress grasshopper populations to the greatest extent possible, the goal of this alternative is to suppress grasshopper populations to a desired level.

Insecticide applications at conventional rates and complete area coverage, is an approach that APHIS has used in the past but is currently uncommon. Under this option, malathion, carbaryl, or diflubenzuron would cover all treatable sites within the designated treatment block per label directions. The application rates under this option are typically at the following application rates:

- 8.0 fluid ounces (0.62 lb a.i.) of malathion per acre;
- 16.0 fluid ounces (0.50 lb a.i.) of carbaryl spray per acre;
- 10.0 pounds (0.50 lb a.i.) of 5 percent carbaryl bait per acre;
- 1.0 fluid ounce (0.016 lb a.i.) of diflubenzuron per acre.

The potential generalized environmental effects of the application of malathion, carbaryl, and diflubenzuron, under this alternative are discussed in detail in the 2019 EIS. A

description of anticipated site-specific impacts from this alternative may be found in Part IV of this document.

C. Research Treatments Alternative

APHIS PPQ continues to refine its methods of grasshopper and Mormon cricket management in order to improve the abilities of the Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program (herein referred to as the Program) to make it more economically feasible, and environmentally acceptable. These refinements can include reduced rates of currently used pesticides, improved formulations, development of more target-specific baits, development of biological pesticide suppression alternatives, and improvements to aerial (e.g., incorporating the use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)) and ground application equipment. A division of APHIS PPQ, Science and Technology's (S&T) Phoenix Lab, located in Arizona, and its Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Management Team (Rangeland Unit) conducts methods development and evaluations on behalf of the Program. The Rangeland Unit's primary mission is to comply with Section 7717 of the Plant Protection Act and protect the health of rangelands (wildlife habitats and where domestic livestock graze) against economically damaging cyclical outbreaks of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets. The Rangeland Unit tests and develops more effective, economical, and less environmentally harmful management methods for the Program and its federal, state, tribal, and private stakeholders.

To achieve this mission, research plots ranging in area from less than one foot to 640 acres are used and often replicated. The primary purpose of these experiments is to test and develop improved methods of management for grasshoppers and Mormon crickets. This often includes testing and refining pesticide and biopesticide formulations that may be incorporated into the Program. These investigations often occur in the summer (May-August) and the locations typically vary annually. The plots often include "no treatment" (or control) areas that are monitored to compare with treated areas. Some of these plots may be monitored for additional years to gather information on the effects of utilized pesticides on non-target arthropods. Note that an [Experimental Use Permit](#) is not needed when testing non-labeled experimental pesticides if the use is limited to laboratory or greenhouse tests, or limited replicated field trials involving 10 acres or less per pest for terrestrial tests.

Studies and research plots are typically located on large acreages of rangelands and the Rangeland Unit often works on private land with the permission of landowners. Locations of research trials will be made available to the appropriate agencies in order to ensure these activities are not conducted near sensitive species or habitats. Due to the small size of the research plots, no adverse effects to the environment, including protected species and their critical habitats, are expected, and great care is taken to avoid sensitive areas of concern prior to initiating studies.

1. Methods Development Studies

Methods development studies may use planes and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) to apply labeled pesticides using conventional applications and the reduced agent area treatments

(RAATs) methodology. The experiments may include the use of an ultra-low volume sprayer system for applying biopesticides (such as native fungal pathogens). Mixtures of native pathogens and low doses of pesticides may be conducted to determine if these multiple stressor combinations enhance mortality. Aircraft will be operated by Federal Aviation Administration licensed pilots with an aerial pesticide applicator's permit.

The Rangeland Unit often uses one square foot micro plots covered by various types of cages depending on the study type and species used. These types of study plots are preferred for Mormon cricket treatments and those involving non-labeled research pesticides or biopesticides. The most common application method for micro plots is simulating aerial applications via the Field Aerial Application Spray Simulation Tower Technique (FAASSTT). This system consists of a large tube enclosed on all sides except for the bottom, so micro plot treatments can be accurately applied to only the intended treatment target. Treatments are applied with the FAASSTT in micro doses via a syringe and airbrush apparatus mounted in the top.

The Rangeland Unit is also investigating the potential use of Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) for a number of purposes related to grasshopper and Mormon cricket detection and treatment. UAS will be operated by FAA licensed pilots with an aerial pesticide applicator's permit.

2. Pesticides and Biopesticides Used in Studies

Pesticides likely to be involved in studies currently include:

- 1) Liquids: diflubenzuron (Dimilin 2L and generics: currently Unforgiven and Cavalier 2L) and chlorantraniliprole (Prevathon). Program standard application rates are: diflubenzuron - 1.0 fl. oz./acre in a total volume of 31 fl. oz./acre; chlorantraniliprole - 2.0 fl. oz./acre (RAATs) or 4.0 fl. oz./acre (conventional coverage), both in a total volume of 32 fl. oz./acre. Research rates often vary, but the doses are lower than standard Program rates unless otherwise noted.
- 2) Baits: carbaryl. Program standard application rates: 2% bait at 10 lbs./acre (2 lbs. AI/acre) or 5% bait at 4 lbs./acre (2 lbs. AI/acre).
- 3) LinOilEx (Formulation 103), a proprietary combination of easily available natural oils and some commonly encountered household products, created by Manfred Hartbauer, University of Graz, Austria. Note that LinOilEx (Formulation 103) is experimental; for more information, see "Potential Impacts of LinOilEx Applications" in the section "Information on Experimental Treatments."

Biopesticides likely to be involved in studies currently include:

- 1) *Metarhizium robertsii* (isolate DWR2009), a native fungal pathogen. Note that *Metarhizium robertsii* (isolate DWR2009) is experimental; for more information, see "Potential Impacts of *Metarhizium robertsii* Applications" in the section "Information on Experimental Treatments."

- 2) *Beauveria bassiana* GHA, a native fungal pathogen sold commercially and registered for use across the U.S.

At this time, it is undecided where in the 17 western states research will be conducted. The final location decision is dependent upon grasshopper and/or Mormon cricket population densities and availability of suitable sites. It is most likely research will be conducted in Arizona, Idaho, New Mexico, Oregon, Montana, or Washington. Potential research studies are as follows:

Study 1: Evaluate efficacy of a UAS-mounted bait spreader applying 2% carbaryl bait at 5 lbs/acre. This study plans to use replicated 40 acre plots (320 acres total) on Colville Confederated Tribes land in Washington sometime in May/June, but is contingent upon a population of sufficient size. Mortality will be then be observed for a duration of time to determine efficacy.

Study 2: Evaluate persistence of the experimental biopesticide DWR2009 in bait form by coating wheat bran with the pathogen. A grasshopper species of local abundance will be placed into replicated microplot cages and fed the baits by hand. Mortality and sporulation will then be observed for a duration of time to determine persistence in both the field and the lab.

Study 3: Evaluate efficacy of the experimental biopesticide DWR2009 in bait form by coating wheat bran with the pathogen. A grasshopper species of local abundance will be placed into replicated microplot cages and fed the baits by hand. Mortality and sporulation will be then be observed for a duration of time to determine efficacy in both the field and the lab.

Study 4: A stressor study to evaluate efficacy of the experimental biopesticide DWR2009 in liquid form when combined with Dimilin 2L. The FAASSTT will be utilized to apply varying dose levels of Dimilin 2L (below label rates) in order to compare efficacy, starting at the rate of 1.0 fl. oz./acre. Replicated microplots will be treated and then a grasshopper species of local abundance will be placed into each cage. Mortality will be then be observed for a duration of time to determine efficacy.

Study 5: Evaluate efficacy of the experimental biopesticide DWR2009 in liquid and bait form (by coating wheat bran with the pathogen) using ultra-ultra low volume RAATs (involves a timing device and ULV nozzles) and a 10 acre plot. ATV-mounted liquid and bait spreaders will be utilized to apply DWR2009. Specimens will be periodically collected to observe mortality and sporulation for a duration of time to determine efficacy.

Study 6: Evaluate efficacy of the experimental, non-traditional pesticide LinOilEx (Formulation 103). A micro-FAASSTT (airbrush system mounted on a 5 gallon bucket) will be utilized to apply varying dose levels in order to compare efficacy, starting at the base rate of 6.64 ml/cage. A grasshopper species of local abundance will be placed into

replicated microplot cages and sprayed directly. Mortality will be then be observed for a duration of time to determine efficacy.

III. Affected Environment

A. *Description of Affected Environment*

This EA covers the State of Wyoming. Additionally, APHIS recognizes that concerns outside this area could necessitate protection buffers that extend into this area.

The size of this region is approximately 97,914 square miles (62,664,960 acres). The total relief is 10,690 feet and ranges from 3,114 feet to 13,804 feet at Gannett Peak. Grasshopper and Mormon cricket treatments occur primarily between 3,640 feet and 7,500 feet in this region. Pine forests dominate the higher elevation. No treatments are anticipated in these forested areas. Annual precipitation in the primary area of concern ranges from 6 inches to 22 inches. Precipitation is higher in the mountains. Temperatures can be extremely variable at any location. Summer temperatures in the 90's and low 100's are common in the lower elevations. Winter low temperatures are often well below 0 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). The yearly mean temperatures for the region are 40 °F to 48 °F.

Croplands are concentrated along major rivers where irrigation is possible. Less than 3 percent of the region is cultivated. The major crops are:

<u>CROP</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>CROP</u>	<u>ACRES</u>
Alfalfa	530,000	Corn	110,000
Other Hay	550,000	Oats	23,000
Wheat	145,000	Sugar Beets	31,300
Barley	100,000	Dry Beans	32,000

(Acreage figures are from National Agricultural Statistics Service, Wyoming Agriculture Statistics, 2015 Crop Acres Planted). Damage to these croplands is expected when migrating bands of Mormon crickets and grasshoppers enter these fields.

Information on the species composition of grasshoppers is available from USDA APHIS PPQ in Cheyenne, Wyoming through the Wyoming Grasshopper Information System. The species of major economic importance are: *Ageneotettix deorum*, *Amphitornus coloradus*, *Anabrus simplex*, *Aulocara elliotti*, *Aulocara femoratum*, *Camnula pellucida*, *Cordillacris crenulata*, *Cordillacris occipitalis*, *Melanophus bivittatus*, *M. differentialis*, *M. femurrubrum*, *M. infantilis*, *M. occidentalis*, *M. sanguinipes*, *Phlibostroma quadrimaculatum*, *Phoetaliotes nebrascensis*, and *Trachyrhachys kiowa*. Approximately 96 other lesser important species are represented in surveys from this region. These 96 species may become economic pests if part of a high density species complex. Warm, dry weather is generally the most favorable for high populations, and severe loss of forage most often occurs in conjunction with drought.

The major population centers are in the towns of Cheyenne and Casper. Smaller towns are located throughout the region. The total population is approximately 563,626 (2010 census figure).

Major recreational areas in this region include eleven State parks and eight National Forests. The top five most visited State Parks in Wyoming are Hot Springs State Park with 1,821,006 visitors, Glendo State Park with 300,801 visitors, Bear River State Park with 261,540 visitors, Sinks Canyon State Park with 212,019 visitors and Keyhole State Park with 187,324 visitors in 2014 (Wyoming State Parks Visitor Use Program, 2016). Statistics for 2015 are pending publication. Wyoming's eight National Forests total 9.7 million acres (National Forest Service, 2016). The roads through the region are a major thoroughfare for tourist traffic to and from Wyoming's two National Parks, two National Monuments and over twenty National Historic Sites and Trails. Yellowstone National Park recorded 4,095,317 visitors for 2015 alone and has recorded between 2.8 million and 3.6 million visitors per year since 2000 (Yellowstone National Park Visitor Statistics, 2016).

Domestic honeybee yards are found throughout Wyoming. Approximately 268 hobbyist (10 hives or less) apiarists and 163 general commercial apiarists make up the total registered 431 apiarists who operate 48,000 bee yards and over 100 million bee hives in Wyoming. Most of these colonies seasonally migrate to California to pollinate the almond orchards. Wyoming also has a hearty alfalfa seed production industry and alfalfa leafcutter bees are commonly used in some areas covered by this EA. Site specific locations can be found through apiary registrations at the Wyoming Department of Agriculture or checking with alfalfa seed producers in the case of leafcutter bees (WDA, 2015).

Many species of big game (antelope, mule deer, whitetail deer, elk, and others) and smaller animals (rabbits, squirrels, muskrats, beavers, minks, weasels, badgers, coyotes and foxes) range within the varied habitats. Livestock ponds, streams and reservoirs within the proposed treatment area provide a nesting and breeding habitat for waterfowl. Many nongame birds migrate through or nest in the region. Golden eagles, peregrine falcons and other raptors nest within the region and game birds (ringed necked pheasant, greater sage-grouse, wild turkey, Hungarian partridge, chukar and dove) are present. Recreational hunting is very important to the local economy.

B. Other Considerations

1. Human Health

The 2002 EIS and 2019 EIS contains detailed hazard, exposure, and risk analyses for the chemicals available to APHIS. Impacts to workers and the general public were analyzed for all possible routes of exposure (dermal, oral, inhalation) under a range of conditions designed to overestimate risk. The operational procedures and spraying conditions examined in those analyses conform to those expected for operations. The following discussion summarizes the hazards, potential exposure, and risk to workers and the general public for operations in Wyoming. Operational procedures identified in

Appendix 1 would be required in all cases and further mitigation measures are identified in this section, as appropriate.

No treatment will occur over congested areas, recreation areas, or schools and if appropriate, a buffer zone will be enacted and enforced. Refer to the Operational Procedures for ground and aerial treatments listed in Appendix 1. Further Treatment information can be found in the Grasshopper Guidebook Provisional online at https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/grasshopper-mormon-cricket/ct_grasshopper_mormon_cricket.

Groundwater wells are a major source of domestic water supplies. Groundwater and surface water are the major rural and livestock water source. No impact is anticipated. Strict adherence to label requirements and USDA treatment guidelines (Appendix 1) will be followed regarding treatments bordering open surface waters.

Malathion and carbaryl are cholinesterase inhibitors. Cholinesterases (including AChE) are enzymes that function at the nerve synapse. The nerve synapse is the point where information in the form of electrical impulses is relayed or transmitted by chemical messengers (called transmitters) from one nerve cell to another. Cholinesterase then inactivates or destroys the transmitter chemical (like acetylcholine) after it completes its job, otherwise the transmitter would continue indefinitely and precise control of the enervated tissue (muscle or organ) would be lost. Refer to the 2015 guidelines (Appendix 1) for further information on mitigating exposure to cholinesterase inhibitors.

No human health effects are likely from exposure to diflubenzuron if it is used according to label instructions. A human exposure assessment was done in detail for diflubenzuron and can be found in APHIS's "Chemical Risk Assessment for Diflubenzuron Use in Grasshopper Cooperative Control Program".

2. Non-target Species

Sensitive non-target species within the area include plants, terrestrial vertebrates and invertebrates, bats, resident and migratory birds, biocontrol agents, pollinators, aquatic organisms, and Federal and State listed threatened and endangered species. APHIS will use an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to ensure non-target effects are reduced. APHIS will also consult with local agency officials to determine appropriate protective measures. Appropriate protective measures will be considered within an IPM framework. These strategies may include but are not limited to chemical selection, reduced rates, reduced coverage areas, buffer zones, timing restrictions and environmental monitoring. If such a request occurs and the grasshopper or Mormon cricket management option selected poses a clear threat to any of these species, APHIS will confer with the land managers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or WGFD personnel to agree on protective measures.

a) Threatened and Endangered Species and Sensitive Species of Concern

The following are federally listed threatened and endangered species that reside in Wyoming.

FEDERALLY LISTED THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES:

<u>Animals</u>	<u>Latin Name</u>	<u>Listed Status</u>
Northern Long-Eared Bat	<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>	Threatened
Grizzly Bear	<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>	Threatened
Humpback Chub	<i>Gila cypha</i>	Endangered
Yellow-Billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Threatened
Kendall Warm Springs Dace	<i>Rhinichthys osculus thermalis</i>	Endangered
Black-Footed Ferret	<i>Mustela nigripes</i>	Endangered / Experimental
Canada Lynx	<i>Lynx canadensis</i>	Threatened
Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse	<i>Zapus hudsonius preblei</i>	Threatened
Colorado Pikeminnow	<i>Ptychocheilus lucius</i>	Endangered
Piping Plover	<i>Charadrius melodus</i>	Threatened / Endangered
Least Tern	<i>Sterna antillarum</i>	Endangered
Wyoming Toad	<i>Anaxyrus baxteri</i>	Endangered
Western Glacier Stonefly	<i>Zapada glacier</i>	Threatened
<u>Plants</u>	<u>Latin Name</u>	<u>Listed Status</u>
Ute Ladies'-Tresses	<i>Spiranthes diluvialis</i>	Threatened
Western Prairie Fringed Orchid	<i>Platanthera praeclara</i>	Threatened
Blowout Penstemon	<i>Penstemon haydenii</i>	Endangered
Desert Yellowhead	<i>Yermo xanthocephalus</i>	Threatened

A summary of species determinations and impact minimization measures can be found in Appendix 3. In the absence of a recent national biological opinion, local Section 7 consultations are conducted yearly with USFWS to mitigate impacts that grasshopper suppression programs may have on listed threatened and endangered species. These correspondences can be found in Appendix 2.

b) Greater Sage-Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have indicated concern regarding the impacts of a grasshopper suppression program on greater sage-grouse, hereafter referred to as sage-grouse. Concerns to sage-grouse include the toxicity effects of the chemicals in question, the effects to the food base of the sage-grouse, and the physical disturbance factors related to a grasshopper suppression program. Wyoming historically supports larger populations of sage-grouse than other states due to the approximately 50 % of land area that is composed of sagebrush habitats (Patterson 1952).

Concern and protection of sage-grouse in Wyoming has been a priority for leaders in Wyoming for many years and has been expressed through the Governor's Executive Orders. Throughout the years, Executive Orders 2008-2, 2010-4, 2011-5, 2013-3, 2015-4, and 2017-2 have protected sage-grouse and their habitat and developed management strategies. The Governor's Sage-Grouse Implementation Team developed the sage-grouse core population area concept in order to protect critical habitat from further degradation. Executive Order 2019-3 supersedes all previous executive orders. The BLM has issued Instruction Memorandum WY 2012-019 entitled Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat Management Policy on Wyoming BLM Administered Public Lands Including the Federal Mineral Estate.

Sage-grouse as a species of concern was addressed in the 2002 EIS and in the updated 2019 EIS. While it is clear that diflubenzuron poses less direct toxicity to greater sage-grouse than both carbaryl and malathion, toxicities were analyzed in the risk assessment and concluded that grasshopper suppression RAATs alternatives would not directly affect greater sage-grouse for any of the proposed insecticides.

The effect of grasshopper suppression programs to the food base of the greater sage-grouse can be important during the early brood rearing timing of the sage-grouse life cycle. Study results indicate that sage-grouse chicks require insects for survival until about three weeks of age (Johnson, May 1987). For most of Wyoming, this timing coincides with the earliest likely timing of grasshopper suppression programs. In order to limit the effects to the food base of the greater sage-grouse APHIS PPQ will utilize grasshopper suppression RAATs alternatives within greater sage-grouse core population areas. By using the RAATs method, effects to non-target insects and grasshoppers will be reduced. The Governor's Executive Order 2019-3 specifically lists Grasshopper / Mormon cricket control following Reduced Agent-Area Treatments (RAATs) protocols as a de-minimis (exempt) activity under Appendix G, "De-minimis" Activities.

In extreme cases grasshopper infestations may be so damaging that crucial sage-grouse habitat is compromised. These areas may not be apparent in time to use diflubenzuron and a faster knockdown may be required to protect the habitat. For these situations APHIS reserves the ability to use carbaryl and malathion in greater sage-grouse core population areas. If treatments are late enough in the season that diflubenzuron is deemed ineffective then it is also most likely that sage-grouse chicks will be mature enough that they will have adjusted their diet to a mixture of forbs and sage brush versus insects only. Situations that require the use of carbaryl or malathion within sage-grouse core population areas will be considered on a case by case situation only with input from the land manager, landowner and WGFD.

In 2015 the USFWS requested data from 11 western states, including Wyoming, to aide in the ESA listing decision of the sage-grouse. The data included sage-grouse populations' status, trends and numbers, habitat status and trends, hunting and other uses, disease and predation, impacts from pesticides, contaminants, recreational activities, and any literature pertinent to the USFWS status review. The compiled data demonstrated Wyoming's commitment and assurance to sage-grouse conservation and the

determination of the western states to logistically and financially conserve sage-grouse habitat and protect the sage-grouse species. Reviews of the compiled data lead to the United States Department of the Interior determining that listing the greater sage-grouse range wide as a threatened or endangered species was precluded making it a candidate species which will not receive statutory protection under the ESA. Sage-grouse are no longer considered a candidate species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (50 FR 24292). In the WGFD 2017 State Wildlife Action Plan sage-grouse are identified as a Tier II SGCN (Tier II is moderate priority). If grasshopper suppression treatments are requested in sage-grouse core population areas, APHIS PPQ will consider additional conditions and mitigation measures outlined in the request. Discussions with local entities such as WGFD and BLM will also occur to determine appropriate steps to suppress grasshopper populations and protect sage-grouse populations and habitat ranges.

c) Species of special concern to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department

The WGFD lists Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). This list may be found in State Wildlife Action Plan, 2017, which can be found at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Habitat/Habitat-Plans/Wyoming-State-Wildlife-Action-Plan>.

WGFD has specific concerns regarding nongame birds and bats with respect to grasshopper suppression programs.

i. Nongame birds

The following species appear on the SGCN list and the Wyoming Partners in Flight Priority Species list, and may be negatively affected by grasshopper control in areas where they nest and forage: burrowing owl, short-eared owl, Brewer's sparrow, sage sparrow, Baird's sparrow, McCown's longspur, loggerhead shrike, sage thrasher, vesper sparrow, lark sparrow, lark bunting, dickcissel, bobolink, black-billed cuckoo, black throated gray warbler, Clark's nutcracker, MacGillivray's warbler, Scott's oriole, Virginia's warbler, Bewick's wren, canyon wren and snowy plover. In particular, the following species consume large amounts of grasshoppers and/or Mormon Crickets; therefore, the impact of grasshopper control on these species is likely to negatively affect both adult and young birds during the nesting season: McCown's longspur, loggerhead shrike, sage thrasher, lark bunting, black-billed cuckoo, Virginia's warbler, Bewick's wren, mountain plover and snowy plover. APHIS would use RAATs methodologies for treatments in most cases, as RAATs with diflubenzuron is the preferred methodology. This method is expected to result in 80 to 95% control, which is approximately 5 to 15% lower mortality than with a conventional (higher rate, blanket coverage) treatment (University of Wyoming, 2010). RAATs methods are expected to leave adequate prey base for insectivorous species. At no time will APHIS strive to eradicate grasshopper populations.

ii. Bats

In previous years, the WGFD has raised concerns about possible impacts of this program on spotted bats. The spotted bat is a nocturnal feeder on flying insects primarily around desert water holes. The bat and its food source are protected by the buffers associated

with water. Additional protective measures, such as the use of bait or RAATs, will be negotiated with the WGFD if proposed pesticide applications directly conflict with sites having recent spotted bat activity.

d) Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Eagle Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668c), enacted in 1940, and amended several times since then, prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from “taking” bald eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs. The Act provides criminal and civil penalties for persons who “take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import, at any time or any manner, any bald eagle ... [or any golden eagle], alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg thereof.” The Act defines “take” as “pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb.” “Disturb” means: “to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, 1) injury to an eagle, 2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or 3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior.” In addition to immediate impacts, this definition also covers impacts that result from human-induced alterations initiated around a previously used nest site during a time when eagles are not present, if, upon the eagles return, such alterations agitate or bother an eagle to a degree that injures an eagle or substantially interferes with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering habits and causes, or is likely to cause, a loss of productivity or nest abandonment.

As listed in the National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines (USFWS, May 2007) the following mitigation measures will be followed when practical:

“Category G. Helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft. Except for authorized biologists trained in survey techniques, avoid operating aircraft within 1,000 feet of the nest during the breeding season, except where eagles have demonstrated tolerance for such activity. In addition, Category A (Agriculture) and Category D (Off Road Vehicle Use) both provide the same guidance for use of ATV's or trucks: No buffer is necessary around nest sites outside the breeding season. During the breeding season, do not operate off-road vehicles within 330 feet of the nest. In open areas, where there is increased visibility and exposure to noise, this distance should be extended to 660 feet.”

Most bald eagles’ nest close to their food source, typically waterways, by policy and label restrictions APHIS will not conduct suppression activities within 500 feet of water bodies providing some inherent protection for Bald Eagles.

e) Aquatic Species not previously listed

The malathion label warns of its toxicity to fish, shrimp, and crabs and prohibits its use over water. EPA lists carbaryl and malathion as pesticides that may affect endangered aquatic species (EPA, 1986).

Diffubenzuron is the main ingredient in Dimilin® 2L, Cavalier 2L and Unforgiven. These chemical products are listed as Restricted Use Pesticides due to toxicity to aquatic invertebrate animals including insects and it cannot be applied directly to water or to areas where surface water is present.

Important game fish in the region include: walleye, sauger, cutthroat trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, brook trout and lake trout.

Programmatic protection for federally listed endangered and threatened species of aquatic animals is covered in the 2002 EIS and 2019 EIS, Biological Assessments, and the Biological Opinions. These procedures will ensure protection of sensitive aquatic species from any adverse effects caused by grasshopper control.

f) Bees

i. Domestic Honey Bees (*Apis mellifera*)

Beekeepers are given notice when definitive treatment areas are identified. Treatment block maps will be available for beekeeper review at the County offices of the Weed and Pest Districts. Beekeepers will be advised to move their bees at least two miles from the spray block boundaries. In all cases when using malathion or carbaryl where beekeepers fail to move or otherwise protect their bees, a two mile buffer zone will be observed around the bee yard. The above procedures will ensure that there will be no significant impact on domestic bee production.

ii. Alfalfa Leafcutter Bees (*Megachile rotundata*)

Alfalfa leafcutter bees are managed for pollination of alfalfa in the area. The areas with these bees are mostly centered at Basin, Burlington, Emblem, Powell, Byron, Lovell and Riverton. Notification is on a case-by-case basis. Beekeepers will be advised to move their bees at least four miles from the spray block boundaries. In all cases when using malathion or carbaryl where beekeepers fail to move or otherwise protect their bees, a four mile buffer zone will be observed around the bee yard. The above procedures will ensure that there will be no significant impact on alfalfa leafcutter bee activity.

g) Wildlife Habitat Reservations and Wilderness Areas

The WGFD operates 39 Wildlife Habitat Management Units in Wyoming. These can be located on the web at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/accessto/whmas.asp>. If a request for treatment involves any of these lands, APHIS will negotiate locally with the habitat biologist located at the nearest Game and Fish regional office for any protective measures necessary, in addition to the operation procedures.

h) Bureau of Land Management Wilderness Study Areas

In Wyoming there are 43 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered Wilderness Study Areas (WSA), encompassing 588,150 acres. These can be located on the web at <https://www.blm.gov/programs/national-conservation-lands/wyoming>. These WSA's are managed under BLM's Interim Management Policy (IMP).

The objective of the IMP is to continue resource uses within the WSA's in a manner that maintains the area's suitability for preservation as wilderness until Congress either designates these lands as wilderness or releases them for other purposes.

Handbook H-8550-1 (Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review) provides guidance regarding how BLM will manage the WSA's. H-8550-1 does provide for insect and disease control by chemical or biological means under certain conditions as discussed in Chapter 3, Section D Rangeland Management, 4 e.

Because of the special requirements found in H-8550-1, including NEPA related requirements, before conducting any Grasshopper and Mormon cricket project involving a WSA, the BLM Field Office administering the specific WSA will be consulted with and involved in the project.

i) Migratory Birds

In accordance with various environmental statutes, APHIS routinely conducts programs in a manner that minimizes impact to the environment, including any impact to migratory birds. In January 2001, President Clinton signed Executive Order (EO) number 13186 to ensure that all government programs protect migratory birds to the extent practicable. APHIS will support the conservation intent of the migratory bird conventions by integrating bird conservation principles, measures, and practices into agency activities and by avoiding or minimizing, to the extent practicable, adverse impacts on migratory bird resources when conducting agency actions.

j) Protective Mitigation Measures of Above Species

Protective mitigation measures that may be taken by APHIS in the grasshopper treatment areas covered by this EA may include, but is not limited to, buffer zones and/or skip swaths. It is important to note that treatment goals are to reduce grasshopper populations to an economic threshold, not eradication. At no time will APHIS strive to reduce populations below levels encountered in non-outbreak years. This will help ensure grasshopper populations sufficient to provide food sources and biodiversity for species of concern.

If after specific program boundaries have been set and if it has been determined by Fish and Wildlife Services or the land manager that species of concern are within the specific area, mitigation measures as described in Appendix 3 or site specific documentation will be followed.

3. Socioeconomic Issues

The possible treatment areas are subject to reoccurring drought. A combination of drought and grasshopper damage causes economic stress to landowners and permittees.

The control of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets in this area would have beneficial economic impacts to local landowners (or permittees). The forage not utilized by grasshoppers will be available for wildlife consumption, livestock consumption, and harvesting. This will allow greater livestock grazing, decreased needs for supplemental

feed, and increased monetary returns. The control of migrating bands of Mormon crickets is most important in protection of crops but if populations are extreme, damage to rangeland forage will occur.

4. Cultural Resources and Events

To ensure that historical sites, monuments, buildings, artifacts or known areas of cultural events and/or observances of special concern are not adversely affected by program treatments, APHIS will confer locally with Tribes, state and federal land managers on proposed treatment areas.

In previous years, BLM has expressed concerns regarding the effect of pesticide applications on carbon dating techniques of pictographs and petroglyphs. There is presently no information on this subject. Until such information is available, USDA APHIS will confer with BLM on a local level to protect known sites on BLM managed lands.

Where tribal lands are involved, APHIS will confer locally with Tribal Officials and with the BIA office to ensure that the timing and location of planned program treatments do not coincide or conflict with cultural events and/or observances on Tribal and/or allotted lands. APHIS will confer locally with Tribal Officials and with the BIA office on possible cultural impacts of proposed grasshopper/Mormon cricket treatment where native plant gathering areas on tribal land are identified to APHIS.

5. Special Considerations for Certain Populations

a) Executive Order Number 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations

Executive Order (EO) number 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, was signed by President Clinton on February 11, 1994 (59 *Federal Register* (FR) 7269). This EO requires each Federal agency to make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Consistent with this EO, APHIS will consider the potential for disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and low-income populations for any of its actions related to grasshopper suppression programs.

Consistent with EO number 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations, APHIS considered the potential for disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from the proposed treatment is minimal and is not expected to have disproportionate adverse effects to any minority or low income populations.

b) Executive Order Number 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks

The increased scientific knowledge about the environmental health risks and safety risks associated with hazardous substance exposures to children and recognition of these issues in Congress and Federal agencies brought about legislation and other requirements to protect the health and safety of children. On April 21, 1997, President Clinton signed EO number 13045, Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks and Safety Risks (62 FR 19885). This EO requires each Federal agency, consistent with its mission, to identify and assess environmental health risks and safety risks that may disproportionately affect children and to ensure that its policies, programs, activities, and standards address those risks. APHIS has developed agency guidance for its programs to follow to ensure the protection of children (USDA, APHIS, 1999).

The human health risk assessment for the 2002 EIS analyzed the effects of exposure to children from three insecticides. The 2019 EIS updates and replaces the 2002 EIS. Based on review of all four insecticides and their use in the grasshopper program, the risk assessment concluded that the likelihood of children being exposed to insecticides is very slight and that no disproportionate adverse effects to children are anticipated over the negligible effects to the general population. Treatments are primarily conducted on open rangelands where children would not be expected to be present during treatment, or enter should there be any restricted entry period after treatment. No treatment will occur over congested areas or schools and if appropriate, a buffer zone will be enacted and enforced.

Impacts on children will be minimized by the implementation of the treatment guidelines as further described in Appendix 1:

Aerial Broadcast Applications of Liquid Insecticides

- Notify all residents in treatment areas, or their designated representatives, prior to proposed operations. Advise them of the control method to be used, the proposed method of application, and precautions to be taken (e.g., advise parents to keep children and pets indoors during ULV treatment). Refer to label recommendations related to restricted entry period.
- No treatments will occur over congested urban areas. For all flights over congested areas, the contractor must submit a plan to the appropriate Federal Aviation Administration District Office and this office must approve of the plan; a letter of authorization signed by city or town authorities must accompany each plan. Whenever possible, plan aerial ferrying and turnaround routes to avoid flights over congested areas, bodies of water, and other sensitive areas that are not to be treated.

Aerial Application of Dry Insecticidal Bait

- Do not apply within 500 feet of any school or recreational facility.

Ultra-Low-Volume Aerial Application of Liquid Insecticides

- Do not spray while school buses are operating in the treatment area.
- Do not apply within 500 feet of any school or recreational facility.

IV. Environmental Consequences

Each alternative described in this EA potentially has adverse environmental effects. The general environmental impacts of each alternative are discussed in detail in the 2002 and 2019 EIS. The specific impacts of the alternatives are highly dependent upon the particular action and location of infestation. The principal concerns associated with the alternatives are: (1) the potential effects of insecticides on human health (including subpopulations that might be at increased risk); and (2) impacts of insecticides on non-target organisms (including threatened and endangered species).

APHIS has written human health and ecological risk assessments (HHERAs) to assess the insecticides and use patterns that are specific to the program. The risk assessments provide an in-depth technical analysis of the potential impacts of each insecticide to human health; and non-target fish and wildlife along with its environmental fate in soil, air, and water. The assessments rely on data required by the USEPA for pesticide product registrations, as well as peer-reviewed and other published literature. The HHERAs are heavily referenced in this final EA. These Environmental Documents can be found at the following website: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/grasshopper>.

A. Environmental Consequences of the Alternatives

Environmental consequences of the alternatives are discussed in this section.

1. No Suppression Program Alternative

Under this alternative, APHIS would not organize or fund a program to suppress grasshoppers. If APHIS does not participate in any grasshopper suppression program, Federal land management agencies, State agriculture departments, local governments, private groups or individuals, may not effectively combat outbreaks in a coordinated effort. Without the technical assistance and coordination that APHIS provides during grasshopper outbreaks, the uncoordinated programs could use insecticides that APHIS considers too environmentally harsh. Multiple treatments and excessive amount of insecticide could be applied in efforts to suppress or even locally eradicate grasshopper populations. There are approximately 100 pesticide products registered by USEPA for use on rangelands and against grasshoppers (Purdue University, 2018). It is not possible to accurately predict the environmental consequences of the No Suppression alternative because the type and amount of insecticides that could be used in this scenario are unknown. However, the environmental impacts could be much greater than under the APHIS led suppression program alternative due to lack of treatment knowledge or coordination among the groups.

The potential environmental impacts from the No Suppression alternative, where other agencies and land managers do not control outbreaks, stem primarily from grasshoppers consuming vast amounts of vegetation in rangelands and surrounding areas. Grasshoppers are general feeders, eating grasses and forbs first and often moving to cultivated crops. High grasshopper density of one or several species and the resulting defoliation may reach an economic threshold where the damage caused by grasshoppers exceeds the cost of controlling the grasshoppers. Researchers determined that during typical grasshopper infestation years, approximately 20% of forage rangeland is removed,

valued at a dollar adjusted amount of \$900 million. This value represents 32 to 63% of the total value of rangeland across the western states (Rashford et al., 2012). Other market and non-market values such as carbon sequestration, general ecosystem services, and recreational use may also be impacted by pest outbreaks in rangeland.

Vegetation damage during large-scale grasshopper outbreaks may be so severe that grasses and forbs are destroyed, resulting in poor or impaired plant growth for several years. Grasshoppers in unsuppressed outbreaks would consume agricultural and nonagricultural plants. Rare, threatened or endangered plants may be consumed during critical times of development such as seed production, and loss of important plant species, or seed production may lead to reduced diversity of rangeland habitats, potentially creating opportunities for the expansion of invasive and exotic weeds (Lockwood and Latchininsky, 2000). When grasshoppers consume plant cover, soil is more susceptible to the drying effects of the sun, making plant roots less capable of holding soil in place. Soil damage results in erosion and disruption of nutrient cycling, water infiltration, seed germination, and other ecological processes which are important components of rangeland ecosystems (Latchininsky et al., 2011).

When the density of grasshoppers reaches significantly high levels, grasshoppers begin to compete with livestock for food by reducing available forage (Wakeland and Shull, 1936; Belovsky, 2000; Pfadt, 2002; Branson et al., 2006; Bradshaw et al., 2018). Ranchers could offset some of the costs by leasing rangeland in another area and relocating their livestock, finding other means to feed their animals by purchasing hay or grain, or selling their livestock. Ranchers could also incur economic losses from personal attempts to control grasshopper damage. Local communities could see adverse economic impacts to the entire area. Grasshoppers that infest rangeland could move to surrounding croplands. Farmers could incur economic losses from attempts to chemically control grasshopper populations or due to the loss of their crops. The general public could see an increase in the cost of meat, crops, and their byproducts.

2. Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates or Reduced Agent Area Treatments with Adaptive Management Strategy

Under Alternative 2, APHIS would participate in grasshopper programs with the option of using one of the insecticides malathion, carbaryl, or diflubenzuron, depending upon the various factors related to the grasshopper outbreak and the site-specific characteristics. The use of an insecticide would typically occur at half the conventional application rates following the RAATs strategy. APHIS would apply a single treatment to affected rangeland areas in an attempt to suppress grasshopper outbreak populations by a range of 35 to 98 %, depending upon the insecticide used.

a) Malathion

Malathion is a broad-spectrum organophosphate insecticide widely used in agriculture on various food and feed crops, homeowner yards, ornamental nursery stock, building perimeters, pastures and rangeland, and regional pest eradication programs. The chemical's mode of action is through AChE inhibition, which disrupts nervous system function. While these effects are desired in controlling insects, they can have undesirable

impacts to non-target organisms that are exposed to malathion. The grasshopper program currently uses the malathion end-use product Fyfanon[®] ULV AG, applied as a spray by ground or air.

Volatility is not expected to be a major pathway of exposure based on the low vapor pressure and Henry's Law constant that have been reported for malathion. The atmospheric vapor phase half-life of malathion is five hours (NIH, 2009b). Malathion's half-life in pond, lake, river, and other natural waters varied from 0.5 days to 10 days, depending on pH (Guerrant et al., 1970), persisting longer in acidic aquatic environments. The reported half-life in water and sediment for the anaerobic aquatic metabolism study was 2.5 days at a range of pH values from 7.8 to 8.7 (USEPA, 2006). The persistence of malathion in soils depends primarily on microorganism activity, pH, and organic matter content. The persistence of malathion is decreased with microbial activity, moisture, and high pH (USEPA, 2016a) and the half-life of malathion in natural soil varies from two hours (Miles and Takashima, 1991) to 11 days (Neary, 1985; USEPA, 2006).

Malathion and associated degradants, in general, are soluble and do not adsorb strongly to soils (USEPA, 2000a). Inorganic degradation of malathion may be more important in soils that are relatively dry, alkaline, and low in organic content, such as those that predominate in the western program areas. Adsorption to organic matter and rapid degradation make it unlikely that detectable quantities of malathion would leach to groundwater (LaFleur, 1979). Malathion degradation products also have short half-lives. Malaoxon, the major malathion degradation product of toxicological concern, has half-lives less than one day in a variety of soil types (USEPA, 2016a). The half-life of malathion on foliage has been shown to range from one to six days (El-Refai and Hopkins, 1972; Nigg, 1986; Matsumara, 1985; USDA FS, 2008).

While livestock and horses may graze on rangeland the same day that the land is treated with malathion, the products used by the grasshopper program are labeled with rates and treatment intervals that are meant to protect livestock. Tolerances are set based on the amount of malathion that is allowed in cattle fat (4 ppm), meat (4 ppm), and meat byproducts (4 ppm) (40 CFR Parts 180.111). The grasshopper program would treat at application rates indicated on product labels or lower, which would ensure approved residue levels. In addition, the program would make only one application a year.

USEPA found malathion moderately toxic to birds on a chronic basis, slightly toxic to mammals through dietary exposure, and acutely toxic to aquatic species (including freshwater as well as estuarine and marine species) (USEPA, 2000b, 2016b). Toxicity to aquatic vertebrates such as fish and larval amphibians, and aquatic invertebrates is variable based on test species and conditions. The data available on impacts to fish from malathion suggest effects could occur at levels above those expected from program applications. Consumption of contaminated prey is not expected to be a significant pathway of exposure for aquatic species based on expected residues and malathion's BCF (USEPA, 2016a; USDA APHIS, 2018d). Indirect effects to fish from impacts of malathion applications to aquatic plants are not expected (USDA APHIS, 2018d).

USEPA considers malathion highly toxic to bees if exposed to direct treatment on blooming crops or weeds. The Fyfanon[®] ULV AG label indicates not to apply product or allow it to drift to blooming crops or weeds while bees are actively visiting the treatment area (USEPA, 2012a). Toxicity to other terrestrial invertebrates is variable based on the test organism and test conditions however malathion is considered toxic to most terrestrial invertebrates (USEPA, 2016b).

Indirect risks to mammals resulting from the loss of plants that serve as a food source would also be low due to the low phytotoxicity of malathion. The other possible indirect effect that should be considered is loss of invertebrate prey for those mammals that depend on insects and other invertebrates as a food source. Insects have a wide variety of sensitivities to malathion and a complete loss of invertebrates from a treated area is not expected because of low program rates and application techniques. In addition, the aerial and ground application buffers and untreated swaths provide refuge for invertebrates that serve as prey for insectivorous mammals and would expedite repopulation of areas that may have been treated.

APHIS expects that direct avian acute and chronic effects would be minimal for most species (USDA APHIS, 2018d). The preferred use of RAATs during application reduces these risks by reducing residues on treated food items and reducing the probability that they will only feed on contaminated food items. In addition, malathion degrades quickly in the environment and residues on food items are not expected to persist. Indirect effects on birds from the loss of habitat and food items are not expected because of malathion's low toxicity to plants and the implementation of RAATs that would reduce the potential impacts to invertebrates that serve as prey for avian species. Several field studies did not find significant indirect effects of malathion applications on avian fecundity (Dinkins et al., 2002; George et al., 1995; Howe, 1993; Howe et al., 1996; Norelius and Lockwood, 1999; Pascual, 1994).

Available toxicity data demonstrates that amphibians are less sensitive to malathion than fish. Program malathion residues are more than 560 times below the most sensitive acute toxicity value for amphibians. Sublethal effects, such as developmental delays, reduced food consumption and body weight, and teratogenesis (developmental defects that occur during embryonic or fetal growth), have been observed at levels well above those assessed from the program's use of malathion (USDA APHIS, 2018d). Program protection measures for aquatic water bodies and the available toxicity data for fish, aquatic invertebrates, and plants suggest low indirect risks related to reductions in habitat or aquatic prey items from malathion treatments.

Available data on malathion reptile toxicity suggest that, with the use of program measures, no lethal or sublethal impacts would be anticipated (USDA APHIS, 2015). Indirect risk to reptiles from the loss of food items is expected to be low due to the low application rates and implementation of preferred program measures such as RAATs (USDA APHIS, 2018d).

The risk to aquatic vertebrates and invertebrates is low for most species; however, some sensitive species that occur in shallow water habitats may be at risk. Program measures

such application buffer zones, drift mitigation measures and the use of RAATs will reduce these risks.

Risks to terrestrial invertebrate populations are anticipated based on the available toxicity data for invertebrates and the broad spectrum activity of malathion (Swain, 1986; Quinn et al., 1991). The risk to terrestrial invertebrates can be reduced by the implementation of application buffers and the use of RAATs, which would reduce exposure and create refuge areas where malathion impacts would be reduced or eliminated. Smith et al. (2006) conducted field studies to evaluate the impacts of grasshopper treatments to non-target terrestrial invertebrates and found minimal impacts when making reduced rate applications with a reduced coverage area (i.e. RAATs) for a ULV end-use product of malathion. Impacts to pollinators have the potential to be significant, based on available toxicity data for honeybees that demonstrate high contact toxicity from malathion exposures (USDA APHIS, 2018d). However, risk to pollinators is reduced because of the short residual toxicity of malathion. In addition, the incorporation of other mitigation measures in the program, such as the use of RAATs and wind speed and direction mitigations that are designed to minimize exposure and reduce the potential for population-level impacts to terrestrial invertebrates.

Adverse human health effects from ULV applications of malathion to control grasshoppers are not expected based on the low mammalian acute toxicity of malathion and low potential for human exposure. Malathion inhibits AChE in the central and peripheral nervous system with clinical signs of neurotoxicity that include tremors, salivation, urogenital staining, and decreased motor activity. USEPA indicates that malathion has “suggestive evidence of carcinogenicity but not sufficient to assess human carcinogenic potential” (USEPA, 2016c).

Adverse health risks to program workers and the general public from malathion exposure are also not expected due to low potential for exposure. APHIS treatments are conducted in rangeland areas consisting of widely scattered, single, rural dwellings in ranching communities, where agriculture is a primary industry. Label requirements to reduce exposure include minimizing spray drift, avoidance of water bodies and restricted entry interval. Program measures such as applying malathion once per season, lower application rates, application buffers and other measures further reduce the potential for exposure to the public.

b) Carbaryl

Carbaryl is a member of the N-methyl carbamate class of insecticides, which affect the nervous system via cholinesterase inhibition. Inhibiting the enzyme AChE causes nervous system signals to persist longer than normal. While these effects are desired in controlling insects, they can have undesirable impacts to non-target organisms that are exposed. The APHIS HHERA assessed available laboratory studies regarding the toxicity of carbaryl on fish and wildlife. In summary, the document indicates the chemical is highly toxic to insects, including native bees, honeybees, and aquatic insects; slightly to highly toxic to fish; highly to very highly toxic to most aquatic crustaceans, moderately toxic to mammals, minimally toxic to birds; moderately to highly toxic to several

terrestrial arthropod predators; and slightly to highly toxic to larval amphibians (USDA APHIS, 2018a).

The offsite movement and deposition of carbaryl after treatments is unlikely because it does not significantly vaporize from the soil, water, or treated surfaces (Dobroski et al., 1985). Temperature, pH, light, oxygen, and the presence of microorganisms and organic material are factors that contribute to how quickly carbaryl will degrade in water. Hydrolysis, the breaking of a chemical bond with water, is the primary degradation pathway for carbaryl at pH 7 and above. In natural water, carbaryl is expected to degrade faster than in laboratory settings due to the presence of microorganisms. The half-lives of carbaryl in natural waters varied between 0.3 to 4.7 days (Stanley and Trial, 1980; Bonderenko et al., 2004). Degradation in the latter study was temperature dependent with shorter half-lives at higher temperatures. Aerobic aquatic metabolism of carbaryl reported half-life ranged of 4.9 to 8.3 days compared to anaerobic (without oxygen) aquatic metabolism range of 15.3 to 72 days (Thomson and Strachan, 1981; USEPA, 2003). Carbaryl is not persistent in soil due to multiple degradation pathways including hydrolysis, photolysis, and microbial metabolism. Little transport of carbaryl through runoff or leaching to groundwater is expected due to the low water solubility, moderate sorption, and rapid degradation in soils. There are no reports of carbaryl detection in groundwater, and less than 1% of granule carbaryl applied to a sloping plot was detected in runoff (Caro et al., 1974).

Acute and chronic risks to mammals are expected to be low to moderate based on the available toxicity data and conservative assumptions that were used to evaluate risk. There is the potential for impacts to small mammal populations that rely on terrestrial invertebrates for food. However, based on the toxicity data for terrestrial plants, minimal risks of indirect effects are expected to mammals that rely on plant material for food. Carbaryl has a reported half-life on vegetation of three to ten days, suggesting mammal exposure would be short-term. Direct risks to mammals from carbaryl bait applications is expected to be minimal based on oral, dermal, and inhalation studies (USDA APHIS, 2018a).

Numerous studies have reported no effects on bird populations in areas treated with carbaryl (Buckner et al., 1973; Richmond et al., 1979; McEwen et al., 1996). Some applications of formulated carbaryl were found to cause depressed AChE levels (Zinkl et al., 1977; Gramlich, 1979); however, the doses were twice those proposed for the full coverage application in the grasshopper program.

While sublethal effects have been noted in fish with depressed AChE, as well as some impacts to amphibians (i.e. days to metamorphosis) and aquatic invertebrates in the field due to carbaryl, the application rates and measured aquatic residues observed in these studies are well above values that would be expected from current program operations. Indirect risks to amphibian and fish species can occur through the loss of habitat or reduction in prey, yet data suggests that carbaryl risk to aquatic plants that may serve as habitat, or food, for fish and aquatic invertebrates is very low.

Product use restrictions appear on the USEPA-approved label and attempt to keep carbaryl out of waterways. Carbaryl must not be applied directly to water, or to areas where surface water is present (USEPA, 2012c). The USEPA-approved use rates and patterns and the additional mitigations imposed by the grasshopper program, such as using RAATs and application buffers, where applicable, further minimize aquatic exposure and risk.

Most rangeland plants require insect-mediated pollination. Native, solitary bee species are important pollinators on western rangeland (Tepedino, 1979). Potential negative effects of insecticides on pollinators are of concern because a decrease in their numbers has been associated with a decline in fruit and seed production of plants. Laboratory studies have indicated that bees are sensitive to carbaryl applications, but the studies were at rates above those proposed in the program. The reduced rates of carbaryl used in the program and the implementation of application buffers should significantly reduce exposure of carbaryl applications to pollinators. In areas of direct application where impacts may occur, alternating swaths and reduced rates (i.e., RAATs) would reduce risk. Potential negative effects of grasshopper program insecticides on bee populations may also be mitigated by the more common use of carbaryl baits than the ULV spray formulation. Studies with carbaryl bran bait have found no sublethal effects on adults or larvae bees (Peach et al., 1994, 1995).

Carbaryl can cause cholinesterase inhibition (i.e., overstimulate the nervous system) in humans resulting in nausea, headaches, dizziness, anxiety, and mental confusion, as well as convulsions, coma, and respiratory depression at high levels of exposure (NIH, 2009a; Beauvais, 2014). USEPA classifies carbaryl as “likely to be carcinogenic to humans” based on vascular tumors in mice (USEPA, 2007, 2015a, 2017a).

USEPA regulates the amount of pesticide residues that can remain in or on food or feed commodities as the result of a pesticide application. The agency does this by setting a tolerance, which is the maximum residue level of a pesticide, usually measured in parts per million (ppm), that can legally be present in food or feed. USEPA-registered carbaryl products used by the grasshopper program are labeled with rates and treatment intervals that are meant to protect livestock and keep chemical residues in cattle at acceptable levels (thereby protecting human health). While livestock and horses may graze on rangeland the same day that the land is sprayed, in order to keep tolerances to acceptable levels, carbaryl spray applications on rangeland are limited to half a pound active ingredient per acre per year (USEPA, 2012c). The grasshopper program would treat at or below use rates that appear on the label, as well as follow all appropriate label mitigations, which would ensure residues are below the tolerance levels.

Adverse human health effects from the proposed program ULV applications of the carbaryl spray (Sevin® XLR Plus) and bait applications of the carbaryl 5% and 2% baits formulations to control grasshoppers are not expected based on low potential for human exposure to carbaryl and the favorable environmental fate and effects data. Technical grade (approximately 100% of the insecticide product is composed of the active ingredient) carbaryl exhibits moderate acute oral toxicity in rats, low acute dermal toxicity in rabbits, and very low acute inhalation toxicity in rats. Technical carbaryl is not

a primary eye or skin irritant in rabbits and is not a dermal sensitization in guinea pig (USEPA, 2007). This data can be extrapolated and applied to humans revealing low health risks associated with carbaryl.

The Sevin® XLR Plus formulation, which contains a lower percent of the active ingredient than the technical grade formulation, is less toxic via the oral route, but is a mild irritant to eyes and skin. The proposed use of carbaryl as a ULV spray or a bait, use of RAATs, and adherence to label requirements, substantially reduces the potential for exposure to humans. Program workers are the most likely human population to be exposed. APHIS does not expect adverse health risks to workers based on low potential for exposure to carbaryl when applied according to label directions and use of personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., long-sleeved shirt and long pants, shoes plus socks, chemical-resistant gloves, and chemical-resistant apron) (USEPA, 2012c) during loading and applications. APHIS quantified the potential health risks associated with accidental worker exposure to carbaryl during mixing, loading, and applications. The quantitative risk evaluation results indicate no concerns for adverse health risk for program workers (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/grasshopper>).

Adherence to label requirements and additional program measures designed to reduce exposure to workers and the public (e.g., mitigations to protect water sources, mitigations to limit spray drift, and restricted-entry intervals) result in low health risk to all human population segments.

c) Diflubenzuron

Diflubenzuron is a restricted use pesticide (only certified applicators or persons under their direct supervision may make applications) registered with USEPA as an insect growth regulator. It specifically interferes with chitin synthesis, the formation of the insect's exoskeleton. Larvae of affected insects are unable to molt properly. While this effect is desirable in controlling certain insects, it can have undesirable impacts to non-target organisms that are exposed.

USEPA considers diflubenzuron relatively non-persistent and immobile under normal use conditions and stable to hydrolysis and photolysis. The chemical is considered unlikely to contaminate ground water or surface water (USEPA, 1997). The vapor pressure of diflubenzuron is relatively low, as is the Henry's Law Constant value, suggesting the chemical will not volatilize readily into the atmosphere from soil, plants or water. Therefore, exposure from volatilization is expected to be minimal. Due to its low solubility (0.2 mg/L) and preferential binding to organic matter, diflubenzuron seldom persists more than a few days in water (Schaefer and Dupras, 1977; Schaefer et al., 1980). Mobility and leachability of diflubenzuron in soils is low, and residues are usually not detectable after seven days (Eisler, 2000). Aerobic aquatic half-life data in water and sediment was reported as 26.0 days (USEPA, 1997). Diflubenzuron applied to foliage remains adsorbed to leaf surfaces for several weeks with little or no absorption or translocation from plant surfaces (Eisler, 1992, 2000). Diflubenzuron treatments are expected to have minimal effects on terrestrial plants. Both laboratory and field studies demonstrate no effects using diflubenzuron over a range of application rates, and the direct risk to terrestrial plants is expected to be minimal (USDA APHIS, 2018c).

Dimilin® 2L is labeled with rates and treatment intervals that are meant to protect livestock and keep residues in cattle at acceptable levels (thereby, protecting human health). Tolerances are set based on the amount of diflubenzuron that is allowed in cattle fat (0.05 ppm) and meat (0.05 ppm) (40 CFR Parts 180.377). The grasshopper program would treat at application rates indicated on product labels or lower, which should ensure approved residues levels.

APHIS' literature review found that on an acute basis, diflubenzuron is considered toxic to some aquatic invertebrates and practically non-toxic to adult honeybees. However, diflubenzuron is toxic to larval honeybees (USEPA, 2018). It is slightly nontoxic to practically nontoxic to fish and birds and has very slight acute oral toxicity to mammals, with the most sensitive endpoint from exposure being the occurrence of methemoglobinemia (a condition that impairs the ability of the blood to carry oxygen). Minimal direct risk to amphibians and reptiles is expected, although there is some uncertainty due to lack of information (USDA APHIS, 2018c; USEPA, 2018).

Risk is low for most non-target species based on laboratory toxicity data, USEPA approved use rates and patterns, and additional mitigations such as the use of lower rates and RAATs that further reduces risk. Risk is greatest for sensitive terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates that may be exposed to diflubenzuron residues.

In a review of mammalian field studies, Dimilin® applications at a rate of 60 to 280 g a.i./ha had no effects on the abundance and reproduction in voles, field mice, and shrews (USDA FS, 2004). These rates are approximately three to 16 times greater than the highest application rate proposed in the program. Potential indirect impacts from application of diflubenzuron on small mammals includes loss of habitat or food items. Mice on treated plots consumed fewer lepidopteran (order of insects that includes butterflies and moths) larvae compared to controls; however, the total amount of food consumed did not differ between treated and untreated plots. Body measurements, weight, and fat content in mice collected from treated and non-treated areas did not differ.

Poisoning of insectivorous birds by diflubenzuron after spraying in orchards at labeled rates is unlikely due to low toxicity (Muzzarelli, 1986). The primary concern for bird species is related to an indirect effect on insectivorous species from a decrease in insect prey. At the proposed application rates, grasshoppers have the highest risk of being impacted while other taxa have a much reduced risk because the lack of effects seen in multiple field studies on other taxa of invertebrates at use rates much higher than those proposed for the program. Shifting diets in insectivorous birds in response to prey densities is not uncommon in undisturbed areas (Rosenberg et al., 1982; Cooper et al., 1990; Sample et al., 1993).

Indirect risk to fish species can be defined as a loss of habitat or prey base that provides food and shelter for fish populations, however these impacts are not expected based on the available fish and invertebrate toxicity data (USDA APHIS, 2018c). A review of several aquatic field studies demonstrated that when effects were observed it was at diflubenzuron levels not expected from program activities (Fischer and Hall, 1992; USEPA, 1997; Eisler, 2000; USDA FS, 2004).

Diffubenzuron applications have the potential to affect chitin production in various other beneficial terrestrial invertebrates. Multiple field studies in a variety of application settings, including grasshopper control, have been conducted regarding the impacts of diffubenzuron to terrestrial invertebrates. Based on the available data, sensitivity of terrestrial invertebrates to diffubenzuron is highly variable depending on which group of insects and which life stages are being exposed. Immature grasshoppers, beetle larvae, lepidopteran larvae, and chewing herbivorous insects appear to be more susceptible to diffubenzuron than other invertebrates. Within this group, however, grasshoppers appear to be more sensitive to the proposed use rates for the program. Honeybees, parasitic wasps, predatory insects, and sucking insects show greater tolerance to diffubenzuron exposure (Murphy et al., 1994; Eisler, 2000; USDA FS, 2004).

Diffubenzuron is moderately toxic to spiders and mites (USDA APHIS, 2018c). Deakle and Bradley (1982) measured the effects of four diffubenzuron applications on predators of *Heliothis* spp. at a rate of 0.06 lb a.i./ac and found no effects on several predator groups. This supported earlier studies by Keever et al. (1977) that demonstrated no effects on the arthropod predator community after multiple applications of diffubenzuron in cotton fields. Grasshopper integrated pest management (IPM) field studies have shown diffubenzuron to have a minimal impact on ants, spiders, predatory beetles, and scavenger beetles. There was no significant reduction in populations of these species from seven to 76 days after treatment. Although ant populations exhibited declines of up to 50 %, these reductions were temporary, and population recovery was described as immediate (Catangui et al., 1996).

Insecticide applications to rangelands have the potential to impact pollinators, and in turn, vegetation and various rangeland species that depend on pollinated vegetation. Based on the review of laboratory and field toxicity data for terrestrial invertebrates, applications of diffubenzuron are expected to have minimal risk to pollinators of terrestrial plants. The use of RAATs provide additional benefits by using reduced rates and creating untreated swaths within the spray block that will further reduce the potential risk to pollinators.

Adverse human health effects from ground or aerial ULV applications of diffubenzuron to control grasshoppers are not expected based on the low acute toxicity of diffubenzuron and low potential for human exposure. The adverse health effects of diffubenzuron to mammals and humans involves damage to hemoglobin in blood and the transport of oxygen. Diffubenzuron causes the formation of methemoglobin. Methemoglobin is a form of hemoglobin that is not able to transport oxygen (USDA FS, 2004). USEPA classifies diffubenzuron as non-carcinogenic to humans (USEPA, 2015b).

Program workers adverse health risks are not likely when diffubenzuron is applied according to label directions that reduce or eliminate exposures. Adverse health risk to the general public in treatment areas is not expected due to the low potential for exposure resulting from low population density in the treatment areas, adherence to label requirements, program measures designed to reduce exposure to the public, and low toxicity to mammals.

d) Reduced Area Agent Treatments (RAATs)

The use of RAATs is the most common application method for all program insecticides and would continue to be so except in rare pest conditions that warrant full coverage and higher rates. The goal of the RAATs strategy is to suppress grasshopper populations to a desired level, rather than to reduce those populations to the greatest possible extent. This strategy has both economic and environmental benefits. APHIS would apply a single application of insecticide per year, typically using a RAATs strategy that decreases the rate of insecticide applied by either using lower insecticide concentrations, and/or by alternating one or more treatment swaths. Usually RAATs applications use both options. The RAATs strategy suppresses grasshoppers within treated swaths, while conserving grasshopper predators and natural enemies (e.g. arachnids, blister beetles, robber flies, bee flies, and others) (see Manske, NDSU DREC for more) in swaths that are not treated.

The concept of reducing the treatment area of insecticides while also applying less insecticide per treated acre was developed in 1995, with the first field tests of RAATs in Wyoming (Lockwood and Schell, 1997). Applications can be made either aerially or with ground-based equipment (Deneke and Keyser, 2011). Studies using the RAATs strategy have shown good control (up to 85% of that achieved with a traditional blanket insecticide application) at a significantly lower cost and less insecticide, and with a markedly higher abundance of non-target organisms following application (Lockwood et al., 2000; Deneke and Keyser, 2011). Levels of control may also depend on variables such as body size of targeted grasshoppers, growth rate of forage, and the amount of coverage obtained by the spray applications (Deneke and Keyser, 2011). Control rates may also be augmented by the necrophilic and necrophagic behavior of grasshoppers, in which grasshoppers are attracted to volatile fatty acids emanating from cadavers of dead grasshoppers and move into treated swaths to cannibalize cadavers (Lockwood et al., 2002; Smith and Lockwood, 2003). Under optimal conditions, RAATs decrease control costs, as well as host plant losses and environmental effects (Lockwood et al., 2000; Lockwood et al., 2002).

The efficacy of a RAATs strategy in reducing grasshoppers is less than conventional treatments and more variable. Foster et al. (2000) reported that grasshopper mortality using RAATs was reduced 2 to 15% from conventional treatments, depending on the insecticide, while Lockwood et al. (2000) reported 0 to 26% difference in mortality between conventional and RAATs methods. APHIS will consider the effects of not suppressing grasshoppers to the greatest extent possible as part of the treatment planning process.

RAATs reduces treatment costs and conserves non-target biological resources in untreated areas. The potential economic advantages of RAATs was proposed by Larsen and Foster (1996), and empirically demonstrated by Lockwood and Schell (1997). Widespread efforts to communicate the advantages of RAATs across the western states were undertaken in 1998 and have continued on an annual basis. The viability of RAATs at an operational scale was initially demonstrated by Lockwood et al. (2000), and subsequently confirmed by Foster et al. (2000). The first government agencies to adopt RAATs in their grasshopper suppression programs were the Platte and Goshen County Weed and Pest Districts in Wyoming; they also funded research at the University of

Wyoming to support the initial studies in 1995. This method is now commonly used by government agencies and private landowners in states where grasshopper control is necessary.

Reduced rates should prove beneficial for the environment. All APHIS grasshopper treatments using malathion, carbaryl, or diflubenzuron are conducted in adherence with USEPA-approved label directions. Labeled application rates for grasshopper control tend to be lower than rates used against other pests. In addition, use rates proposed for grasshopper control by APHIS are lower than rates used by private landowners.

3. Research Treatments Alternative

a) Research *Metarhizium robertsii* Applications

Metarhizium is a common entomopathogenic fungus genus containing several species, all of which are host-restricted to the Arthropoda, with some having greater host specificity to an insect family, or even a group of related genera. Once considered a single species based on morphology but split into a number of species based on DNA sequence data, the genus is found worldwide and is commonly used as a management alternative to chemicals (USDA, 2000; Lomer et al., 2001; Zimmerman, 2007; Roberts, 2018; Zhang et al. 2019). Two *Metarhizium*, *M. brunneum* strain F52 and *M. anisopliae* ESF1, are registered with the USEPA as insecticides and are commercially used against a range of pest insects.

No harm is expected to humans from exposure to *Metarhizium* by ingesting, inhaling, or touching products containing this active ingredient. No toxicity or adverse effects were seen when the active ingredient was tested in laboratory animals. *M. anisopliae* has undergone extensive toxicology testing for its registration in Africa and the registration of Green Guard in Australia. There has been no demonstrated adverse effect on humans from these products. There is a potential for an allergic reaction to dry conidia if a person is extensively exposed to the product and has a preexisting allergy to fungal spores. *Metarhizium* use in this program is not expected to cause adverse impacts to soil, water, or air. No adverse impacts from the use of *Metarhizium* biopesticides have been observed in almost 20 years of field trials in other countries.

From 2005 to 2017, a massive project (led by Donald W. Roberts, Utah State University, in collaboration with USDA and others, and funded by APHIS-PPQ-S&T) was undertaken to collect 38,052 soil samples from across the 17 western states, from areas that were historically known to have large populations of grasshoppers and/or Mormon crickets. The purpose of these collections was to locate a domestic alternative to the nonindigenous *M. acridum*, used around the world for management of grasshopper (usually locust) populations, particularly in Australia and sub-Saharan Africa, but also in Mexico and Brazil. The use of such a pathogen would be highly useful to the Program as a biopesticide. Approximately 2,400 new isolates of *Metarhizium* spp., *Beauveria* spp. and other entomopathogenic fungi were found. Many of these fungi isolates were selected for lab and field trials with grasshoppers and Mormon crickets, the most promising being strain DWR2009 belonging to the species *M. robertsii* (Bischoff et al.,

2009). The DWR2009 isolate is still undergoing lab and field testing for efficacy against orthopterans. This species is closely related to *M. anisopliae*, which is commonly found worldwide and discernible based on diagnostic DNA sequences (Roberts, 2018).

There is the potential for prolonged persistence in the environment of a domestic isolate from one area brought to another. Despite this possibility, potential environmental impact is minimal given the widespread and common nature of *Metarhizium* in the western United States and because the DWR2009 isolate have been chosen for their optimized effects on orthopterans (Roberts, 2018). Although entomopathogenic fungi can reduce grasshopper populations, a substantial portion of the treated population are able to resist the infection through thermoregulation. Molecular systematics analyses (by the Roberts Lab; Bischoff et al., 2009; Kepler et al., 2014; Mayerhofer et al., 2019) revealed DWR2009 is very closely related to many other strains within *M. robertsii*, all of which are basically biologically equivalent to each other. In fact, *Metarhizium robertsii* can only be differentiated from other species by a multiplexed PCR assay based on two gene sequences. Furthermore, it is likely that persistence effects would mirror those found for *M. anisopliae* and *M. acridum*. Both species need optimal temperature ranges to thrive, as well as relatively humid conditions (Zimmerman, 2007; EA, 2010). In particular, *M. acridum* does not persist in semi-arid and arid environments, which include rangeland habitats, where U.S. grasshopper outbreaks occur (EA, 2010). If the DWR2009 strain derived biopesticide is spread outside of the research plots, exceptional rates of fungal infection are not anticipated. Since *M. anisopliae* is a generalist entomopathogen, lethal effects on non-target arthropods have been reported, but are more commonly observed in laboratory experiments than in the field. Plus, such effects are dependent on how the pathogen is applied, (i.e., its intended target and application method play roles in non-target effects) (Zimmerman, 2007). During experiments, the Rangeland Unit will spray ultra-low volumes (on 10 acres or less) of DWR2009 on grasshopper and Mormon cricket species from aircraft, or through the FAASSTT system. The Rangeland Unit may also coat small amounts of grasshopper bait with the DWR2009.

For the following four reasons, overall environmental impact by research studies utilizing *Metarhizium robertsii* applications should not be significant: 1) various strains of the pathogen are already common in rangeland habitats; 2) “behavioral fever” enables species to often “burn out” the infection by basking, allowing infected grasshoppers and Mormon crickets to escape death by mycosis; 3) fungal pathogens are fairly susceptible to heat and ultraviolet light, greatly reducing the environmental persistence of spores to a few days on treated foliage or ground; and 4) at least three days of 98-100% relative humidity is required for fungal outgrowth and sporulation (reproduction) from infected cadavers (Lomer et al., 2001; Zimmerman, 2007; EA, 2010; Roberts, 2018).

b) Research LinOilEx Applications

LinOilEx (Formulation 103) is a non-traditional pesticide alternative still in the early stages of development. Its mode of action appears to be topical, often inducing a “freezing” effect in treated specimens whereby they appear to have been mid-movement when they die. Previous studies by its creator using locusts and katydids showed promise

in its efficacy (Abdelatti and Hartbauer, 2019), so the Rangeland Unit decided to test it. Initial Mormon cricket microplot field studies and grasshopper lab studies are intriguing and warrant further field investigations via microplot cage experiments. The formulation is proprietary, but includes linseed oil, lecithin, wintergreen oil, and caraway oil mixed into a bicarbonate emulsion.

Target effects on locust and katydids in initial studies were high while non-target results were mixed, with one tested beetle species, as well as wheat seedlings, experiencing almost no impact. Another tested beetle species did experience relatively high mortality, but well-below target levels (Abdelatti and Hartbauer, 2019). The mode of action appears to be topical, meaning that direct contact with the formulation is needed to induce mortality. The Rangeland Unit's initial studies demonstrated that indirect contact, by spraying vegetation, did not induce mortality. Together, these data suggest that overall environmental impact by research studies utilizing LinOilEx applications is expected to be relatively minimal.

B. Other Environmental Considerations

1. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impact, as defined in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulations (40 CFR § 1508.7) “is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.”

Potential cumulative impacts associated with the No Suppression alternative where APHIS would not organize or fund any grasshopper suppression programs include the continued increase in grasshopper populations and potential expansion of populations into neighboring range and cropland. In addition, State and private land managers could apply insecticides to manage grasshopper populations. However, land managers may opt not to use RAATs, which would increase insecticides applied to the environment. Increased insecticide use from the lack of coordination and RAAT applications, where suitable, could increase the exposure risk to non-target species and the environment. In addition, land managers may not employ the extra program measures designed to reduce exposure to the public and the environment.

Potential cumulative impacts associated with the Preferred Alternative are expected to be minimal because the program applies an insecticide application once during a treatment. The program may treat an area with different insecticides, but does not overlap the treatments. The program does not mix or combine insecticides. Based on historical outbreaks in the United States, the probability of an outbreak occurring in the same area where treatment occurred in the previous year is unlikely; however, given time, populations eventually will reach economically damaging thresholds and require treatment. The insecticide application reduces the insect population down to levels that cause an acceptable level of economic damage. The duration of treatment activity, which

is relatively short since it is a one-time application, and the lack of repeated treatments in the same area in the same year reduce the possibility of significant cumulative impacts.

Potential cumulative impacts resulting from the use of insecticides include insect pest resistance, synergistic chemical effects, chemical persistence and bioaccumulation in the environment. The program use of reduced insecticide application rates (i.e. ULV and RAATs) are expected to mitigate the development of insect resistance to the insecticides. Grasshopper outbreaks in the United States occur cyclically so applications do not occur to the same population over time, further eliminating the selection pressure which increase the chances of insecticide resistance.

The insecticides proposed for use in the program have a variety of agricultural and non-agricultural uses. There may be an increased use of these insecticides in an area under suppression when private, State, or Federal entities make applications to control other pests. However, the vast majority of the land where program treatments occur is uncultivated rangeland and additional treatments by landowners or managers are very uncommon making possible cumulative or synergistic chemical effects extremely unlikely.

The insecticides proposed for use in the grasshopper program are not anticipated to persist in the environment or bioaccumulate. Therefore, a grasshopper outbreak that occurs in an area previously treated for grasshoppers is unlikely to cause an accumulation of insecticides from previous program treatments.

The proposed research treatments are short-term and would take place in a very limited area. The purpose of the field tests conducted by the Rangeland Unit will help determine whether APHIS would eventually include *Metarhizium robertsii* (isolate DWR2009) based biopesticides as an option for the Program. The data generated by these studies would likely be used as part of the EPA registration process for this biopesticide. Inclusion of effective and environmentally friendly insecticides would provide the Program additional control options for grasshoppers and Mormon crickets in sensitive habitats. If successful, the use of *M. robertsii* could decrease the amount of chemical insecticides used in rangeland against grasshoppers and Mormon crickets.

2. Endangered Species Act

Under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, Section 7, federal agencies are required to consult with the USFWS regarding the degree of impact to federally proposed and listed species and critical habitat from the program action and the necessary protective measures to avoid or minimize adverse effects. Informal consultation between APHIS and the USFWS may be used to determine whether any adverse effects to species or habitat by the proposed action can be avoided or summarily minimized.

The last formal consultation resulted in the 1998 biological assessment prepared by APHIS and the 1995 biological opinion issued by USFWS. This environmental assessment uses information from past formal consultations in determining protective measures.

Malathion and carbaryl have been included in consultation procedures in the past. The 1995 biological opinion has summarized the language from former assessments and opinions on the effects of both pesticides:

Carbaryl:

In general, carbaryl demonstrates low to moderate mammalian toxicity, low toxicity to birds, and moderate toxicity to fish. It is very toxic to aquatic invertebrates and many terrestrial insects. Carbaryl remains effective on vegetation for approximately seven days and 28 days in anaerobic soils (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1995).

Malathion:

Malathion is relatively low in toxicity to mammals and birds. It is moderately to highly toxic to fish and amphibians. Malathion is extremely toxic to aquatic invertebrates and highly toxic to most insects, including bees. Malathion is relatively non-persistent in soil, water, plants, and animals. Its half-life in alkaline soils is generally less than one day; in water, the half-life is generally less than two days. Malathion residues in plants persist up to five to seven days. Malathion does not bioaccumulate in animals; it is rapidly excreted after exposure ceases (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1995).

Diﬂubenzuron:

Further information on carbaryl, malathion, and diﬂubenzuron is included earlier in this EA, in the 2002 EIS and in the 2019 EIS.

Due to the incomplete formal consultation, local informal consultations have been completed. Correspondence regarding local consultations between APHIS and USFWS are included in Appendix 2 “USFWS/NMFS/WGFD Correspondence”.

3. Monitoring

Monitoring involves the evaluation of various aspects of the grasshopper suppression programs. There are three aspects of the programs that may be monitored. The first is the efficacy of the treatment. APHIS will determine how effective the application of an insecticide has been in suppressing the grasshopper population within a treatment area and will report the results in a Work Achievement Report to the Western Region. Work achievement reports are available from the Cheyenne, Wyoming USDA APHIS PPQ office for specific spray blocks upon request. No treatments were conducted in 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 or 2018 by PPQ in Wyoming.

The second area included in monitoring is safety. This includes ensuring the safety of the program personnel through medical monitoring conducted specifically to determine risks of a hazardous material. The cholinesterase health monitoring program is mandatory and prevents and/or reduces overexposure to cholinesterase inhibiting compounds such as carbamate and organophosphate pesticides. Since the effect of these pesticides is cumulative during a period of exposure, it is mandatory that all exposed individuals be monitored. The APHIS cholinesterase monitoring program will help protect employees

from pesticide poisoning and will also help monitor the use and condition of personal protective equipment. APHIS program personnel are also provided proper hearing protection equipment. Chemical application equipment such as planes, trucks and sprayer motors may affect hearing if exposed for long periods of time. (See APHIS Safety and Health Manual, USDA APHIS, 1998 located online at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/manualsandguidelines>)

The third area of monitoring is environmental monitoring. 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).

The current environmental monitoring plan can be found at https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/sa_emt/ct_support_docs. Past years environmental monitoring reports are available upon request from the Cheyenne, Wyoming USDA APHIS PPQ office.

Treatments conducted by PPQ in 2010 amounted to 1,027,099 protected acres. All treatments in 2010 were conducted using Dimilin 2L and RAATs methodology.

Treatments conducted by PPQ in 2011 amounted to 81,527 protected acres. All treatments in 2011 were conducted using Dimilin 2L and RAATs methodology.

No treatments were conducted by PPQ in Wyoming during 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Treatments conducted by PPQ in 2019 amounted to 130,902 protected acres. All treatments in 2019 were conducted using Dimilin 2L and RAATs methodology.

4. Fires and Human Health Hazards

Various compounds are released in smoke during wildland fires, including carbon monoxide (CO), carbon dioxide, nitrous oxides, sulfur dioxide, hydrogen chloride, aerosols, polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons contained within fine particulate matter (a byproduct of the combustion of organic matter such as wood), aldehydes, and most notably formaldehyde produced from the incomplete combustion of burning biomass (Reisen and Brown, 2009; Burling et al., 2010; Broyles, 2013). Particulate matter, CO, benzene, acrolein, and formaldehyde have been identified as compounds of particular concern in wildland fire smoke (Reinhardt and Ottmar, 2004).

Many of the naturally occurring products associated with combustion from wildfires may also be present as a result of combustion of program insecticides that are applied to

rangeland. These combustion byproducts will be at lower quantities due to the short half-lives of most of the program insecticides and their low use rates. Other minor combustion products specific to each insecticide may also be present as a result of combustion from a rangeland fire but these are typically less toxic based on available human health data (<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/plant-health/grasshopper>).

The safety data sheet for each insecticide identifies these combustion products for each insecticide as well as recommendations for PPE. The PPE is similar to what typically is used in fighting wildfires. Material applied in the field will be at a much lower concentration than what would occur in a fire involving a concentrated formulation. Therefore, the PPE worn by rangeland firefighters would also be protective of any additional exposure resulting from the burning of residual insecticides.

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VI. Listing of Agencies and Persons Consulted

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Appendix 1: APHIS Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program FY-2020 Treatment Guidelines

Version 3/9/2020

The objectives of the APHIS Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program are to 1) conduct surveys in the Western States; 2) provide technical assistance to land managers and private landowners; and 3) when funds permit, suppress economically damaging grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks on Federal, Tribal, State, and/or private rangeland. The Plant Protection Act of 2000 provides APHIS the authority to take these actions.

General Guidelines for Grasshopper / Mormon Cricket Treatments

1. All treatments must be in accordance with:
 - a. the Plant Protection Act of 2000;
 - b. applicable environmental laws and policies such as: the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, and the Clean Water Act (including National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System requirements – if applicable);
 - c. applicable state laws;
 - d. APHIS Directives pertaining to the proposed action;
 - e. Memoranda of Understanding with other Federal agencies.
2. Subject to the availability of funds, upon request of the administering agency, the agriculture department of an affected State, or private landowners, APHIS, to protect rangeland, shall immediately treat Federal, Tribal, State, or private lands that are infested with grasshoppers or Mormon crickets at levels of economic infestation, unless APHIS determines that delaying treatment will not cause greater economic damage to adjacent owners of rangeland. In carrying out this section, APHIS shall work in conjunction with other Federal, State, Tribal, and private prevention, control, or suppression efforts to protect rangeland.
3. Prior to the treatment season, conduct meetings or provide guidance that allows for public participation in the decision making process. In addition, notify Federal, State and Tribal land managers and private landowners of the potential for grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks on their lands. Request that the land manager / landowner advise APHIS of any sensitive sites that may exist in the proposed treatment areas.
4. Consultation with local Tribal representatives will take place prior to treatment programs to fully inform the Tribes of possible actions APHIS may take on Tribal lands.
5. On APHIS run suppression programs, the Federal government will bear the cost of treatment up to 100 % on Federal and Tribal Trust land, 50 % of the cost on State land, and 33 % of cost on private land. There is an additional 16.15 % charge, however, on any funds received by APHIS for federal involvement with suppression treatments.

6. Land managers are responsible for the overall management of rangeland under their control to prevent or reduce the severity of grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks. Land managers are encouraged to have implemented Integrated Pest Management Systems prior to requesting a treatment. In the absence of available funding or in the place of APHIS funding, the Federal land management agency, Tribal authority or other party/ies may opt to reimburse APHIS for suppression treatments. Interagency agreements or reimbursement agreements must be completed prior to the start of treatments which will be charged thereto.

7. There are situations where APHIS may be requested to treat rangeland that also includes small areas where crops are being grown (typically less than 10 % of the treatment area). In those situations, the crop owner pays the entire treatment costs on the croplands.

NOTE: The insecticide being considered must be labeled for the included crop as well as rangeland and current Worker Protection Standards must be followed by the applicator and private landowner.

8. In some cases, rangeland treatments may be conducted by other federal agencies (e.g., Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or Bureau of Indian Affairs) or by non-federal entities (e.g., Grazing Association or County Pest District). APHIS may choose to assist these groups in a variety of ways, such as:

- a. loaning equipment (an agreement may be required);
- b. contributing in-kind services such as surveys to determine insect species, instars, and infestation levels;
- c. monitoring for effectiveness of the treatment;
- d. providing technical guidance.

9. In areas considered for treatment, State-registered beekeepers and organic producers shall be notified in advance of proposed treatments. If necessary, non-treated buffer zones can be established.

Operational Procedures

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR ALL AERIAL AND GROUND APPLICATIONS

1. Follow all applicable Federal, Tribal, State and local laws and regulations in conducting grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression treatments.

2. Notify residents within treatment areas, or their designated representatives, prior to proposed operations. Advise them of the control method to be used, proposed method of application, and precautions to be taken.

3. One of the following insecticides that are labeled for rangeland use can be used for a suppression treatment of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets:

A. Carbaryl

- a. solid bait
- b. ultra-low volume (ULV) spray
- B. Diflubenzuron ULV spray
- C. Malathion ULV spray
- D. Chlorantraniliprole

4. Do not apply insecticides directly to water bodies (defined herein as reservoirs, lakes, ponds, pools left by seasonal streams, springs, wetlands, and perennial streams and rivers).

Furthermore, provide the following buffers for water bodies:

- 500 foot buffer with aerial liquid insecticide.
- 200 foot buffer with ground liquid insecticide.
- 200 foot buffer with aerial bait.
- 50 foot buffer with ground bait.

5. Instruct program personnel in the safe use of equipment, materials and procedures; supervise to ensure safety procedures are properly followed.
6. Conduct mixing, loading, and unloading in an approved area where an accidental spill would not contaminate a water body.
7. Each aerial suppression program will have a Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) OR a Treatment Manager on site. Each State will have at least one COR available to assist the Contracting Officer (CO) in GH/MC aerial suppression programs.

NOTE: A Treatment Manager is an individual that the COR has delegated authority to oversee the actual suppression treatment; someone who is on the treatment site and overseeing / coordinating the treatment and communicating with the COR. No specific training is required, but knowledge of the Aerial Application Manual and treatment experience is critical; attendance to the Aerial Applicators Workshop is very beneficial.

8. Each suppression program will conduct environmental monitoring as outlined in the current year's Environmental Monitoring Plan.

APHIS will assess and monitor rangeland treatments for the efficacy of the treatment, to verify that a suppression treatment program has properly been implemented, and to assure that any environmentally sensitive sites are protected.

9. APHIS reporting requirements associated with grasshopper / Mormon cricket suppression treatments can be found in the APHIS Grasshopper Program Guidebook:
http://www.aphis.usda.gov/import_export/plants/manuals/domestic/downloads/grasshopper.pdf.

SPECIFIC PROCEDURES FOR AERIAL APPLICATIONS

1. APHIS Aerial treatment contracts will adhere to the current year's Statement of Work (SOW).
2. Minimize the potential for drift and volatilization by not using ULV sprays when the following conditions exist in the spray area:
 - a. Wind velocity exceeds 10 miles per hour (unless state law requires lower wind speed);
 - b. Rain is falling or is imminent;
 - c. Dew is present over large areas within the treatment block;
 - d. There is air turbulence that could affect the spray deposition;
 - e. Temperature inversions (ground temperature higher than air temperature) develop and deposition onto the ground is affected.
3. Weather conditions will be monitored and documented during application and treatment will be suspended when conditions could jeopardize the correct spray placement or pilot safety.
4. Application aircraft will fly at a median altitude of 1 to 1.5 times the wingspan of the aircraft whenever possible or as specified by the COR or the Treatment Manager.
5. Whenever possible, plan aerial ferrying and turnaround routes to avoid flights over congested areas, water bodies, and other sensitive areas that are not to be treated.

Appendix 2: USFWS/NMFS/WGFD Correspondence



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
334 Parsley Boulevard
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82007



In Reply Refer to:
06E13000-2020-I-0190

April 7, 2020

Ms. Kathleen Meyers
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
5353 Yellowstone Road, Suite 208
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82009

Dear Ms. Meyers:

This letter is in response to your correspondence dated March 26, 2020, with attached Environmental Assessment (EA) plus appendices requesting initiation of section 7 consultation pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended, 50 CFR 402.13, for potential effects to listed species from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program (Program). Activities associated with this Program are scheduled to occur from March 1 to August 31 of 2020 in Wyoming. It is our understanding that the first choice for chemicals to be used will be diflubenzuron, known by the tradename as Dimilin®, using the Reduced Agent Area Treatment (RAAT) method. If additional chemicals are needed to control outbreaks, APHIS has the option of adding carbaryl or malathion as necessitated by the scope and timing of grasshopper or Mormon cricket population levels.

APHIS is also planning to conduct research on pesticide and biopesticides on plots ranging in area from less than one square foot to 640 acres with replicates. This research is conducted to refine pesticide and biopesticide formulations that may be incorporated into their Program. Locations of research trials will be made available to the appropriate agencies in order to ensure these activities are not conducted near sensitive species or habitats. The pesticides likely to be involved in this research include diflubenzuron, chlorantraniliprole, carbaryl baits, and LinOilEx (Formulation 103), which is a proprietary combination of natural oils and some commonly encountered household products. Biopesticides likely to be involved in studies currently include two native fungal pathogens, *Metarhizium robertsii* (isolate DWR2009) and *Beauveria bassiana* GHA.

Based on the Program description presented in the EA and the impact analysis presented in Appendix 4, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) concurs with your determinations that the APHIS grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression Program of 2020 may affect but is unlikely to adversely affect the yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*). Regarding the occupied habitat of the yellow-billed cuckoo, APHIS has also committed to implementing (1) a

INTERIOR REGION 5
MISSOURI BASIN

KANSAS, MONTANA*, NEBRASKA, NORTH DAKOTA,
SOUTH DAKOTA

*PARTIAL

INTERIOR REGION 7
UPPER COLORADO RIVER BASIN

COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, UTAH, WYOMING

500-foot ground buffer and a 1,320-foot aerial buffer for the use of carbaryl ULV and malathion; (2) a 500-foot ground buffer and a 750-foot aerial buffer for the use of carbaryl bait; (3) a 500-foot ground buffer and 1,000-foot aerial buffer for the use of diflubenzuron ULV; and (4) a 500-foot ground/aerial buffer for chlorantraniliprole at the edge of known locations of the yellow-billed cuckoo and any designated critical habitat for the species.

The Service concurs with your determination that the suppression Program, as described, may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) (NLEB). APHIS grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression efforts are not anticipated to occur in the interior forest habitats typical of this species and there are no known maternity colonies in the areas where suppression is proposed to occur. Furthermore, Program applications will use the RAAT methodologies so that adequate prey is expected to remain, will not occur during peak foraging periods, and are not expected to contaminate prey or water sources of the NLEB. If APHIS determines that Program activities will occur in close proximity to the forested habitat of northeast Wyoming or in areas occupied by the NLEB, then APHIS will re-consult at the project-specific level prior to project implementation.

The Service also concurs with your determination that the Program, as described, is not likely to adversely affect the Kendall warm springs dace (*Rhinichthys osculus thermalis*) as no suppression activities will occur in the vicinity of this fish. In the event that suppression activities will occur in Sublette County, APHIS has committed to implementing a 0.25-mile buffer around the Kendall Warm Springs site for all chemicals used and ground applications of malathion. If malathion will be applied aurally, then a 1-mile buffer will be maintained.

The Service concurs with your determination that grasshopper suppression activities are not likely to adversely affect the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*), because such activities are unlikely to occur in areas of the mouse's preferred habitat. Additionally, a programmatic 500-foot buffer is placed on either side of streams or water bodies, which is standard procedure for all USDA APHIS grasshopper aerial suppression programs. For areas that may be treated using ground equipment the 50 foot buffer will be increased to 500 feet around waters and riparian areas that are Preble's meadow jumping mouse suitable habitat, within the range of the species. Also, APHIS has committed to protecting the Preble's meadow jumping mouse and its prey base from ultra-low volume applications of chlorantraniloprole by implementing a 500-foot treatment buffer from the edge of known occupied habitat or critical habitat.

According to the EA, suppression treatments are unlikely to occur in the Shirley Basin area where there is a non-essential experimental population of black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*). The Service concurs with your determination that any treatment activities are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the Shirley Basin population as, by definition, any effects to a non-essential, experimental population will not likely jeopardize the continued existence of the species. The Service also concurs that any treatment activities outside the Shirley Basin, with the exception of the recently reintroduced population near Meeteetse in Park County, is not likely to adversely affect this species. Please contact our office if grasshopper suppression activities may occur in Park County.

The Service concurs with your determination that grasshopper suppression activities are not likely to adversely affect the Wyoming toad in the area of the Little Laramie River and Mortenson National Wildlife Refuge if the 1-mile buffer zones for aerial spraying are maintained. Although grasshopper suppression activities are unlikely to occur in Albany County, please contact our office should grasshopper suppression be necessary as there are three safe harbor sites for the Wyoming toad and buffers will need to be implemented.

The Service also concurs with your not likely to adversely affect determination for the blowout penstemon (*Penstemon haydenii*), desert yellowhead (*Yermo xanthocephalus*), and Ute ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*) based on your commitment, that should a treatment occur near known occupied habitat during the flowering season of these species, that APHIS will employ the following protective measures: (1) no aerial application of malathion or carbaryl or gamma-cyhalothrin will occur within 3 miles of known occupied habitat of these plants for the protection of the pollinators; (2) only carbaryl bran bait or diflubenzuron or chlorantraniliprole combined with RAATs will be used within a 3-mile buffer; (3) no application of carbaryl bran bait will be applied within a 0.25-mile buffer of known occupied habitat of these plants; and (4) a 50-foot buffer for ground applications will be maintained for all chemicals except diflubenzuron and chlorantraniliprole, which have no effect on adult insect pollinators.

APHIS has determined that the proposed action will have no effect to the Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*) or the grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) as treatments are not expected to occur in the montane habitat that these species occupy. APHIS has also determined that there will be no effect to any of the downstream Platte River or downstream Colorado River species as no depletion of water sources will occur and grasshopper suppression activities are not anticipated to affect water quality.

APHIS has also determined that their research pesticides and biopesticides on plots will have no adverse effect to the environment, which includes protected species and their critical habitat based on the small size of the research plots and avoidance of sensitive areas of concern prior to initiating studies.

This concludes informal consultation pursuant to the regulations implementing the ESA. This project should be re-analyzed if new information reveals effects of the action that may affect listed or proposed species or designated or proposed critical habitat in a manner or to an extent not considered in this consultation; if the action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to a listed or proposed species or designated or proposed critical habitat that was not considered in this consultation; and/or, if a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated that may be affected by this project.

The Service requests that any visual observation of threatened and endangered species during suppression activities be reported to our office as soon as possible. We appreciate your efforts to ensure the conservation of endangered, threatened, and candidate species and migratory birds. If you have questions regarding this letter or your responsibilities under the ESA, please contact Kim Dickerson of my staff at the letterhead address or phone (307) 757-3710.

Sincerely,

NATHAN
DARNALL

Digitally signed by
NATHAN
DARNALL
Date: 2020.04.07
08:45:03 -0600

for Tyler A. Abbott
Field Supervisor
Wyoming Field Office

cc: BLM, Endangered Species Program Lead, Cheyenne, WY (C. Keefe) (ckeefe@blm.gov)
WGFD, Statewide Habitat Protection Program, Cheyenne, WY (wgfd.hpp@wyo.gov)
WGFD, Statewide Large Carnivore Section Supervisor, Lander, WY (D. Thompson)
(daniel.thompson@wyo.gov)



WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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RICHARD LADWIG
DAVID RAEI
MIKE SCHMID

April 22, 2020

WER 9810.00x
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
Environmental Assessment
Wyoming Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program 2020
Statewide

Kathleen King
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
5353 Yellowstone Road, Suite 208
Cheyenne, WY 82009

Dear Ms. King,

The staff of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Department) has reviewed the proposed Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Environmental Assessment (EA) for Wyoming Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program 2020. We offer the following comments for your consideration.

Language in the 2020 EA for the Wyoming Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program should be updated to better represent the current federal status of Greater Sage-grouse (sage-grouse), as well as the State of Wyoming and Wyoming Game and Fish Department sage-grouse plans.

- The State of Wyoming implemented a new Sage-grouse Executive Order (SGEO) in 2019. On page 19, the language should be updated to read, "The Governor's Executive Order 2019-3 specifically lists Grasshopper / Mormon cricket control following Reduced Agent-Area Treatments (RAATS) protocols a de-minimis (exempt) activity under Appendix G, "De-minimis Activities."
- On page 20, the document states that sage-grouse are currently precluded as a federal threatened or endangered species making them a candidate species for listing. Sage-grouse are no longer considered a candidate species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In the Wyoming Game and Fish Department 2017 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) sage-grouse are identified as a Tier II Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). SGCN are placed into one of three tiers: Tier I – highest priority, Tier II – moderate priority, and Tier III – lowest priority. Language in the 2020 EA should be changed to identify sage-grouse as a Tier II SGCN in the State of Wyoming.
- The Wyoming Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan (WGS GCP), which was adopted by the State of Wyoming in 2003, has been replaced by the State of Wyoming SGEO. There

"Conserving Wildlife - Serving People"


Kathleen King
April 22, 2020
Page 2 of 2 - WER 9810.00x

have been several SGEOs in place since 2008. The Department recommends replacing language referring to the WSGGCP with language referring to the most current State of Wyoming Greater SGEO.

Wyoming is currently working to confirm whether the distribution of the northern long-eared bat (NLEB) extends farther south than previously thought. We recommend that APHIS coordinate with the Department to update the current map in the event NLEB range is extended further south than currently documented.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions or concerns please contact Linda Cope, Habitat Protection Biologist, at 307-777-2533.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Withroder", is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

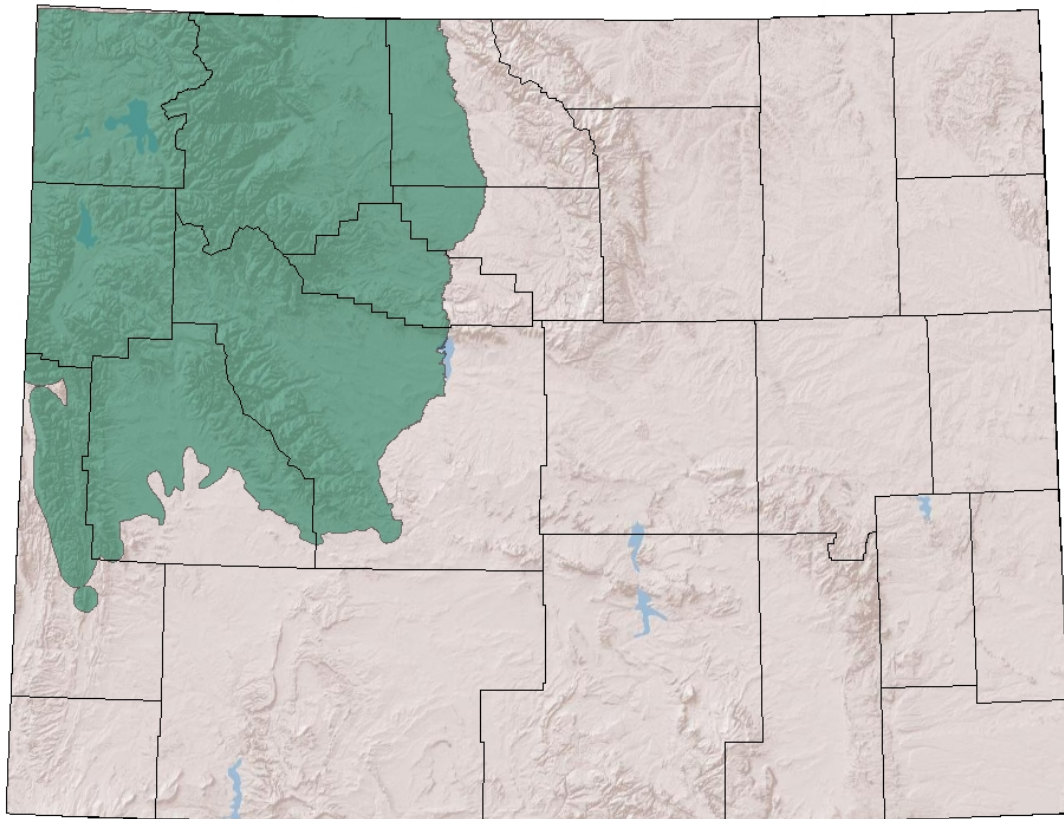
Amanda Withroder
Habitat Protection Supervisor

AW/lc

cc: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Leslie Schreiber, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Zack Walker, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Chris Wichmann, Wyoming Department of Agriculture

Appendix 3: Summary of Species Determinations and Impact Mitigation Measures

1. Grizzly bear; *Ursus arctos horribilis*
 - a. Species Status Map



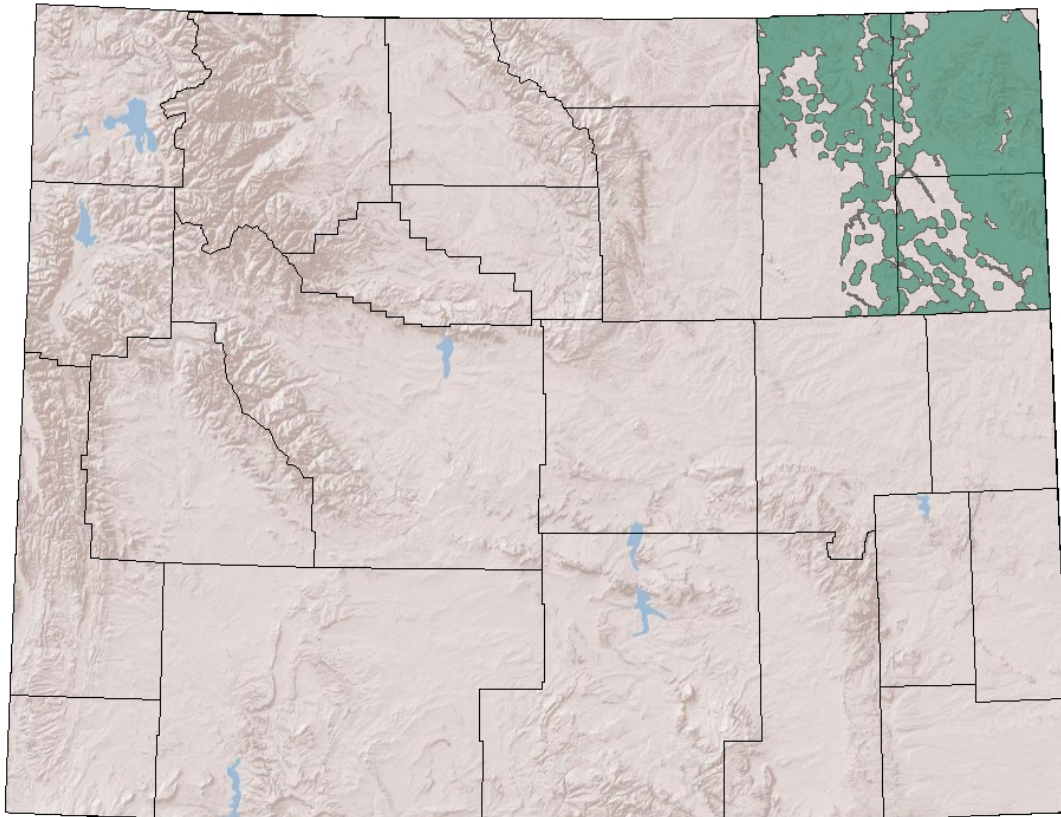
Ursus arctos horribilis

 Grizzly Bear


- b. USFWS status: Threatened

APHIS grasshopper suppression programs will have no effect on the grizzly bear. It is not likely that APHIS grasshopper suppression programs will occur in areas of the bear's preferred habitat, montane forests. If a suppression program does overlap with the habitat areas of the grizzly bear then a site specific consultation will be initiated with USFWS.

2. Northern Long-Eared Bat; *Myotis septentrionalis*
a. Species Status Map



Myotis septentrionalis

 Northern Long Eared Bat

b. USFWS Status: Threatened with a 4(d) rule

APHIS grasshopper suppression programs may affect but are not likely to adversely affect the Northern Long-Eared Bat.

Wyoming is on the edge of the species range and there are no known active maternity areas in Wyoming. APHIS would use RAATs methodologies for treatments in most cases and this would be expected to leave adequate prey base for insectivorous species such as the NLEB. The preferred foraging areas for the NLEB are forested areas that would not receive grasshopper or Mormon cricket treatments. In addition, treatments would not occur during peak foraging activity reducing the potential for exposure to program insecticides. Dietary exposure from ingestion of contaminated prey or water is also not anticipated to be a major pathway of exposure for the northern long-eared bat. Indirect impacts to the NLEB from loss of invertebrate prey items due to program treatments are not anticipated. There may be insignificant or discountable effects to foraging resources or water due to grasshopper suppression programs outside of (but near to) the northern long-eared bat roosting and foraging areas. However grasshoppers and Mormon crickets are not the typical or primary prey for the northern long-eared bat.

Please see Appendix 5 for additional risk summary information.

3. Yellow billed Cuckoo; *Coccyzus americanus*
a. Species Status Map



Coccyzus americanus

 **Yellow Billed Cuckoo**

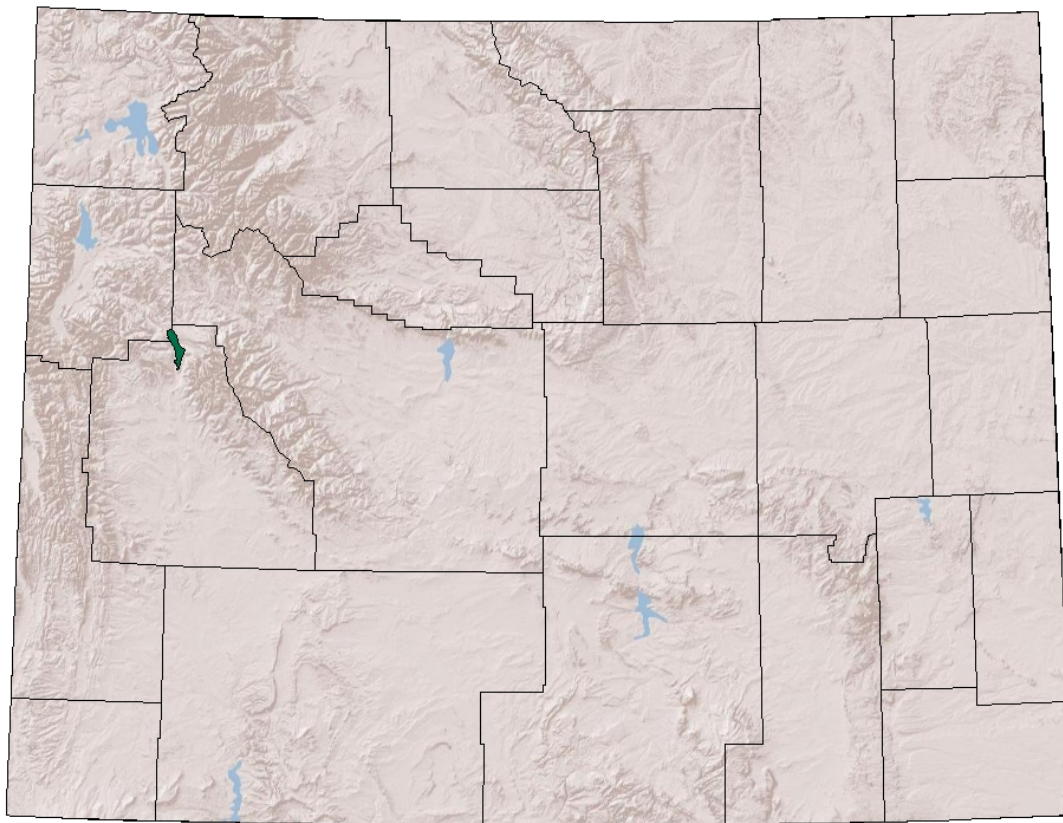
b. USFWS Status: Threatened

APHIS grasshopper suppression programs may affect but are not likely to adversely affect the yellow billed cuckoo. The following mitigation measures will be followed:

1. Malathion and carbaryl ULV: 500 foot ground buffer and 1320 foot aerial buffer at the edge of known locations of yellow-billed cuckoos or their suitable habitat.
2. Carbaryl bait: 500 foot ground buffer and 750 foot aerial buffer at the edge of known locations of yellow-billed cuckoos or their suitable habitat.
3. Diflubenzuron: 500 foot ground buffer and 1000 foot aerial buffer at the edge of known locations of yellow-billed cuckoos or their suitable habitat.
4. Chlorantraniliprole ULV: 500 foot ground/aerial buffer at the edge of known locations of yellow-billed cuckoos or their suitable habitat.

Please see Appendix 4 for additional risk summary information.

4. Kendall Warm Springs dace; *Rhinichthys osculus thermalis*
a. Species Status Map



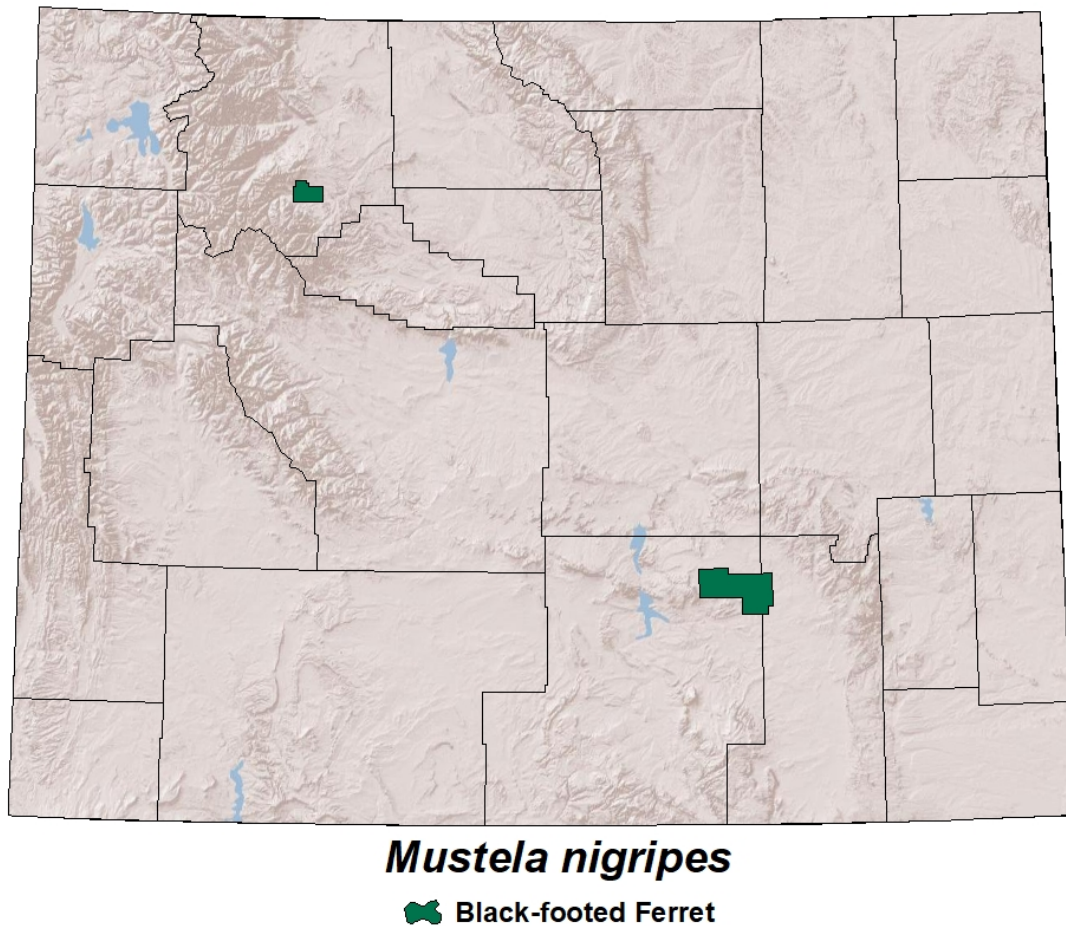
Coccyzus americanus

 Kendall Warm Springs Dace

b. USFWS status: Endangered

Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming are not likely to adversely affect the Kendall warm springs dace. It is not likely that APHIS grasshopper suppression activities will occur in the vicinity of Kendall warm springs. If suppression activities are conducted in Sublette County then the following impact minimization efforts will be utilized. A 0.25 mile buffer shall be maintained around the Kendall warm springs site for all chemicals, and ground applications of malathion. For aerial applications of malathion, a 1 mile buffer will be maintained.

5. Black-footed ferret; *Mustela nigripes*
a. Species Status Map



b. USFWS status: Endangered

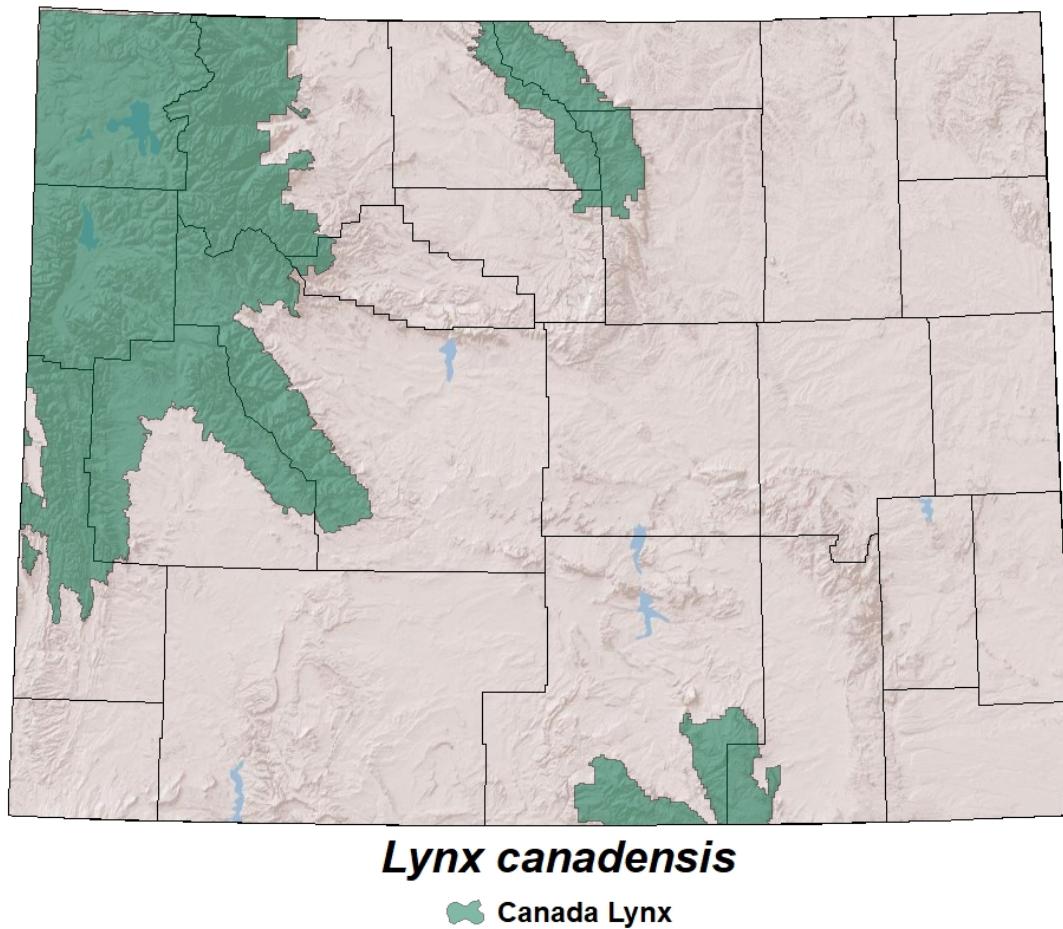
Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming are not likely to adversely affect black-footed ferrets. This determination is based on the fact that there are no known non-reintroduced black-footed ferret populations in Wyoming.

c. USFWS Status: Experimental (Shirley Basin population)

There is one non-essential experimental population of black-footed ferrets in Wyoming. Located in the Shirley Basin, ferrets were reintroduced in 1991.

Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of the species based on the fact, by definition; any effects to an experimental non-essential population of any species will not jeopardize the continued existence of the species. The Shirley Basin recovery area has historically not been a high grasshopper density area so APHIS does not expect to have treatments in this area.

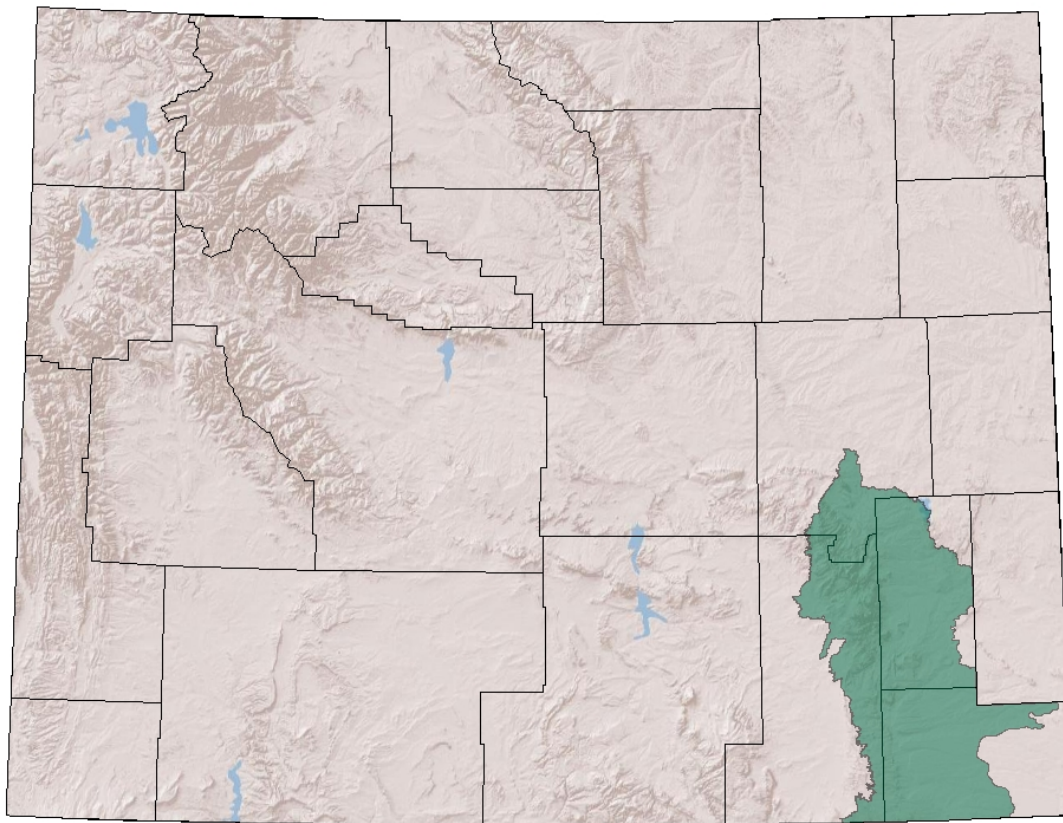
6. Canada Lynx; *Lynx canadensis*
a. Species Status Map



b. USFWS status: Threatened, Critical Habitat designated

APHIS grasshopper suppression programs will have no effect on the Canada Lynx or its designated critical habitat. It is not likely that APHIS grasshopper suppression programs will occur in areas of the lynx preferred habitat, boreal forests. If a suppression program does overlap with the critical habitat areas of the Canada Lynx then a site specific consultation will be initiated with USFWS.

7. Preble's meadow jumping mouse; *Zapus hudsonius preblei*
a. Species Status Map



Zapus hudsonius preblei

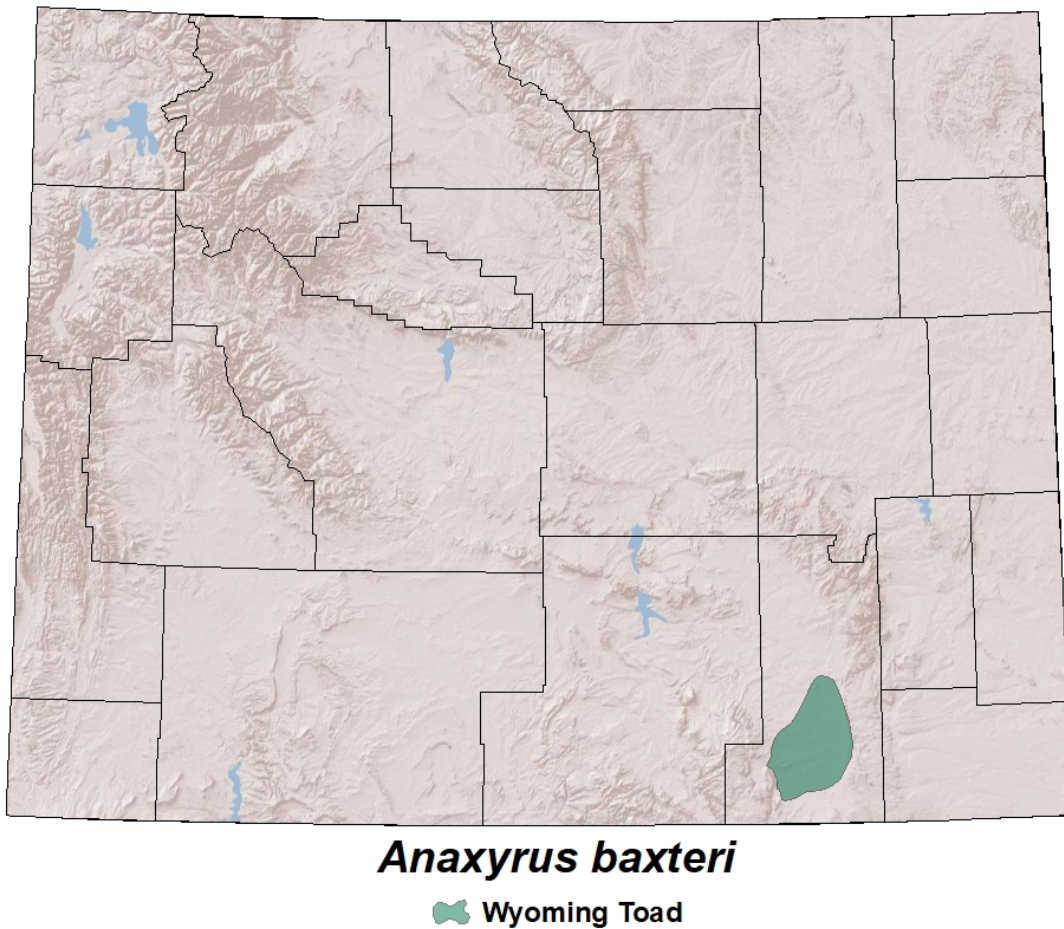
 Preble's meadow jumping mouse

b. USFWS status: Threatened, Critical Habitat designated: Colorado only

Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming are not likely to adversely affect the Preble's meadow jumping mouse. It is not likely that APHIS grasshopper suppression programs will occur in areas of the mouse's preferred habitat, riparian areas due to a programmatic buffer placed on either side of streams or water bodies. This 500 foot buffer is standard procedure for all USDA APHIS PPQ grasshopper aerial suppression programs. For those areas that may be treated using ground equipment the 50 foot buffer will be increased to 500 feet around waters and riparian areas that are Preble's meadow jumping mouse suitable habitat, within the range of the species.

In addition to the programmatic 200 foot ground treatment buffer and 500 foot aerial treatment buffer around bodies of water, to protect the Preble's meadow jumping mouse and its prey base from ULV application of chlorantraniloprole, there will be a 500 foot treatment buffer from the edge of known occupied habitat or critical habitat.

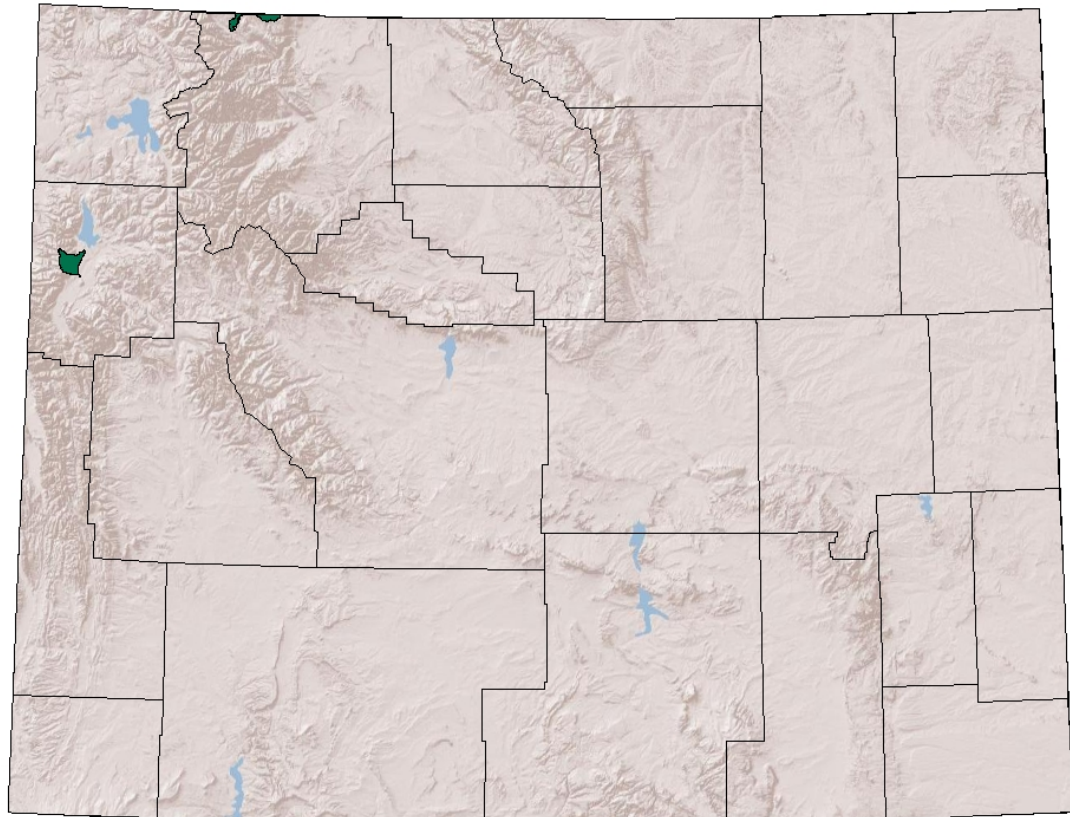
8. Wyoming toad; *Anaxyrus baxteri*
a. Species Status Map



b. USFWS status: Endangered

Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming are not likely to adversely affect the Wyoming toad. It is not likely that APHIS grasshopper suppression activities will occur in the vicinity of Mortenson Lake. If suppression activities are conducted in Albany County then the following impact minimization efforts will be put into place. A one mile buffer for aerial spray shall be maintained on each side of the Little Laramie River and no treatments will be applied within a one mile buffer of Mortenson NWR.

9. Western Glacier Stonefly; *Zapada glacier*
a. Species Status Map



Zapada glacier

 **Western Glacier Stonefly**

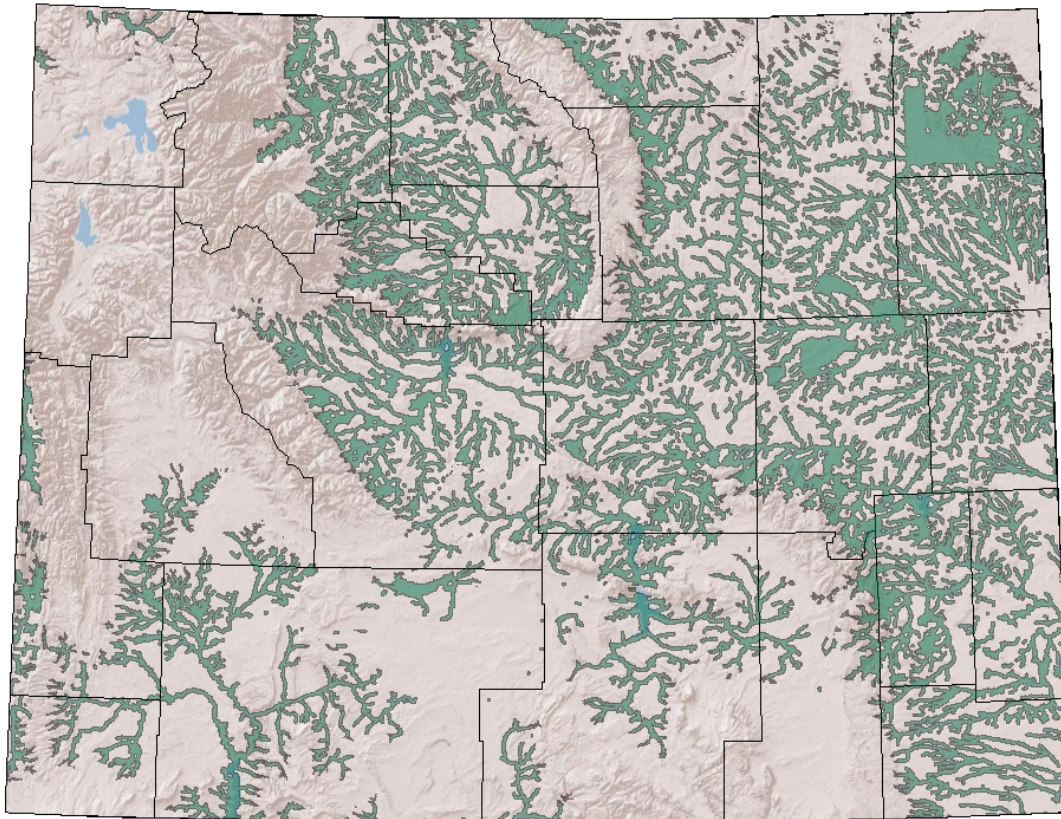
b. USFWS status: Threatened, Critical Habitat designated

Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming are not likely to adversely affect the Western Glacier Stonefly. It is not likely that APHIS grasshopper suppression programs will occur in areas of the stonefly's habitat, riparian areas due to a programmatic buffer placed on either side of streams or water bodies. This 500 foot buffer is standard procedure for all USDA APHIS PPQ grasshopper aerial suppression programs. For those areas that may be treated using ground equipment the 50 foot buffer will be increased to 500 feet around waters and riparian areas that are Western Glacier Stonefly suitable habitat, within the range of the species.

In addition to the programmatic 200 foot ground treatment buffer and 500 foot aerial treatment buffer around bodies of water, to protect the Western Glacier Stonefly from ULV application of chlorantraniloprole, there will be a 500 foot treatment buffer from the edge of known occupied habitat or critical habitat.

10. Ute ladies' tresses; *Spiranthes diluvialis*

a. Species Status Map



Spiranthes diluvialis

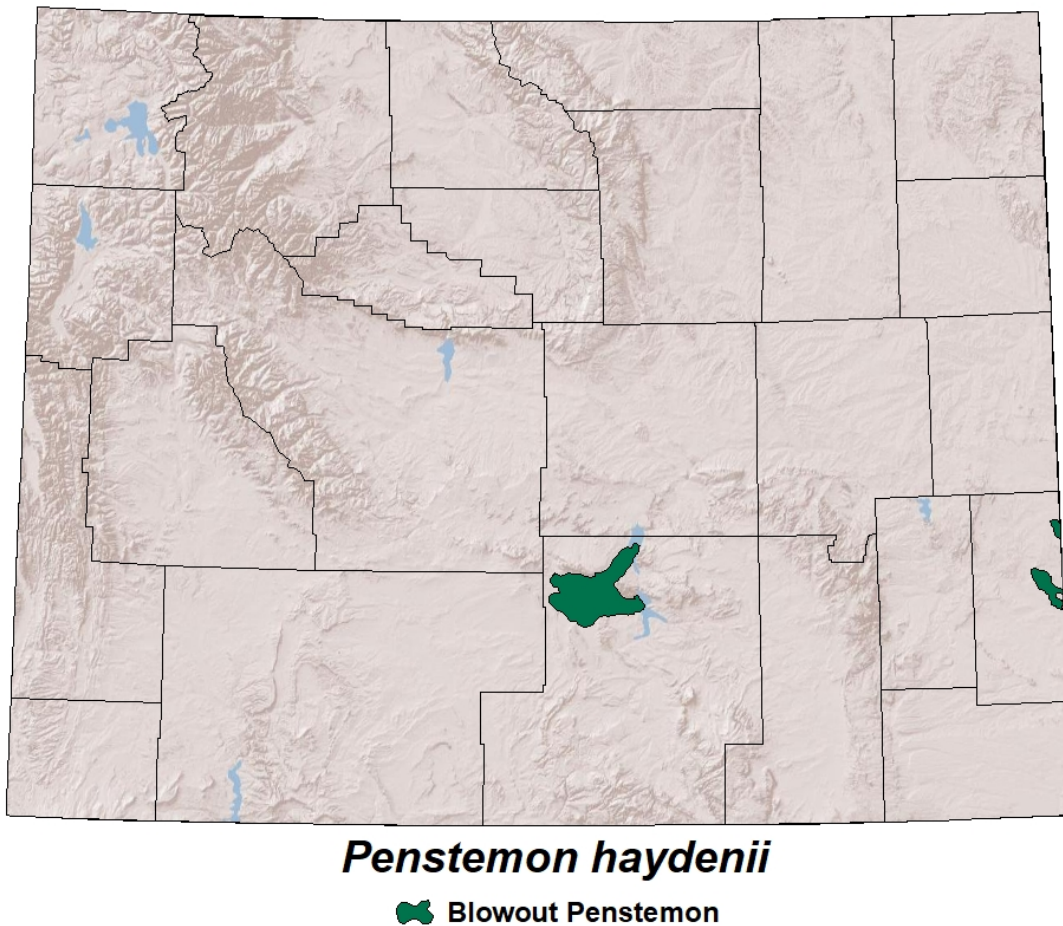
 **Ute Ladies' Tresses**

b. USFWS status: Threatened

Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming are not likely to adversely affect the Ute ladies' tresses. APHIS will take the following impact minimization measures for the protection of pollinators if a spray block occurs within known occupied habitat. The latest data available from WYNDD will be used to determine the known distribution of Ute ladies' tresses. If treatments occur after August 1st the following buffers will be put in place for areas of potential habitat and known populations of Ute ladies' tresses in addition to the programmatic 500 foot buffer from water bodies.

- 1) No aerial application of malathion or carbaryl or gamma-cyhalothrin within 3 miles of the known occupied habitat.
- 2) Only carbaryl bran bait or diflubenzuron or chlorantraniliprole combined with RAATs will be used within the 3 mile buffer.
- 3) No application of carbaryl bran bait will be applied within a 0.25 mile buffer of the potential range of species.
- 4) No buffer is required for diflubenzuron or chlorantraniliprole as they have no effect on adult insect pollinators. A 50 foot buffer for ground applications will be applied.

11. Blowout penstemon; *Penstemon haydenii*
a. Species Status Map

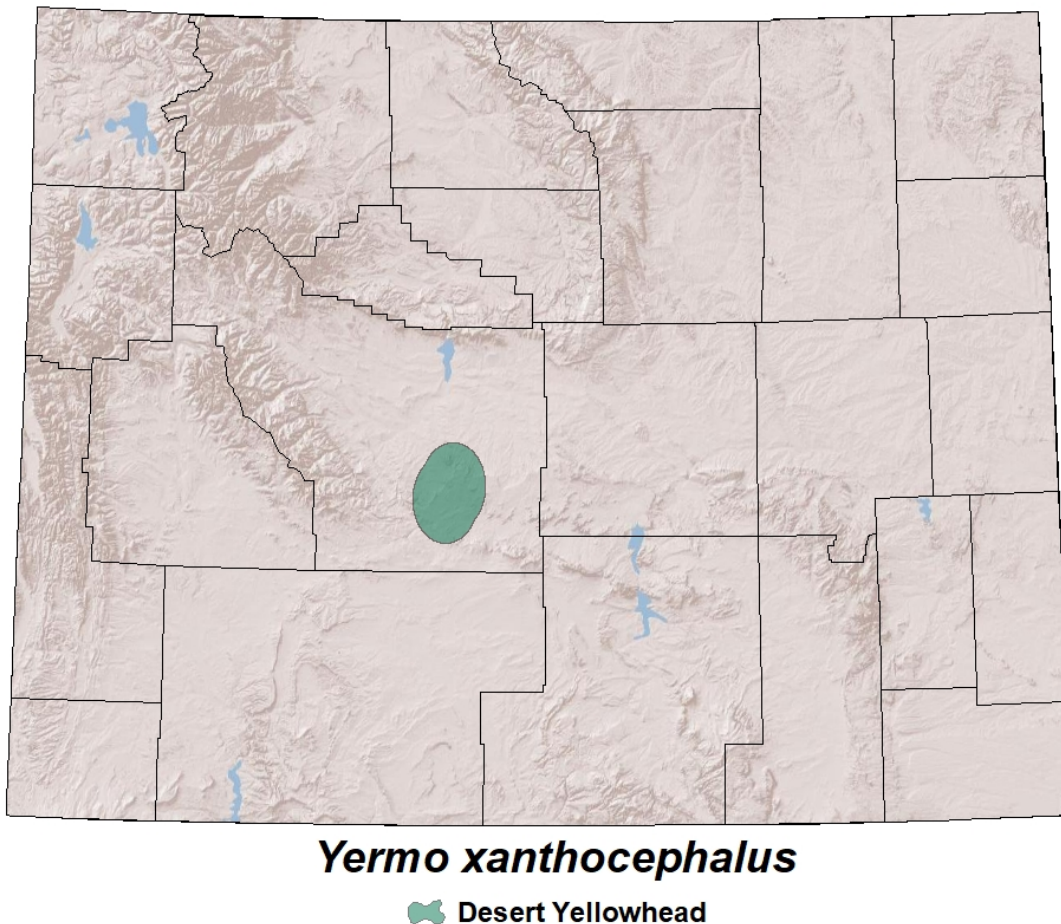


b. USFWS status: Endangered

Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming are not likely to adversely affect the blowout penstemon. APHIS will take the following impact minimization measures for the protection of pollinators if a spray block occurs within the USFWS potential range of species.

- 1) No aerial application of malathion or carbaryl or gamma-cyhalothrin within 3 miles of the potential range of species.
- 2) Only carbaryl bran bait or diflubenzuron or chlorantraniliprole combined with RAATs will be used within the 3 mile buffer.
- 3) No application of carbaryl bran bait will be applied within a 0.25 mile buffer of the potential range of species.
- 4) No buffer is required for diflubenzuron or chlorantraniliprole as they have no effect on adult insect pollinators. A 50 foot buffer for ground applications will be applied.

12. Desert Yellowhead; *Yermo xanthocephalus*
a. Species Status Map



b. USFWS status: Threatened, Critical Habitat designated

Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming are not likely to adversely affect the desert yellowhead or its designated critical habitat. APHIS will take the following impact minimization measures for the protection of pollinators if a spray block occurs within critical habitat or occupied habitat.

1. No aerial application of malathion or carbaryl or gamma-cyhalothrin within 3 miles of the critical habitat or known occupied habitat.
2. Only carbaryl bran bait or diflubenzuron or chlorantraniliprole combined with RAATs will be used within the 3 mile buffer.
3. No application of carbaryl bran bait will be applied within a 0.25 mile buffer of the potential range of species.
4. No buffer is required for diflubenzuron or chlorantraniliprole as they have no effect on adult insect pollinators. A 50 foot buffer for ground applications will be applied.

13. River Species

a. Platte River Species

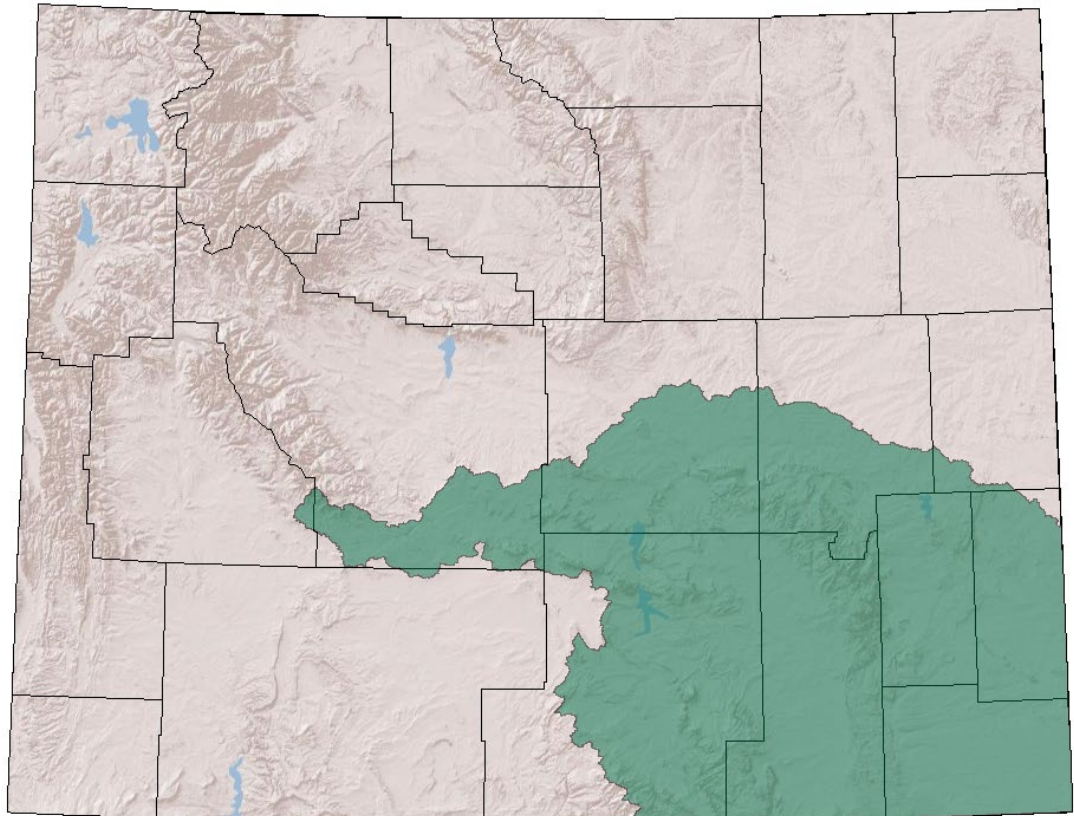
Least Tern - Interior Population (*Sterna antillarum*) Status: Endangered

Pallid Sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*) Status: Endangered


Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*) Status: Endangered


Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*) Status: Threatened


Whooping Crane (*Grus americana*) Status: Endangered




Platte River Species

 Least Tern

 Piping Plover

 Whooping Crane

 Pallid Sturgeon

 Western Prairie Fringed Orchid

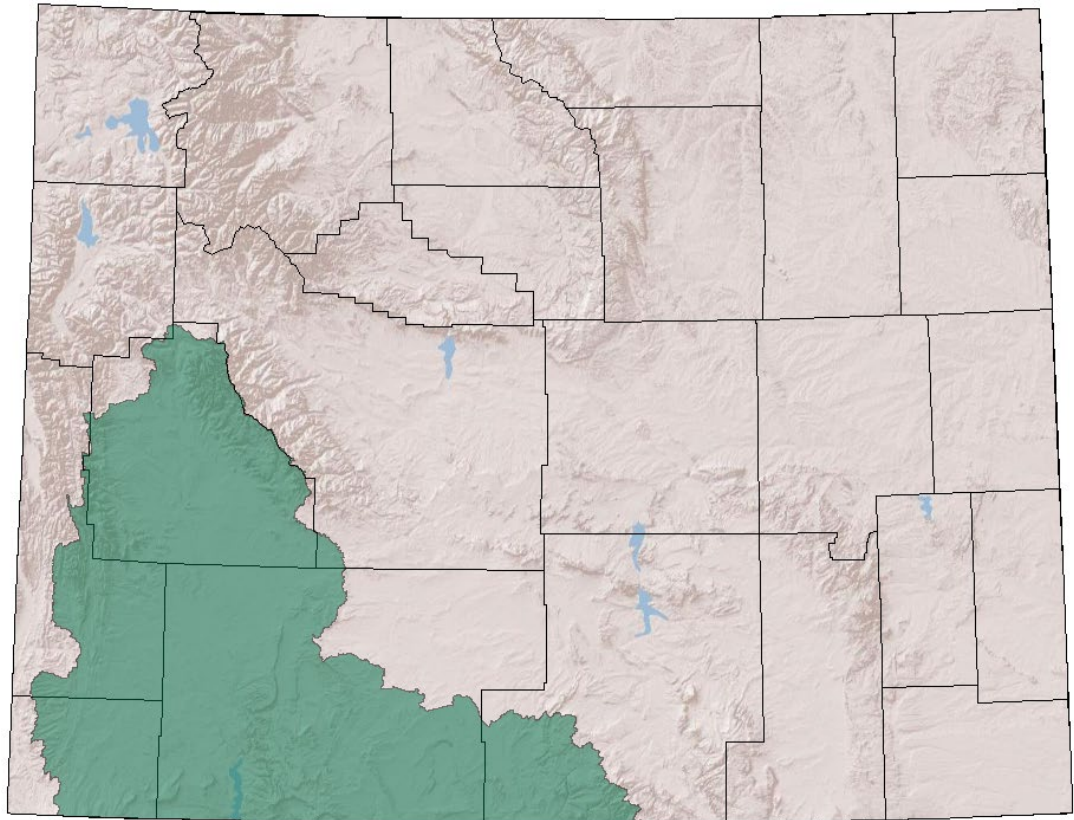
b. Colorado River Fish Species

Bonytail (*Gila elegans*) Status: Endangered





Coloradao Pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus lucius*) Status: Endangered

Humpback Chub (*Gila cypha*) Status: Endangered

Razorback Sucker (*Xyrauchen texamus*) Status: Endangered



Colorado River Fish Species

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Bonytail Chub |  Humpback Chub |
|  Colorado Pikeminnow (=squawfish) |  Razorback Sucker |

Grasshopper suppression activities in Wyoming will have no effect on any of the river species listed by the USFWS. Suppression activities will not deplete any water sources listed as tributaries to the Platte or Colorado River system nor will any activities have any effect on water quality downstream from Wyoming.

Appendix 4: Yellow-billed cuckoo (YBC) risk summary for grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression program

The acute toxicity of Program insecticides, in particular carbaryl and diflubenzuron, range from practically non-toxic to highly toxic for birds, in the case of carbaryl, and practically non-toxic in the case of diflubenzuron (USDA APHIS, 2015). Carbaryl avian toxicity is variable based on the test species with the European starling, (*Sturnis vulgaris*) being the most sensitive and the ring-necked pheasant, *Phasianus colchicus*, being the least sensitive bird species (USDA APHIS, 2015). Carbaryl acts by inhibiting the neurotransmitter, AChE, while diflubenzuron acts to inhibit chitin synthesis in developing invertebrates. Chronic toxicity between the two chemistries is similar with a lack of effects at field-relevant doses (USDA APHIS, 2015). The potential for risk to the YBC from the proposed use of program insecticides is related to the toxicity of each chemical and the probability of exposure which is discussed below.

Direct exposure to the YBC from proposed grasshopper and Mormon cricket applications is expected to be unlikely. The YBC use riparian habitats that contain willow-cottonwood and other woodland habitats. Optimal habitat size for the YBC is 200 acres with nesting rarely occurring in sites that are less than 50 acres. Forested areas typically have dense closed canopies. Nesting usually occurs in willow trees of various species but may also occur in other riparian tree species (USFWS, 2014). These are habitats that are not part of the Program for treatment and due to their proximity to water would have no application buffers regardless of whether they may contain YBC or their designated suitable habitat. In cases where there are YBC and/or suitable habitat APHIS increases the no application buffer which further reduces the potential for direct exposure to any Program applications. Estimates of drift from the use of proposed treatments and no application buffers suggest that any potential residues that could move into YBC habitat would be below any potential for direct risk (USDA APHIS, 2015). The presence of dense, closed canopies of riparian trees in YBC habitat would also serve to intercept and remove the small amount of insecticide that could drift into these types of habitat.

Dietary exposure from ingestion of contaminated prey or water is also not anticipated to be a major pathway of exposure for the YBC. There may be some incidental consumption of program insecticides that could be on the surface of some insect prey that receive a sublethal dose following treatment, however, there is not a plausible exposure scenario that could result in the ingestion of enough prey to result in risk to the YBC. Insects that receive a lethal dose would not be available for foraging by the YBC since they prefer live prey items. In the case of carbaryl bait applications, the probability of exposure would be less since the material is not applied as a liquid where it could result in residues on the surface of insects. Dietary exposure from the ingestion of contaminated surface water is also not anticipated to be a major pathway of exposure for the YBC. The program use of no application buffer zones from aquatic areas minimizes the potential for exposure to surface water.

Indirect impacts to the YBC from loss of invertebrate and vertebrate prey items due to program treatments are not anticipated. The YBC has a varied diet including invertebrates as well as some vertebrates including tree frogs and lizards. Diet studies show that approximately 45% of its diet consists of lepidopteran larvae, followed by tree frogs (24%), katydid (22%),

grasshoppers (9%) and the remaining amount from various invertebrates including, but not limited to beetles, flies, spiders, caddisflies, dragonflies, crickets and cicadas (USFWS, 2014). This preference may change based on availability of large invertebrate fauna. YBC prefer nesting and foraging in tree canopies along riparian corridors using a “sit and wait” strategy watching foliage movement for prey items (USFWS, 2014). The primary constituent elements and preferred habitat of YBC for nesting and foraging are not areas where the Program will be making applications. Proposed no application buffers from suitable habitat and known locations of the YBC, as well as the use of Reduced Agent Area Treatments (RAATs) where applications will occur adjacent to habitat would mitigate the impacts to potential food items for the YBC. In cases where YBC would forage outside of their preferred habitat there would be adequate food items for foraging based on their varied diet and the lack of effects to terrestrial invertebrates and vertebrates in the no application buffer zones that have been proposed, as well as negligible impacts to non-target terrestrial invertebrates and vertebrates in treatment blocks. The impacts to non-target invertebrates within treatment blocks from Program applications are summarized below and show minimal impacts to most non-target terrestrial invertebrates.

Available field studies suggest the program insecticide applications have minimal impacts to non-target terrestrial invertebrates (Quinn et al., 1990; Swain, 1986; Smith et al., 2006). Smith et al. (2006) assessed changes in non-target arthropod populations following applications of diflubenzuron, carbaryl, or malathion using RAATs. In the 2-year study, post application surveys of the major insect fauna revealed that only ants were negatively affected by grasshopper applications within treatment areas. As stated previously, Weiland et al. (2002) assessed the impacts of Sevin XLR Plus applications at 750 g a.i./ha to several invertebrate groups over a 21-day period. This rate equates to 0.67 lb a.i./ac which is 1.34 times higher than the highest rate allowed in the program. Results from the study demonstrated no negative effects on abundance in the following insect groups: Homoptera, Hymenoptera, Coleoptera, Hemiptera, Lepidoptera, and Neuroptera. Previously conducted research, as well as field studies carried out as part of the grasshopper IPM project, indicates that diflubenzuron has minimal impact on most terrestrial non-target arthropods (Catangui et al., 1996). Weiland et al. (2002) in Wyoming monitored the effects of Dimilin 25W for 21 days post-application on terrestrial invertebrates after full treatment applications of 17.5 and 52.5 g a.i./ha. From high and low sweep net captures, no effect on invertebrates in the orders Homoptera, Hymenoptera, Coleoptera, Hemiptera, Lepidoptera, or Neuroptera were found. There was a statistically significant increase in Diptera and a statistically significant decrease in Araneae (spiders) but the authors question the spider analysis since untreated populations dropped dramatically during the study. Tingle (1996) assessed the impacts of diflubenzuron applications in two field trials occurring in two separate years with applications of 93 g a.i./ha (0.08 lb a.i./ac). Based on an analysis of 28 taxonomic groupings only two were affected and included non-target grasshoppers and lepidopteran larvae. This effect only occurred in the treated areas but did not occur in the untreated buffer areas that were sampled. Grasshopper IPM field studies have shown diflubenzuron to have a minimal impact on ants, spiders, predatory beetles, and scavenger beetles. There was no significant reduction in populations of these species from 7 to 76 days after treatment. Although ant populations exhibited declines of up to 50%, these reductions were temporary, and population recovery was described as immediate (Catangui et al., 1996). No significant reductions in flying non-target arthropods, including honey bees, were reported. Within one year of diflubenzuron applications in a rangeland environment, no significant reductions of bee predators, parasites, or

pollinators were observed for any level of diflubenzuron treatment (Catangui et al., 1996). Graham et al. (2008) evaluated the impacts of diflubenzuron treatments on aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates for Mormon cricket suppression in Utah. Most terrestrial invertebrate taxa were not significantly different pre- and post-treatment among three sites that were evaluated. There was a noted decrease in some ant genera, but results were not consistent between sites and not all genera were impacted. Non-ant Hymenoptera showed increased numbers at two of the three sites and a decrease at a third site when comparing numbers pre- and post-treatment. Impacts to aquatic invertebrates, such as caddisflies and dragonflies, that may serve as prey for the YBC would be minimal due to the implementation of Program no-application buffer zones adjacent to aquatic habitat. Impacts to vertebrate food items for the YBC such as frogs and lizards would also be minimal based on risk estimates for each Program insecticide and the proposed mitigation to protect the YBC (USDA APHIS, 2015).

Based on the qualitative risk assessment above and the proposed mitigation for protection of YBC and its suitable habitat, APHIS has determined that the Program may affect but is not likely to adversely affect the YBC.

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Appendix 5: Northern long-eared bat (NLEB) risk summary for grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression program

The acute toxicity of Program insecticides, in particular carbaryl and diflubenzuron, are considered moderate for mammals, in the case of carbaryl, and practically non-toxic in the case of diflubenzuron (USDA APHIS, 2015). Similar differences in toxicity between the two insecticides are seen in sublethal and chronic studies, as well. The difference in toxicity between the two insecticides is related to the mode of action. Carbaryl acts by inhibiting the neurotransmitter, AChE, while diflubenzuron acts to inhibit chitin synthesis in developing invertebrates. The potential for risk to the NLEB from the proposed use of program insecticides is related to the toxicity of each chemical and the probability of exposure.

Direct exposure to the northern long-eared bat from proposed grasshopper and Mormon cricket applications is expected to be minimal. Program applications will occur during the day when bats are not foraging and would be under bark on trees, in crevices, and in mines or caves where exposure to drift would be limited (USFWS, 2014). Emerging at dusk, most hunting occurs above the understory, 1 to 3 meters (m) (3 to 10 feet (ft)) above the ground, but under the canopy (Nagorsen and Brigham, 1993) on forested hillsides and ridges, rather than along riparian areas (Brack and Whitaker, 2001; LaVal et al., 1977). This coincides with data indicating that mature forests are an important habitat type for foraging northern long-eared bats (Caceres and Pybus, 1997). Occasional foraging also takes place over forest clearings and water, and along roads (van Zyll de Jong, 1985). Foraging patterns indicate a peak activity period within 5 hours after sunset followed by a secondary peak within 8 hours after sunset (Kunz, 1973). The preferred foraging areas for the NLEB are areas that would not receive grasshopper or Mormon cricket treatments. In addition, treatments would not occur during peak foraging activity reducing the potential for exposure to Program insecticides.

Dietary exposure from ingestion of contaminated prey or water is also not anticipated to be a major pathway of exposure for the northern long-eared bat. There may be some incidental consumption of program insecticides that could be on the surface of some insect prey that receive a sublethal dose following treatment, however, there is not a plausible exposure scenario that could result in the ingestion of enough prey based on the daily food consumption rates for similar *Myotis* species. Insects that receive a lethal dose would not be available for foraging by the NLEB since they prefer live prey items. In the case of carbaryl bait applications, the probability of exposure would be less since the material is not applied as a liquid where it could result in residues on the surface of insects. Dietary exposure from the ingestion of contaminated surface water is also not anticipated to be a major pathway of exposure for the NLEB. The program use of no application buffer zones from aquatic areas minimizes the potential for exposure to surface water.

Indirect impacts to the NLEB from loss of invertebrate prey items due to program treatments are not anticipated. NLEB depends on a variety of invertebrates in its diet using foraging behaviors including hawking, and gleaning of insect prey from plant surfaces and water (Ratcliffe and Dawson, 2003). Its diet may include insects from the orders Lepidoptera, Neuroptera, Coleoptera, Trichoptera, Hymenoptera, Diptera, Hemiptera, and Homoptera (Thomas et al.,

2012; Feldhamer et al., 2009; Carter et al., 2003; Lee and McCracken, 2004). Coleoptera and Lepidoptera appear to make up the largest percentage of their diet, although proportions vary spatially and temporally, similar to other *Myotis* species, suggesting opportunistic feeding for available flying invertebrates (Griffith and Gates, 1985; Whitaker, 1972). Available field studies suggest the program insecticide applications have minimal impacts to non-target terrestrial invertebrates (Quinn et al., 1990; Swain, 1986; Smith et al., 2006). Smith et al. (2006) assessed changes in non-target arthropod populations following applications of diflubenzuron, carbaryl, or Malathion using RAATs. In the 2-year study, post application surveys of the major insect fauna revealed that only ants were negatively affected by grasshopper applications within treatment areas.

As stated previously, Weiland et al. (2002) assessed the impacts of Sevin XLR Plus applications at 750 g a.i./ha to several invertebrate groups over a 21-day period. This rate equates to 0.67 lb a.i./ac which is 1.34 times higher than the highest rate allowed in the program. Results from the study demonstrated no negative effects on abundance in the following insect groups: Homoptera, Hymenoptera, Coleoptera, Hemiptera, Lepidoptera, and Neuroptera. Previously conducted research, as well as field studies carried out as part of the grasshopper IPM project, indicates that diflubenzuron has minimal impact on most terrestrial non-target arthropods (Catangui et al., 1996). Weiland et al. (2002) in Wyoming monitored the effects of Dimilin 25W for 21 days post-application on terrestrial invertebrates after full treatment applications of 17.5 and 52.5 g a.i./ha. From high and low sweep net captures, no effect on invertebrates in the orders Homoptera, Hymenoptera, Coleoptera, Hemiptera, Lepidoptera, or Neuroptera were found. There was a statistically significant increase in Diptera and a statistically significant decrease in Araneae (spiders) but the authors question the spider analysis since untreated populations dropped dramatically during the study. Tingle (1996) assessed the impacts of diflubenzuron applications in two field trials occurring in two separate years with applications of 93 g a.i./ha (0.08 lb a.i./ac). Based on an analysis of 28 taxonomic groupings only two were affected and included non-target grasshoppers and lepidopteran larvae. This effect only occurred in the treated areas but did not occur in the untreated buffer areas that were sampled. Grasshopper IPM field studies have shown diflubenzuron to have a minimal impact on ants, spiders, predatory beetles, and scavenger beetles. There was no significant reduction in populations of these species from 7 to 76 days after treatment. Although ant populations exhibited declines of up to 50 %, these reductions were temporary, and population recovery was described as immediate (Catangui et al., 1996). No significant reductions in flying non-target arthropods, including honey bees, were reported. Within 1 year of diflubenzuron applications in a rangeland environment, no significant reductions of bee predators, parasites, or pollinators were observed for any level of diflubenzuron treatment (Catangui et al., 1996). Graham et al. (2008) evaluated the impacts of diflubenzuron treatments on aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates for Mormon cricket suppression in Utah.

Most terrestrial invertebrate taxa were not significantly different pre- and post-treatment among three sites that were evaluated. There was a noted decrease in some ant genera, but results were not consistent between sites and not all genera were impacted. Non-ant Hymenoptera showed increased numbers at two of the three sites and a decrease at a third site when comparing numbers pre- and post-treatment. Impacts to aquatic invertebrates that may serve as prey would

be minimal due to the implementation of Program no-application buffer zones adjacent to aquatic habitat.

Based on the qualitative risk assessment above, APHIS has determined that the Program will not jeopardize the continued existence of the northern long-eared bat foraging and in roosts in the program area.

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Appendix 6: Comments received during the open comment period

USDA APHIS received several public responses to the publication of the Wyoming draft EA (EA Number: WY-20-01). Public comments were received from BLM field offices, WGFD and USFWS. Public comments were also received from the Xerces Society and from the Center for Biological Diversity. Comments similar in nature were grouped under one response. Comments that were editorial in nature or requested additional citations are not addressed in the appendix but were incorporated into the final EA, where appropriate. The Grasshopper Program has decided not to use chlorantraniliprole in Wyoming during 2020, any exposure scenarios which the commenters are concerned about are not relevant, and references to this chemical has been removed from the final EA.

Comment 1

USDA APHIS received one comment about the EA providing little in the way of solid information about where, how, and when the treatments may actually occur within the counties covered under the EAs, during the year 2020, which makes it impossible to determine if effects would actually be significant or not.

APHIS described the purpose and need for grasshopper suppression treatments, potential treatment options, the affected environment within the state, and an analysis of the potential environmental consequences in the Draft EA that were made available for public comment. These documents become programmatic because APHIS cannot precisely predict where an outbreak will occur each year; we only know that outbreaks will occur, and treatments in a timely manner will be absolutely necessary. The emergency response aspect is why site-specific treatment details cannot be known, analyzed, and published in advance. APHIS relies on its emergency provisions within its NEPA Implementing Regulations (7 CFR 372.10) to address these situations.

Please be aware that as per conversations with BIA may preclude disclosure of Tribal information to the public or outside of APHIS without the consent of BIA or the Tribes. Individuals may request information on the specific treatment areas on Tribal Lands from the individual Tribal Nations or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Comment 2

USDA APHIS received one comment concerning the lack of transparency about the location of actual treatment areas, particularly on public lands, being a disservice to the public that prevents the public from reviewing sufficient information to be able to gauge justification for and the risks involved in the suppression effort.

APHIS did not withhold the location of actual treatment areas while preparing the Draft EA, but rather those facts were not known at that time because economically damaging grasshopper populations had not become apparent. See previous comment concerning the prevention of the commenter's ability to gauge the justification and risks of treatments within the proposed action areas.

Comment 3

APHIS received one comment urging APHIS to provide the public with maps of specific treatment areas and proposed treatment strategies (including proposed date of application and chemical and rate to be used), immediately after approving any treatment and at least 14 days prior to implementation of any treatment. This comment suggested that this specific information be posted at the APHIS website as soon as it is available, sent to interested parties, and made available for public comment.

In most circumstances, APHIS is not able to accurately predict specific treatment areas and treatment strategies months or even weeks before grasshopper populations reach economic infestation levels. The need for rapid and effective response when an outbreak occurs limits the options available to APHIS to inform the public other than those stakeholders who could be directly affected by the actual application. APHIS typically does not have 14 days between planning a treatment and the actual application because of the rapid population growth and potential damage of grasshopper infestations.

Please be aware that as per conversations with BIA may preclude disclosure of Tribal information to the public or outside of APHIS without the consent of BIA or the Tribes. Individuals may request information on the specific treatment areas on Tribal Lands from the individual Tribal Nations or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Comment 4

APHIS received one comment that mentioned “APHIS’ procedure to approve or disapprove treatments based on a cost-benefit analysis performed using the “Hopper” model” and that is site-specific data are not available or current, APHIS must use protective values as defaults in Hopper.”

The “Hopper” model is an older model and is no longer used in Wyoming.

In Wyoming, general site specific data, which is used to determine treatments in real time and gathered at time of actual surveys are used to make treatment decisions. The general site specific data include: grasshopper densities, species complex, dominant species, dominant life stage, range conditions, local weather patterns (wind, temp., and precipitation), and known historical hatching beds. Land owners and land managers consider other factors such as animal unit months (AUM’s) present in grazing allotment, forage damage estimates, number of potential AUM’s consumed by grasshopper population, potential AUM’s managed for allotment and value of the AUM, estimated cost of replacement feed for livestock, rotational time frame for grazing allotments, and the number of livestock in grazing allotment when requesting APHIS’s assistance. These are all factors taken into consideration during this cooperative decision making process during the survey season.

Comment 5

APHIS received one comment concerning how analysis of projected economic injury levels and ultimately, treatment decisions, might be determined in the absence of site-specific data (specifically rangeland productivity and composition, precipitation and soil moisture,

accessibility and cost of alternative forage, effectiveness of treatment, cost of treatment, timing of treatment, and grasshopper population density, life stage, and species composition).

See comment 4 above. In Wyoming, general site specific data, which is used to determine treatments in real time and gathered at time of actual surveys are used to make treatment decisions. This decision making process is a cooperative effort between the requesting land owners and land managers and APHIS.

Comment 6

APHIS received one comment related to disclosing its analysis for each of the seven variables mentioned in comment 5.

The site specific data that is used to determine treatments in real-time is gathered at the time of actual surveys. This data is not available at the time that the environmental assessments are prepared. See comment 4 for an example of general site specific data used to determine treatments.

Please be aware that as per conversations with BIA may preclude disclosure of Tribal information to the public or outside of APHIS without the consent of BIA or the Tribes. Individuals may request information on the specific treatment areas on Tribal Lands from the individual Tribal Nations or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Comment 7

APHIS received one comment about providing the public with a more precise definition of when the threshold for spraying has been met.

Economic thresholds are variable based on the value of protected resources and management objectives. Baseline thresholds for Mormon crickets are 2 per sq. yd. and grasshoppers are 8 per sq. yd., though neither of those thresholds guarantees justification for treatment alone. All of the site-specific data mentioned in comment 4 above are also considered for Wyoming.

Comment 8

APHIS received one comment urging APHIS to delay the publication of EA and FONSI until after treatment requests are received and all treatment areas have been delineated and are identified to the public.

In Wyoming, it is necessary to complete the EA and FONSI prior to the start of field season. Delaying the publication of the EA and FONSI would make responding to requests from land owners and land managers unreasonable. Cooperating agency's which tier their NEPA documents to APHIS's need a reasonable amount of time before or at the start of the field season and specific treatment decisions are made during the nymphal survey which, due to grasshopper biology, need to be timely in order to use APHIS' preferred chemical and most ecologically sound treatment strategies.

Comment 9

APHIS received one comment regarding the EA's list three insecticide options (diflubenzuron, carbaryl, and malathion), and states that the choice of which to use will be site-specific, without being clear about how that choice of insecticide is made.

Letters of Request in previous years from land managers may be specific to use a particular insecticide and not treat during specific times of the day or on weekends and may include special sites to be buffered out of the treatment. These requests are adhered to in Wyoming. The letters of request come from the individual land managers. The decision to use diflubenzuron is determined by the life stage of the dominant species within the outbreak population. In the case of early instars, diflubenzuron, the preferred insecticide, can produce 90 to 97% mortality. If the window for the use of diflubenzuron closes, as a result of treatment delays, then the only other option would be the use of Carbaryl 2% or 5% bait. There are certain species which are susceptible to carbaryl bait. If the species complex present in the outbreak is not susceptible to bait and the diflubenzuron window is closed, then no treatments will occur. This is discussed with the requesting land managers.

The final EA has been updated to reflect the changes in the program.

Comment 10

APHIS received one comment concerning BeeREX calculating the expected environmental concentration (EEC) of diflubenzuron in pollen and nectar from foliar overspray as 1.76 mg/kg, which is equivalent to 1760 ppb.

Nectar and pollen values in BeeREX are based on residues that would be expected to occur from direct pesticide applications to long grass which is a food source EPA estimates in its T-REX model. These assumptions may overestimate expected residues of diflubenzuron in pollen and nectar. Available data for diflubenzuron pollen residues in crops show a low frequency of occurrence and low concentrations. The concentration in pollen will depend on application rates and when applications are made relative to flower bloom. Program applications of diflubenzuron are at the lower end of labeled use rates for Dimilin due to the sensitivity of Orthoptera. In addition, the Program uses rates less than the current labeled rates for grasshoppers and other labeled crops and makes only one application.

Comment 11

APHIS received one comment regarding chitin synthesis and its importance in the early life stages of insects, as they molt and form a new exoskeleton in various growth stages. The specific concern was that aquatic guideline tests, (or terrestrial invertebrate acute tests), which typically run for 48 hours, may not capture a molting stage, and thus underrepresent acute toxicity. Single doses may cause mortality, if received at a vulnerable time, and consequently, conclusions from RQs based on acute toxicity studies for invertebrates may not fully represent actual risk.

APHIS agrees that chitin synthesis is a critical function for terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates. APHIS in its risk assessments prepared for each Program insecticide summarized available acute and chronic toxicity data. This would include studies of short duration such as 48 to 96

hours as well as much longer term studies that would evaluate continuous exposures during critical life stages and development.

Comment 12

APHIS received the following comment, “For honey bees (the surrogate species for risk assessment in the absence of other data), USEPA (2018) reported a chronic 21-day ED50 and NOAEL of 0.012 and <0.0064 µg a.i./larva, respectively. Utilizing these values in BeeREX (EPA’s model that calculates risk quotients for bees) and assuming an application rate of 0.016 lb. a.i./ac, BeeREX calculates an acute dietary risk quotient of 18.13 and a chronic dietary risk quotient of 33.99. (A threshold value is 1.0). Risk quotients this high above 1.0 indicate a high concern for exposed bees.”

BeeREX is a tier one screening level model used by EPA to assess potential risk to pollinators. Estimates of risk quotients are used to determine if there is a presumption of risk that requires additional evaluation. APHIS also relies on available field data to further characterize the risks of Program insecticides to terrestrial and aquatic invertebrates, where available. A limitation of BeeREX is it does not account for pesticide degradation that would normally occur in Program treatments.

Nectar and pollen values in BeeREX are based on residues that would be expected to occur from direct pesticide applications to long grass which is a food source EPA estimates in its T-REX model. These assumptions may overestimate expected residues of diflubenzuron in pollen and nectar. Available data for diflubenzuron pollen residues in crops with higher use rates show a low frequency of occurrence and low concentrations. The concentration in pollen will depend on application rates and when applications are made relative to flower blooming. Diflubenzuron Program applications are at the lower end of labeled use rates for Dimilin due to the sensitivity of Orthoptera. In addition, the Program uses rates less than the current labeled rates and makes one application.

Comment 13

APHIS received one comment, regarding the EIS disclosing that under some circumstances, Dimilin may be quite persistent; field dissipation studies in California citrus and Oregon apple orchards reported half-live values of 68.2 to 78 days. Rangeland persistence is unfortunately not available, but diflubenzuron applied to plants remains adsorbed to leaf surfaces for several weeks.

Diflubenzuron persistence varies depending on site conditions. Diflubenzuron degradation is microbially mediated with soil aerobic half-lives much less than dissipation half-lives. While dissipation half-lives may extend up to 78 days, they have also been shown to be much less under other use patterns.

Comment 14

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS discounted the pollinator risk by claiming that studies finding significant effects to pollinators utilized doses far above levels that would be used in grasshopper control. Unfortunately, this does not appear to be true for all studies cited. Mommaerts et al. (2006) conducted dose-response assays and found that exposure to

diflubenzuron resulted in reproductive effects in *Bombus terrestris*, with only the doses at 0.001 of maximum field recommended concentrations (MFRC) in pollen and 0.0001 in sugar water resulting in effects statistically similar to controls. The MFRC for diflubenzuron is listed in the study as 288 mg/L (equivalent to 288,000 ppb). At 1/10,000 of this level, diflubenzuron effects would be similar to controls only at levels at or below 28.8 ppb while at 1/1000 of this level, diflubenzuron “no effect” concentrations would be equivalent to 288 ppb. This analysis thus shows the opposite of what APHIS claims – that the effective dose for reproductive effects is actually far below the EEC expected for diflubenzuron at RAATS rates used in grasshopper suppression. This raises concern that the application of diflubenzuron at the specified RAATS rates may cause severe impacts to bee reproduction within treated areas.”

APHIS relied on available laboratory and field collected data for each Program insecticide to summarize risks to terrestrial invertebrates. In evaluating studies, APHIS also evaluated likely routes of exposure for Program treatments. Estimates of exposure using the EPA tier one screening model likely overestimate potential residues in pollen and nectar.

Comment 15

APHIS received six comments about chlorantraniliprole.

Chlorantraniliprole is not proposed for use in Wyoming in 2020. Appendix 1: APHIS Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program FY-2020 Treatment Guidelines are updated for the national grasshopper program for all 17 western states. The final EA has been updated to reflect the changes in the program.

Comment 16

APHIS received one comment concerning malathion being found to cause jeopardy in 1,284 endangered species according to recent nationwide Biological Opinions

APHIS recognizes that EPA and the Services are continuing to develop updated national level consultations. APHIS currently consults with the Services at the State level for the Grasshopper program to ensure program activities do not adversely affect protected species or their critical habitat.

See response to comment 9 for use of Malathion in Wyoming.

Comment 17

APHIS received one comment regarding the EPA determined that carbaryl is likely to adversely affect 1,542 species.

The Endangered Species Act section 7 pesticide consultation process between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (the Services, collectively) and the EPA specifically concerns FIFRA pesticide registration and reregistration in the United States, including all registered uses of a pesticide. The state-level Biological Assessments for APHIS invasive species programs are separate from any consultations conducted in association with pesticide registration and reregistration process.

The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill) created a partnership between USDA, EPA, the Services, and the Council on Environmental Quality to improve the consultation process for pesticide registration and reregistration. USDA is committed to working to ensure consultations are conducted in a timely, transparent manner and based on the best available science. The Revised Method for National Level Listed Species Biological Evaluations of Conventional Pesticides provides a directionally improved path to ensuring that pesticides can continue to be used safely for agricultural production with minimal impacts to threatened and endangered species.

APHIS provided information about use of carbaryl to EPA for the FIFRA consultation for carbaryl. The Grasshopper Program use of carbaryl has in the past comprised substantially less than 1% of the percent crop treated (PCT) for rangeland use of carbaryl. This is the case for the reasonably foreseeable future. For rangeland, in the EPA BE, the Grasshopper Program's very low usage was rounded up to <1% PCT, which gives an overestimate of rangeland acres treated and thus endangered species risk. APHIS use of carbaryl is even smaller compared to all uses of carbaryl. Further, the Grasshopper Program consults directly with the Services to ensure program activities do not adversely affect protected species or their critical habitat.

Comment 18

APHIS received the following comment, "The jeopardy and LAA calls for malathion and carbaryl should be included in the EAs and should preclude the use of these chemicals."

APHIS consults directly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on treatments and methods. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's on-going consultation on pesticide registration across all nationwide uses of program pesticides does not provide sufficiently detailed analysis or conclusions relevant to the Grasshopper Program.

Comment 19

APHIS received one comment that it should take into account the risk to native bees and butterflies from these treatments, especially those designated species of greatest conservation need. APHIS should constrain its treatments to take into account pollinator conservation needs, and improve its monitoring capability to try to understand what non-target effects actually occur as a result of the different treatments.

APHIS reduces the risk to native bees and pollinators through monitoring grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations and making pesticide applications in a manner that reduces the risk to this group of non-target invertebrates. Monitoring grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations allows APHIS to determine if populations require treatment and to make treatments in a timely manner reducing pesticide use and emphasizing the use of Program insecticides that are not broad spectrum. Historical use of Program insecticides demonstrate that diflubenzuron is the preferred insecticide for use. Over 90% of the acreage treated by the Program has been with diflubenzuron. Diflubenzuron poses a reduced risk to native bees and pollinators compared to liquid carbaryl and malathion applications. In addition APHIS used RAATs to treat approximately 99% of the acres historically treated by the Program. APHIS also uses RAATs that are typically below the labeled RAAT rates further reducing the amount of insecticide used by the program. APHIS also emphasizes the use of carbaryl bait, where applicable, as a means

to suppress pest populations while protecting native bees and pollinators. These methods of applications have been shown to be protective of non-target invertebrates. These studies are referenced and summarized in the EIS.

Comment 20

APHIS received the following comment, This EA and the EIS claim that the use of untreated swaths will mitigate impacts to natural enemies, bees, and other wildlife. However, the width of the skipped swaths is not designated in advance in the EA, and there is no minimum width specified.

APHIS assumes that the reduced amount of pesticide that would occur using untreated swaths over a given treatment block will result in reduced risk to non-target organisms by reducing exposure. The swath width can vary based on site specific conditions, however, the end result is reduced pesticide exposure over a treatment area. The EIS cites studies that demonstrate that the use of RAATs result in higher non-target invertebrate populations compared to treatment blocks that did not use RAATs.

Comment 21

APHIS received two comments/recommendations about minimum swath widths, “Without knowing minimum (rather than maximum) swath widths that will be applied under this EA, it is hard to compare results from this study (Lockwood et al. 2000) to the results on non-targets expected under RAATS in this EA. 2). APHIS should commit to science-based methodologies to assess actual risk from the proposed treatments and institute minimum untreated swath widths wide enough to meaningfully minimize exposure to bees and other beneficials.”

Typically, APHIS employs 50% skip swaths when using RAATs. Swath widths and skips are determined by the type of plane doing the aerial application, the smallest being 75 feet, but the minimum skip swath is typically 100 feet because larger planes are often contracted.

The commenter references the work of Lockwood et al. 2000, this study looked at RAAT’s increasing swath widths in some instances by double skipping the untreated area. They also used ATV’s in their study which only have a minimum effective swath width of 30 feet. Using modifications presently being done in Arizona with the UTV’s ability to adjust the hopper height, using the same ATV spreader, the minimum effective swath width can be increased to 40 feet, thus also increasing the untreated swath to 40 feet. APHIS uses science based methodologies to assess treatment related benefits or risks. APHIS has for decades funded the Science and Technology Research Lab in Phoenix, Arizona, which is specific to Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Program research and development. It is the only one of its kind in the U.S. The S&T Lab in cooperation with ASU researchers have evaluated non-target invertebrate impacts in the past and have made recommendations to the Program side of APHIS.

Comment 22

APHIS received the following comment, “Although the EIS included a quantitative analysis of drift anticipated from ULV aerial applications to estimate deposition into aquatic areas, an

analysis is not presented or available to back up the assumption that untreated areas (skipped swath widths) will act as refugia for natural enemies, bees, and other wildlife.”

The EIS cites studies that demonstrate that the use of RAATs result in higher non-target invertebrate populations compared to treatment blocks that did not use RAATs.

Comment 23

APHIS received three comments about the drift analysis described in the EA, 1) “The drift analysis described in the EA assumed a droplet spectra size of fine to very fine (median diameter = 137.5 µm). However, labels do not require a minimum droplet size for ULV applications over rangeland, and other uses of ULV technology for pest control assume much smaller droplet sizes. EPA’s (2018) Ecological Risk Assessment for diflubenzuron uses AgDrift to estimate the drift fraction from aerial LV applications, although it is unclear whether AgDrift is validated for the purposes of predicting deposition of insecticides applied using ULV technology. EPA assumed a volume mean diameter (VMD) of 90 µm [note that this is approximately 2/3 of the VMD used in the APHIS analysis]. Under EPA’s analysis, the drift fraction comprises 19% at 150 ft.”, 2) “APHIS should disclose its quantitative analysis and the percent drift it expects--by distance-- into untreated swaths for each application method it proposes”, and 3) “APHIS must also specify in its operational procedures the use of nozzles that will result in droplet spectra that accord with its analysis”.

The VMD used by APHIS for diflubenzuron is the preferred median diameter used by the Program. APHIS recognizes that the range of droplet sizes can vary under a ULV application.

Comment 24

APHIS received a comment that it is “unrealistic that APHIS can comply with mitigation measures designed to protect bees on pesticide labels “(e.g., bumble bees fly earlier and later in the day, diflubenzuron is toxic to developing forms, if plants are flowering, bees are active, etc.)

APHIS uses diflubenzuron at far-lower levels than allowed by the label, thereby minimizing risks to non-targets, such as bees. There have been several studies on diflubenzuron effects on bees, such as Schroeder et al. (1980) and insect growth regulator effects reviewed in Tasei (2001), which support the idea that the diflubenzuron levels APHIS uses for grasshoppers and Mormon crickets are a minimal risk to bees. APHIS also complies with any label requirements designed to minimize impacts to pollinators.

Comment 25

APHIS received the following comment, “Except for untreated swath widths, the EA is silent on how it will avoid impact to pollinators. It has already been shown that within sprayed areas, risk quotients at expected application rates would be well above 1.0. Leaving skipped widths is also not a full solution at expected widths since, due to drift, untreated swaths are highly likely to be exposed to levels above risk quotients”.

APHIS uses diflubenzuron at far-lower levels than allowed by the label, thereby minimizing risks to non-targets. Additionally, APHIS commonly incorporates untreated swaths into its treatment

programs, which have consistently demonstrated reduced impacts to non-target arthropods (Lockwood et al. (1999, 2001, 2002); Norelius and Lockwood (1999)).

Comment 26

APHIS received one comment regarding that APHIS must not ignore requirements listed on pesticide labels, nor make assumptions about its compliance with these when RAATS measures that will actually be taken are vague and unspecified.

APHIS complies with all applicable Federal and State pesticide label language when making pesticide treatments.

Comment 27

APHIS received the following comment: “While flexibility with these may have been appropriate at the EIS stage, it is not appropriate at the EA stage. APHIS must fully disclose its RAATS plan for each treatment in the EA, including specifying application method, chemical to be used, rate, and width of untreated swaths.”

RAATs are a dynamic treatment method based on the size of the treatment area, species complex, and density of target species. Specific details regarding RAATs cannot be determined until site specific data is collected during the 2020 survey season and an appropriate chemical is identified. Once a treatment is determined necessary, application method, untreated swath widths, chemical choice, and application rate are included in the bid for contracting.

Please be aware that as per conversations with BIA may preclude disclosure of Tribal information to the public or outside of APHIS without the consent of BIA or the Tribes. Individuals may request information on the specific treatment areas on Tribal Lands from the individual Tribal Nations or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Comment 28

APHIS received one comment, “To be consistent with the Pollinator-Friendly BMPs for Federal Lands (see Comment 7), APHIS must go beyond the general statements on the pesticide labels and specify more exactly how its spray plan will further reduce exposure and risk to bees.”

See Comment 25.

Comment 29

APHIS received the following comment, “The EA describes the listed species potentially present, some information about these species life histories and habitats, and protective measures for some of these species, but is silent about the consultation response from USFWS. What is the status of such consultation? Does USFWS concur with the Not Likely to Adversely Affect or No Effect calls for each of the species present within the proposed project areas? If so, what additional mitigation measures (if any) does USFWS suggest?”

In Wyoming, consultation with USFWS is completed as mandated by Section (7)(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The EA includes a section that discusses APHIS’s compliance with the ESA and the Final EA includes the USFWS concurrence letter in Appendix 2.

Comment 30

APHIS received the comment “Chlorantraniliprole is mentioned in the operating guidelines and in the sections describing proposed mitigations for listed species but is missing from the alternatives and effects sections. Chlorantraniliprole should not be used until fully analyzed.”

Chlorantraniliprole is not proposed for use in 2020. The final EA has been updated to reflect the changes in the national grasshopper and Mormon cricket program.

See USFWS letters of concurrence stated in previous response.

Comment 31

APHIS received two comments concerning operationally, how will listed species’ protected locations be identified for ground and aerial applicators? How will such locations, buffer widths listed in the protective measures, and any specific instructions (i.e. use of carbaryl bait only) for some species be mapped and communicated to applicators? APHIS must provide to applicators a set of clear set of directions outlining protective measures for the listed and proposed species found within this project area and not burden applicators with a confusing set of directions split between multiple tables.

In Wyoming, after request letters are received and potential treatment areas are delineated, cooperative decision making begins which involves many cooperators. If additional consultation from USFWS is needed it is conducted prior to finalizing maps and shapefiles.

See Comment 33 and 35.

Comment 32

APHIS received one comment about pesticide specific conservation measures for each listed species, where appropriate, should be explicitly addressed and adopted.

Agreed upon mitigation measures address specific chemicals when conservation measures are warranted. These measures are agreed upon during the consultation process with the USFWS and are applied in the field during application.

Comment 33

APHIS received one comment that APHIS should adopt the following operational guideline across all site-specific EAs: “Use Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates for pilot guidance on the parameters of the spray block. Ground flagging or markers should accompany GPS coordinates in delineating the project area as well as areas to omit from treatment (e.g., boundaries and buffers for bodies of water, habitats of protected species, etc.).”

In Wyoming, treatment boundaries, water bodies, sensitive sites, etc., are initially identified by data from land managers and land owners. These are further confirmed during nymphal surveys and any additional sensitive sites are identified to the GIS specialist. Finalized maps are shared with applicators in the form of shapefiles. These shapefiles clearly show treatment boundaries, water buffers as per program guidelines, and other sensitive site exclusions to be treated from

areas to be excluded from treatment. Communications with applicators are extensive before, during and after treatments. Applicators participate in daily briefings with APHIS personnel to review all sensitive sites. During treatments, APHIS personnel conduct environmental monitoring in excluded areas. Furthermore, applicators provide APHIS track-files to APHIS as required in the statement of work.

Comment 34

APHIS received one comment that, “APHIS states that it has no legal obligation to manage for vulnerable species not on the Endangered Species List. The essential role that pollinators play in the conservation of listed plant species is not addressed in the EAs and makes no mention of the fact that there are affirmative obligations incumbent on federal agencies with regard to protection of pollinators, regardless of whether they are federally listed including the 2014 Presidential Memorandum, the National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators, the Pollinator Friendly BMPs for Federal Land, and the Pollinator Research Action Item.”

APHIS considers the role of pollinators in any consultations conducted with the USFWS to protect federally-listed plants. Mitigation measures, such as no treatment buffers are applied with consideration of the protection of pollinators that are important to a particular listed plant species.

APHIS also implements several BMP practices in their treatment strategies that are designed to protect non-target invertebrates, including pollinators. APHIS minimizes insecticide use by using lower than labeled rates for all Program insecticides, alternating swaths during treatment, making only one application per season and minimizing use of liquid broad spectrum insecticides. APHIS also continues to evaluate new monitoring and control methods designed to increase the response to economically damaging populations of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets while protecting rangeland resources such as pollinators.

Comment 35

APHIS received one comment, “The EA does not disclose which, if any, invertebrates within the geographic area are listed as sensitive by federal land management agencies or as Species of Conservation Concern, or whether the state of Nevada designates any invertebrates as species of greatest conservation need.”

This EA is for Wyoming and not Nevada. Species of greatest conservation need in Wyoming are discussed on page 20 of the EA and are discussed during cooperative decision making processes.

Comment 36

APHIS received one comment regarding, the EAs protections for at risk species, including the monarch butterfly which is currently being assessed for listing under the Endangered Species Act, are practically non-existent.

Under USFWS Section 7 Act there is no requirement to consult on proposed or candidate species. (See USFWS letter of concurrence in Appendix 2.) However, in Wyoming when there is

concern by land management agencies, federal, state, etc. it is discussed in this cooperative process between APHIS and landowners and land management agencies and mitigation measures are decided upon prior to treatment.

Comment 37

APHIS received one comment, “In the face of declining pollinator populations and the existence of federal directives for agencies to support and conserve pollinators and their habitat, APHIS must not conduct business as usual. APHIS should identify the at-risk pollinator species potentially present in the geographic area of the EAs and map their ranges prior to approving any treatment requests. Prior to treatment, APHIS should survey for presence of host plants and ensure that it has identified specific, actionable measures it will take to protect monarch habitat and the habitat of at-risk butterfly species from contamination that may occur as a result of exposure to treatment, such as designating a 125-ft buffer around identified habitat. Some ways to enact protections for at-risk species above and beyond those included in the EAs include:

- Survey for butterfly host plants and avoid any applications to host plants.
- Time pesticide applications to avoid exposure to at risk species.
- Do not apply pesticides (especially insecticides) when monarchs (adult and immature) are present or expected to be present.
- Avoid aerial applications.
- Avoid using malathion and liquid carbaryl.
- Include large buffers around all water sources, including intermittent and ephemeral streams, wetlands, and permanent streams and rivers, as well as threatened and endangered species habitat, honey bee hives, and any human-inhabited area. For example, Tepedino (2000) recommends a three-mile buffer around rare plant populations, as many of these are pollinated by solitary bees that are susceptible to grasshopper control chemicals.”

APHIS includes many of the proposed measures to minimize risks to non-target organisms and human health. These are summarized in the recent EIS. For example, no treatment buffers are applied to all water bodies and to areas where the public may potentially be exposed to Program applications. APHIS also minimizes aerial insecticide use, where possible, however site conditions may dictate the need for aerial treatments. APHIS minimizes use of liquid carbaryl and malathion which is reflected in the historical use for both insecticides. Diflubenzuron has been the preferred insecticide for making Program suppression treatments. In addition APHIS has incorporated the use of RAATS in the Program as a means to reduce insecticide use providing reduced risk while meeting the goal of suppression. APHIS continues to research and develop new techniques for management of grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations.

Comment 38

APHIS received the following comment, “While the mitigations that are identified for aquatic habitats in the EAs are heartening, APHIS should include monitoring for the presence and health of mussels in streams that traverse or are adjacent to treatment areas as part of its monitoring strategy.”

APHIS conducts environmental monitoring related to Program treatments. Monitoring is typically done adjacent to sensitive habitats, including aquatic habitats, to determine pesticide residues. These data can be used to determine risk to non-target organisms based on available toxicity data.

Comment 39

APHIS received the following comment, “To protect freshwater mussels, APHIS should use the same buffers agreed to in the national consultation with NMFS to protect listed salmon to protect freshwater mussels.”

APHIS agrees that freshwater mussels should be protected, as well as other aquatic organisms, and uses ground and aerial application no treatment buffers adjacent to all aquatic habitats. In addition, APHIS uses reduced rates of Program insecticides compared to current labeled rates. These mitigation measures are beyond label requirements for protection of aquatic habitats. The intent of these buffers is to reduce off-site drift and runoff of Program insecticides to aquatic habitats.

Comment 40

APHIS received the following comment, “The EAs do not discuss water bodies of anthropogenic origin, such as stock tanks or stock ponds, nor any buffers that will be observed to prevent pesticide overspray or drift into these habitats.”

In Wyoming, all stock tanks and stock ponds are buffered for applications.

Comment 41

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS should recognize the potential for stock pond/tanks to contribute significantly to the diversity of aquatic invertebrates in rangelands.”

See previous response. All bodies of water are buffered according to the APHIS Guidelines in Appendix 1 of the EA.

Comment 42

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS should identify and map all stock tanks/ponds and specify a buffer around stock ponds/tanks from chemical treatment at least equivalent to that specified for wetlands, in order to protect aquatic diversity.”

All bodies of water are buffered according to APHIS Guidelines in Appendix 1 of the EA. In Wyoming, locations of stock tanks are provided to APHIS by land owners and land managers to be used in the field during delimiting surveys and treatment planning. Tribal stock tank locations are provided to APHIS but are not to the public. Tribal maps can be provided from the BIA.

Comment 43

APHIS received one comment, “APHIS’ reactive strategy includes no mention of what is most sorely needed: cooperation and planning with land managers to take appropriate steps to prevent the types of grasshopper and cricket outbreaks that are now dealt with by chemical controls.”

APHIS is not a land management agency, but encourages IPM through past and current research and will continue to do so.

APHIS supports the use of IPM in the management of grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets. APHIS provides technical assistance to Federal, Tribal, State and private land managers including the use of IPM. However, implementation of on-the-ground IPM activities is limited to land management agencies and Tribes, as well as private land owners. In addition, APHIS' authority under the Plant Protection Act is to treat Federal, State and private lands for grasshoppers and Mormon cricket populations. APHIS' technical assistance occurs under each of the three alternatives proposed in the EIS.

In addition to providing technical assistance, APHIS completed the Grasshopper Integrated Pest Management (GIPM) project, which is discussed in more detail on page 21 of this EIS. One of the goals of the GIPM is to develop new methods of suppressing grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations that will reduce non-target effects. RAATs are one of the methods that has been developed to reduce the amount of pesticide used in suppression activities, and is a component of IPM. APHIS continues to evaluate new suppression tools and methods for grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations, including biological control, and as stated in the EIS, will implement those methods once proven effective and approved for use in the United States.

Comment 44

APHIS received one comment: "Emphasizing cultural techniques through appropriate grazing management could help to minimize pesticide application and allow natural enemies to regulate grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations to the greatest extent possible. While more research is needed to develop species- and region-specific management treatments that use alternatives to pesticides (Vermeire et al. 2004), there is likely enough data to employ cultural techniques now."

APHIS supports the use of IPM in the management of grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets. APHIS provides technical assistance to Federal, Tribal, State and private land managers including the use of IPM, including cultural techniques. However, implementation of on-the-ground IPM activities is limited to land management agencies and Tribes, as well as private land owners. In addition, APHIS' authority under the Plant Protection Act is to treat Federal, State and private lands for grasshoppers and Mormon cricket populations.

Comment 45

APHIS received one comment that, "APHIS must elevate the expectation of preventative approaches in its cooperative agreements with other land management agencies. APHIS can collaborate with agencies (such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and State Extension program) to facilitate discussion and disseminate information to ranchers about preventative measures that can be taken and alternatives to pesticide use."

APHIS supports the use of IPM in the management of grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets. APHIS provides technical assistance to Federal, Tribal, State and private land managers including the use of IPM, including cultural techniques. However, implementation of on-the-ground IPM activities is limited to land management agencies and Tribes, as well as private land

owners. In addition, APHIS' authority under the Plant Protection Act is to treat Federal, State and private lands for grasshoppers and Mormon cricket populations.

APHIS has maintained cooperative relationships with state and federal land managers as well as private landowners and Indian tribes for decades. Those relationships have allowed APHIS to provide consistent and continual recommendations on land management practices designed to mitigate the damage from orthopteran infestations.

Comment 46

APHIS received on comment that, “APHIS and/or collaborating agencies should investigate and implement opportunities to incentivize healthy range management practices.”

As part of its ongoing IPM strategy to manage grasshoppers and Mormon cricket outbreaks, APHIS collaborates with scientists and land managers focused on rangeland health.

Comment 47

APHIS received one comment that, “APHIS and its partners should be approaching the problem by keeping a focus on the potential to reduce grasshopper carrying capacity by making the rangeland environment less hospitable for the pests. APHIS must not take a limited view of its role and responsibilities, and should utilize any available mechanism to require land management agencies to diminish the severity, frequency and duration of grasshopper outbreaks by utilizing cultural management actions. Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) should be examined and updated to ensure that land management agencies are accountable in utilizing cultural techniques to diminish the carrying capacity of pest species.

APHIS supports the use of IPM in the management of grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets. APHIS provides technical assistance to Federal, Tribal, State and private land managers including the use of IPM. However, implementation of on-the-ground IPM activities is limited to land management agencies and Tribes, as well as private land owners. In addition, APHIS' authority under the Plant Protection Act is to treat Federal, State and private lands for grasshoppers and Mormon cricket populations.

Comment 48

APHIS received a comment, “Longer-term strategic thinking should include:

- Prevent conditions that allow pest populations to survive and reproduce.
- Employ diverse management techniques (e.g., biological, physical, and cultural).
- Select pesticides to minimize risks to non-target organisms.
- Implement frequent and intense monitoring to identify populations that can be controlled with small ground-based pesticide application equipment.
- Monitor sites before and after application of any insecticide to determine the efficacy of the pest management technique as well as if there is an impact on water quality or non-target species.”

APHIS currently monitors for grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations. These measures are employed to allow APHIS to respond with treatment, where warranted, treating the smallest area possible and if practical using ground-based equipment. APHIS, due to its monitoring efforts, has been able to rely on diflubenzuron as the primary insecticide used in the Program.

Diiflubenzuron is a more selective insecticide compared to carbaryl and malathion posing less risk to non-target organisms. APHIS also uses environmental monitoring to assess application success and to determine if Program insecticides are reaching sensitive habitats, including aquatic habitats. APHIS supports the use of IPM in the management of grasshoppers and Mormon Crickets. APHIS provides technical assistance to Federal, Tribal, State and private land managers including the use of IPM. However, implementation of on-the-ground IPM activities is limited to land management agencies and Tribes, as well as private land owners. In addition, APHIS' authority under the Plant Protection Act is to treat Federal, State and private lands for grasshoppers and Mormon cricket populations. APHIS continues to research and develop new methods for assessing and controlling grasshopper and Mormon cricket populations that can be incorporated into IPM practices.

Comment 49

APHIS received one comment that, “The EAs do not make mention of any specific protections to be accorded to special status lands such as Wilderness areas, Wilderness study areas, Research Natural Areas, National Wildlife Refuges, and designated or proposed Areas of Critical Environmental Concern. These special status areas have been designated for specific purposes and generally discourage human intervention with the natural ecosystem. Grasshopper suppression should not be undertaken in such areas.”

APHIS does not make treatments on lands of special status without a request from that agency and an evaluation of the whether treatments are necessary. Additional protection measures for these types of lands are established by the agency requesting treatment and are followed by APHIS.

Comment 50

APHIS received the comment “The EA cites a 1995 Biological Opinion with US Fish and Wildlife on listed species, but makes no mention of a newer Biological Opinion or letter of concurrence for the newer chemical diiflubenzuron which is listed as one of the active ingredients allowed under the preferred alternative.”

The 1995 Biological Opinion is the most current between APHIS and USFWS on a national level. Local and site specific consultations take place annually in Wyoming. The concurrence letter received this year from USFWS can be found in Appendix 2.

Comment 51

APHIS received the comment that the EA does not adequately address the essential role of pollinators in the conservations of listed plant species.

The EIS analyzed concerns for pollinators in regards to the grasshopper program, underwent the NEPA process and had been finalized. The EA is tiered to the EIS.

Comment 52

APHIS received the following comment “We appreciate that public notice of this site-specific EA and its comment period was posted at the APHIS website. It does not appear to have been the practice to post the Draft EAs in the last several years, but limiting public notice is contrary to the spirit of the NEPA process. Grasshopper suppression efforts are of more than local concern

and as federal actions, should be noticed properly, i.e. beyond local stakeholder audiences, local newspapers, etc. We recommend that, in the future, notice of open public comment periods for all site-specific EAs for grasshopper suppression be posted in the Federal Register, and documents made available for review at regulations.gov and at the APHIS grasshopper website.”

Public involvement under the CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA distinguishes federal actions with effects of national concern from those with effects primarily of local concern (40 CFR 1506.6). Our EIS process for the grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression program was published in the Federal Register (APHIS-2016-0045), and met all applicable notice and comment requirements for a federal action with effects of national concern. This process provided individuals and national groups the ability to participate in the development of alternatives and provide comment. Our subsequent state-based actions have the potential for effects of local concern, and we publish them according to the provisions that apply to federal actions with effects primarily of local concern. This includes the USDA APHIS NEPA Implementation Procedures, which allows for EAs and FONSIIs where the effects of an action are primarily of regional or local concern to normally provide publication in a local or area newspaper of general circulation (7 CFR 372.7(b)(3)). These publications provide potentially locally-affected individuals an additional opportunity to provide input into the decision-making process. Some states also provide additional opportunities for local public involvement, such as public meetings.

Comment 53

APHIS received the following comments, “The Draft Environmental Assessments Frustrate Public Participation.” and “APHIS frustrated public participation by failing to inform interested parties of the existence of the EAs.”

“Scoping” is the process APHIS uses through which the agency and the public identify alternatives and issues to be considered during the development of a grasshopper or Mormon cricket suppression program. Scoping was helpful in the preparation of the draft Environmental Assessments (EAs). The process can occur formally and informally through meetings, conversations, or written comments from individuals and groups.

Prior to the treatment season, APHIS conducted meetings or provided guidance for public participation in the decision making process. In addition, APHIS notified Federal, State and BIA land managers and private landowners of the potential for grasshopper and Mormon cricket outbreaks on their lands.

Comment 54

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS did not providing information for the submission of public comments including where and when to submit comments by.”

APHIS works to inform all interested parties about draft EA’s for comment. When an interested party asks to be informed, APHIS ensures contact information is added to the list of interested stakeholders. Each local office works to inform interested parties of the availability of an EA for comment. Any omission of an interested party is not intentional.

A notice of public comment was sent to all parties who expressed interest in the past or at public meetings in addition to the local newspapers, tribal nations, federal and state cooperators. A letter of notice clearly defining the 30 day comment period and the contact information of local APHIS personnel responsible for drafting the state EAs was also sent out to the respective parties.

Comment 55

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS frustrated public participation by failing to inform interested parties of the existence of the EA, by not providing information for the submission of public comments including where and when to submit comments by, limiting public notice to local papers, and providing a short public comment period during this COVID-19 pandemic.”

Public involvement under the CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA distinguishes federal actions with effects of national concern from those with effects primarily of local concern (40 CFR 1506.6). Our EIS process for the GMC program was published in the Federal Register (APHIS-2016-0045), and met all applicable notice and comment requirements for a federal action with effects of national concern. This process provided individuals and national groups the ability to participate in the development of alternatives and provide comment. Our subsequent state-based actions have the potential for effects of local concern, and we publish them according to the provisions that apply to federal actions with effects primarily of local concern. This includes the USDA APHIS NEPA Implementation Procedures, which allows for EAs and FONSIIs where the effects of an action are primarily of regional or local concern to normally provide publication in a local or area newspaper of general circulation (7 CFR 372.7(b)(3)). These publications provide potentially locally-affected individuals an additional opportunity to provide input into the decision-making process. Some states also provide additional opportunities for local public involvement, such as public meetings.

Comment 56

APHIS received the following comments, “APHIS provided a short public comment period during this COVID-19 pandemic.” “The 30 day comment deadline for the Draft EAs is wholly inappropriate during the current COVID-19 pandemic, where both staff and members of the concerned public have limited capacity, given the challenges associated with a global pandemic including but not limited to increased childcare demands, illness, etc.”

The comment period was in accordance with CEQ regulations, 40 C.F.R. § 1501.4(e) (2), in determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement the Federal agency shall: (e) Prepare a finding of no significant impact, if the agency determines on the basis of the environmental assessment not to prepare a statement. (2) In certain limited circumstances, which the agency may cover in its procedures under § 1507.3, the agency shall make the finding of no significant impact available for public review (including State and area-wide clearinghouses) for 30 days before the agency makes its final determination whether to prepare an environmental impact statement and before the action may begin. CEQ guidance also notes: When preparing an EA, the agency has discretion as to the level of public involvement. The CEQ regulations state that the agency shall involve environmental agencies, applicants, and the public, to the extent

practicable, in preparing EAs. Sometimes agencies will choose to mirror the scoping and public comment periods that are found in the EIS process. In other situations, agencies make the EA and a draft FONSI available to interested members of the public. APHIS would have considered extending the comment period if there had been a reason to believe that additional substantive issues remained, or that the pandemic itself created new issues.

Comment 57

APHIS received the following comment, “The Draft EAs also limit public participation by failing to provide contact information for the submission of written or electronic comments.”

The local offices send out public notices to a list of stakeholders that they have collected over the years and also announced the open comment period in the local media. Those notices have the link for the EA’s and the point of contact. The cover page of the EA has contact information included. In an attempt to be more transparent APHIS has also placed Program EA’s on to the APHIS website for the public to access. When an interested party asks to be informed, APHIS ensures their contact information is added to the list of interested stakeholders. Each local office works to inform interested parties of the availability of an EA for comment. Any omission of an interested party is not intentional.

Comment 58

APHIS received the following comment, “Nowhere on the webpage for the Draft Environmental Assessment Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program is there any information on where to submit comments.”

The local offices send out public notice to a list of stakeholders that they have collected over the years and they also announce the open comment period in the local media. Those notices have the link for the EA’s for comment and the point of contact. In an attempt to be more transparent APHIS has also placed Program EA’s on its website. When an interested party asks to be informed, APHIS ensures their contact information is added to the list of interested stakeholders. Each local office works to inform interested parties of the availability of an EA for comment. Any omission of an interested party is not intentional. (See Previous Response).

Comment 59

APHIS received the following comment, “Staff for USDA-APHIS that have been involved with the environmental review for this program were unable to readily provide information for the submission of public comment.”

The local offices send out public notice to a list of stakeholders that they have collected over the years and they also announce the open comment period in the local media. Those notices have the link for the EA’s for comment and the point of contact. In an attempt to be more transparent, we have put all of our EA’s on to the website for people to access. When an interested party asks to be informed APHIS ensures their contact information is added to the list of interested stakeholders. Each local office works to inform interested parties of the availability of an EA for comment. Any omission of an interested party is not intentional. The cover page of the EA has contact information included.

APHIS is not aware of the direct personnel communication cited by the commenter. APHIS personnel are engaged in a wide variety of activities to protect American agriculture and not every staff member is completely informed about the details of the Grasshopper Program NEPA compliance procedures.

Comment 60

APHIS received the following comment, “there is no information on when the comment period opened or closed on the EAs provided on the webpage.”

The local offices send out public notice to a list of stakeholders that they have collected over the years and they also announce the open comment period in the local media. Those notices have the link for the EA’s for comment and the point of contact. The cover page of the EA has contact information included. In an attempt to be more transparent, we have put all of our EA’s on to the website for people to access. When an interested party asks to be informed, APHIS ensures their contact information is added to the list of interested stakeholders. Each local office works to inform interested parties of the availability of an EA for comment. Any omission of an interested party is not intentional.

Comment 61

APHIS received the following comment, “With the EA dated March 11, 2020, a reasonable person could have easily concluded that a 30 day comment period ended on April 11, 2020 rather than the April 24, 2020 comment deadline.”

See previous comment response.

Comment 62

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS has failed to comport with NEPA’s threshold requirements.”

APHIS did not fail to perform NEPA’s threshold requirements for public outreach and engagement, but rather exceeded them. See previous comments concerning how APHIS informed interested parties of the availability of EAs for public comment, including public meetings, where to send comments, and the closing date for the comment period. See response to previous comment.

Comment 63

APHIS received the following comment, “The Draft EAs further limit public participation by failing to post notices in the Federal Register or on regulations.gov, unlike earlier versions of the environmental review.”

APHIS further involves the public in the scoping process by the publication of notices of availability for EAs and a Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI). When an individual State level EA is written, a notice is published in the legal section of the local newspaper, advertising the availability of the EA during an open comment period. The notices published in local newspapers was conducted in accordance with APHIS’ NEPA Implementation Procedures, 372.7 (b)(3), Notification of the availability of environmental assessments and findings of no significant impact for proposed activities will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER, unless

it is determined that the effects of the action are primarily of regional or local concern. Where the effects of the action are primarily of regional or local concern, notice will normally be provided through publication in a local or area newspaper of general circulation and/or the procedures implementing Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

Public involvement under the CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA distinguishes federal actions with effects of national concern from those with effects primarily of local concern (40 CFR 1506.6). Our EIS process for the GMC program was published in the Federal Register (APHIS-2016-0045), and met all applicable notice and comment requirements for a federal action with effects of national concern. This process provided individuals and national groups the ability to participate in the development of alternatives and provide comment. Our subsequent state-based actions have the potential for effects of local concern, and we publish them according to the provisions that apply to federal actions with effects primarily of local concern. This includes the USDA APHIS NEPA Implementation Procedures, which allows for EAs and FONSI where the effects of an action are primarily of regional or local concern to normally provide publication in a local or area newspaper of general circulation (7 CFR 372.7(b)(3)). These publications provide potentially locally-affected individuals an additional opportunity to provide input into the decision-making process. Some states also provide additional opportunities for local public involvement, such as public meetings.

Comment 64

APHIS received the following comment, "[The Center for Biological Diversity] have been informed that there was notice in local newspapers. This local notice is insufficient as it excludes countless other interested parties."

See previous response.

Comment 65

APHIS received the following comment, "APHIS has failed to meet NEPA's requirements for public involvement in these EAs."

APHIS also notes CEQ guidance for public involvement in the NEPA process of agencies, "A Citizen's 12 Guide to the NEPA" states: "When preparing an EA, the agency has discretion as to the level of public involvement. The CEQ regulations state that the agency shall involve environmental agencies, applicants, and the public, to the extent practicable, in preparing EAs. Sometimes agencies will choose to mirror the scoping and public comment periods that are found in the EIS process. In other situations, agencies make the EA and a draft FONSI available to interested members of the public".

Comment 66

APHIS received the following comment, "the range of alternatives offered by APHIS is inadequate and confusing."

APHIS structured and analyzed the risk of the substantial program alternatives available to the agency. Alternatives, including those excluded from further analysis, were discussed in the final EIS.

Comment 67

APHIS received the following comment, “[The alternatives] are outlined as, “No Suppression Program,” “Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates or Reduced Agent Area Treatments with Adaptive Management Strategy (Preferred Alternative)” and “Experimental Treatments.” While the RAATs are an improvement over conventional approval rates, this alternative should actually be two, one, Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates and two, Reduced Agent Area Treatments with Adaptive Management Strategy. Lumping the two together means that supporting this alternative could mean pesticide application at conventional rates without RAATs. APHIS must break these into different alternatives.”

The EA states “Under Alternative A, the No Action alternative (here called the No Suppression Alternative), APHIS would not conduct a program to suppress grasshopper infestations. Under this alternative, APHIS may opt to provide limited technical assistance, but any suppression program would be implemented by a Federal land management agency, a State agriculture department, a local government, or a private group or individual.”

Under Alternative B, the Preferred Alternative, APHIS would manage a grasshopper treatment program using potentially any of the three approved pesticides and application methods described in the EA Alternative B to suppress outbreaks. The grouping of conventional methods and pesticide rates with the more commonly used RAATs procedures reflects the variety of approaches that the agency may need depending on treatment specific circumstances.

Comment 68

APHIS received the comment, “APHIS does not adequately explain why the “Experimental Treatments” alternative is not preferred, despite the fact that it is described in far greater detail than the other alternatives.”

In the Wyoming EA this section is titled Research Treatment Alternative. The Research Treatment Alternative is for testing new chemicals and treatment strategies for possible future incorporation into the program alternatives and is completed by the Science and Technology branch of APHIS PPQ. These Research Treatments are typically conducted on private property with permission and are smaller in scope to test various treatment strategies. The Research Treatment alternative is not used to suppress grasshoppers as requested by landowners and land managing agencies.

Comment 69

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS does not include an alternative that utilizes Integrated Pest Management.”

APHIS technical guidance is part of each alternative proposed, and is not unique to any one alternative. An example of APHIS technical guidance is the agency’s work on integrated pest

management (IPM) for the grasshopper program. IPM for grasshoppers includes biological control, chemical control, rangeland and population dynamics, and decision support tools.

APHIS has funded the investigation of various integrated pest management (IPM) strategies for the grasshopper program. Congress established the Grasshopper Integrated Pest Management (GIPM) to study the feasibility of using IPM for managing grasshoppers.

The major objectives of the APHIS GIPM program were to: 1) manage grasshopper populations in study areas, 2) compare the effectiveness of an IPM program for rangeland grasshoppers with the effectiveness of a standard chemical control program on a regional scale, 3) determine the effectiveness of early sampling in detecting developing grasshopper infestations, 4) quantify short- and long-term responses of grasshopper populations to treatments, and 5) develop and evaluate new grasshopper suppression techniques that have minimal effects on non-target species (Quinn, 2000). The results for the GIPM program have been provided to managers of public and private rangeland including ways to manage grasshopper populations in the long-term, such as livestock grazing methods and cultural control by farmers.

APHIS issued the GIPM User Handbook describing biological control, chemical control, environmental monitoring and evaluating, modeling and population dynamics, rangeland management, decision support tools, and future directions.

Federal and State land management agencies, State agriculture departments, and private groups or individuals may carry out a variety of preventative IPM strategies that may reduce the potential for grasshopper outbreaks. Some of these activities include grazing management practices, cultural and mechanical methods, and prescribe-burning of rangeland areas. These techniques have been tried with varying success in rangeland management, and some have been associated with the prevention, control, or suppression of harmful grasshopper populations on rangeland.

Regardless of the various IPM strategies taken, the primary focus of the risk analysis contained in the EAs is on the potential impacts from chemical treatments needed during an outbreak of economic importance. While APHIS provides technical expertise regarding grasshopper management actions, the responsibility for implementing most land management practices lies with other Federal (i.e., BIA, BLM, and USDA's FS), State, and private land managers.

The final EA will be updated to reflect APHIS support for IPM strategies in the grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression program.

Comment 70

APHIS received the following comment, "Given that much of APHIS's work on grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression is on lands managed by DOI or USDA or adjacent to federal public lands in Wyoming, it only makes sense that it would conform to their IPM mandates in these EAs."

See previous response. APHIS supports the use of IPM to prevent grasshopper outbreaks on or near Federal lands. These actions are and should continue to be considered by agencies as part

of proper land management. APHIS treatments are a component of the IPM strategies that may be employed by Federal land management agencies. APHIS also adheres to any restrictions proposed by Federal or State land management agencies that may be part of their IPM strategies.

Comment 71

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS must adopt an alternative that harmonizes its mandates in regard to grasshoppers and Mormon crickets with the IPM mandates of the federal lands that it operates on.”

See previous response. A Memorandum of Understanding between land management agencies, i.e., the Department of Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of Land Management, and USDA’s Forest Service, indicates that while APHIS provides technical expertise, namely advice, regarding grasshopper management actions, the responsibility for implementing most land management practices, including IPM measures, lies with other Federal (i.e., BIA, BLM, and USDA’s FS), State, and private land managers (page 32 of the 2019 EIS).

Comment 72

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS must enlist IPM experts to craft an alternative that is land-use and pest-specific, using the minimum level of pest suppression necessary, relying on prevention, avoidance, monitoring, and suppression techniques in order to decrease pest pressure with the least harmful controls possible.”

See previous comment response.

Comment 73

APHIS received the following comments, “APHIS must conduct an adequate analysis of human health effects”, “The EA’s fail to take a hard look at the impacts of the proposed action on human health in Nevada. APHIS simply makes conclusory statements and appears to be attempting to minimize the threats” and “APHIS is proposing to use very dangerous chemicals that can cause a variety of significant impacts to human health.”

The commenter has suggested the Wyoming Grasshopper Program EA should have taken a hard look at human health effects in Nevada resulting from grasshopper suppression activities. The risk analysis in the EA is tiered to the two Environmental Impact Statements (2002 and 2019) and the four Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments as described in sections I.C. About this Process, II.A. Alternatives (where an internet link to the more in-depth risk analysis documents is provided on page 7), in the second paragraph of section IV. Environmental Consequences (a link is also provided there), and many other locations in the EA.

Adherence to label requirements and additional Program measures designed to reduce exposure to workers (e.g., PPE requirements include long-sleeved shirt and long pants and shoes plus socks) and the public (e.g., mitigations to protect water sources, mitigations to limit spray drift, and restricted-entry intervals) result in low health risk to all human population segments.

Comment 74

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS states that “[n]o treatment will occur over congested areas, recreation areas, or schools and if appropriate, a buffer zone will be enacted and enforced. While APHIS may believe this to be the case, it can not claim to know all the areas where people congregate or recreate in Wyoming, and it provides no information on what kinds of buffer zones it would enact and enforce even if it did”.

The grasshopper program is a rangeland program and normally conducted in a mixture of federal lands, state lands and private lands where people are not likely to congregate or recreate. Open communications between applicators and APHIS personnel about treatment occur throughout the treatment to avoid any unforeseen congregations or bystanders. Landowners and land managers whose lands fall within the treatment area are aware of the treatment activities.

Comment 75

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS’s failure conduct any analysis of their impacts to human health is a far cry from the level of analysis demanded by NEPA and basic due care for public health.”

See responses to comment 73. APHIS prepared and published separate Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments for all the pesticides used by the Grasshopper Programs (November 2019). These documents were incorporated by reference into the draft EA.

Comment 76

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS fails to look at the effects of the proposed action on migratory birds.”

Executive Order 13186 directs Federal agencies taking actions with a measurable negative effect on migratory bird populations to develop and implement a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFWS that promotes the conservation of migratory bird populations. On August 2, 2012, a Memorandum of Understanding between APHIS and the USFWS was signed to facilitate the implementation of this Executive Order.

Specifically to the grasshopper and Mormon cricket program, APHIS evaluated potential impacts to birds in the final EIS and associated human health and ecological risk assessments. These documents are incorporated by reference into the final EA.

Comment 77

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS needs to take a hard look at the impacts of the proposed action, including direct and indirect effects.”

The EA incorporated the analysis from the EIS and associated human health and ecological risk assessments into the analysis. The EIS, and in particular, the risk assessments evaluated potential indirect effects to non-target organisms, relying on available toxicity data and estimates of risk.

Comment 78

APHIS received the following comments, “A direct effect of not spraying insecticides is abundant food for migratory birds. Conversely, a direct effect of spraying is reduced abundance of food for insectivorous migratory birds. Another potential direct effect of insecticide spraying is poisoning. An example of an indirect effect is the cumulative effect of continuous low level pesticide exposure from numerous sites over many years. APHIS must take a hard look at all these impacts” and “APHIS says that it will strive to reduce populations below levels encountered in non-outbreak years, but whether APHIS will actually be able to achieve this is unknown, and also fails to include consideration of the fact that migratory birds may rely on the boom and bust cycles of grasshopper outbreaks.”

The routine use of Reduced Area Agent Treatment (RAAT) procedures results in the temporary reduction of insects that birds prey upon within the treated swaths. This indirect effect is mitigated by the unchanged abundance of prey in nearby untreated swaths. The EIS analyzes the toxicological effects of Grasshopper applied insecticides on birds (carbaryl p. 42-43, diflubenzuron p.50-52, malathion p.61-63, and chlorantraniliprole p.75). The EIS also describes the potential effects on birds caused by loss of prey (diflubenzuron p. 52, malathion p. 63, generally p. 88-89).

Comment 79

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS’s handling of impacts to non-target species and species of concern wholly fails to meet NEPA’s requirement that the agency take a hard look at the impacts of its proposed action.”

APHIS prepared and published separate Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments for all the pesticides used by the grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression program (November 2019). The EIS and risk assessments evaluated available effects data and risk to non-target species. These documents are incorporated by reference into the final EA. The risk assessments provided the basis for summary statements in the EA that is tiered to the EIS.

The USFWS defines "Species of concern" is an informal term that refers to those species which may require some conservation actions but which are not threatened with extinction. The conservation actions needed will vary depending on the health of the populations and types and degree of threats. At one extreme, there may only need to be periodic monitoring of populations and threats to the species and its habitat. At the other extreme, a species eventually may require listing as a Federal threatened or endangered species and become the subject of a Federal recovery program. Species of concern receive are not provided legal protection under the Endangered Species Act, and the use of the term does not necessarily mean that the species will eventually be proposed for listing as a threatened or endangered species. Based on USFWS funding and staffing levels discussions with APHIS about species of concern may occur during broader ESA consultations and result in specific protections measures observed by the Grasshopper Program.

Comment 80

APHIS received the following comment, “The EA cannot be finalized until APHIS actually takes a hard look at the impacts on non-target and species of concern.”

APHIS prepared and published separate Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments for all the pesticides used by the grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression program (November 2019). The EIS and risk assessments evaluated available effects data and risk to non-target species. These documents are incorporated by reference into the final EA. The risk assessments provided the basis for summary statements in the EA that is tiered to the EIS.

Under USFWS Section 7 Act there is no requirement to consult on sensitive species. See USFWS letter of concurrence in Appendix 2.

Comment 81

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS must consider the impacts of the proposed action on sensitive or culturally important species.”

APHIS prepared and published separate Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments for all the pesticides used by the Grasshopper Programs (November 2019). See response to previous comment.

Comment 82

APHIS received the following comment, “While pollinators are mentioned, impacts to them are not actually analyzed. Grasshopper spraying season is precisely when bees are flying” and “Insecticide spraying done in the wrong place at the wrong time could have the tragic and unintended consequence of out an entire population of a species, or even driving extinct a rare species, perhaps even one that has never been named. Native bees remain understudied and underappreciated, despite the hugely important impacts they have on ecosystem function.”

APHIS works with BIA, Federal and State land managers and their local biologists, natural resource specialists, and range conservationists to implement measures that reduce risks of Program treatments to native bees. These measures may include reduced insecticide applications associated with RAATS, avoidance measures and use of carbaryl bait, where applicable. APHIS also prepared and published separate Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments for all the pesticides used by the Grasshopper Programs (November 2019). The risk assessments summarized available effects data for non-target species including pollinators.

Comment 83

APHIS received the following comment, “The EAs have not adequately analyzed the cumulative impacts of the program with other governmental or private entity actions.”

APHIS discussed the potential of overlapping chemical treatments in the areas where outbreaks of grasshoppers have occurred or could occur in the future in the cumulative impacts section of the draft EIS, from page 79 to 83. It is unlikely there would be significant overlap between APHIS programs and the grasshopper program and coordinated treatments would mitigate impacts if there is ever overlap; current label and mitigations minimize significant exposure of soil, water, and air to Program insecticides; grasshopper chemical treatments are not expected to persist or bioaccumulate in the environment; and, there is a lack of significant routes of exposure (page 82 to 83 of draft EIS).

We are unaware of any retreatment that would occur in an area where APHIS has conducted a treatment. Generally, the land that APHIS treats is a hybrid of BLM rangeland and requesting landowners leasing land for grazing. Private landowners do not actively manage that land and, therefore, are not expected to be making any other types of chemical treatments. Although APHIS is unaware of any, BLM could potentially do herbicide treatments in areas we treat, but they would not treat for GHMC.

Comment 84

APHIS received the following comment, “The EA does not take into account the background level of exposure to humans and animals from pesticides and other pollutant sources that exist in the environment from other actions or the synergistic effects of the enhanced toxicity that many mixtures exhibit.”

The commenter assumes that the rangeland in Wyoming which is covered by the Draft EA WY-20-01 has been exposed to pesticides and pollutants and have a synergistic effect which enhances toxicity to the environment. The land managers that manage the areas covered in the EAs, document all pesticide applications. The activities, or lack thereof, are discussed in the cumulative impacts section of the final EA.

Comment 85

APHIS received the following comment, “[the EA] does not account for the range of cumulative exposures that would be anticipated. There was no mention of widespread mosquito spraying that takes place in many areas.”

The Wyoming Draft EA does not account for the commenter’s remarks due to the fact that there is no widespread mosquito abatement in the State of Wyoming. APHIS follows program guidelines and treatment strategies listed in the EIS and only treat an area once per year. Treatments rarely occur in the same locations year to year.

Comment 86

APHIS received the following comment, “as cattle are grazing these pesticides will be washed off their bodies or excreted through waste and contaminate surrounding land and water bodies.”

The labels for Dimilin 2L and Carbaryl 2% bait specify that there is no grazing restrictions. Any pesticide residues that may be present on forage in treated areas after treatment is typically metabolized and excreted as metabolites that have lower toxicity than the parent compound. In addition the low application rates employed by APHIS relative to the current maximum labelled rates for each Program insecticide would result in very low residues in livestock waste.

Comment 87

APHIS received the following comment, “A substantial acreage of rangeland is adjacent to lands used for plant agriculture, and the EAs state that they also aim to protect these agricultural lands. These areas generally have a high potential for crossover contamination through drift or runoff of pesticides. Large quantities of pesticides, including insecticides and fungicides that may be synergistic with the insecticides included in the EAs, may be used on these lands. In addition,

herbicide use on crops already significantly impacts insects by destroying habitat and food sources in agricultural lands”.

The grasshopper program is a rangeland program and only rangeland is treated. Treatments on rangeland that is adjacent to agriculture lands also provide some protection from grasshoppers moving into crops. APHIS strictly adheres to pesticide labels which clearly state where their use is allowed or prohibited.

Comment 88

APHIS received the following comment, “None of these issues were disclosed or analyzed in the Draft EIS and add to the already large cumulative exposures from pesticides used in 1) the boll weevil eradication program, 2) fruit fly cooperative eradication program, 3) the gypsy moth cooperative eradication program, and 4) invasive plant control”.

The commenter refers to the Draft EIS. The EIS has been finalized and the ROD has been signed. The final EIS does address the cumulative exposures from other APHIS programs on a programmatic level. The documents in question are the Draft EA's. The first three programs mentioned by the commenter are not relevant to the Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program in Wyoming. APHIS follows program guidelines and treatment strategies listed in the EIS and only treat an area once per year. Treatments rarely occur in the same locations. All grasshopper treatments are coordinated with the land managers and other non-grasshopper programs are discussed if the land managers are concerned about an overlap with other programs.

Comment 89

APHIS received the following comment, “These cumulative exposures cannot only adversely affect human and environmental health but can also negatively impact biological control programs that try to manage insect and weed pests with natural predators”.

APHIS follows program guidelines and treatment strategies listed in the EIS and only treat an area once per year. Treatments rarely occur in the same locations. All grasshopper treatments are coordinated with the land managers and other non-grasshopper programs are discussed if the land managers are concerned about an overlap with other programs. APHIS's preferred treatment chemicals and strategies are the most ecologically sound for non-targets such as biological control.

Comment 90

APHIS received the following comment, “How these pesticides act in conjunction with one another to additively or synergistically increase toxicity is not discussed and no mitigation measures were proposed. Therefore, APHIS must fully analyze the impacts from cumulative exposures and identify ways in which risk can be mitigated or prohibited”.

The Grasshopper Program does not apply treatments more than once per year to any rangeland area. Cumulative exposures from pesticides applied by external parties are not anticipated in most cases due to coordination between APHIS, land managers and other cooperators, on

rangeland that may be receive grasshopper or Mormon cricket treatments. The EA details many procedures APHIS employs to mitigate risk.

Comment 91

APHIS received the following comment, “The project is vague and ill-defined, it improperly precludes the disclosure of environmental effects because the information on the project and its impacts is incomplete”.

The proposed Grasshopper treatment program described in the EA could occur within a specific area, using a limited number of insecticides and application methods. The environmental consequences of suppressing or not suppressing grasshopper infestations are analyzed in the EA and other programmatic risk analysis documents.

Comment 92

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS’s explanation of a “level of economic infestation,” which is the trigger for insecticide spraying, does not give the public any sense whatsoever of when that threshold is met. The definition is too vague and ill-defined to meet NEPA’s purposes and mandates. The agency could spray with minimal infestation levels if it saw fit whenever it decided to do so. There must be a more concrete definition that identifies specific thresholds that must be met for the agency to determine an economic level of infestation has been met”.

APHIS utilizes and provides links to extensive resources for determining when a grasshopper outbreak is exceeding IPM thresholds including, “a level of economic infestation”. The Purpose and Needs section of the EA and supporting documents adequately define the multiple factors that must be evaluated before APHIS decides a treatment is necessary.

The “economic infestation level” is a measurement of the economic losses caused by a particular population level of grasshoppers to the infested rangeland. This value is determined on a case-by-case basis with knowledge of many factors including, but not limited to, the following: economic use of available forage or crops; grasshopper species, age, and density present; rangeland productivity and composition; accessibility and cost of alternative forage; and weather patterns. In decision-making, the level of economic infestation is balanced against the cost of treating to determine an “economic threshold” below which there would not be an overall benefit for the treatment. Short-term economic benefits accrue during the years of treatments, but additional long-term benefit may accrue and be considered in deciding the total value gained by treatment. Additional losses to rangeland habitat and cultural and personal values (e.g., aesthetics and cultural resources), although a part of decision-making, are not part of the economic values in determining the necessity of treatment.

Comment 93

APHIS received the following comment, “The EA’s description of the preferred alternative that includes “reduced agent area treatments” (“RAATs”) is similarly vague and ill defined”.

RAATs has long been in use, is public knowledge, and one of APHIS’s preferred IPM strategies, supported by decades of research. Skipping swaths are the most common RAATs choice, leaving

50% of the treated area untreated to maximize refugia for non-target arthropods while simultaneously inducing target Orthoptera mortality at desired levels. RAATs are also described in detail in the final EIS that is incorporated by reference in the EA.

Comment 94

APHIS received the following comment, “It is unclear whether RAATs will even be used and how they will be used in the site specific area”.

APHIS’ preferred method of treatment is to use RAATs as a means to reduce program costs and potential environmental effects. However the program could decide to apply insecticides at conventional rates and total area coverage if a damaging grasshopper infestation warrants that level of suppression. These instances are rare due to monitoring and other technical assistance provided by APHIS. An explanation of the uncertainties involved with predicting grasshopper populations before they emerge is provided in section I.C. About this Process.

Comment 95

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS could use the pesticide at 95% of the labelled rate and still call the application a RAAT.”

RAAT’s is defined as Reduced Agent and/or Area Treatments. The current pesticide labels for use in the Program do not allow applications at 95% of the labeled rate to be called RAATs. This information was also summarized in the final EIS. EPA has approved the RAAT verbiage for each pesticide label. The labels clearly state which rates are allowed to meet a RAAT rate. In the case of Dimilin 2L label, which clearly states the application rates for RAAT’s is 0.75 - 1 ounce per acre. “Use on rangeland only, in a RAAT’s application on early instars. A RAAT’s application is an IPM strategy that takes advantage of grasshopper movement and conservation biological control to allow Dimilin 2L to be applied on rangeland on a reduced treated area and at reduced rates, while sustaining acceptable control.”

The applicator can only use the RAAT’s rate of .75 or 1 ounce per acre. The label rate, if not using RAAT’s is 2 ounces/acre. The RAAT’s rate would be 50% of the label rate not 95% of labeled rate.

In the case of using Carbaryl 5% bait the label rate is 20-40 lbs. per acre. APHIS uses the RAAT’s rate of 10lbs/acre. In the case of Carbaryl 2% bait, the label clearly states for ground applications 25 pounds/acre. It clearly states for U.S. Federal Government and State affiliated Grasshopper/Mormon Cricket Suppression Programs using aerial applications the rate of application is 10 pounds/acre. So clearly the RAAT’s applications are 50% or less than the labeled rates.

In the case of a full coverage treatment, the total acreage is treated. In the case of reduced area portion of RAAT’s the treatment area would be 50% less than a full coverage treatment. The reduced area is achieved through alternating the treated and untreated swath widths. The RAAT’s application rates are described in detail in the Draft EA’s and depending on the pesticide used in a treatment, the label will also specify or clarify what the RAAT’s rate. The reduced area is achieved by skipping a treated swath. For example, if the swath width of the

treatment equipment is 40 feet, then the treated swath would be 40 feet. Then the adjacent swath would be skipped or untreated. The next treated swath would then be applied. So across the treatment block would be treated and untreated swaths. Thus the reduced area of actual treated ground, instead of a conventional broadcast treatment.

The RAAT procedures used by the program are flexible to allow for a reduction of pesticide use. Typically the RAAT procedures will result in half the amount of pesticide being applied to a treatment block than conventional rates and total coverage. Program managers may reduce the rate at which the pesticide is sprayed from the aircraft or increase the distance between swaths that are sprayed based on factors specific to grasshopper populations being suppressed. It should be noted that APHIS average RAAT rates are lower than the labeled RAAT rates further reducing pesticide loading into the environment.

Comment 96

APHIS received the following comment, “The agency must give the public a more precise definition of when the threshold for spraying has been met (i.e. number of grasshoppers or crickets/acre and a full description of the economic interests at stake).”

APHIS utilizes and provides links to extensive resources for determining when a grasshopper outbreak is exceeding economic thresholds including, “a level of economic infestation”. The Purpose and Needs section of the EA and supporting documents adequately define the multiple factors that must be evaluated before APHIS decides a treatment is necessary. Establishing a treatment threshold based on the number of grasshoppers ignores a variety of factors that must be considered by program managers before treatments. Some examples include how voracious the individual species are that compose a grasshopper infestation and the hardness of rangeland vegetation within a proposed treatment block. These factors are also discussed in the recently published final EIS and are incorporated by reference in the final EA.

Comment 97

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS must also convey what metrics will be used to determine the area that will be sprayed in any given outbreak”.

The size and exact configuration of a treatment block cannot be forecast prior to the emergence of the grasshoppers, requests from land managers and other cooperators, and other environmental considerations such as buffers from water and sensitive species. The program procedures and mitigation measures are adequately described in the EA and supporting documents.

APHIS is unable to predict exactly what areas will be treated before conducting surveys and completing the EA. For ground applications, the terrain is key to be able to treat safely. If the terrain is too rough to safely drive a UTV, then the area is not treated even though other factors warrant a treatment. There are many variables taken into account before an area is treated. Another factor that must be considered is the movement of populations. If for any number of reasons, a treatment can be delayed there is a risk that, depending on species, the boundaries will have to be readjusted to account for the movement of populations.

*For example, it is documented that *Melanoplus sanguinipes*, the Migratory Grasshopper can swarm and fly up to 5-10 miles normally. The longest migrations recorded in 1938 were made by swarms that traveled from northeastern South Dakota to the southwestern corner of Saskatchewan, a distance of 575 miles (Pfadt, 1994). This is why it is critical to have a rapid response to outbreaks. Population dynamics of grasshoppers and Mormon crickets are fluid and responses have to be adaptable to the most current assessments to ensure successful suppression treatments while minimizing environmental impacts.*

Comment 98

APHIS received the following comments, “The agency must accurately and comprehensively disclose and analyze the range of rare, sensitive, threatened, and endangered species, ecological areas, communities, Native American gathering grounds and sensitive receptors that could potentially be significantly affected by the proposed project” and “Without this baseline data the EA cannot disclose the environmental effects of the project”.

APHIS works in cooperation with Federal and State land managing agencies to protect sensitive resources managed on their lands. In Wyoming, Native American sacred places or special sites are only made available to APHIS when necessary. These places are not published or disclosed to the public as per conversations with BIA. They are addressed in general terms when published in the EA. Specific details are addressed during meetings with BIA. Sensitive or special BLM sites are not published or disclosed to the public as per conversations with BLM. These sites are also in general terms when published in the EA. Specific details are addressed during meetings with BLM. T&E species are analyzed during the USFWS Section 7 consultations. APHIS adheres to protective measures which have been agreed upon with USFWS and addressed in the letters of concurrence. See USFWS concurrence letter in Appendix 2.

PHIS adequately summarized available data for current baseline conditions in the draft EA. This includes cultural resources as well as the potential for any overlap of federally listed species with the proposed areas of treatment.

Comment 99

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS’s description of the environmental effects of the pesticides at issue failed to properly capture many of their environmental effects”.

APHIS prepared and published separate Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments for all the pesticides used by the Grasshopper Programs (November 2019). These documents and the associated final EIS are incorporated by reference.

Comment 100

APHIS received the following comment, “Long-term exposure to carbaryl is associated with decreased egg production and fertility in birds”.

APHIS would make a single application per year to a treatment area, and could apply insecticide at an APHIS rate conventionally used for grasshopper suppression treatments, or more typically as reduced agent area treatments (RAATs). Carbaryl has a reported half-life on vegetation of three to ten days, therefore, long-term exposure to birds is not anticipated.

The study cited by the commenter noted. Carbaryl is practically nontoxic to birds on both an acute oral exposure (LD50 >2,000 mg/kg) and subacute dietary exposure basis (LC50 >5,000 mg/kg of diet). In addition, no chronic effects were observed at a dietary exposure of 300 mg/kg of diet.

Comment 101

APHIS received the following comment, “Carbaryl is considered moderately toxic to mammals with decreased pup survival being the most sensitive effect”.

APHIS would make a single application per year to a treatment area, and could apply insecticide at an APHIS rate conventionally used for grasshopper suppression treatments, or more typically as reduced agent area treatments (RAATs). Carbaryl has a reported half-life on vegetation of three to ten days, therefore the chronic exposure to mammals that resulted in decreased pup survival is not anticipated.

Comment 102

APHIS received the following comment, “EPA has designated carbaryl as “highly toxic” to bees on a short-term exposure basis and ranged from moderately to highly toxic to other insects, mites and spiders”.

Although the Grasshopper Program has used the liquid formulation of carbaryl in the past, nearly all carbaryl applications this year and for the foreseeable future are likely to be a bait. The potential exposures of bees and other pollinators to carbaryl bait are minimal. The risks of carbaryl to bees and other non-target organisms are summarized in the human health and ecological risk assessment that was prepared to support the final EIS. This analysis is incorporated by reference into the final EA.

Comment 103

APHIS received the following comment, “Carbaryl is considered “highly toxic” to certain species of fish when exposed to short-term bursts and can reduce the number of eggs spawned when fish are exposed to lower levels over a longer period of time”.

The EA provided links to APHIS’ Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Carbaryl Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications are published. Comparison of the distribution of acute, sublethal and chronic effects data for fish to the residues estimated using ground and aerial ultra-low volume spray and bait applications show that the range of residues do not overlap with acute toxicity values, suggesting there is no acute risk to fish species. APHIS determined there is some overlap with chronic and sublethal effect values and estimated residues. However, carbaryl half-lives in water are typically short and with the proposed one time application chronic exposure and risk to fish is not anticipated. Effects from consumption of contaminated prey are also not expected to be a significant pathway of exposure, based on the low residues and low bioconcentration factor values reported for carbaryl.

APHIS program guidelines describe buffers to bodies of water, streams and rivers are addressed in Appendix 1 of Draft EA WY-20-01 and the USFWS Section 7 consultations and USFWS letters of concurrence (Appendix 2). All reduce the exposure to fish species.

Comment 104

APHIS received the following comments, “Carbaryl has been designated “very highly toxic” to aquatic invertebrates on an acute exposure basis by the EPA and mesocosm studies that analyze how the pesticide affects aquatic community structure have found significant negative effects at low levels”.

The EA provided links to APHIS’ Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Carbaryl Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications are published. The risk assessment summarizes the available laboratory and field effects data for aquatic invertebrates and carbaryl. The risk assessment also summarized the potential exposure and risk to aquatic invertebrates. The EIS and carbaryl risk assessment are incorporated by reference into the EAs.

Comment 105

APHIS received the following comment, “The EPA identified potential interactions between carbaryl and the androgen pathway in fish, indicating that carbaryl is an endocrine disruptor in male aquatic vertebrates”.

Carbaryl half-lives in water are typically short and with the proposed one time application chronic exposure and endocrine disruption risk to fish is not anticipated. Effects from consumption of contaminated prey are also not expected to be a significant pathway of exposure, based on the low residues and low bioconcentration factor values reported for carbaryl. Chronic risk is also a conservative estimate because chronic toxicity data is based on long-term exposures that what would not be expected to occur from a single application, based on the environmental fate of carbaryl in aquatic environments. The final EIS and human health and ecological risk assessment for carbaryl provides additional information regarding the effects of carbaryl to fish. APHIS program guidelines describe buffers to bodies of water, streams and rivers are addressed in Appendix 1 of Draft EA WY-20-01 and the USFWS Section 7 consultations and USFWS letters of concurrence (Appendix 2). All reduce the exposure to fish species.

Comment 106

APHIS received the following comment, “On March 12, 2020, the EPA released a draft biological opinion finding that carbaryl is likely to adversely affect 1542 out of 1745, or 86% percent of all listed species in the U.S. and 713 out of 776 designated critical species’ habitats across the U.S.”.

The Endangered Species Act section 7 pesticide consultation process between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (the Services, collectively) and the EPA specifically concerns FIFRA pesticide registration and reregistration in the United States, including all registered uses of a pesticide. The state-level Biological Assessments for APHIS

invasive species programs are separate from any consultations conducted in association with pesticide registration and reregistration process.

The Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (Farm Bill) created a partnership between USDA, EPA, the Services, and the Council on Environmental Quality to improve the consultation process for pesticide registration and reregistration. USDA is committed to working to ensure consultations are conducted in a timely, transparent manner and based on the best available science. The Revised Method for National Level Listed Species Biological Evaluations of Conventional Pesticides provides a directionally improved path to ensuring that pesticides can continue to be used safely for agricultural production with minimal impacts to threatened and endangered species.

APHIS provided information about use of carbaryl to EPA for the FIFRA consultation for carbaryl. The Grasshopper Program use of carbaryl has in the past comprised substantially less than 1% of the percent crop treated (PCT) for rangeland use of carbaryl. This is the case for the reasonably foreseeable future. For rangeland, in the EPA BE, the Grasshopper Program's very low usage was rounded up to <1% PCT, which gives an overestimate of rangeland acres treated and thus endangered species risk. APHIS use of carbaryl is even smaller compared to all uses of carbaryl nationwide. Further, the Grasshopper Program consults directly with the Services to ensure program activities do not adversely affect protected species or their critical habitat.

Comment 107

APHIS received the following comment, "EPA found many Wyoming species were likely to be adversely affected. This is a chemical far too toxic for APHIS to consider using across wide swaths of land in Wyoming."

Carbaryl is presently approved by the EPA and registered in Wyoming. It should be noted that the current labeled uses for carbaryl grasshopper treatments are at much higher rates and can be applied with more frequency than what APHIS is proposing for use in Wyoming. In addition carbaryl use by the Program is minor compared to the preferred alternative diflubenzuron. APHIS has evaluated the risk of carbaryl use in the Program and in general the conclusions are consistent with other risk assessments demonstrating low risk when adhering to label requirements. Additional mitigation measures used by APHIS further reduces the risk to human health and the environment.

APHIS submitted a programmatic biological assessment to the USFWS in 2015. APHIS is currently working with the USFWS to update and complete the biological assessment and receive concurrence. The intent of the programmatic biological assessment is to provide consistent mitigation measures for listed species that may co-occur with Program treatments. Consultation with the USFWS is still being completed at the local level prior to any treatments. No APHIS treatments are made in States without prior concurrence from the USFWS regarding federally-listed species. This information is also summarized in the final EIS.

APHIS consulted with the USFWS on federally-listed species that may occur within the county or areas where grasshopper and Mormon cricket treatments may be required. APHIS works closely with the USFWS to determine the application of protection measures and where those

measures should be applied prior to any treatments. APHIS also evaluated the potential direct and indirect impacts to non-target species which is summarized in the final human health and ecological risk assessments for each insecticide.

Comment 108

APHIS received the following comment, “The European Union banned carbaryl in 2007 due to, among other things, “...a high long-term risk for insectivorous birds and a high acute risk to herbivorous mammals, a high acute and long-term risk to aquatic organisms and a high risk for beneficial arthropods”.

APHIS summarizes the risk of carbaryl to non-target organisms in final human health and ecological risk assessment that was part of the recently published final EIS. Available effects data and the exposures that would be expected from proposed use in the grasshopper and Mormon cricket program are reduced based on mitigation measures (ex. RAATS, aquatic buffers) application methods and formulation types which further reduce risk.

Comment 109

APHIS received the following comments, “Carbaryl is classified as “likely to be carcinogenic to humans” based on treatment-related hemangiosarcoma development in mice”.

The levels of carbaryl that caused the above-mentioned effects to mice are above exposure concentrations that would be expected to occur for the public as well as workers and applicators in the APHIS grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression program. The risk to human health from carbaryl use, including the proposed APHIS use, have been evaluated by APHIS and are discussed in the final human health and ecological risk assessment for carbaryl. It should be noted that other agencies have evaluated the risk to carbaryl at much higher application rates than those used in the grasshopper and Mormon cricket program.

Comment 110

APHIS received the following comments, “EPA has determined that humans can be exposed to more than 4 times the amount of carbaryl known to cause neurotoxicity from some legal uses of the pesticide. EPA also found that the current labelled uses of carbaryl may result in neurotoxic harms to mixers, loaders and applicators” and “use of this dangerous old pesticide must be discontinued and should not be considered for use in grasshopper and Mormon cricket eradication in Wyoming”.

The EA provided links to APHIS’ Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Carbaryl Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications are published. APHIS evaluated the potential human health risks from the proposed use of carbaryl ULV sprays and carbaryl bait applications and determined that the risks to human health are low. The lack of risk to human health is based on the low probability of human exposure and the favorable environmental fate and effects data.

APHIS treatments are conducted in rural rangeland areas where agriculture is a primary economic factor. Rural rangeland areas consist of widely scattered, single dwellings in ranching communities with low population density. Risk to the general public from carbaryl ground or

aerial applications is also expected to be minimal due to the low-population areas proposed for treatment, adherence to label requirements, and additional Program measures designed to reduce exposure to the public. APHIS is not obligated to analyze the risk posed by all legal uses of carbaryl, but rather the Grasshopper Program formulations and application rates.

The proposed use of carbaryl as a ULV spray, or a bait, and adherence to label requirements substantially reduces the potential for exposure to humans. APHIS does not expect adverse health risks to workers because of the low potential for exposure to carbaryl when applied according to label directions and use of personal protective equipment. APHIS quantified the potential risks associated with accidental exposure of carbaryl for workers during mixing, loading, and application. The quantitative risk evaluation results indicate no concerns for adverse health risk for Program workers from carbaryl applications in accordance with program standard operating procedures for safety.

As stated in the EA, the application of an insecticide within all or part of the outbreak area is the response available to APHIS to rapidly suppress or reduce, but not eradicate, grasshopper populations and effectively protect rangeland. At no time does APHIS ever strive to eradicate grasshoppers.

Comment 111

APHIS received the following comment, “EPA has found that all use scenarios of chlorantraniliprole can result in direct or indirect effects to all listed species”.

The EPA risk assessment is a screening level ecological risk assessment that evaluated risk under a variety of application rates with most being well above use rates proposed in the APHIS Grasshopper Program. APHIS prepared a final human health and ecological risk assessment that assesses the risk of APHIS Program treatments. The state-level Biological Assessments for APHIS invasive species programs are separate from any consultations conducted in association with pesticide registration and reregistration process.

As previously stated, the Grasshopper Program will not be using chlorantraniliprole in Wyoming during 2020. Therefore any chlorantraniliprole exposure scenarios which the commenter is concerned about are not relevant at this time.

Comment 112

APHIS received the following comment, “EPA has found that all use scenarios of chlorantraniliprole can result in direct or indirect effects to all listed species. Chlorantraniliprole is considered “very highly toxic” to freshwater invertebrates and EPA found that many uses of it can result in acute and chronic harms to aquatic invertebrates. This was the case for both aerial and ground spray applications. Sublethal doses can impair locomotion in bees more than seven days post exposure. A 2013 European Food Safety Authority analysis of chlorantraniliprole found that the use of the pesticide poses a high risk to soil macro-organisms, aquatic invertebrates and sediment dwelling organisms.” and “APHIS must consider chlorantraniliprole substantial environmental impacts, including population level effects”.

The EA provided links to APHIS' Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Chlorantraniliprole Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications is published. The document summarizes available effects data and characterizes risk to human health and non-target organisms based on the use pattern proposed by the Program. Results from the risk assessment suggest low risk of chlorantraniliprole to non-target aquatic organisms and most terrestrial invertebrates.

As previously stated, the Grasshopper Program will not be using chlorantraniliprole in Wyoming during 2020. Therefore any chlorantraniliprole exposure scenarios which the commenter is concerned about are not relevant at this time.

Comment 113

APHIS received the following comments, “Diflubenzuron is considered “highly” to “very highly toxic” to aquatic invertebrates. In a 2018 analysis, EPA found that the registered, labeled uses of diflubenzuron may result in freshwater invertebrate exposure at up to 550 times the level known to cause harm. Diflubenzuron exposure to honeybees and other pollinators at the larval stage was estimated to be more than 500 times the level known to cause harm. Although arthropods are not a part of EPA’s ecological risk assessment, the European Food Safety Authority found that “Juvenile non-target arthropods were very sensitive to diflubenzuron. Very large in-field no-spray buffer zones would be needed to protect non-target arthropods. There is no reason for APHIS to exclude consideration of impacts to arthropods in its analysis of this pesticide.” and “APHIS also acknowledges the pollinator impacts but attempts to diminish them without providing evidence on how or why they are not significant”.

The EA provided links to APHIS' Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Diflubenzuron Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications are published. The EPA risk assessment evaluated risk to aquatic organisms and pollinators based on application rates, methods of application and use patterns that would result in greater exposure and risk to aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. APHIS evaluated risks to these groups of non-target organisms based on methods of application consistent with Program applications and other mitigation measures for diflubenzuron. The exposure potential is reduced compared to label uses due to many factors. This includes but is not limited to reduced application rates, one application per season, use of RAATs and buffers from aquatic habitats. APHIS relied on laboratory and field collected data regarding diflubenzuron effects to aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates to show that risk is low for most non-target invertebrates.

Characterization of risk to aquatic species from Program-specific diflubenzuron applications was made by comparing the residue values in the exposure analysis from ground and aerial applications to the distribution of available acute and chronic fish toxicity data. Residue values were below the distribution of acute and chronic response data, suggesting that direct risk to aquatic species is not expected from diflubenzuron applications. More specifically, the distribution of aquatic invertebrate toxicity data is above the residues estimated from spray drift models for Grasshopper Program ground and aerial applications of diflubenzuron.

The Endangered Species Act section 7 pesticide consultation process between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service (the Services, collectively) and the EPA specifically concerns FIFRA pesticide registration and reregistration in the United States, including all registered uses of a pesticide. The Grasshopper Program treatments employ methods and diflubenzuron application rates that result in substantially lower freshwater invertebrate exposures than the rate cited by the EPA and the commenter.

The EPA Preliminary Risk Assessment to Support Re-registration Review examines all legal uses of diflubenzuron, of which the Grasshopper Program constitutes a small fraction. APHIS is not obligated to examine all legal uses of the pesticide, but rather those contemplated by the program. The EA provided links to APHIS' Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Diflubenzuron Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications are published. Characterization of risk to aquatic species from diflubenzuron applications was made by comparing the residue values in the exposure analysis from ground and aerial applications to the distribution of available acute and chronic fish toxicity data. Residue values were below the distribution of acute and chronic response data, suggesting that direct risk to aquatic species is not expected from diflubenzuron applications. More specifically, the distribution of aquatic invertebrate toxicity data is above the residues estimated from spray drift models for Grasshopper Program ground and aerial applications of diflubenzuron.

The EA provided links to APHIS' Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Diflubenzuron Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications are published. The APHIS analysis noted Diflubenzuron has low toxicity and risk to some non-target terrestrial invertebrates, including pollinators such as honey bees.

Comment 114

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS also acknowledges the pollinator impacts but attempts to diminish them without providing evidence on how or why they are not significant. It does not mention that Wyoming is home to an amazing abundance of native bees and pollinators, and improperly uses honeybees as a surrogate for pollinators, when native pollinators are far more sensitive due to the lack of hive buffering effects. This is not a pesticide that should be applied to broad swaths of land. It is highly toxic to far too many species of importance in Wyoming.”

Grasshopper IPM field studies have shown diflubenzuron to have a minimal impact on ants, spiders, predatory beetles, and scavenger beetles. There was no significant reduction in populations of these species from 7 to 76 days after treatment. Although ant populations exhibited declines of up to 50%, these reductions were temporary, and population recovery was described as immediate (Catangui et al., 1996). No significant reductions in flying non-target arthropods, including honey bees, were reported. Within one year of diflubenzuron applications in a rangeland environment, no significant reductions of bee predators, parasites, or pollinators were observed for any level of diflubenzuron treatment (Catangui et al., 1996).

Comment 115

APHIS received the following comment, “Diflubenzuron is commonly fed to ranging cattle as a way to control flies. This pesticide is present in the excreted manure and urine of cattle where they range. Therefore, any decision on whether to use diflubenzuron in these areas must consider that listed or non-listed species can be exposed to other sources of the pesticide. It is that cumulative exposure that must be considered in this decision – and is compelled by the ESA and NEPA’s mandate that an action agency take into account the environmental baseline”.

APHIS recognizes that some diflubenzuron residues may be present in urine and feces from cattle that feed on forage immediately after diflubenzuron treatment; however this pathway of exposure is expected to be minor based on the proposed use pattern of diflubenzuron in the Program. Low application rates applied only once per season will reduce the amount of diflubenzuron present in manure and urine. In addition some metabolism of diflubenzuron occurs in animals, and there will be further environmental degradation once excreted.

Comment 116

APHIS received the following comment, “Malathion is considered “very highly toxic” to all aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates, as well as aquatic vertebrates such as fish. In addition indirect effects to taxa should be considered.”

The EA provided links to APHIS’ Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Malathion Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications are published. The risk assessment summarizes available laboratory and field collected aquatic and terrestrial effects data for malathion and then estimated risk based on conservative estimates of exposure. APHIS recognizes in the risk assessment that malathion can be toxic to sensitive non-target species however the effects have to be considered in relation to the potential for exposure to estimate risk, as well as historical use in the Program which is negligible.

Comment 117

APHIS received the following comment, “When exposed to malathion for longer periods of time, female birds displayed regressed ovaries, reduced number of hatched eggs and enlarged gizzards”.

The EA provided links to APHIS’ Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Malathion Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications are published.

Several reproductive and developmental studies have been conducted with birds. The lowest median lethal dose to chicken embryos (eggs) was 3.99 mg per egg for 4-day embryos (Greenberg and LaHam, 1969). The median lethal concentration for field applications of malathion to mallard duck eggs was found to be 4.7 lbs. a.i./acre (Hoffman and Eastin, 1981). This is approximately five times greater than the maximum rate for rangeland grasshopper (0.928 lbs. a.i./acre), 7.6 times greater than the maximum APHIS application rate (0.619 lbs. a.i./acre), and nearly 19 times greater than the average RAATs rate applied by APHIS.

No effect on reproductive capacity of chickens was found at dietary concentrations as high as 500 ppm in feed (Lillie, 1973). Based on the results from chronic reproduction studies using the bobwhite quail and mallard duck, the NOEC values were 110 and 1,200 ppm, respectively. The most sensitive endpoint in the quail study was regressed ovaries and reduced egg hatch at the next highest test concentration (350 ppm). The effect endpoint in the mallard study was growth and egg viability at the 2,400 ppm level Lowest Observed Effect Concentration (LOEC).

APHIS expects that direct avian chronic effects would be minimal for most species. The preferred use of RAATs during application reduces these risks by reducing residues on treated food items and reducing the probability that they will only feed on contaminated food items. In addition, malathion degrades quickly in the environment and residues on food items are not expected to persist.

Comment 118

APHIS received the following comments, “Malathion degrades into malaoxon, which has been shown to be at least 22 times more toxic than the parent molecule”.

Similar to other organophosphate pesticides, malathion inhibits the enzyme AChE in the central and/or peripheral nervous system. Malathion is metabolized to malaoxon, which is the active AChE inhibiting metabolite. AChE inhibition is through phosphorylation of the serine residue at the active site of the enzyme, and leads to accumulation of acetylcholine and ultimately neurotoxicity. Malaoxon goes through detoxification with subsequent metabolism. Absorption and distribution of malathion and malaoxon are rapid with extensive metabolism and no accumulation in tissues.

Carboxylesterase detoxifies malathion and malaoxon to polar and water-soluble compounds for excretion. A rat metabolism study showed 80 to 90% of malathion excretion in the urine in the first 24 hours of exposure. Mammals are less sensitive to the effects of malathion than insects due to greater carboxylesterase activity resulting in less accumulation of malaoxon.

Available aquatic toxicity data show that malaoxon is approximately 1.5 to 6 times more toxic to fish and 1.8 to 93 times more toxic to amphibians. FMC, in their 2019 public response to the Grasshopper Program EIS, reported that malaoxon is 0.80 to 2.58 times more toxic to fish than malathion based on data that were determined to meet their criteria for acceptability (FMC, 2014). The conversion of malathion to malaoxon in aquatic environments can range from approximately 1.8 to 10% (CDPR, 1993; Bavcon et al., 2005; USEPA, 2012).

While APHIS assumed that malaoxon is most likely more toxic to aquatic invertebrates than the parent; however, due to its low percentage of occurrence in aquatic systems and its rapid breakdown, malaoxon is not anticipated to pose a greater aquatic risk when compared to malathion.

Comment 119

APHIS received the following comment, “A 2017 EPA biological evaluation also found that the use of malathion is likely to adversely affect 1778 out of 1835 listed species in the U.S. and 784

out of 794 critical species' habitats across the U.S. These findings were based on methodology recommended by the National Academy of Sciences. EPA found many Wyoming species were likely to be adversely affected, such as the yellow billed cuckoo. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service later drafted a biological opinion finding that malathion is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of 1284 threatened and endangered species. This is an astounding number of jeopardy calls for a single pesticide, and makes it even more astounding that APHIS would continue to consider using it for grasshopper and cricket control."

The Endangered Species Act section 7 pesticide consultation process between EPA and the Services specifically concerns FIFRA pesticide registration and reregistration in the United States, including all registered uses of the pesticide. The Grasshopper Program use of malathion comprised nearly none of the percent crop treated for rangeland in the past, and this remains APHIS' expectation for the foreseeable future. Further, the Grasshopper Program consults directly with the Services to ensure program activities do not adversely affect protected species or their critical habitat.

Comment 120

APHIS received the following comment, "California's Proposition 65 list of chemicals known to cause cancer and has been designated as having suggestive evidence of carcinogenicity by the EPA for instances of liver, oral palate mucosa and nasal respiratory epithelium tumor formation in mice."

The EA provided links to APHIS' Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and Final Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessment for Malathion Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Applications are published.

Comment 121

APHIS received a comment that, "EPA has determined that humans can be exposed to more than 6 times the amount of malathion known to cause neurotoxicity from some legal uses of the pesticide. EPA also found that the current labelled uses of malathion may result in neurotoxic harms to those exposed to pesticide drift from aerial applications at labelled rates". The commenter also pointed out that occupational applicators, mixers and loaders can be exposed to malathion through inhalation and dermal absorption at levels above what the EPA considers safe – even when using required personal protective equipment."

APHIS evaluated the risk to human health, including neurotoxicity data in its finale human health and ecological risk assessment. The risk assessment was prepared based on APHIS use patterns and Program mitigations that reduce risk to human health. APHIS is not obligated to ensure the EA and supporting documents analyze the risk posed by all legal uses of malathion, but rather the Grasshopper Program methods and application rates.

Malathion exposure to the general public is not expected from the program use based on label requirements and program standard operating procedures that prevent potential exposure. Only protected handlers may be in the area during application, and entry of the general public into the treated area is not allowed during the re-entry interval period. APHIS treatments are conducted on rural rangelands, where agriculture is a primary economic factor and widely

scattered dwellings in low population density ranching communities are found. The program requires pilots avoiding flights over congested areas, water bodies, and other sensitive areas. Aerial applications are not allowed while school buses are operating in the treatment area; within 500 feet of schools or recreational facilities; when wind velocity exceeds 10 miles per hour (mph) (unless a lower wind speed is required under State law); when air turbulence could seriously affect the normal spray pattern; and/or temperature inversions could lead to off-site movement of spray. The Grasshopper Program also notifies residents within treatment areas, or their designated representatives, prior to application to reduce the potential for incidental exposure.

APHIS acknowledges workers in the program are the most likely human population segment to be exposed to malathion during grasshopper treatments. Occupational exposure to malathion may occur through inhalation and dermal contact during ground and aerial applications. Direct contact exposure from the application of a malathion ULV spray will be minimal with adherence to label requirements, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), general safety hygiene practices, and restricted entry intervals into treated areas after application. EPA estimates of risk to workers is based on use patterns and rates that result in greater exposure to malathion than would occur in the APHIS program. APHIS evaluated the risk from program specific uses of malathion and demonstrated low risk to applicators. It should also be noted that historical malathion use in the Program is negligible further reducing the potential for any types of human health risk.

Comment 122

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS touts EPA-approval as an indication that the pesticides that the agency proposes to use are safe. However, under our nation’s pesticide laws, EPA-approval is an indication that use of the pesticide won the agency’s cost-benefit analysis, and should not be misconstrued as a finding of safety.”

The EA provided links to APHIS’ Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and human health and ecological risk assessments for pesticides used by the Grasshopper Program are published. APHIS does not assert the FIFRA registration of the pesticides by the EPA demonstrates that the Grasshopper Program uses are safe. Instead the extensive risk analysis published by APHIS considered whether the suppression of grasshopper population will have significant environmental impacts, in accordance with NEPA.

Comment 123

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS does not discuss or account for how pesticides impact overall soil health or the health of any organisms that reside in soil.”

The EA provided links to APHIS’ Grasshopper Program webpage where the 2019 EIS and HHERA for pesticides used by the Grasshopper Program are published. The HHERA contain extensive analysis of pesticide effects on terrestrial vertebrates, many of which reside in soil.

Comment 124

APHIS received the following comment, “Impacts on soil health can impact listed and non-listed plants by impacting nutrient cycling, soil oxygenation and soil water retention, as well as listed and non-listed animals that rely on plants or soil organisms for their survival.”

The Grasshopper Program applies pesticides in accordance with current label restrictions and program operational procedures that are mitigations to minimize significant exposure of soil, water, and air to insecticides; grasshopper chemical treatments are not expected to persist or bioaccumulate in the environment. APHIS evaluated these effects in human health and ecological risk assessments that were prepared along with the final EIS for the grasshopper and Mormon cricket suppression program.

Comment 125

APHIS received the following comment, “Carbaryl was ranked as extremely toxic to earthworms in a lab test rating pesticide toxicity from relatively nontoxic, moderately toxic, very toxic, extremely toxic, and super toxic.”

The study was a comparison of the toxicology of 45 pesticide to determine the LC50. These studies exposed earthworms to varying concentrations of carbaryl to determine toxicological endpoints. Based on the extremely high doses, the impact to the survival of earthworms was not only unsurprising, but the object of the studies. APHIS would like to note this laboratory dosing procedure is not comparable to any exposure levels resulting from the use of carbaryl ultra-low volume sprays by the Grasshopper Program.

Comment 126

APHIS received the following comment, “A single application of carbaryl in a field study caused a 38% reduction in survival of total Lumbricidae, and a 78% reduction in total earthworms for at least 5 weeks.”

APHIS would like to note the “single application” involved applying carbaryl 6 times on a weekly interval to its assigned plots at the highest recommended dose (i.e. Sevin at 9.12 mg/m²), a rate that is greater than 16 times the Grasshopper ultra-low volume liquid rate (0.56 mg/m²). The Grasshopper program only makes one application per year, rather than six weekly treatments. Also, the field study found carbaryl significantly inhibited earthworm feeding activity for at least three weeks without leading to any earthworm death.

In addition, the 78% reduction in earthworm casts noted in the comment resulted from an application of a combination of clothianidin and bifenthrin pesticides.

Comment 127

APHIS received the following comment, “Carbaryl significantly impacted the survival or population abundance of *E. fetida*, *E. andrei*, *Lumbricus terrestris*, and *Lumbricus rubellus*, *Aporrectodea caliginosa*, and *Allolobophora chlorotica*.”

These studies exposed earthworms to varying concentrations of carbaryl to determine toxicological endpoints (NOEC, LC50). Based on the extremely high doses, the impact to the survival of earthworms was not only unsurprising, but the object of the studies. For example in

Lima et al. 2011, ten adult worms with individual fresh weight between 300 and 600 mg, were exposed to different carbaryl concentrations (20, 40, 60, 80, 100 mg/kg). APHIS would like to clarify the Grasshopper Program applies carbaryl ultra-low volume spray at a rate of half a pound active ingredient per acre.

*Comparison of the results of paper contact test with those obtained in soils clearly demonstrates that the contact test has no predictive values for the toxicity of an insecticide in soils, though it is important for the initial screening of the environmental chemicals. The differences between lowest and highest LC50 values of insecticides for *M. posthuma* and *E. fetida* in paper contact method were only 6.9 and 2.5-fold respectively while in soil they were over 38 and 26-fold. These data demonstrated that worms could tolerate higher concentrations in soil than on moist filter paper. This difference in the behavior of the insecticide may probably due to the rate of diffusion/uptake of insecticide from the medium into the body of the earthworm. It is well reported in the literature that insecticides are adsorbed on soil medium through strong binding by organic matter contents in soils (Davis, 1971, Van Gestel and Van Dis, 1988). Hence, the availability of insecticide for diffusion will be less from the soil than the impregnated filter paper. Contact filter paper test can be used as an initial screening technique to assess the relative toxicity of chemicals; however it fails to represent the situation in the soil ecosystem. Artificial soil test is more representative of the natural environment of earthworms and acute toxicity data on several insecticides can be used in the ecological risk assessment on soil ecosystems.*

Comment 128

APHIS received the following comment, “In another study, carbaryl induced an avoidance response in *E. fetida*. Soil structure changes were observed between the control and carbaryl treated sites, with higher treatments of carbaryl causing significantly more lumps in the soil due to earthworm inactivity.”

The commenter cited a study where worms were rinsed in tap water and transferred to the flasks containing 2 ml solution per worm. The flasks were gently tilted every 5 min and the exposure was terminated after 30 min. The worms were removed, rinsed in cold tap water and transferred to Petri dishes (five worms in each) containing soil but no pesticide. The worms were inspected at intervals during 80 days or until all the worms were dead or had recovered. The structure of the soil in the Petri dishes was observed in order to get an idea about the ability to work the soil after pesticide treatment. APHIS would like to note this laboratory dosing procedure is not comparable to any exposure scenario resulting from the use of carbaryl ultra-low volume sprays by the Grasshopper Program.

*Notably, *E. foetida* could tolerate high concentrations of carbaryl without dying, although low concentrations severely affected its ability to work the soil or to disappear from the soil surface. The researchers believe the solutions were equivalent to 64, 32, 16, 8 and 4 mg/kg of pesticide, and found that carbaryl did not kill *E. foetida* in concentrations up to 64 mg/kg, from the 800 mg/l solution.*

The avoidance test is a behavioral test with several advantages (simple, quick and cheap) but one drawback: this is not a measure of toxicity but rather a measure of repellence

(Capowiez and Bérard, 2006), and thus is termed 'measure of habitat modification'. As there is not always a direct relationship between avoidance and toxicity, an improvement of this test was recently proposed by Sanchez-Hernandez (2006).

APHIS would like to clarify the Grasshopper Program applies carbaryl ultra-low volume spray at a rate of half a pound active ingredient per acre. If a cubic foot of rangeland soil weighs 75 pounds, 1 acre (43,560 ft.²) of soil two inches deep would weigh 544,500 pounds, or 246,981 kilograms. The maximum rate used by the Grasshopper Program to apply carbaryl as an ultra-low volume spray is half a pound (226796 mg) active ingredient per acre. Therefore, the maximum concentration of 0.92 mg carbaryl spray per kg of soil could result from program applications. However, this analysis assumes none of the foliar spray settled on vegetation, and all of the carbaryl is instantaneously absorbed into the top two inches of soil. In addition, this maximum concentration was less than the lowest concentration which the researchers determined has significant effects on the reduction of the *P. excavatus* hatching rate (1.51 mg carbaryl per kg of soil).

Comment 129

APHIS received the following comment, "Carbaryl negatively affected the biomass of *E. andrei*, *Perionyx* excavates, total earthworms, and *Lumbricus terrestris* at a tenth of the recommended dose."

The carbaryl concentrations used for each test species was chosen based on the LC50/EC50 previously carried out and reported by Lima et al. (2011). This was also a toxicological endpoint study where the acute toxicity was determined by exposing the worms to a nominal concentration range of 20 to 100 mg/kg of technical grade carbaryl. The application rate was 850 grams per hectare of Sevin L85 which is equal to 1.12 pounds active ingredient carbaryl per acre, compared with Sevin XLR which is 44.1 % applied at half a pound active ingredient per acre by the Grasshopper Program.

This study was primarily designed to validate the production of casts by earthworms as a biomarker for behavioral effects. While the significant effects in earthworm weight observed at low concentrations of carbaryl are concerning, Grasshopper program applications of foliar sprays are unlikely to result in the subsurface soil becoming saturated at the concentrations created in the laboratory.

Comment 130

APHIS received the following comment, "A 60-99% reduction in earthworm biomass and density due to carbaryl treatment lasted 20 weeks. Burial of organic matter was also negatively affected. Casting activity of earthworms was reduced by 90%, and 71% and 81% after 3 and 5 weeks, respectively."

The researchers made two applications of carbaryl at a rate of 8 lbs. a.i./acre, 16 times greater than the maximum spray rate employed by the Grasshopper Program. The Grasshopper Program only makes one application per year. In addition, the foliar spray of ultra-low volume carbaryl over rangeland is unlikely to result in subsurface soil concentrations comparable to the direct turfgrass application made in this study.

Comment 131

APHIS received the following comment, “Carbaryl negatively affected growth in *E. fetida*, and the feeding rate of *Diplocardia* spp. Total cast production of *L. terrestris* was significantly impacted at one-tenth of the recommended field rate.”

*The lowest test concentration that effected *E. fetida* resulted from saturation of the test media with 25 mg/kg of carbaryl. Another field study found a single application of carbaryl significantly inhibited earthworm (*Diplocardia* spp.) feeding activity for at least three weeks without leading to any earthworm death. APHIS would like to note the “single application” involved applying carbaryl 6 times on a weekly interval to its assigned plots at the highest recommended dose (i.e. Sevin at 9.12 mg/m²), a rate that is greater than 16 times the Grasshopper ultra-low volume liquid rate (0.5 lbs. a.i./acre). The Grasshopper program only makes one application per year, rather than six weekly treatments.*

Comment 132

APHIS received the following comment, “Reproduction of *E. fetida*, and *Perionyx excavatus* was negatively affected, with the hatching rate of *P. excavatus* reduced by 87% at sublethal concentrations lower than the recommended field rate. A total loss of burrowing was observed at 4 and 8 mg/kg after 40 minutes and at 1 and 2 mg/kg after 80 minutes.”

*The lowest test concentration that effected *E. fetida* resulted from saturation of the test media with 25 mg/kg of carbaryl. In another study the reduction of the *P. excavatus* hatching rate was observed at a concentration of 1.51 mg carbaryl per kg of soil.*

*APHIS would like to clarify the Grasshopper Program applies carbaryl ultra-low volume spray at a rate of half a pound active ingredient per acre. If a cubic foot of rangeland soil weighs 75 pounds, 1 acre (43,560 ft.²) of soil two inches deep would weigh 544,500 pounds, or 246,981 kilograms. The maximum rate used by the Grasshopper Program to apply carbaryl as an ultra-low volume spray is half a pound (226796 mg) active ingredient per acre. Therefore, the maximum concentration of 0.92 mg carbaryl spray per kg of soil could result from program applications (0.92 mg/kg). However, this analysis assumes none of the foliar spray settled on vegetation, and the carbaryl instantly absorbed into the top two inches of soil, thus mirroring the laboratory conditions. In addition, this maximum concentration was less than the lowest concentration which the researchers determined has significant effects on the reduction of the *P. excavatus* hatching rate (1.51 mg/kg).*

Comment 133

APHIS received the following comment, “Morphological abnormalities and histological changes in *E. andrei* and *M. posthuma* were observed at very low, sublethal doses ranging from 0.24-1.20 mg/kg and 0.5-1.20 mg/kg, respectively.”

*The cited study did not test *E. andrei* but rather *E. fetida* a closely related species. The sublethal doses were derived from anecdotal observations during filter paper tests where concentrations were measured in µg/cm² not mg/kg. APHIS would also like to note the researcher’s skepticism about toxicity tests where the worms are dosed on saturate filter paper. They wrote: Comparison*

of the results of paper contact test with those obtained in soils clearly demonstrates that the contact test has no predictive values for the toxicity of an insecticide in soils, though it is important for the initial screening of the environmental chemicals. The differences between lowest and highest LC50 values of insecticides for M. posthuma and E. fetida in paper contact method were only 6.9 and 2.5-fold respectively while in soil they were over 38 and 26-fold. These data demonstrated that worms could tolerate higher concentrations in soil than on moist filter paper. This difference in the behavior of the insecticide may probably due to the rate of diffusion/uptake of insecticide from the medium into the body of the earthworm. It is well reported in the literature that insecticides are adsorbed on soil medium through strong binding by organic matter contents in soils (Davis, 1971, Van Gestel and Van Dis, 1988). Hence, the availability of insecticide for diffusion will be less from the soil than the impregnated filter paper. Contact filter paper test can be used as an initial screening technique to assess the relative toxicity of chemicals; however it fails to represent the situation in the soil ecosystem. Artificial soil test is more representative of natural environment of earthworms and acute toxicity data on several insecticides can be used in the ecological risk assessment on soil ecosystem.

Comment 134

APHIS received the following comment, “Carbaryl impacted multiple biochemical biomarkers in *E. andrei*, including Acetylcholinesterase (AChE), methoxyresorufin-O-deethylase (MROD), and NADH and NADPH red cytochrome reductase.”

*This study exposed earthworms to carbaryl in artificial soil at concentrations of 12, 25 and 50 mg/kg. The research showed that carbaryl inhibited biotransformation enzyme activities but did not induce oxidative stress. Since carbaryl is a cholinesterases inhibitor, changes detected in acetylcholinesterase activities were not surprising. The acetylcholinesterase activity reduction was not complete and the residual activity was stable whatever the dose or the exposure duration because of the presence in *E. andrei* of a non-inhibited, non-specific cholinesterases.*

APHIS would like to note the lowest tested soil concentration of carbaryl that caused these effects (12 mg/kg) is approximately 12 times greater than the hypothetical concentrations that could result from Grasshopper Program treatments where none of the foliar ultra-low volume spray settles on vegetation, and the chemical is instantly and uniformly mixed into the top two inches of soil.

Comment 135

APHIS received the following comment, “AChE activity was inhibited in *E. fetida* in two studies, one of which resulted in muscular paralysis that directly impacted earthworm burrowing capabilities.”

In the first study, carbaryl stock solution was prepared in acetone and water to yield final concentrations of 1, 2, 4 and 8 parts per million. Five earthworms were individually exposed for 5, 10, 20, 40 and 80 minute intervals in a 50ml beaker containing 2.0ml of various concentrations of test solution. The researchers asserted the test concentrations used in the study were close to expected residues in the soil without any evidence or analysis as proof. They also used higher concentrations to exert significant inhibition of AChE activity and loss of burrowing in earthworms for establishing a dose effect “correlationship”. These higher exposures occurred

after the individual worms were rinsed in tap water, their borrowing rate was measured, they were rinsed again, and then placed back into the solution. Needless to say this systematic dosing in a pesticide solution does not match any exposure levels that could result from the application of ultra-low volume sprays.

While the significant reduction in the ability of worms to burrow in soil was clearly evident at the lowest test concentration (1 ppm) and the earliest period of exposure (5 min), all worms were alive and fully recovered to normal behavior (no tremors, efficient burrowing) 18 hrs. post-exposure to 1 ppm carbaryl.

*The second study cited by the commenter measured AChE responses in earthworms exposed to carbaryl on filter paper and in a soil media. APHIS has previously noted the difficulty extrapolating between filter paper toxicological tests to actual exposure scenarios relevant to the Grasshopper Program treatments. While the AChE inhibition reached significance after one day of exposure to 0.48 mg/kg carbaryl, the researchers did not conclude there was a reduction of burrowing capacity. Pure carbaryl was used as a liquid solution, while Zoril 5 was applied as a powder spread on the soil. Zoril 5 was thus more abundant on the superficial soil fraction, and was immediately in contact with the animals, whereas pure carbaryl penetrated into the soil and probably became bioavailable later. APHIS would also like to note the tested application rate of 17.8 pounds per acre carbaryl 5% powder formulation (Zoril 5), that was estimated to result in a concentration of 4.29 mg/kg was nearly twice the maximum Grasshopper Program carbaryl bait rate and had no effect on earthworm AChE activity or the lysosomal membrane stability of *E. andrei*.*

Comment 136

APHIS received the following comment, “In addition to earthworms, carbaryl negatively affected collembola population abundance and reproduction.”

The first and second studies cited by the commenter did not investigate carbaryl or collembola (Panda and Sahu, 2004, and Stepić, et al., 2013). The third paper cited used carbaryl as a toxic standard for comparison of the effects of other pesticides (Larson et al., 2012). The researchers applied carbaryl at a rate of 8.17 lbs. a.i./acre. Researchers conducting the fourth study cited by the commenters (Potter et al., 1990) made two applications of carbaryl at the same rate of 8.17 lbs. a.i./acre, 16 times the maximum rate used by the Grasshopper Program in ultra-low volume sprays. The Grasshopper Program only makes one application per year. Therefore this study used 32 times the carbaryl rate as the program. In addition, the foliar spray of ultra-low volume carbaryl over rangeland is unlikely to result in subsurface soil concentrations comparable to the direct turfgrass application made in this study.

*The next study cited by the commenters (Joy and Chakravorty, 1991) investigated carbaryl toxicity to collembola. Adult specimens of *Cyphoderus* sp. and *Xenylla* sp. and *Lancetopopia* sp. were exposed to soils saturated with solutions ranging from 0.5 to 10 ml/l. Although they noted the standard agricultural doses of carbaryl 50 WP was 6.25 ml/l, the researchers did not provide a sufficient description of their methods for APHIS to make a valuable comparison of the exposure rates of the collembola in the experiment to potential exposure levels resulting from Grasshopper Program treatments.*

The commenters cited another study to suggest carbaryl effected collembola reproduction. Three nominal concentrations of carbaryl (1, 4 and 7 mg/kg) in soil chemical behavior and toxicity were investigated at different temperatures. After 15 days from soil spiking, it was observed that carbaryl concentration in soil decreased to 30% and 33% of the initial concentration at the temperature extremes of 8 °C and 28 °C, respectively, and 22.8% of the initial concentration under a 20 °C temperature regime. The collembola survival and reproduction were significantly affected at 4 and 7 mg/kg concentrations, approximately 4 and 7 times greater than hypothetical soil concentrations resulting from Grasshopper Program ultra-low volume sprays (see previous comments for estimations parameters).

Comment 137

APHIS received the following comments, “Carbaryl also negatively impacted Prostigmata mites, and *Tiphia vernalis*, a wasp that feeds on scarab beetle larvae in the soil.”

In the first study cited carbaryl applied at a rate of 8.18 lbs. a.i./acre, greater than 16 times the Grasshopper Program’s maximum rate, as a toxic standard for comparison of various pesticide control efficacy. The effects on oribatid and mesostigmatid mites was not surprising or comparable to exposure levels resulting from applications of carbaryl ultra-low volume sprays.

*The commenters are mistaken, in that the research cited did not find effects on *Tiphia vernalis* (Helson et al., 1994).*

Comment 138

APHIS received the following comment, “Carbaryl can be particularly toxic to ground-nesting bees, like *Andrena erythronii*, *Bombus terrestris*, and *Bombus terricola*.”

*The commenters cited a toxicology study where carbaryl was applied topically to the thorax of the bees to investigate lethal doses and determine the concentration values in units of µg a.i./g body weight and of µg a.i./bee. This dosing method is not comparable to any exposure scenario resulting from the Grasshopper Program treatments using ultra-low volume sprays. APHIS would like to note that of the six insecticides tested, carbaryl had the second lowest relative toxicity, rather than as the commenter characterized being particularly toxic to ground-nesting bees. The researchers noted their study does not suggest an inherent, physiological relationship between size and pesticide susceptibility, and they further suggested that bumble bees may be at relatively little risk from carbaryl, contrary to the commenter’s suggestion of particular toxicity to *Bombus terricola*. The researcher’s elaborated carbaryl previously was not found to have significant effects on bumble bees, citing Hansen and Osgood (1984).*

*The acute effects of carbaryl on *B. terrestris* were investigated for ingestion and topical contact in another cited study. The researchers found the calculated hazard ratio for oral exposures of carbaryl (309) was below the mean (1399) and the median (381) of the 14 pesticides tested and reported. Carbaryl was not found to be toxic through topical exposure at the “highest dose advised on the label.” The hazard ratio values permit only a comparative evaluation between the different active compounds tested.*

Comment 139

APHIS received the following comment, “Carbaryl caused 100% mortality in *Nomia melanderi* when exposed to field-rate pesticide residues 3 hours post-application, 97% mortality with 8 hours post-application, and 78% mortality 2 days post application. Carbaryl was more toxic than DDT.”

APHIS does not use DDT during Grasshopper Program treatments and does not agree that the relative toxicity to carbaryl is a concern. The study cited by the commenter did not test carbaryl toxicity on bees, but rather included data from earlier studies. The application rate of carbaryl emulated in the earlier studies was 1.0 lbs. 80% wettable powder per acre, approximately twice the maximum ultra-low volume rate used by the Grasshopper Program. APHIS found the literature did not provide sufficient details for a reasonable comparison of the carbaryl application methods and rates for additional effects analysis.

Comment 140

APHIS received the following comment, “*Bombus impatiens* colony vitality (as measured by colony weight, worker weight) and the number of workers, honey pots, and brood chambers was reduced following carbaryl exposure.”

The researchers noted the confinement of the bee colonies within cages represent a worst case scenario in that the workers were caged on the sprayed plots for two or four weeks. Whole-colony consequences of a smaller proportion of the workers foraging on insecticide-contaminated weeds in an open system likely would be less severe. In addition, the researchers explained extent to which an insecticide is hazardous to pollinators is determined by its inherent toxicity as well as the formulation and manner in which it is applied (Stark et al. 1995). For example, pollen contamination, which can decimate honey bee colonies, may be exacerbated by wettable powder or microencapsulated formulations that have high affinity for binding to pollen (Johansen et al. 1983).

APHIS would also like to note the direct application of carbaryl to turfgrass at rates ten times greater (5.44 lbs. a.i./acre) than the maximum rate used by the Grasshopper Program (0.5 lbs. a.i./acre) is not comparable to ultra-low volume foliar spray treatments.

Comment 141

APHIS received the following comment, “In a laboratory study, chlorantraniliprole negatively inhibited the enzymes acetylcholinesterase and glutathione-S-transferase in *Eisenia fetida*.”

As previously stated, the Grasshopper Program will not be using chlorantraniliprole in Wyoming during 2020. Therefore any chlorantraniliprole exposure scenarios which the commenter is concerned about are not relevant at this time.

Comment 142

APHIS received the following comment, “Chlorantraniliprole negatively affected *Folsomia candida* (collembola) reproduction.”

As previously stated, the Grasshopper Program will not be using chlorantraniliprole in Wyoming during 2020. Therefore, any chlorantraniliprole exposure scenarios which the commenter is concerned about are not relevant at this time.

Comment 143

APHIS received the following comment, “Microscopic examination in an avoidance test revealed that the collembola were paralyzed from the chlorantraniliprole treatment and couldn't migrate, clarifying an observed avoidance at 1 mg/kg, but no avoidance at any higher concentrations. The authors note that chlorantraniliprole may be more toxic to non-target arthropods closely related to insects than to other soil invertebrates.”

As previously stated, the Grasshopper Program will not be using chlorantraniliprole in Wyoming during 2020. Therefore, any chlorantraniliprole exposure scenarios which the commenter is concerned about are not relevant at this time.

Comment 144

APHIS received the following comment, “In the field, ground-nesting bumble bees (*Bombus impatiens*) treated with chlorantraniliprole consumed less pollen than control bees.”

As previously stated, the Grasshopper Program will not be using chlorantraniliprole in Wyoming during 2020. Therefore any chlorantraniliprole exposure scenarios which the commenter is concerned about are not relevant at this time.

Comment 145

APHIS received the following comment, “Staphylinidae (Coleoptera) population abundance was slightly but significantly suppressed.”

As previously stated, the Grasshopper Program will not be using chlorantraniliprole in Wyoming during 2020. Therefore any chlorantraniliprole exposure scenarios which the commenter is concerned about are not relevant at this time.

Comment 146

APHIS received the following comment, “After one application of diflubenzuron, myriapoda populations were nearly eradicated (73% reduction), gamasina mites were reduced by 40%, and uropodina mites were reduced by 57%. Diflubenzuron treatment reduced the populations of oribatid mites, prostigmata mites, and soil arthropod larvae, mostly comprised of coleoptera and diptera, by nearly 15%.”

The cited research does not suggest Grasshopper Program applications of diflubenzuron will result in significant impacts to soil microfauna. The researchers applied diflubenzuron to plots and investigated the effects on Collembola, Insecta, Myriapoda, and 4 groups of mites for 6 months. The observed taxa abundance fluctuated seasonally, but for a majority of taxa no significant differences were noticed between the control and exposed plots. The total number of microarthropods was insignificantly lower in exposed groups. While myriapods were the only

taxon that was close to extinction after a single exposure to diflubenzuron the pesticide was applied directly to the soil at a rate four times greater than the maximum conventional application rate used by the program. The researchers noted their data proved that soil has some buffering capacity, and this fact should always be taken into consideration when estimating the risk for the environment.

Comment 147

APHIS received the following comment, “In a field study, collembola populations were negatively affected by diflubenzuron and did not recover for one and a half years. The earthworms, *Dendrobaena rubidus* and *Lumbricus rubellus* were reduced in plots treated with concentrations of diflubenzuron at half the recommended field rate. Gamasid and oribatid mite populations were additionally reduced, and oribatida were observed migrating into deeper soil layers to avoid the pesticide.”

*The commenters have cited a study where the researchers applied two treatments of diflubenzuron wettable powder directly to the forest floor at a rate 37% higher than the maximum rate used by the Grasshopper Program. Contrary to the characterization of the research findings presented by the commenter, the mean population size of earthworms did not differ significantly during the potential effect phase between control and the 137% the Grasshopper Program rate treatment plot. The populations of the enchytraeid species *E. buchholzi*, *E. minutus*, *E. norvegicus* and *M. clavata* did not respond to this 137% treatment of diflubenzuron applied twice per growing season. While the number of oribatids decreased after the application of the insecticides in all experimental plots including the control, these differences were only significant in the plot where diflubenzuron was applied directly to the forest floor at a rate nearly 14 times greater than the maximum Grasshopper Program rate. Where Brachychthoniid populations declined significantly in the diflubenzuron treated plots, the reductions were in part compensated by changes in numbers of the dominant genus *Oppiella*. The researchers explained the half-life of diflubenzuron in soil is reported to range from 1 to 27 days, which was borne out by their data. Therefore, residue accumulations in the organic layer is unlikely if diflubenzuron is only applied once per year.*

The researchers acknowledged that there could be several potential reasons for differences in populations of soil invertebrates between the study plots. First, the plots could differ independent of any treatment. APHIS agrees this is a reasonable interpretation because of the small sample sizes during the pre-application, potential effect and early recovery data recording phases (I.e. four plots including the control, five sample dates, two replicates, n=10). The testing of natural variation during the 9 month pre-application phase may not have been sufficient. They decided to interpret deviations as a response to a treatment, if numbers in the potential effect phase were different to those in the other phases in the same plot and to the control in the same phase.

Comment 148

APHIS received the following comment, “Diflubenzuron treatment resulted in a total loss in brood production of male *Bombus terrestris*, and 100% inhibition of egg hatching success and larval growth. Transovarial transport and accumulation of the pesticide in deposited eggs explained the total loss of reproduction. Abnormal cuticle formation, which can lead to

mechanical weakness and death, was observed in dead larvae that worker bees were observed removing from treated nests.”

*The commenters have cited a study where the *B. terrestris* was directly dosed with diflubenzuron to test acute toxicity. Adult worker bees were exposed via contact by topical application and orally via drinking sugar water and by eating pollen. For contact application, 50 μ L of the aqueous concentration was topically applied to the dorsal thorax of each worker with a micropipette. The worker bumblebees were also provided diflubenzuron treated sugar-water for drinking for 11 weeks. Bumblebees can also be exposed orally to pollen sprayed until saturation with a diflubenzuron concentration. Both the sugar water and pollen were supplied for unlimited oral consumption.*

While APHIS acknowledges the effects of acute diflubenzuron exposures on the egg hatching and larval stages of bumble bees is a concern, the direct dosing conducted by the researchers is not comparable to any exposure levels that could result from the Grasshopper Program diflubenzuron ultra-low volume spray treatments.

In addition, APHIS would like to note, no acute mortality was observed after topical application, nor after oral exposure to treated sugar-water or treated pollen. In all cases, the number of dead worker bees in the treated nests over a period of 11 weeks was not above that of the control groups using water (0–10%).

Comment 149

APHIS received the following comment, “Multiple studies have observed AChE inhibition in earthworms when malathion was applied. Malathion effected the sperm count and viability and testicular histology of male *E. fetida* at sublethal concentrations, potentially impairing population abundance.”

APHIS agrees with the commenter that the main acute poisonous effect of malathion is the inhibition of the enzyme acetylcholinesterase, and acute poisoning such as was carried out by the researchers with direct exposures to high concentrations of the pesticide could occur in many types of organisms including earthworms. The direct dosing of earthworms to validate their use as toxicological test organisms does not mimic any exposure scenario resulting from the Grasshopper Program use of ultra-low volume sprays of malathion.

To further illustrate the disparity between exposures resulting from laboratory toxicity tests and grasshopper suppression treatments APHIS would like to note the lowest tested concentration was 80 mg/kg of soil. The Grasshopper Program applies malathion ultra-low volume spray at a rate of 0.62 pounds active ingredient per acre. If a cubic foot of rangeland soil weighs 75 pounds, 1 acre (43,560 ft.²) of soil two inches deep would weigh 544,500 pounds, or 246,981 kilograms. The maximum rate used by the Grasshopper Program to apply malathion as an ultra-low volume spray is 0.62 pounds (281227 mg) active ingredient per acre. Therefore, the maximum concentration of 1.14 mg malathion spray per kg of soil could result from program applications. However, this analysis assumes none of the foliar spray settled on vegetation, and the malathion instantly absorbed into the top two inches of soil. This hypothetical soil

concentration resulting from ultra-low volume sprays should not be compared in a risk analysis with the 80 mg/kg tested for sub-lethal effects in the laboratory.

Comment 150

APHIS received the following comment, “In addition to AChE, the biochemical biomarkers glutathione-S-transferase, and catalase were also inhibited by malathion in studies with *Eisenia andrei*. Malathion has also been observed to negatively affect the reproduction of *E. andrei*.”

The commenters have cited research that confirms malathion inhibits AChE in earthworms. While APHIS does not dispute this effect, the agency doubts such effects could result in significant impacts. Notably the researchers found the inhibition period suggests lengthening of retreatment intervals to 45 days is the appropriate conclusion from the study. APHIS only makes one suppression treatment per year to grasshopper infested rangeland.

Comment 151

APHIS received the following comment, “Malathion had a severe effect on AChE activity in *Drawida willsi*. Growth, casting activity, and respiration of *D. willsi* was negatively affected by malathion treatment and did not recover for 75, 60, and 30 days, respectively.”

The commenters have cited research that confirms malathion inhibits AChE in earthworms. While APHIS does not dispute this effect, the agency doubts these biomarker effects could result in significant impacts.

The study cited by the commenters described malathion’s recommended agricultural dose as 2.7 to 4.0 kg a.i./ha and calculated the equivalent 1.5 to 2.22 mg a.i./kg soil, which APHIS would like to note are comparable to the concentration estimation provided above. However the toxicity results for a single dose of malathion were reported for a concentration of 2.2 mg a.i./kg which is equivalent to double the dose of 4.0 kg a.i./acre, nearly six times the application rate used by the Grasshopper Program.

Comment 152

APHIS received the following comment, “In addition to AChE, the biochemical biomarkers glutathione-S-transferase, and catalase were also inhibited by malathion in studies with *E. andrei*. Malathion has also been observed to negatively affect the reproduction of *E. andrei*.”

*The commenters have cited two toxicology studies where earthworms were placed in test tubes lined with malathion saturated filter paper to determine acute effect concentrations, extrapolated from the biomarker, AChE reduction. The dosing methods and units of ug a.i./cm² are not comparable to any exposure levels that could result from the application of malathion ultra-low sprays by the Grasshopper Program. The study cited by the commenter did not make any conclusions regarding malathion affecting reproduction of *E. andrei*.*

Comment 153

APHIS received the following comment, “In a lab test rating the toxicity of 45 pesticides to *E. fetida*, malathion was ranked moderately toxic with an LC50 of 114.4 ug/cm.”

The study cited by the commenter was a comparison of the toxicology of 45 pesticide to determine the LC50. These studies exposed earthworms to varying concentrations of carbaryl to determine toxicological endpoints. Based on the extremely high doses, the impact to the survival of earthworms was not only unsurprising, but the object of the studies. APHIS would like to note this laboratory dosing procedure is not comparable to any exposure scenario resulting from the use of malathion ultra-low volume sprays by the Grasshopper Program.

Comment 154

APHIS received the following comment, “Malathion caused a 40% decrease in survival of the ground-nesting bee, *Nomia melanderi*.”

The study cited by the commenter did not test malathion toxicity on bees, but rather included data from earlier studies. The application rate of malathion emulated in the earlier studies was 1.0 lb. of emulsifiable concentrate per acre, significantly greater than the maximum ultra-low volume rate used by the Grasshopper Program. APHIS found the literature did not provide sufficient details for a reasonable comparison of the malathion application methods and rates for additional effects analysis.

Comment 155

APHIS received the following comment, “The EAs an agency action subject to this consultation requirement, must be prepared “concurrently with and integrated with environmental impact analyses . . . required by . . . the Endangered Species Act of 1973.”

The commenter has again confused the EA prepared by APHIS for the Grasshopper Program in Wyoming with other environmental risk analysis documents. See comment/response 156 below.

Comment 156

APHIS received the following comment, “In order to properly provide information to the public for commenting on the EIS and the EAs, the section 7 process should be completed prior to the completion of NEPA. APHIS must ensure that consultation addresses all species and critical habitat that could be directly and indirectly affected by the proposed project.” The commenter also states that APHIS has not complied with its responsibilities under Section 7 of the ESA.

As stated in the final EIS, APHIS has completed programmatic consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). APHIS has reinitiated programmatic consultation with NMFS to include chlorantraniliprole. In the interim APHIS will consult with NMFS at the State level if there is a proposal to apply chlorantraniliprole. The NMFS consultation does not apply to species in Wyoming since there are no federally listed species under NMFS jurisdiction however the information was provided in response to comments regarding the final EIS. APHIS submitted a programmatic biological assessment to the USFWS in 2015. APHIS is currently working with the USFWS to update and complete the biological assessment and receive concurrence. The intent of the programmatic biological assessment is to provide consistent mitigation measures for listed species that may co-occur with Program treatments. In the

meantime consultations with the USFWS are still being completed at the local level prior to any treatments. No APHIS treatments are made in States without prior concurrence from the USFWS or NMFS regarding federally-listed species. This information is also summarized in the final EIS.

Local USFWS Section 7 consultations were entered into prior to the DRAFT EA. APHIS consulted with the USFWS on federally-listed species that may occur within the county or areas where grasshopper and Mormon cricket treatments may be required. APHIS works closely with the USFWS to determine the application of protection measures and where those measures should be applied prior to any treatments. APHIS also evaluated the potential direct and indirect impacts to non-target species which is summarized in the final human health and ecological risk assessments for each insecticide.

APHIS would like to note that agencies are not required to publish concurrence letters as part of our NEPA documents. Coordination with other environmental reviews (50 CFR § 402.06) says, “. . . the results should be included in the documents required by those statutes.” To reduce paperwork and an emphasis on background material (40 CFR § 1500.4), we make biological assessments part of the administrative record available through FOIA. APHIS complied with the applicable publication requirements for the programmatic EIS and all tiered EAs, consequently reopening public comment periods will not alleviate any perceived deficiency in public access and does not provide any additional remedy for NEPA compliance.

The 1998 ESA Handbook provides guidance for completing consultations. More recent guidance at <https://www.fws.gov/endangered/what-we-do/faq.html#10> says, “Formal consultation should be initiated prior to or at the time of release of the DEIS or EA. At the time the Final EIS is issued, section 7 consultation should be completed.” We discussed our Section 7 consultation work to date in the final EIS which included timely initiation of formal consultation and provided for compliance to occur at the State level until a programmatic Biological Opinion is in place

Comment 157

APHIS received the following comment, “The EA cites to correspondences with FWS at Appendix 2, but Appendix 2 is blank”.

Local USFWS Section 7 consultations were entered into prior to the DRAFT EA. USFWS verbally indicated concurrence and stated the letter of concurrence regarding the local site specific biological assessment was being written and sent for signature. The Final EA will have the letters of concurrence cited in the Appendix 2. See Appendix 2.

Comment 158

APHIS received the following comment, “Because the site specific project is vague and fails to describe the breadth of cumulative effects it cannot comply with the ESA or NEPA. Any discrepancy between the project described in the EAs and the documents provided to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must be rectified.”

APHIS believes that the site specific information described in the draft EA is adequate to allow completion of Section 7 compliance with the USFWS. Information discussed in the draft EA is

also shared with the USFWS during consultation so there is no discrepancy between actions described in the EA and other documents.

Comment 159

APHIS received the following comment, “APHIS would unlawfully be making an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources if it allows insecticide application on rangeland grasshoppers and/or Mormon crickets to occur prior to receipt of a final biological opinion from FWS. APHIS will run afoul of its Section 7 ESA requirements if it chooses to move forward, and it will also likely violate the ESA’s prohibition against the take of endangered species as described by Section 9 of the statute if it moves forward with this project prior to properly completing its Section 7 duties. Even where there is a letter of concurrence, APHIS would still fail to comply with the ESA because informal consultation does not authorize the incidental take of federally-listed species nor does it authorize the adverse modification or destruction of critical habitat, and the letter of concurrence fails to articulate any rationale for the buffers.”

APHIS has been able to complete informal consultation with the USFWS regarding the APHIS Grasshopper Program at the State level. Formal consultation has not been required since the USFWS has concurred with the APHIS determinations of not likely to adversely affect, including any associated critical habitat. Since APHIS has complied with Section 7 through informal consultation APHIS has not violated Section 9 of the ESA, nor has formal consultation been required resulting in a biological opinion.

The commenter errs in assuming that any of APHIS’s projects will result in “incidental take” since the agreed-upon mitigation measures, included in Appendix 3 of each EA, were developed to preclude such. Neither will APHIS projects modify or destroy critical habitat. Quite the contrary, the failure to suppress severe grasshopper infestations pose the real inherent risk of “take” of T&E species and “adverse modification or destruction of critical habitat” due to overfeeding, often causing defoliation of nurse plants and consumption of sensitive plants, themselves.

Comment 160

APHIS received the comment “The Wyoming toad is highly sensitive to pesticides, and are greatly imperiled by any acute or subacute contact with pesticides. In addition, any impacts to their insect prey are must be considered direct effects to these species”.

As stated on page 19 of Appendix 3, it is not likely that APHIS grasshopper suppression activities will occur in the vicinity of Mortenson Lake where Wyoming toads are found. If suppression activities are conducted in Albany County then the following impact minimization efforts will be put into place: A one mile buffer for aerial spray shall be maintained on each side of the Little Laramie River and no treatments will be applied within a one mile buffer of Mortenson NWR. See USFWS concurrence letter in Appendix 2.

Comment 161

APHIS has received the following comments, “Grasshopper spraying in or near riparian areas can decrease prey populations for these species as well as produce chronic sub-lethal effects as a result of drift or ingesting pesticide through the insects they consume” in reference to the

Southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) and “for all these species, insecticide spraying threatens their food supply and imperils them with acute and subacute poisoning impacts” in reference to “the Interior Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum athalassos*), the Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*), the Western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), and the Whooping Crane (*Grus Americana*)”.

Protective measures were developed during the lengthy local USFWS Section 7 consultations for each of the 37 T&E species and species of concern within proposed treatment areas. APHIS protective measures were determined using the USFWS Recommended Protection Measures for Pesticide Applications in Region 2 of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service” (USFWS 2007). The USFWS letters of concurrence agree with our determinations. See Appendix 3 page 24 Platte River Species and Appendix 3 page 14 for YBCO. See also Appendix 2 for USFWS concurrence letter.

Comment 162

APHIS received the comment “The threatened Western DPS is found west of the Continental Divide through the Rocky Mountains in the United States and in Wyoming”.

APHIS cannot adequately reply to the commenter at this time. Without an explanation of the meaning of the acronym “DPS” and/or a scientific name of the species, APHIS is uncertain as to what the commenter is referring.

Comment 163

APHIS received the comments “Wyoming’s listed fish are already facing significant threats from climate change and habitat loss. Insecticide use threatens them with direct effects, and also imperils their food supply. Most of these species have a limited range, and if insecticides were to poison their waters due to a single unexpected gust of wind or bad judgement call by an applicator, they would have nowhere else to go to survive. Bioaccumulation of toxins in their limited range, both from this project and other activities such as farming, mining, grazing, and OHV use, presents a substantial threat that must be considered for these precariously endangered fish” in reference to “the Bonytail vhub (*Gila elegans*), the Colorado pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus Lucius*), the Greenback cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii stomias*), the Humpback chub (*Gila cypha*), the Kendall Warm Springs dace (*Rhinichthys osculus thermalis*), the Pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*), and the Razorback Sucker (*Xyrauchen texanus*)”.

The greenback cutthroat trout (Oncorhynchus clarkii stomias) has not been found in Wyoming according to USFWS surveys and is only known from high elevation locations in Colorado. Since this species is found at high elevation it is unlikely to move into Wyoming. See Appendix 3 pages 24 Platte River Species, page 25 Colorado River Species and page 15 for KWSD. See also Appendix 2 for USFWS concurrence letter and response to comment 161.

Comment 164

APHIS received the comment “The Western Glacier stonefly is already highly imperiled due to climate change and any exposure to insecticides would be a fatal blow to this species”.

As stated on page 20 of Appendix 3, it is not likely that APHIS grasshopper suppression activities will occur in areas of the stonefly's habitat, riparian areas due to a programmatic buffer placed on either side of streams or water bodies. This 500 foot buffer is standard procedure for all USDA APHIS PPQ grasshopper aerial suppression programs. For those areas that may be treated using ground equipment the 50 foot buffer will be increased to 500 feet around waters and riparian areas that are Western Glacier Stonefly suitable habitat, within the range of the species. See USFWS concurrence letter in Appendix 2.

Comment 165

APHIS received the comments, "Impacts to these mammal species must be studied before this project may move forward. Several of these species can occupy the very rangelands this EA targets, or may pass through it. Impacts of spraying can include habitat disturbance, acute and subacute poisoning, and reduced prey, amongst other possible impacts that must be considered" in reference to "the Black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*), the Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), the Grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), the Northern Long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), the Preble's meadow jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*), and the Wolverine (*Gulo gulo*) (proposed)".

*The North American wolverine (*Gulo gulo luscus*) is a proposed species and under USFWS Section 7 Act there is no requirement to consult on proposed or candidate species. (See USFWS letter of concurrence in Appendix 2.) For other species listed in these comments see Appendix 3 pages 16, 17, 12, 13, and 18 respectively. See also Appendix 2 for USFWS concurrence letter and response to comment 161.*

Comments 166

APHIS received the comments, "Use of insecticides can directly effect plants and it may also harm their soil and reduce available pollinators for these plants, threatening the viability of their life cycle. Any mitigation efforts to avoid adverse effects to ESA listed plants will necessitate knowledge of all occupied habitat, which requires regular surveys, and also knowledge of groundwater, as well as knowledge of unoccupied but nonetheless essential habitat. This knowledge would also have to factor in current and anticipated threats, cumulative impacts, and likely climate change migration. Any take of these plants is illegal" in reference to Blowout penstemon (*Penstemon haydenii*), Colorado butterfly plant (*Gaura neomexicana* ssp. *coloradoensis*), Desert yellowhead (*Yermo xanthocephalus*), Ute Ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes diluvialis*), and Western Prairie fringed orchid (*Platanthera praeclara*).

*Colorado Butterfly Plant (*Gaura neomexicana coloradensis*) has been delisted and no longer receives protection under the ESA. For other species listed in these comments see Appendix 3 pages 22, 23, 21 and 24 respectively. See also Appendix 2 for USFWS concurrence letter and response to comment 161.*

Comment 167

APHIS received the comments, "APHIS recognizes that malathion causes low to moderate toxicity in terrestrial plants, with effects on reproduction, growth, and mortality. In all cases, use of insecticides may reduce available pollinators for these plants, threatening the viability of their life cycle. No mitigation measures can work to protect this plant unless APHIS is entirely

confident that it knows all locations of this species and that no changes have occurred” in reference to Ute ladies’-tresses.

Ute ladies’-tresses typically blooms from late July through August. APHIS strives to use preferred chemicals and strategies for treatments in Wyoming and under these preferred methods would be finished with treatments by late July. If treatments are necessary later than July, then APHIS strictly follows program guidelines and USFWS consultations. See Appendix 3 page 21 and Appendix 2.

EA Comment References

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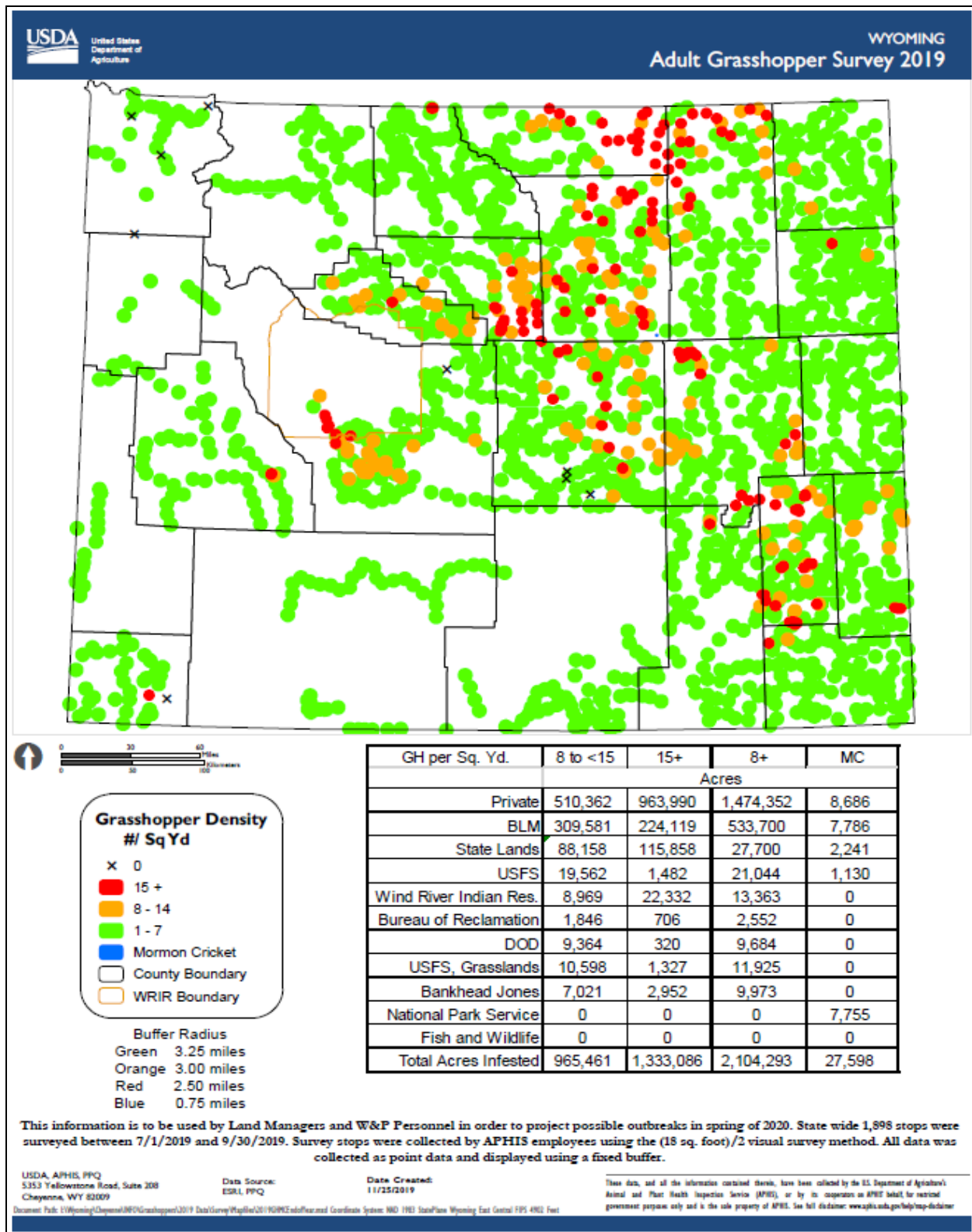
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Appendix 7: 2019 Adult Grasshopper Survey Map



Appendix 8: Completed FONSI

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Rangeland Grasshopper and Mormon Cricket Suppression Program Environmental Assessment in Wyoming EA Number WY-20-01

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes alternatives for suppressing grasshopper and Mormon cricket, hereafter referred to as grasshoppers, outbreaks on rangeland in Wyoming. The EA, incorporated by reference in this document, is available from USDA APHIS PPQ, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Suite 208, Cheyenne, WY 82009.

- The EA includes an analysis of the potential impacts of 3 alternatives. They include (1) No Suppression Program, (2) Insecticide Applications at Conventional Rates or Reduced Agent and Area Treatments (RAATs) with Adaptive Management Strategy, and (3) research methods. The preferred method will be Reduced Agent and Area Treatments. APHIS participation in this suppression program may be necessary to reduce grasshopper populations in order to preserve rangeland forage levels used for grazing, protect adjacent cropland from being infested with damaging grasshopper species, and to protect range conditions for long term range management. The goal of these suppression treatments is not to eradicate grasshopper species, but to mitigate outbreak populations back to normal levels without causing any significant adverse effects to human health or the environment.

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

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

1. Human health: The 2019 EIS contains detailed hazard, exposure, and risk analyses for the chemicals available to APHIS. Impacts to workers and the general public were analyzed for all possible routes of exposure (dermal, oral, inhalation) under a range of conditions designed to overestimate risk. No treatment will occur over congested areas, recreational areas, or schools and if appropriate, a buffer zone will be enacted and enforced. No treatment will occur directly over water bodies. Furthermore, the following buffers will also be adhered to: 500 foot buffer for aerial liquid insecticides; 200 foot buffer with aerial bait; and a 50 foot buffer for all ground applications. No impact to groundwater is anticipated. Workers will utilize necessary safety protection measures to mitigate the risk of exposure. All APHIS treatments will strictly adhere to label requirements and further protection measures as outlined in the 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 effects on non-targets. Bee keepers will be given notice of any potential treatments in areas that contain domestic or

leaf cutter bees. In all cases when using malathion or carbaryl a two mile buffer for domestic bees and a four mile buffer for leaf cutter bees will be enforced either by the movement of bees or with buffer zones. APHIS will conduct environmental monitoring in areas where buffers are implemented.

3. Endangered and threatened species: Protection measures that resulted from the completed Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation will be implemented and strictly followed. APHIS will confer with land managers, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and/or Wyoming Game & Fish personnel once treatment areas are identified to determine if any threatened or endangered species occur and, if so, which mitigating measures are needed for the selected treatment option. Suppression treatments are not likely to adversely affect endangered or threatened species or their habitats.
4. Socioeconomic issues: Potential suppression efforts would likely have beneficial economic impacts to local landowners and permittees. The forage not utilized by grasshoppers and Mormon crickets will allow for greater wildlife and livestock grazing, decreased needs for supplemental feed and increased monetary returns.
5. Cultural resources and events: USDA APHIS does not anticipate any impact on cultural resources or events. APHIS will confer with BLM on a local level to protect known cultural, pictograph, and petroglyph sites. Where tribal lands are involved, APHIS will confer locally with Tribal Officials and Bureau of Indian Affairs on possible cultural impacts of proposed suppression efforts.
6. Executive Orders 12898 (low income and minorities), 13045 (children), and 13186 (migratory birds): No adverse effects are anticipated on low income and/or minority populations or children because suppression treatments will be conducted primarily on open rangeland where human activity is unlikely. APHIS routinely conducts programs in a manner that minimizes the impact to the environment, including any impact to migratory birds.

The time between the receipt of a request for treatment and the start of a suppression program is very short. APHIS made the draft EA available for public comment from March 25th until April 24th 2020 in order to allow the public to provide input on the proposed program.

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

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Bruce Shambaugh
State Plant Health Director

05/29/2020

Date