DECISION NOTICE

AND

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

2014 Kudzu Management Project

For Indiana

By

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology

July 2014

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INTRODUCTION

This document accompanies the Environmental Assessment (EA) titled "2014 Kudzu Management Project for Indiana", written by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). The EA is a site-specific analysis of the potential effects of implementing the project, which is referenced as the proposed action. Although no federal assistance is being utilized for this project, procedures outlined by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) are being used as a guideline in the assessment of this proposed action. The NEPA process provides a mechanism to identify 1) issues and concerns from the public, 2) reasonable and prudent alternatives for the proposed action, 3) potential environmental impacts of the alternatives, and 4) appropriate mitigation measures. In addition to the EA, Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, the IDNR requires that a Work and Safety Plan be completed before the project can be implemented.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

The IDNR proposes treating 53 sites in 24 counties in Indiana with a total treatment acreage of 61.35 acres.

Glyphosate would be used on three sites totaling 1.1 acres. Clopyralid would be used on eleven sites totaling 8.17 acres. A combination of clopyralid and glyphosate would be used on 15 sites totaling 12.28 acres. Metsulfuron methyl would be used on three sites totaling 2.08 acres. A combination of clopyralid, glyphosate and metsulfuron-methyl would be used on 12 sites totaling 27.58 acres. A combination of glyphosate and metsulfuron-methyl would be used on four sites totaling 2.48 acres. A combination of clopyralid and metsulfuron-methyl would be used on one site of 0.38 acres. Triclopyr would be used on three sites totaling 5.61 acres. Clopyralid and triclopyr would be used on one site of 1.67 acres.

The objectives of this proposed project are to; 1) eradicate kudzu populations from the proposed treatment sites to prevent populations from spreading in the State of Indiana, 2) manage kudzu population growth in the proposed treatment sites if eradication is not feasible, and 3) decrease kudzu leaf surface area to reduce potential reservoirs for invasive insects and pathogens.

Clopyralid, glyphosate, metsulfuron-methyl and/or triclopyr would be applied once in accordance with label directions when kudzu plants are most vulnerable to herbicide treatments, which is usually between early August and late September. All applications would be applied from the ground. IDNR would administer the overall operational, technical and administrative aspects of the project and well as provide 100% of the funding.

DECISION

The EA discusses alternatives for treating kudzu populations in Indiana. The EA document is a site-specific environmental analysis conducted by the IDNR.

The EA includes a site-specific discussion of:

1. Purpose and need for action
2. Alternatives, including the proposed action
3. Affected environment
4. Environmental consequences

The six alternatives that were considered in detail in this analysis were:

1. No action (no proposed project)
2. Treatment with clopyralid
3. Treatment with glyphosate
4. Treatment with metsulfuron-methyl
5. Treatment with triclopyr
6. Treatment with clopyralid, glyphosate, metsulfuron-methyl and/or triclopyr

Based upon the analysis documented in this EA, it is my decision that the objectives of the proposed action and the needs of the people of Indiana are best met by
Alternative 6 – Treatment with clopyralid, glyphosate, metsulfuron-methyl and/or triclopyr.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

The mission of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology is to manage plant and apiary pests for the preservation and protection of cultivated and natural resources, and to enhance the quality and appreciation of the environment. The decision to proceed with this project is consistent with this mission statement and the objectives of the Indiana Invasive Species Council (Indiana Code 15-16-10). Indiana Administrative Code 312 IAC 18-3-16(f) declares that kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*) is a pest in the State of Indiana and is subject to elimination from a property.

My decision to choose Alternative 6 as the preferred alternative is based upon compliance with and the authority granted by this state law.

I did not choose the other alternatives for the following reasons:

Alternative 1 – No action (no proposed project). The no action alternative is not selected because it does not meet my responsibility to assist the State of Indiana in protecting Indiana lands from invasive species. The no action alternative does not meet the requirements of Indiana Administrative Code 312 IAC 18-3-16(f) which states that kudzu is subject to elimination from a property. This alternative is likely to result in more rapid spread of kudzu populations within Indiana and increased kudzu leaf surface area to serve as a host for destructive insects and plant pathogens.

Alternative 2 – Treatment with clopyralid. Success is likely with this alternative at all sites and at varying density populations. However, 18 of the 53 proposed treatment sites have water sources located within the site and clopyralid alone cannot be used at those sites.

Alternative 3 – Treatment with glyphosate. Success is likely with Glyphosate alone at 41 of the 53 proposed treatment sites which have medium to low density populations. However, 12 of the proposed sites have high density populations and success is not likely at these sites. Therefore, glyphosate for all sites is not selected.

Alternative 4 – Treatment with metsulfuron-methyl. Success is likely with this alternative at low density sites that have been treated previously. However, broad spectrum treatments at all sites would increase the risk of non target injury. Therefore, metsulfuron-methyl for all sites is not selected.

Alternative 5 – Treatment with triclopyr. Success is likely with this alternative at all density level sites. However, broad spectrum treatments at all sites would increase the risk of non target injury. Therefore, triclopyr for all sites is not selected.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

I have reviewed the EA and carefully considered the issues and concerns regarding this proposed project. Based on the site-specific environmental analysis documented in the EA, I have determined that implementing this decision in the manner described will not cause significant environmental impacts or adverse effects. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not needed for this project. This decision was made after considering the context and intensity of the project.

There are no significant effects after using a systematic approach in considering the context and intensity of the project (Indiana Code 13-12-3 and 13-12-4). The site-specific EA evaluates the environmental consequences (effects) of the proposed action in the context of local and regional issues. Kudzu treatments would occur on 53 sites in 24 counties, within a total assessed land area of approximately 61.35 acres. The areas of treatment are only a small portion of the total acres in these counties.

The significance of any effects is minimal for the following reasons:

1. Impacts from the applications are limited to the treatment areas. Treatment of the kudzu populations will benefit the potential for the proposed sites to be restored back to a native species diversification.

2. There is no indication that the general public will experience any adverse health or safety effects from clopyralid, glyphosate, metsulfuron-methyl and/or triclopyr. A Work and Safety Plan is completed before implementation of the project.
3. No historic or cultural resources are known to occur on any of the proposed sites. Treatments are not applied to croplands. Treatments are not applied directly to

streams, rivers or ponds. There is no indication that any significant impacts will occur to wetlands or ecologically critical areas.

4. An Integrated Pest Management approach using a combination of herbicides specific to each site will be used. This approach will help to maintain the quality of the environment and manage kudzu as part of a restoration of the land. A total of 58 landowners were contacted and notified of the proposed treatment. The notification process to landowners involved a combination of direct personal contact, phone and mailings. Of these landowners, 51 voluntarily signed an agreement allowing the proposed treatment to occur on their property. Seven additional landowners gave verbal permission allowing treatments to occur on their property. Clopyralid, glyphosate, metsulfuron-methyl and triclopyr are registered for treatment of kudzu and for use in the State of Indiana and will be applied according to label requirements. This meets the provisions of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act of 1947 (7 USC 136) as amended.

5. There are no known unique or unknown risks identified with this project.

6. The decision to proceed is based upon the results of a site-specific environmental analysis. Decisions regarding future actions will be made in a similar manner.

7. The site specific analysis in this environmental assessment demonstrated that no cumulative effects were identified in the 53 proposed sites.

8. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology reviewed the proposed treatment sites and determined that no historic properties will be altered, demolished, or removed by the proposed project.

9. The IDNR Environmental Unit was consulted and made recommendations regarding a few of the proposed treatment sites to address potential impacts to nontarget species. The Northern Crawfish Frog has been recorded near the Sullivan 2 site. The application of glyphosate or clopyralid will be avoided at the Sullivan 2 site in order to avoid potential impact to this species. Triclopyr will be applied in a selective manner. IDNR Environmental Unit stated concerns regarding the application of herbicides directly to water, especially at sites like Orange 2, Jennings 13, Jennings 14 and Washington 1. Herbicide applications at these and all sites will not be released directly into water and wind direction will be considered to avoid any drift to non target areas. The IDNR Early Coordination Unit did not anticipate any impacts to other species as a result of this project.

10. The proposed action complies and is consistent with all applicable state, local and federal laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment. The action is a project that is planned, funded and will be implemented by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

This project may be implemented after this document has been signed.

July 9, 2014

Philip T. Marshall, State Entomologist
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology
402 West Washington Street, IGC South, Room W290
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Date