MAR 22 1990

MONTANA STATE LIBRARY
1515 E. 6th AVE.
HELENA, MONTANA 59620

SCOPING STATEMENT
PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NOXIOUS WEED TRUST FUND GRANTS PROGRAM

I. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) coordinates the Noxious Weed Trust Fund under the provisions of the Montana Noxious Weed Trust Fund Act of 1985 (80-7-801-821, Montana Code Annotated, MCA). The MDA administers the funds collected under a herbicide sales surcharge and vehicle weed fee and issues them through grants or contract funds to communities, weed districts or other entities it considers appropriate for noxious weed management projects (61-3-510, 23-2-803, MCA). Grant funding recommendations are from a nine-member Noxious Weed Advisory Council appointed by the Director of the Department of Agriculture.

The MDA has determined that this program is a major state action which requires preparation of a programmatic EIS as dictated by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) (75-1-101, MCA) and rules (4.2.312-337 Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM)). The MDA intends to contract for preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for the Noxious Weed Trust Fund grants program.

II. CONTENT OF THE PEIS

The Department of Agriculture prepared this scoping document to inform the public of the program and seek additional public input. The department is aware of a number of issues and concerns as outlined below.

The MDA encourages public participation in the preparation of this Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. The department requests public input on those issues outlined in Section III below. Your input will help the department focus on the significant issues and concerns related to the program and help the department select a preferred alternative.

The alternatives that may be addressed in the PEIS include: continuation of the grants program as it is currently administered, requirement of additional information from grant applicants prior to their acceptance, and requirement of additional information or data from grant applicants after the funding of a grant application. Other alternatives that may be identified during the scoping sessions and development of the PEIS.

The final PEIS will determine the future direction of the Noxious Weed Trust Fund grants program.

PLEASE RETURN

III. ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED

The following issues and concerns have been identified through agency discussions and may be used as a general guideline for discussion at the scoping sessions. The department encourages submission of additional issues pertaining to the program.

1. Do the types of projects funded through the Noxious Weed Trust Fund grants program need to be investigated by an environmental review process?
 - Types of projects funded include: integrated weed management, animal grazing, herbicide use, non-chemical research, chemical research, and education.
2. What are the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the possible actions financed by the Noxious Weed Trust Fund grants program?
3. Should the MDA employ an evaluation process to determine environmental impacts of individual grant proposals?
4. What criteria should the MDA use to determine whether a grant proposal requires further environmental review under MEPA?
5. What are possible alternatives to the current grants process that might ensure immediate compliance of all proposals with MEPA?
6. Does the current grants program adequately assist in managing noxious weeds?

IV. TIMING OF COMMENTS

Written comments concerning this program should be submitted to the Department no later than April 13, 1990. Direct comments (see enclosed comment sheet) to:

Barbra Mullin
Montana Department of Agriculture
Capitol Station
Helena, Montana 59620

For additional information you may contact the Environmental Management Division (406) 444-2944.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Copies of this scoping document will be mailed to an estimated 300 individuals, agencies and organizations. The department will hold four public meetings. The purpose of these meetings is to help determine the scope of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and identify issues to be addressed.

COMMENT SHEET
MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
NOXIOUS WEED TRUST FUND

Mailing Instructions: Please fold with the reverse side out, staple or tape, stamp and mail to the address shown. You may attach additional pages of comments as needed.

Name:

Address:

Comments on the tentative issues identifies in the scoping brochure:

Additional issues that you feel should be addressed:

What alternatives should the department consider in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement?

Other comments:

Do you wish to remain on the mailing list and receive additional information on this program as it is developed?

Yes No

Stamp

Montana Dept. of Agriculture
Environmental Mgmt Div.
Capitol Station
Helena, MT 59620

Public comments may be limited to ensure an opportunity for everyone to participate. Individuals providing verbal comments are requested to provide a copy of their comments for the record. Written comments will be accepted by the department through April 13, 1990 for those who cannot attend the public meetings.

Public meetings will be held:

March 21, 1990 - Columbus, MT 7:00 PM

Stillwater Pavillon, Columbus Fairgrounds, Columbus, MT

March 22, 1990 - Glendive, MT 7:00 PM

Community Room, County Courthouse, Glendive, MT

March 26, 1990 - Missoula, MT 7:00 PM

Community Room, Southgate Mall, Missoula, MT

March 27, 1990 - Havre, MT 7:00 PM

Iron Horse Restaurant, Havre, MT

Montana Dept. of Agriculture
Environmental Mgmt Div.
Capitol Station
Helena, MT 59620

6231

Montana State Lib.