



News Release

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

For Release: January 23, 2004

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

Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Issued for Management of Port-Orford-Cedar in Southwest Oregon

The U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have released the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) addressing some management actions for both agencies in southwest Oregon. 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*) that infects the species.

The FSEIS covers public lands within the Coos Bay, Medford, and Roseburg BLM Districts and the Siskiyou National Forest. Although each office has been taking management actions for many years to limit the spread of the disease, this document is the first effort to analyze the range-wide needs of the species and the cumulative impacts of agency actions.

“This environmental impact statement has been 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 Port-Orford-cedar as an ecologically and economically significant species on public lands with the need to continue other forest uses.”

The Port-Orford-cedar tree is native to southwestern Oregon and northwestern California where it can play a unique ecological role, particularly on ultramafic soils. The tree is also 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 pathogen (*Phytophthora lateralis*) 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 primarily 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.

“We did not discover any new treatments during our analysis”, Denton said. “The two dozen different strategies currently used by the agencies, such as washing equipment used in infested areas and closing infested roads during wet seasons, work well for controlling the disease. However, the preferred alternative strengthens the criteria for determining when control measures should be applied. We also identified currently

uninfested watersheds and have added emphasis to keeping the disease away from these areas.”

A second document, the Port-Orford-Cedar Rangewide Assessment has also been released by the agencies. This document describes the overall condition of and trends in the health and distribution of Port-Orford-cedar throughout its entire natural range. According to Kirk Casavan, Port-Orford-cedar Program Manager for BLM, the Assessment is not intended to be a decision document, rather it provides a snapshot in time of the status of Port-Orford-cedar, lists information on biology, ecology, and management of Port-Orford-cedar and *Phytophthora lateralis*, and identifies information gaps and research needs.

Details about the project, including a down-loadable copy of the FEIS and the Rangewide Assessment, are available at: http://www.or.blm.gov/planning/Port-Orford-cedar_SEIS/. Copies of the documents 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 documents are also available on paper or on CDs from the SEIS Team office at the address below.

Port-Orford-cedar SEIS Team
P.O. Box 2965
Portland, OR 97208
or:
E-mail: ORPOCEIS@or.blm.gov

END