

Using any of the currently legal chemical herbicides is like using an atom bomb when a shovel will do. They have so many negative consequences at so many levels of our resource base, from macroinvertebrates, native plants, all the way to mammals, and humans, not to mention soil, air, and water quality. And there are alternatives, hand control, fire, timely mowing.

The EPA itself at the federal level is now looking into the safety of herbicides and pesticide. In fact, a couple of years ago the state EPA did a study in Hood River, in cooperation with fruit growers, which confirmed that chemicals the orchardist were using appeared downstream and correlated their use with a die off in the macroinvertebrates, the base of the salmon food chain.

I'm a member of the Native Plant Society of Oregon, and know how sensitive natives are to herbicides. Much as I dislike "noxious weeds" spraying them is NOT a sustainable practice.

My husband and I already volunteer with the National Forest Service, to do manual trail maintenance, mostly in wilderness areas. All kinds of groups are involved in this effort, horse riders, mountain bikers, outdoor enthusiasts. I'm sure many folks would volunteer in supporting BLM weed control, it's very similar work, hard physical labor, but in a great environment: an Oregon forest.

The public is becoming more and more aware of this issue and much prefer seeing "weeds" to obviously sprayed ground. Just 3 examples I know of personally,

- 1) Lane Co is using herbicides as a last resort only on county roads maintenance,
- 2) ODOT is doing a pilot project on the coast on roadside management without chemical herbicides.
- 3) All the publicly owned land in Quebec Province in Canada is now managed without any chemical use.

We and our neighbors have been working on restoring native salmon riparian habitat in the Coast range and yes it's hard work to cut down blackberries, pull up scotch broom and other invasive, plant and fence off trees but we do it, without any chemical use and for free because we have a vision of seeing coho runs in the 100s of thousands per year as they were in the early 1900s. Believe me, if we thought chemicals really were a sustainable answer we'd use 'em. And we are saddened to see clear cutting followed by helicopter spraying on nearby private timber land and then the inevitable heavy rains which wash the soil down the steep banks into the very salmon bearing creeks we are working so hard to restore. We know their rationale is a slightly larger tree to cut down in 30 years and the health of the entire resource base is not their first priority. However, we DO expect the health of the entire resource base to be the first priority of those in charge of OUR public lands.

Please put the long term good of all before the short sighted use of herbicides on public land. Continue to set the wonderful example you've been doing, protect our shared resource and let us feel safe when we take our grandchildren to visit our favorite BLM places on both sides of the Cascades.

Sincerely

Mary Moffat and David Webb  
Landowners  
Walton, Oregon