



DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
Navajo Nation Integrated Weed Management Plan
VOLUME I – DRAFT PEIS
July 2021

ON BEHALF OF:
THE NAVAJO NATION

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS NAVAJO REGION
NAVAJO NATION
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT - NEW MEXICO
NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE - ARIZONA
ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
UTAH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
SAN JUAN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
NAVAJO NATION SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



Estimated Lead Agency Total Costs Associated with Development of this EIS: \$ 511,298.78

Welcome to the Virtual Public Hearing

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
NAVAJO REGION



Thank you for joining us.
We will begin shortly.

Music by Josh Woodward, Branches, Creative Commons

Instructions for the Meeting

- Please mute your microphone during the meeting.
- If you have issues with Zoom, you may call-in at (720)707-2699.
 - Meeting ID: 819 8225 9301
 - Participant ID: 399029
- Please use the chat if you are having technical issues or if you would like to ask a question.
- This meeting is being recorded. A copy will be available on the project website after the meeting.

Introduction

Bureau of Indian Affairs Navajo Region
Regional Director
Gregory C. Mehojah



"A strategic and focused approach to weed management can improve the BIA's coordination and planning for weed projects across the Navajo Nation."

Presentation Objectives

1. Overview of the NEPA process
2. Review the Integrated Weed Management Plan and Draft PEIS.
3. Receive substantive comments.



Legal Authorities

- Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-629)
- Plant Protection Act of 2000 (P.L. 106-224)
- American Indian Agriculture Resource Management Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-413)
- Bureau of Indian Affairs Regulations (25 C.F.R Parts 162, 166, 167, and 169)
- Navajo Nation Agriculture and Livestock (Title 3 NNC)
- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (43 CFR Part 46)
- Council of Environmental Quality Regulations 40 CFR 1500-1508

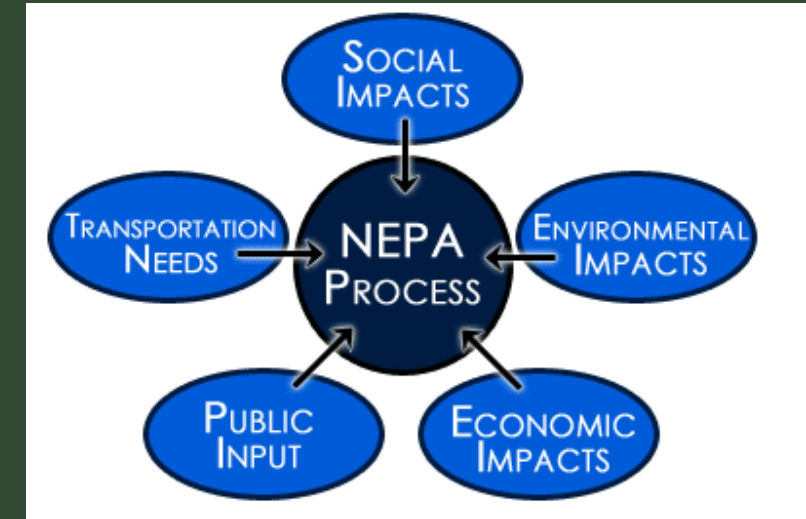
Presentation Overview

OUTLINE OF TOPICS



1. What is National Environmental Policy Act?
2. What is a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement?
3. Project Location
4. Purpose and Need
5. Cooperating Agencies
6. Public Involvement
7. Issues Identified
8. Alternatives Proposed
9. Resources Evaluated
10. Current Project Schedule
11. What is a Substantive Comment?
12. Opportunity to submit comments.

What is NEPA?



Federal Agencies

- Federal agencies
- Projects using federal funds
- Projects on federal land

Public Involvement

- Hear issues, concerns, and needs.
- Work with other agencies.
- Allow review and provide input.

We want to hear your voice.

Environmental Considerations

- Evaluate impacts of the action to the human environment.
- Incorporate in decision making process.

Analysis Disclosure

- Disclose analysis and findings to the public.
- Use of current relevant data, studies, and information.

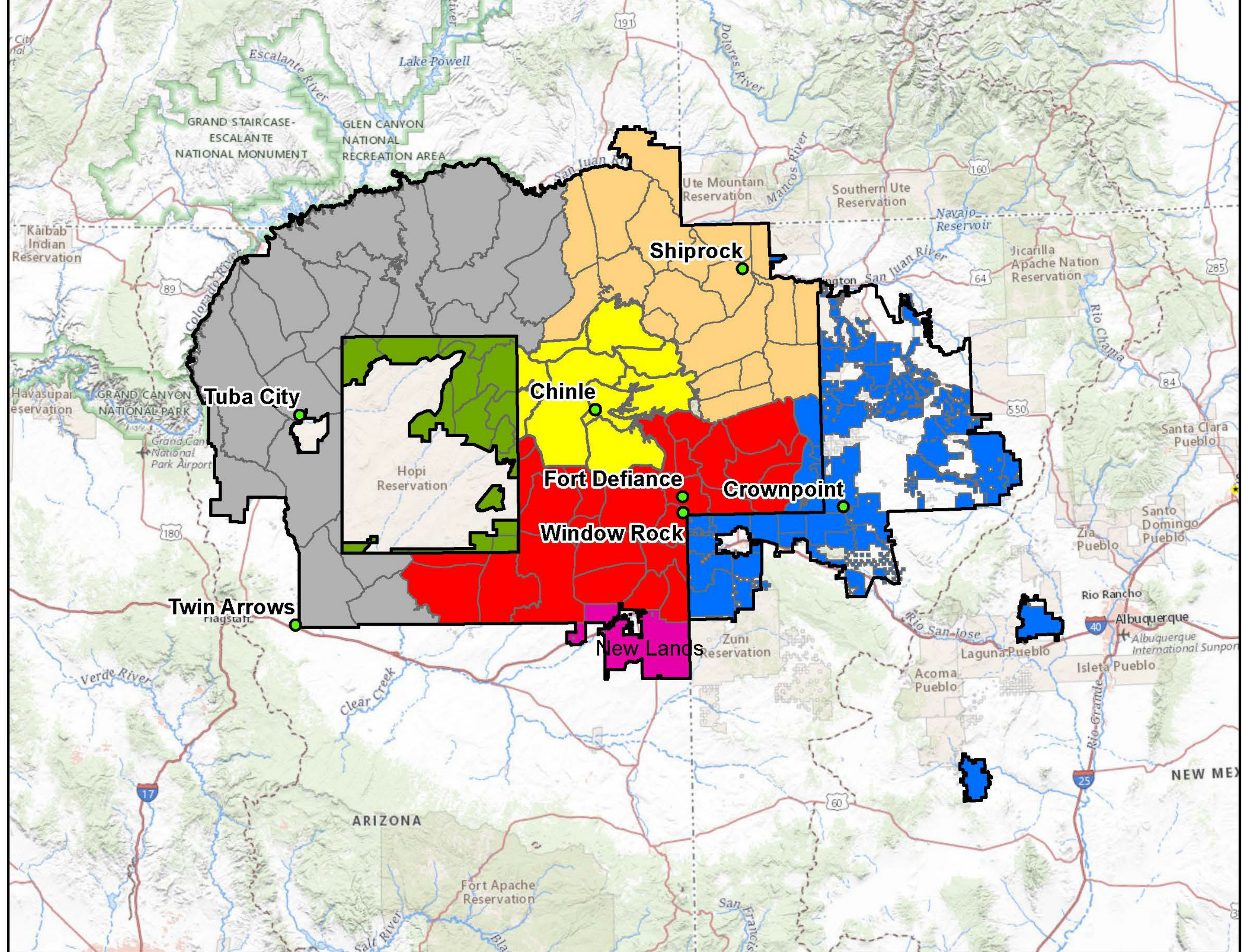
What is a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) required if action significantly affects the human environment.
- Programmatic approach provides limited information on specific treatments
- Broad resource impact analysis.
- Evaluates cumulative impacts from weed projects
- An integrated weed management plan is a generalized weed management approach.
- Individual projects will tier off with project-specific environmental assessments (EA).
- Streamline future NEPA compliance needs.



Legend

-  Navajo Nation Boundary
-  New Lands
-  Chinle Agency
-  Eastern Navajo Agency
-  Navajo Partitioned Lands
-  Fort Defiance Agency
-  Shiprock Agency
-  Western Navajo Agency



Project Need

- Weed populations expanding on the Navajo Nation
- Impact every habitat
- Affect the economic, historic, and cultural livelihood of the Navajo People
- Ecological impacts from weeds:
 - Alter soil temperatures
 - Increase soil salinity
 - Limit water availability
 - Change nutrient availability and cycling
 - Hinder native seed germination
 - Alter water infiltration
 - Change surface run-off

DRAFT PEIS FOR THE NAVAJO NATION INTEGRATED WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN
PUBLIC HEARING



Project Purpose

The purpose of the Integrated Weed Management Plan is to manage 45 noxious weed species on the Navajo Nation to improve ecological function by increasing native plant productivity and diversity, preventing further noxious weed spread, and enhancing wildlife habitat.

Each species will be managed based on the following goals:

- Prevention
- Eradication
- Containment
- Long-term eradication
- Local containment
- Monitoring



Cooperating Agency Engagement



NAVAJO NATION



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS)



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT – NEW MEXICO



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE (NRCS)



UTAH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



NAVAJO NATION SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS



SAN JUAN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



DRAFT PEIS FOR THE NAVAJO NATION INTEGRATED WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN
PUBLIC HEARING



Public Scoping

Original period: January 14, 2013 – February 28, 2013

Extended Period: March 1, 2013 – March 20, 2013

Updated Scoping: April 29 – May 29, 2021

- 🌿 **EARLY AND OPEN PROCESS TO INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN PLANNING**
- 🌿 **NOI PUBLISHED ON JANUARY 14, 2013**
 - 45-day Comment Period
 - Original close of February 27, 2013
- 🌿 **NOI TO EXTEND PUBLIC SCOPING PUBLISHED ON MARCH 8, 2013**
 - Additional 30-day Comment Period
 - New close of March 20, 2013
- 🌿 **PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS AT 11 LOCATIONS**
 - Five meetings from February 5–12, 2013
 - Six meetings from March 11–15, 2013
- 🌿 **A TOTAL OF 129 PEOPLE ATTENDED SCOPING**
- 🌿 **RECEIVED 45 COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**
- 🌿 **PUBLIC NOTICE FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENT PUBLISHED APRIL 29, 2021**
- 🌿 **6 WEB COMMENTS COLLECTED**

Issues Identified



SCOPING PERIOD COMMENTS

Received 51 comments
from the public and
Cooperating Agencies

ONE RELEVANT ISSUE

Use of Biocontrol
Biological control may
negatively impact
endangered species and cause
unforeseen ecological
changes.

NEW ALTERNATIVE

A No Biological Control
Alternative was added to
the Draft PEIS.

Project Alternatives

ALTERNATIVE 1 NO ACTION



ALTERNATIVE 2 PROPOSED ACTION



ALTERNATIVE 3 NO BIOLOGICAL CONTROL





Alternative 1

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

- Required by CFR 1502.8
- Continue current planning and implementation for weed management projects
- Limited coordination for weed projects
- Treats 21 noxious weed species
- Control primarily through chemical and mechanical methods
- Chemical treatments use 11 U.S. EPA-approved herbicides

Alternative 2

PROPOSED ACTION

- Implements the Navajo Nation Integrated Weed Management Plan
- Treats 45 noxious weed species
- Treat up to 50,000 acres annually over 10 years
- Treatment methods include:
 - Manual
 - Mechanical
 - Biological control
 - Cultural control
 - Chemical (use of 20 U.S. EPA-approved herbicides)
- Based on priority areas and species
- Adaptive management
- Annual weed mapping and monitoring
- Established protocols for planning and communication



Alternative 2

PROPOSED ACTION

Category A - HIGH	
COMMON NAME	SPECIES
Leafy spurge	<i>Euphorbia esula</i>
African rue	<i>Peganum harmala</i>
Fountaingrass	<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>
Squarrose knapweed	<i>Centaurea virgata</i>
Tree of Heaven	<i>Ailantus altissima</i>
Blue mustard	<i>Chorispora tenella</i> (Pall.) DC.
Ravenna grass	<i>Saccharum ravennae</i>
Yellow starthistle	<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>
Bull thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Dalmatian toadflax	<i>Linaria dalmatica</i>
Musk thistle	<i>Carduus nutans</i>
Perennial pepperweed	<i>Lepidum latifolium</i>
Scotch thistle	<i>Onopordum acanthium</i>
Spotted knapweed	<i>Centaurea maculosa</i> , <i>C. stoebe</i>
Tall Whitetop	<i>Cardaria draba</i>
Sahara mustard	<i>Brassica tournefortii</i>
Uruguyan pampas grass	<i>Cortaderia sellonana</i>
Yellow nutsedge	<i>Cyperus esculentus</i>
Sulphur cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla rect L.</i>
Common Mediterranean grass	<i>Schismus barbatus</i>
Tamarisk, Saltcedar	<i>Tamarix</i> spp., including hybrids

Category B - MEDIUM	
COMMON NAME	SPECIES
Camelthorn	<i>Alhagi camelorum</i>
Halogeton	<i>Halogeton glomeratus</i>
Siberian elm	<i>Ulmus pumila</i>
Tamarisk, Saltcedar	<i>Tamarix ramosissima</i>
Diffuse knapweed	<i>Centaurea diffusa</i>
Russian knapweed	<i>Acroptilon repens</i>
Russian Olive	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>
Johnsongrass	<i>Sorghum halepense</i>
Category C – LOW	
COMMON NAME	SPECIES
Cheatgrass	<i>Bromus tectorum</i>
Field bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
Jointed goatgrass	<i>Aegilops cylindrica</i>
Puncturevine	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>
Rescuegrass	<i>Bromus catharticus</i>
Ripgut brome	<i>Bromus diandrus</i>
Smooth brome	<i>Bromus inermis</i>
Bald brome	<i>Bromus racemosus</i>
Red brome	<i>Bromus rubens</i>
Spreading wallflower	<i>Erysimum repandum</i>
Horehound	<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>
California burclover	<i>Medicago polymorpha</i>
Russian thistle	<i>Salsola collina</i> , <i>S. paulsenii</i> , <i>S. tragus</i>
Field brome	<i>Bromus arvensis</i>
Kochia	<i>Bassia scoparia</i> , <i>K. scoparia</i>



Mitigation Measures

- Coordinate with local communities, federal and tribal agencies, and local experts.
- Avoidance measures for federal and tribally listed species, open water, cultural resources, fossils, and wells.
- Safety measures to protect workers and the general public.
- Required PPE and safety briefings
- Project planning to identify issues, concerns, and management needs.
- Apply to Alternatives 2 and 3



Alternative 3

NO BIOLOGICAL CONTROL ALTERNATIVE

- Rely on manual, mechanical, cultural, and chemical treatments, but excludes biological control
- All treatments will have same acre limits, less 5,000 acres proposed for biological control
- Treats up to 45,000 acres annually over 10-year period
- Adaptive management
- Same planning and communication protocols
- Same mitigation measures as Alternative 2

Alternatives Not Analyzed

ALTERNATIVE 4 – NO CHEMICAL

- Suggested by the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Significantly decrease acres treated annually.
- Chemical treatments cover large areas.
- Some weeds are best managed with chemical treatments
- Funding less likely without chemical treatments.
- Would not meet the purpose and need.

ALTERNATIVE 5 – GRAZING MANAGEMENT

- Grazing has increased weeds.
- No long-term reduction for noxious weeds.
- Grazing deferment may not result in native plants regrowth, especially in heavily impacted areas.
- Does not address weeds in non-range areas.
- Would not meet the purpose and need.
- Address through an Agricultural Resource Management Plan



Resources Evaluated



PALEONTOLOGY



SOILS, WATER, AND AIR



VEGETATION



WILDLIFE



AGRICULTURE



PUBLIC HEALTH



SOCIOECONOMICS



CULTURAL RESOURCES



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



AREAS WITH SPECIAL DESIGNATION



Resources Evaluated



Impacts anticipated for vegetation, soils, wildlife, with secondary impacts to cultural and paleontological resources.



Impacts short-lived during and immediately after with long-term improvement over time.



Impacts would be minimized through mitigation measures, best management practices, and coordination.

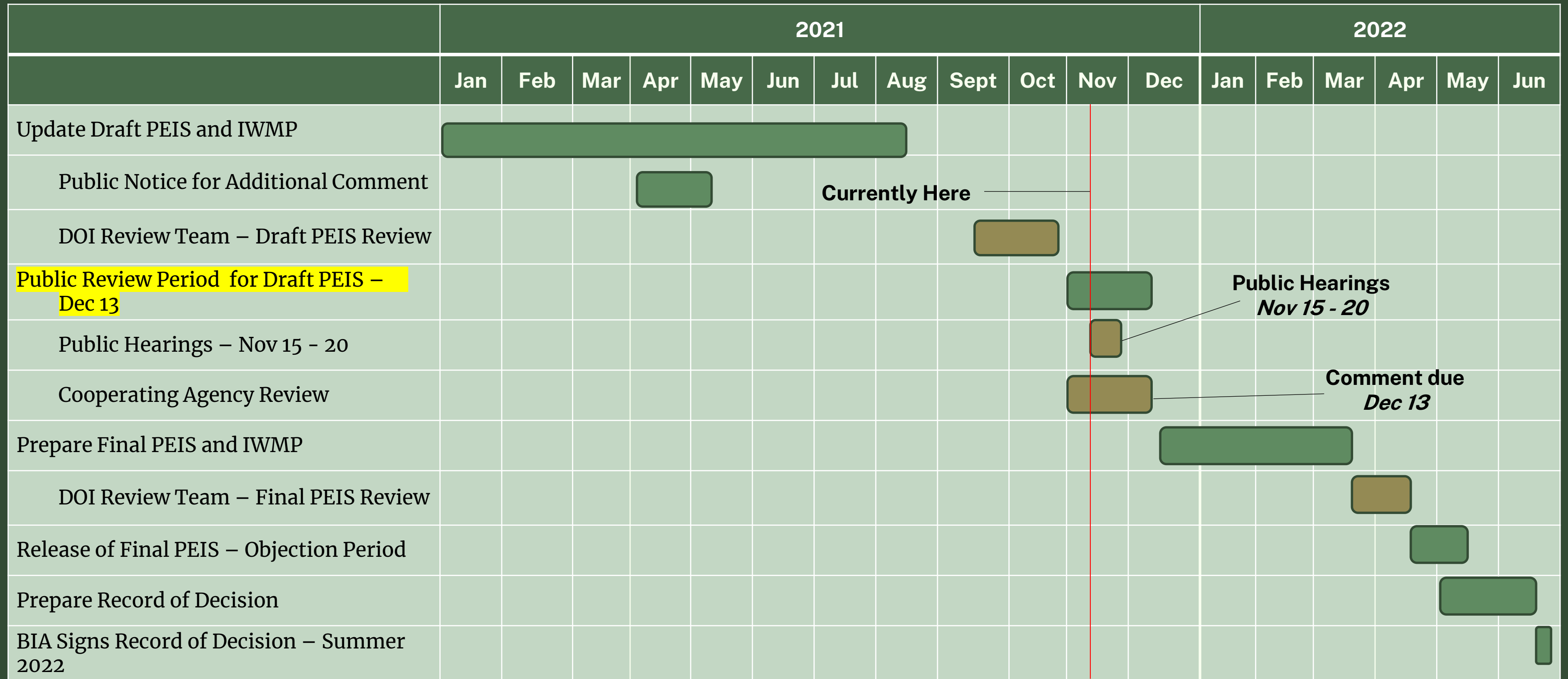


Benefits to socioeconomics, wildlife habitat, and native vegetation.



Review the Draft PEIS for more detailed information.

Project Schedule



Upcoming Public Hearings

- Tuesday, November 16, 10:00 am
- Wednesday, November 17, 6:00 pm
- Thursday, November 18, 6:00 pm
- Saturday, November 20, 10:00 am

If you would like to attend, please register at:

<https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/navajo/navajo-nation-integrated-weed-management-plan>



SUBSTANTIVE COMMENTS

- Submit by December 13, 2021
- Presents new information
- Identify weaknesses in analysis
- Suggests reasonable alternatives

NOT SUBSTANTIVE

- No data to support changes
- Does not apply to project or area
- Vague, open-ended questions
- Value-based comments

Substantive Comments

OTHER TIPS

- Be specific on improvements
- References items in the document
- Provide evidence

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS

- BIA will respond to issues raised
- Similar issues grouped together
- Responses will review proposed adjustments to analysis

Substantive Comment Examples

SUBSTANTIVE

- Have you considered the following study in the analysis?
- The analysis is based on old data. Please use the updated data from ...
- This company has introduced a new herbicide for treating weeds. Can you include it in the analysis based on the following studies?
- This group started a new weed management initiative. Have you incorporated their work in the plan?

NOT SUBSTANTIVE

- I like camelthorn and I don't want you to treat it.
- This study is wrong.
- I don't like the idea of using bugs to treat plants.
- Can the plan include measures for managing [unrelated topic]?
- I moved recently and need to update my address for my range permit.
- Can I treat weeds using RoundUp?

Way to Stay Informed

- Facebook @BureauIndAffrs
- Tweet us at @BureauIndAffrs
- Email us at nniwmp@bia.gov
- Phone: 505-863-8287
- Visit the project website at:



<https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/navajo/navajo-nation-integrated-weed-management-plan>

How to Submit a Comment

- Comments will be received from October 29 to December 13, 2021
- Submit written comments via fax, email, or mail.
- Comments may also be submitted using the form on the project website.
- In the subject line, please include:
 - “Comments on the NNIWMP PEIS”
- Comments received via social media (i.e. Twitter or Facebook) will not be considered.
- Please include your name and a return address on all written comments.

TO ACCESS THE DRAFT PEIS

<https://www.bia.gov/regional-offices/navajo/navajo-nation-integrated-weed-management-plan>

How to Submit a Comment

Email: nniwmp@bia.gov

Fax: (505) 863-8374

By Mail:

Mr. Leonard Notah
Regional NEPA Coordinator
Bureau of Indian Affairs – Navajo Regional Office
Branch of Environmental Quality Compliance and Review
P.O. Box 1060
Gallup, New Mexico 87301

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