



Animal and Plant
Health Inspection
Service

Plant Protection and
Quarantine

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Nancy Gilbert
US Fish & Wildlife Service
20310 Empire Ave., Suite A100
Bend, OR 97701

February 6, 2015

Dear Nancy Gilbert:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), in conjunction with Federal, State, and local cooperators, is preparing for possible grasshopper/ Mormon cricket suppression programs on rangeland in eastern Oregon again this year. This letter is to request an informal exchange of Section 7 consultation information between the FWS and APHIS to ensure that any grasshopper suppression programs conducted by APHIS in Oregon are in compliance with the ESA.

APHIS has prepared a 2015 Biological Assessment (BA) which arrives at an effects determination for each listed species and corresponding critical habitat which occur in the proposed suppression (action) area of Oregon. Where it is determined that the action may affect a listed species or its habitat, the BA specifies mitigation measures that are designed to reduce the potential effects to the point where they are not likely to adversely affect the listed species or its habitat. This BA also addresses the chemical diflubenzuron (Dimilin) and the RAATs (Reduced Agent-Area Treatment) strategy as treatment alternatives which were not considered in the last National Programmatic Biological Opinion, October 3, 1995.

The informal local consultation process has been used the past several years to obtain concurrence from your agency on the effects determinations made by APHIS. For this season there are no changes in the chemicals available or the methods of application. At the request of FWS we have included a determination for two candidate species found in the proposed area. For all other species, we are proposing the same mitigation measures that were agreed to last year.

Please provide any coordination necessary with the FWS Klamath Falls Office for areas of Klamath and Lake Counties. A written response from FWS is requested indicating whether you concur with the "no effect" and the "not likely to adversely affect" determinations in the Biological Assessment.

Nancy Gilbert
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Your cooperation and timely response in assisting APHIS to meet its ESA responsibilities are appreciated. If you have any questions regarding these requests, please contact me at (509) 353-2950.

Sincerely,



George Bruno
PPQ Officer
USDA, APHIS, PPQ
Spokane, Washington

w/ enclosures
- 2015 APHIS Biological Assessment

cc: Robert Bailey, APHIS State Plant Health Director (Acting), Portland, OR
Laurie Sada, F&WS, Field Supervisor, Klamath Falls Fish & Wildlife
Office