

Appendix I

Noxious Weed and Pest Management Plan

TWO RIVERS WIND PROJECT

COUNTY WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN

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1.0 Introduction

Two Rivers Wind LLC (Two Rivers Wind) is proposing to develop the Two Rivers Wind Project (the “Project”) on approximately 15,657 acres (the “Project Area”) near the Town of Medicine Bow in unincorporated Carbon County, Wyoming. The Project Area is composed of predominately private fee lands, with interspersed parcels administered by the State of Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments and the Bureau of Land Management Rawlins Field Office (BLM RFO). See **Figure 1** for a layout of the proposed facilities.

1.1 Plan Purpose

The purpose of this Weed Management Plan (Plan) is to prescribe methods to prevent, mitigate, and control the spread of noxious and invasive weeds during construction and operation of the Project on private and state lands. For the purpose of this Plan, the Project Area is defined by the 15,657 acres of private and state land, with the impact area being limited to the acres of temporary and permanent disturbance within the Project Area. A separate Weed Management Plan for BLM surface has been submitted to the BLM RFO with the Project Plan of Development (POD).

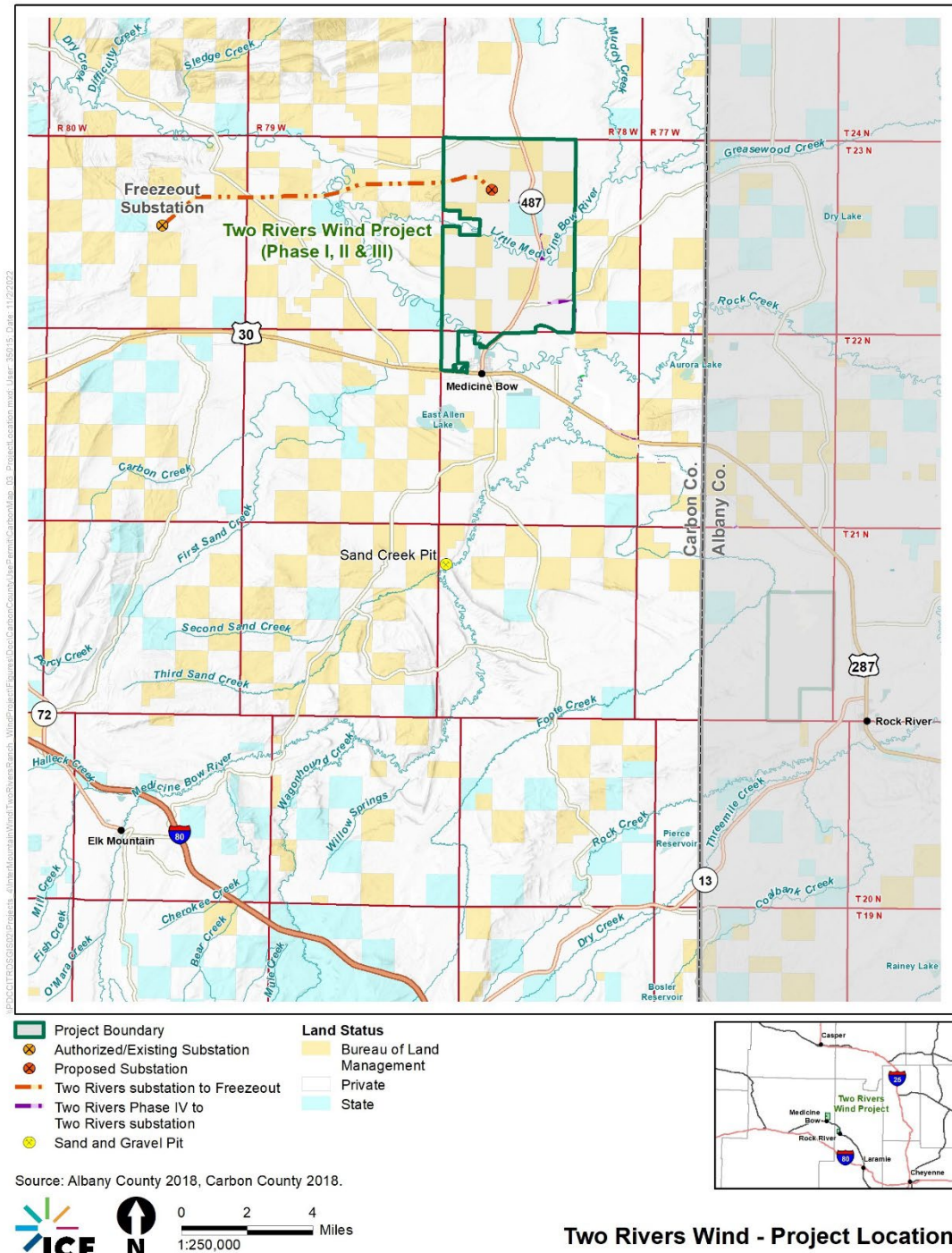
Development of this Plan incorporates approaches recommended by The Nature Conservancy (Tu and Meyers-Rice 2001) and the Colorado Natural Areas Program (CNAP 2000).

1.2 Laws, Regulations, and Guidance

The operator and its contractors will adhere to the following laws, regulations, and guidance related to weed management planning and herbicide use and handling:

- Plant Protection Act of 2000 (7 U.S.C. 7701 et seq.)
- Noxious Weed Control and Eradication Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. 7781 et seq.)
- Executive Order 13751 – Safeguarding the Nation from the Impacts of Invasive Species (2016) and Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species (1999)
- Wyoming Weed and Pest Control Act (Title 11, Chapter 5, Article 1)

Figure 1. Project Overview



2.0 Invasive and Noxious Weed Species

Federal Invasive Species Executive Order 13751 defines an invasive species as a non-native organism whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. A designated noxious weed means the weeds, seeds, or other plant parts that are considered detrimental, destructive, injurious, or poisonous, either by virtue of their direct effect, as carriers of diseases, or parasites that exist within this state, and are on the designated list, which is formed by joint resolution of the Wyoming Board of Agriculture (WBA) and the Wyoming Weed and Pest Council (WWPC). A “declared weed” means any plant which the WBA and the WWPC have found, either by virtue of its direct effect, or as a carrier of disease or parasites, to be detrimental to the general welfare of persons residing within the district (county) (WWPC 2018). Designated noxious weeds in the state of Wyoming and declared weeds in Carbon County are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Designated Noxious Weeds in the State of Wyoming and Declared Weeds in Carbon County

Common Name	Scientific Name
State of Wyoming	
Field bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Leafy spurge	<i>Euphorbia esula</i>
Perennial sowthistle	<i>Sonchus arvensis</i>
Quackgrass	<i>Agropyron repens</i>
Hoary cress (whitetop)	<i>Cardaria draba</i> and <i>C. pubescens</i>
Perennial pepperweed (giant whitetop)	<i>Lepidium latifolium</i>
Ox-eye daisy	<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>
Skeletonleaf bursage	<i>Franseria discolor</i>
Russian knapweed	<i>Centaurea repens</i>
Yellow toadflax	<i>Linaria vulgaris</i>
Dalmatian toadflax	<i>Linaria dalmatica</i>
Scotch thistle	<i>Onopordum acanthium</i>
Musk thistle	<i>Carduus nutans</i>
Common burdock	<i>Arctium minus</i>
Plumeless thistle	<i>Carduus acanthoides</i>
Dyers woad	<i>Isatis tinctoria</i>
Houndstongue	<i>Cynoglossum officinale</i>
Spotted knapweed	<i>Centaurea maculosa</i>
Diffuse knapweed	<i>Centaurea diffusa</i>
Purple loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>
Saltcedar (tamarisk)	<i>Tamarix</i> spp.
Common St. Johnswort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>
Common tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>
Russian olive	<i>Elaeagnus angustifolia</i>
Black Henbane	<i>Hyoscyamus niger</i>
Common mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>

Common Name	Scientific Name
Yellow starthistle	<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>
Ventenata	<i>Ventenata dubia</i>
Medusahead rye	<i>Taeniatherum caput-medusae</i>
Carbon County	
Cheatgrass / Downy brome	
Plains larkspur / Geyer larkspur	<i>Delphinium geyeri</i>
Halogeton	<i>Halogeton glomeratus</i>
Wyeth's lupine	<i>Lupinus wyethii</i>
Plains pricklypear	<i>Opuntia polycantha</i>
Common cocklebur	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i>

Sources: Wyoming Weed and Pest Council 2018 and Carbon County Weed and Pest 2018

Noxious and invasive weeds can move into disturbed areas and dominate or disrupt natural communities or restoration projects. These weeds compete with native species for soil, water, and other limiting resources. Weed species are often able to out-compete native vegetation and can form monocultures. This degrades the value of agricultural and natural resources, including wildlife habitat. Management of noxious and invasive weeds is a priority during the construction, operation, maintenance, and reclamation activities for the Project.

2.1 Current Weed Distribution

Weed management is a cooperative effort between the surface landowners (BLM, State of Wyoming, private landowners), grazing lessees, and the County Weed and Pest Control Districts. The entire Project area has not specifically been surveyed for invasive and noxious weeds and some of the data collected to date is from incidental sightings. The absence of recorded weeds does not infer that areas lack invasive species, but that these areas may not have been surveyed. A weed survey will be conducted prior to issuance of the ROW grant.

Based upon incidental observations made during other baseline surveys, three weed species have been identified within the proposed Project area: 1) Canada thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), 2) thistle (*Carduus* spp.), and 3) cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*). Other species of concern that are known to be in close proximity include: saltcedar (*Tamarix* spp.), halogeton (*Halogeton glomeratus*), knapweed (*Centaurea* spp.), leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*), black henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*), dalmatian toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*), and perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*).

The occurrence of weeds is generally associated with drainages, water features, and disturbed areas. Weed mapping for the Project area will be performed prior to construction so that weeds can be treated, avoided, and/or weedy topsoil can be segregated during construction. Per discussions with the Carbon County Weed and Pest Supervisor on November 16, 2022, Two Rivers Wind will provide the results of the weed mapping to Carbon County after the field investigation has been completed.

3.0 Weed Management

Management of noxious and invasive weeds will occur for the life of the Project. Weed occurrences within the Project area will be identified and delineated. Weed management will follow the outline established in this Plan and will be implemented prior to surface-disturbing activities for construction, during operation and maintenance activities, and during reclamation. The efficiency of the prescribed control measures will be evaluated throughout the Project area and all phases of activity.

Weed management for the Project will be dynamic, and will include the following actions:

- Establish and record weed management goals.
- Identify weed species that prevent these goals from being reached and prioritize those species based on the severity of their effects.
- Identify the presence, distribution, and density of weed species within the impact area. The impact area is the area of both temporary and permanent disturbance within the Project Area.
- Develop and implement weed control plans to prevent, control, and/or eliminate the effects of priority weed species and, if necessary, re-order priorities based on likely effects on target and/or non-target species.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the weed control plan through monitoring and use this information to modify and improve weed management goals, control priorities, methods, and plans.
- Monitoring of weed species will occur two times per year, in the spring and fall, to identify weed species and note population size. The monitoring will be done to verify if previous treatments were effective and to determine if continued treatments are necessary.

3.1 Weed Management Goals

The goal of weed management in the Project Area is to implement preventative measures to eliminate or minimize the spread of noxious and invasive plant species during the construction, operation, maintenance, and reclamation of the Project.

Two Rivers Wind will assist federal, state, and local agencies' weed control efforts; comply with requirements designed to prevent the spread of noxious and invasive plant species; and implement weed control measures within the impact areas that are identified to be of special concern.

Success standards will tier to those success standards identified in the approved Reclamation Plan. Part of successful revegetation includes maintaining native plant communities (>90% native/desired species) with minimal undesirable plant species (<10% invasive species), and zero tolerance standards for noxious weeds. Success standards and management goals are designed to be site-specific to each surface-disturbing activity and the surrounding vegetation.

3.2 Priorities for Weed Management

Landowners (private or state) will be consulted for weed management activities to occur on their lands. Weed species that present the greatest threat to achieving the management goals and that need to be controlled immediately are the highest priority. Factors to consider when establishing priorities and suggested rankings are described below.

- Current extent and expansion potential of the species/population in or near the Project area.
- Current and potential effects of the species.
- Value of the habitats/areas that the species infests or may potentially infest.
- Difficulty of control.

Once identified, a specific control plan for each priority species will be developed. The specific control plan will identify species in need of controlling, treatment locations, period of control, methods to use, and monitoring.

3.3 Weed Inventory

The presence, distribution, and cover of noxious and invasive weeds in the Project Area will be assessed and documented through a weed inventory and associated mapping, prior construction activities. Discussion with private landowners and the CWP offices will occur to understand the presence of weed species within the Project Area. Data will be collected using handheld data-logger units and geo-referenced using global positioning system (GPS) locations and delineated shapefiles. This information will be used to supplement the specific control plan for each priority species and assist in monitoring efforts.

3.4 Weed Management Actions

Weeds spread through a variety of ways including vehicles, construction equipment, livestock, and wildlife. The spread of noxious and invasive weeds is a significant concern in projects that involve any surface-disturbing activities. Measures must be taken to prevent, control, and/or eliminate weed species; and in areas where prevention is not possible, active management and/or control measures must be put in place. Best management practices (BMP) are necessary to ensure that existing weed occurrences are appropriately identified and controlled, subsequent spread is prevented, and new populations of noxious weeds do not emerge.

Two Rivers Wind will implement the following BMPs and protective measures for the control of noxious and invasive plant species at the Project Area as appropriate (BLM 2008; WRRRC 2010):

- Only approved, certified weed-free seeds will be used;
- The Project Area will be monitored for noxious and invasive weed species;
- Weeds will be controlled and treated (vehicles and equipment will be washed when entering and leaving a weed infested area);
- Construction equipment will be washed;

- Weed occurrences will be marked during construction;
- Employees will be trained on noxious and invasive plant species awareness and measures to prevent the spread of weeds; and
- Coordination with landowners and agencies to conduct weed management.

3.5 Prevention

Prevention is the most cost-effective approach to noxious and invasive weed management. Two Rivers Wind will implement the following measures to prevent the spread of noxious and invasive weeds within the Project:

- The owner's construction manager will incorporate an environmental training PowerPoint presentation into the site orientation for the construction contractor. The environmental training PowerPoint will describe the goals and best management practices for noxious weed management, and the effects of weeds on agriculture, livestock, and wildlife. Information will be provided regarding weed identification, the importance of preventing the spread of noxious and invasive weeds in areas not infested, and methods to control the proliferation of weeds already present.
- In areas where infestations were identified and flagged in the field, the contractor will stockpile cleared vegetation and salvaged topsoil adjacent to the area from which they were stripped to eliminate the transport of soil-borne noxious and invasive weed propagules. These weed-infested stockpiles will be marked with clearly visible signage until reclamation. Weed infested soil and vegetative matter will be disposed of at an approved facility or location.
- Vehicles and earth moving equipment will be washed prior to entering the Project for the first time and will be rewashed after any off road travel through identified and flagged noxious and invasive weed infestation areas. The weed area will be surrounded by silt fence and a portable vehicle washer will be used to wash equipment within the boundary of the weed area. The contractor will inspect vehicles and earth moving equipment prior to leaving the weed area and ensure that mud and vegetation have been adequately removed from vehicles and equipment.
- Wash station design will be similar to the portable vehicle washer described in the MTDC Portable Vehicle Washer Technical Report 0434-2819-MTDC, as shown in **Figure 2**.
- Locations of wash stations will be determined following completion of the weed inventory. Vehicle and earth moving equipment will be thoroughly power washed with an emphasis on cleaning wheels, wheel wells, bumpers, and underbody of the vehicle where most mud and dirt collects. Wastewater shall be disposed of at an approved facility or location. Compressed air will not be used for cleaning equipment.
- The wash station pad or mat will be bermed to prevent water runoff that may carry soil, seeds, or petroleum contamination off the wash station site (gravel ground cover would be used in place of a pad or mat for winter months, to avoid personal injury due to slipping). Washing will also be located away from a storm water drainage or other ephemeral or intermittent drainage way to prevent untreated overflow from entering a surface water body.
- Silt fence will be installed along the perimeters of the work areas to help in preventing the spread of contaminated materials outside of the wash station location.

- Used/dirty water from the wash station will be collected through equipment such as a wet vac or hose and pumped into a plastic storage tank or storage bag located on a trailer or at the wash site. Dirty wash water could be filtered and recycled for re-use, or hauled off to the appropriate wastewater facility. Filtered mud and debris from the wash station will be disposed of at an approved facility or location. In the event that soils at wash stations are contaminated by a spill or leak of petroleum products, clean-up activities will be initiated immediately and contaminated soil will be removed and disposed of at an approved disposal facility.
- Water tanks and washers will be kept from freezing. Options include using a portable water heater or saline solution to keep the washer or storage tank from freezing. Washer equipment may also be flushed and drained following use to prevent freezing.
- Two Rivers Wind will require that the contractors use straw or hay bales for sediment barrier installations or mulch distribution are certified weed-free. If certified weed-free bales are unavailable, alternative certified weed-free sediment barrier installations will be used.
- The contractors will be required to use of certified weed-free gravel.
- Two Rivers Wind will implement stabilization and/or reclamation of disturbed lands immediately following construction, as outlined in the Reclamation Plan.
- Reseeding will occur following site disturbance as set forth in the Reclamation Plan. Revegetation with native seed mixes provides soil stabilization, promotes the establishment of native plant communities, and potentially prevents the spread of noxious and invasive weeds from competition of native plants.
- Disturbed ground may require chemical or mechanical weed control before weeds go to seed.

Early detection and rapid response (EDRR) is an important weed management strategy. This strategy intends to employ a variety of survey methods in order to detect new invasive species. EDRR prevents invasive species from becoming established and difficult to control or eliminate. Frequent or recurrent monitoring along with repeated treatments to the invasive species is used to ensure successful eradication.

Figure 2. Typical Wash Station



3.6 Treatment Methods

Two Rivers Wind will implement noxious and invasive weed control measures and BMPs in accordance with existing regulations and landowner agreements. Within the Project Area, general pre- and post-reclamation noxious and invasive weed control will be conducted using herbicide treatment methods. Treatment methods other than herbicide application, such as cultural, mechanical, biological, and enhancement measures, will be considered during the reclamation process to facilitate weed control.

All designated and declared weed species will be treated. Two particular species that the Carbon County Weed and Pest Supervisor stated will likely occur and require treatment within the Project Area are Cheatgrass and Halogeton. Two Rivers Wind will also coordinate with landowners or a third party weed contractor to determine if any other weed species will require treatment.

3.6.1 Herbicide

Herbicide application will be used to treat identified noxious and/or potentially problematic invasive plant populations, in accordance with existing regulations and landowner agreements, in an effort to reduce infestations prior to soil disturbance caused by construction. Post-reclamation strategies will entail either herbicide application or mechanical treatment of noxious and invasive weeds in infestation areas depending on the phenology of the weed species. Areas to be seeded will be pre-treated with an herbicide application prior to seeding. Herbicide application will occur either following seedbed establishment or after allowing two seasons of growth. Mechanical controls will be used between herbicide treatments to provide short-term control and minimize weed establishment. For most weeds, herbicide spraying is most effective in early spring.

Coordination between landowners and the CWP offices will be carried out to determine which

herbicides will be used and all herbicides will be applied in accordance with their label requirements. The effects to special status species (federally listed as threatened or endangered) will be considered when designing herbicide treatment programs. A selective herbicide and a wick or backpack sprayer will be used to minimize risks to special status plants. Vegetation will not be treated with herbicide during time-sensitive periods (e.g., nesting and migration, sensitive life stages) for special status species in the treatment area. Other treatment methods (i.e., cultural or mechanical treatment) will be implemented during these periods.

Herbicide application is an effective means of reducing the size of noxious and invasive weed populations. Applications will be controlled to minimize effects on surrounding vegetation. In areas of dense infestation, a broader application will be used and a follow-up seeding program implemented. The timing of subsequent revegetation efforts will be based on the life/persistence of the selected herbicide.

On private lands herbicide applications may be applied by the private landowner or a third party weed contractor. If a third party weed contractor is utilized, they will be a certified commercial applicator(s) or be under the direct supervision of a certified applicator.

3.6.2 Cultural/Mechanical

Cultural control refers to management practices that seek to control weed species using techniques that influence the plant community through cultivation. This may include native plant seeding, burning, flooding, and limiting livestock grazing or recreational uses in infested areas.

Mechanical control includes mowing, chopping, and discing, which are very effective short-term controls. Repeating mechanical treatment weakens plants making them susceptible to disease and competition from other native plants and depletes food reserves. Mowing weeds in newly revegetated areas during the first season of establishment, prior to seed formation, could minimize weed establishment.

3.7 Monitoring

The purpose of the monitoring program is to document whether areas that have been reclaimed are progressing toward revegetation and ecosystem reconstruction. Part of successful revegetation includes maintaining native plant communities with minimal weed species. Monitoring of noxious and invasive weeds will be conducted concurrent with reclamation success monitoring. For the first five years, following the Project construction, noxious and invasive weeds will be monitored annually. Thereafter, noxious and invasive weed surveys will be conducted at least once every three years at appropriate times as directed by the authorized officer, or until the Project Area has reached reclamation success and is released from monitoring. Information from the noxious and invasive species monitoring surveys will be included in the annual report on reclamation status.

Infestations of noxious and invasive weeds noted during monitoring activities will be treated according to the methods described in this Plan. Small infestations will be treated locally with herbicide applications appropriate for the specific species. When a large infestation occurs or reoccurs, an evaluation will be performed to determine what led to the infestation, a specific weed control plan will be developed or modified, and a treatment strategy will be implemented. This evaluation will be made available to relevant noxious weed supervisory authorities.

3.8 Herbicide Handling and Safety

The use, storage, and disposal of herbicides will comply with all federal and state laws. Herbicide application will be conducted according to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards and will strictly follow herbicide label instructions as well as information gathered from the CWP offices. Private landowners, grazing lessees, or a third party weed contractor may perform herbicide applications and only in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. The landowner, grazing lessees, or third party weed contractor will provide information collected during the monitoring program regarding noxious weed infestations within and adjacent to the disturbance areas indicating where treatments have occurred.

Application of herbicides will be postponed if the following conditions are present:

- Wind velocity exceeds 10 mph.
- Snow or ice covers foliage of weeds.
- Precipitation is occurring or imminent.

Vehicle-mounted sprayers (e.g., handgun and boom) would be used primarily in open areas that are readily accessible by vehicle. Hand application methods (e.g., backpack spraying) that target individual plants would be used to treat small scattered weed populations in rough terrain. Calibration checks of the equipment will be conducted at the beginning of spraying and periodically thereafter to ensure the proper application rates are achieved.

Application of herbicides will follow these restrictions:

- Aerial spraying will not occur within 100 feet of surface water.
- Vehicle sprayers will not be used within 25 feet of surface water.
- Hand application (broadcast backpack spraying) will not occur within 10 horizontal feet of water.
- Herbicides would not be mixed in an area where an accidental spill could enter a water body or groundwater.

Herbicides would be transported to the Project site with the following provisions:

- Concentrate would be transported only in containers in a manner that would prevent tipping or spilling and in a compartment that is isolated from food, clothing, and safety equipment.

3.8.1 Worker Safety and Spill Reporting

All herbicide contractors would obtain and have readily available copies of the appropriate EPA Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for the herbicides being used. All reasonable precautions will be taken to avoid herbicide spills. Spill kits will be kept in the contractor vehicles and in herbicide storage areas to allow for quick and efficient response to spills. Herbicide spills would be reported in accordance with all applicable laws and requirements.

Response to an herbicide spill will vary with the size and location of the spill but general procedures will be, as follows:

- Assessing scene safety.
- Controlling traffic.

- Dressing the clean-up team in protective clothing.
- Stopping leaks.
- Containing the spilled material.
- Cleaning up and removing the spilled herbicide and contaminated adsorptive material and soil.
- Transporting the spilled herbicide and contaminated material to an authorized disposal site.
- Notifying landowner and Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality.

3.8.2 Herbicide Use

The use of herbicides shall comply with the Federal and state laws governing their proper transport, use, storage, and disposal. Further, their use shall only occur within any limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior.

The following is the sequence of events to be followed for using herbicides on private and state land:

- The primary species targeted for control will include the Wyoming Noxious Weed list as well as specific species of concern from the CWP offices.
- Any special conditions, such as sign posting requirements or notice to livestock grazers, will be noted.
- Coordination efforts prior to weed spraying between the CWP offices and private landowners will be encouraged to understand herbicides, both restricted use and nonrestrictive use. If a third party weed contractor is utilized, herbicides shall be applied only by personnel certified in the use of these herbicides or under the direct supervision of certified applicators (State of Wyoming Commercial Applicator's License).

4.0 Contractor Orientation and Site Control

Two Rivers Wind will provide information to its contractor to support compliance with environmental requirements, including noxious and invasive species management. Two Rivers Wind will work with CWP offices to develop appropriate material to provide to the construction manager so they will understand the expectations and applicable permit requirements, and how to incorporate them into their daily work activities. This information will be provided prior to working on-site.

Contractor orientation will include instruction related to the following:

- Two Rivers Wind's construction manager will incorporate an environmental training PowerPoint presentation into the site orientation for the construction contractor. The environmental training PowerPoint will describe the goals and best management practices for noxious weed management, and the effects of weeds on agriculture, livestock, and wildlife. Information will be provided regarding the importance of preventing the spread of noxious and invasive weeds in areas not infested and of controlling the proliferation of weeds already present.

- Weeds shall be controlled on Project-disturbed areas and native areas infested as direct result of the Project. The control methods shall be in accordance with the approved weed management plan and guidelines established by the EPA, state, and local authorities.
- In areas where infestations were identified and flagged in the field, the contractor will stockpile cleared vegetation and salvaged topsoil adjacent to the area from which they were stripped to eliminate the transport of soil-borne noxious and invasive weed propagules. These weed-infested stockpiles will be marked with clearly visible signage until reclamation.
- To minimize the potential for the introduction of new weeds, the contractor shall thoroughly power-wash construction equipment, including the under-carriage, before transporting them to the Project area. If portable wash units are utilized, waste water shall be properly handled and disposed. Compressed air shall not be used as a method for cleaning equipment.

5.0 References

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