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To the editor (all three papers):

The January 19th edition included an article: “Forest Service declares war on invasive species” heralding a “national strategy.” The “strategy” was prepared with the participation of Monsanto and Dow – major producers of toxic herbicides.

Forest Service managers wanted to hire Siskiyou County’s Agriculture Department to spray non-native plants within 10 feet of salmon streams. The Klamath Forest Alliance investigated and discovered:

- In spite of spraying some sites for 30 years, Siskiyou County’s Agriculture Department can not document eradicated “noxious weeds” on any site.
- The Forest Service was allowing the county to spray on public land without environmental review or monitoring.
- Examination of sites sprayed by the county showed that spraying (which is often done from four-wheel OHVs) had increased the rate of weed spread.
- The impacts claimed to native ecosystems were speculative.

Klamath National Forest Managers also refused to address the major sources of weed spread – livestock grazing, open roads and use of weed-infested gravel on roads.

Fortunately, the Regional Water Board refused to cave to Forest Service pressure to allow spraying next to streams and the Salmon River Restoration Council used volunteers to hand pull weeds next to the Salmon River.

From this and numerous other examples it is clear that the “War on weeds” is really a strategy to reintroduce toxic sprays on public lands. Because they are increasingly rejected by citizens concerned about cancer and birth defects, Monsanto and Dow need another market and the public lands are targeted.

In a society which imports millions of shipping containers per week the idea that we can eliminate non-native plants is ludicrous. Citizens should let the Forest Service know we will not allow our public lands, salmon streams and drinking water to be poisoned in the interest of profits and a bogus “War on weeds.”

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