



News Release

Port-Orford-cedar Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
Port-Orford-cedar SEIS Team
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, Oregon 97208

For Release: June 13, 2003

Contact: Alan Hoffmeister 541-751-4249 or Mary Marrs 541-858-2211

Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Available for Review

The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are asking for comments from the public on a recently released draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS). The federal agencies are proposing to amend their respective Land and Resource Management Plans with new standards and guidelines for the management of Port-Orford-cedar trees and the root disease *Phytophthora lateralis*. The SEIS covers public lands within the Coos Bay, Medford, and Roseburg BLM Districts and the Siskiyou National Forest. The 90-day public comment period begins on June 13 and closes on September 12, 2003.

The Port-Orford-cedar tree is native to southwestern Oregon and northwestern California. The tree is highly valued for its straight grain and is used in fine wood trim and even as stock for wooden arrows. The tree has also been planted widely in the Northwest as an urban landscaping tree. For the last 50 years, a disease which attacks the roots of the trees has been affecting the population, especially near roads and water courses. Once a tree is infected, the disease is almost always fatal. The disease is spread by spores that travel in water or mud. Natural forces such as runoff, erosion and animal movement can spread the spores. Human activity can accelerate the spread as vehicles, foot traffic, and heavy equipment pick up mud from an infested area and deposit it in uninfested areas.

“This supplemental environmental impact statement is being used to help us choose from several alternatives for maintaining Port-Orford-cedar on federal forests,” said Ken Denton, SEIS Team Leader. “We’re trying to identify the strategy that best balances the need to maintain the cedar with the need to continue other forest uses.”

The Draft SEIS, now out for public review, considers five alternatives for future maintenance of Port-Orford-cedar. According to Denton, most of the alternatives seek to reduce disease introductions, slow the spread of the disease where present, and/or mitigate the occurrence of the disease to the degree such treatments are needed, practical, and cost effective.

- Alternative 1 continues the current management direction of using available disease-management practices based on site-specific analysis and continue to develop seedlings from cedar that show a natural resistance to the disease.
- Alternative 2 uses essentially the same management practices as Alternative 1 but adds a risk key to clarify the environmental conditions that would require implementation of additional site-specific practices.
- Alternative 3 includes all elements of Alternative 2, and adds additional protections for 32 currently uninfested watersheds.
- Alternative 4 removes existing disease management practices, but accelerates the resistant breeding program to provide resistant stock for all areas within 10 years.
- Alternative 5 also removes existing disease management practices, and stops development of resistant seed for remaining undeveloped breeding zones.

Details about the project, including a down-loadable copy of the Draft SEIS, are available at: http://www.or.blm.gov/planning/Port-Orford-cedar_SEIS/. Copies of the Draft SEIS can also be reviewed at many local libraries in the region and at BLM and Forest Service offices in North Bend, Roseburg, Grants Pass, Medford, Gold Beach, Powers, Eureka, Redding, and Yreka. Copies of the Draft SEIS area also available on paper or on CDs from the SEIS Team office at the address below.

“We would like to see comments about the adequacy of the statement, the merits of the alternatives discussed, and any information that may have been missed,” said Denton. “We’re hoping that those who comment on the Draft SEIS will make their comments as specific as possible. It would be helpful to tie comments to page numbers and chapters of the document.”

Denton added that comments on the SEIS will be accepted through September 12, 2003 via postal mail or e-mail, and should be sent to:

Port-Orford-cedar SEIS Team
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208

or: E-mail: ORPOCEIS@or.blm.gov

END