

# Chapter 1

## Purpose and Need

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Chapter 1 of the Supplemental Draft EIS is incorporated by reference, in accordance with 40 CFR 1500.4(j) and (o), 1502.21 and 1506.4. The incorporated material can be found on pages 1-1 through 1-28 in Volume 1 of the Supplemental Draft EIS. The content is briefly summarized below, with changes based on public comment and internal review following the summary.

### Summary

### Proposed Action

The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) propose to develop and implement a coordinated, scientifically sound, broad-scale, ecosystem-based management strategy for lands they administer across parts of Idaho, Oregon, Montana, and Washington (approximately 63 million acres; see Map 1-1). The selected strategy will amend the 62 land use plans currently in effect on 32 Forest Service or BLM administrative units in the project area.

Changed conditions over the past century, new information, and enhanced understandings indicate that the ecosystems of the interior Columbia River Basin are declining in health. Improving the health, diversity and productivity of these ecosystems will support cleaner air and water, healthier populations of fish and wildlife, and help meet the needs of

current and future generations. To address these changed conditions, seven alternatives were developed, analyzed, and presented in the Eastside and Upper Columbia River Basin Draft Environmental Impact Statements (Draft EISs; June 1997) for the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP). Public comment, input from federal agencies and the Science Advisory Group, new scientific information, and discussions with tribal and interagency partners gave rise to a need for redesign and refocus of the project. In response, three management alternatives were developed, analyzed, and presented in a Supplemental Draft EIS (March 2000).

A subsequent Record of Decision (ROD) for this EIS will provide the context to help managers make sound local decisions while considering effects, particularly cumulative effects, at a scale larger than individual administrative units.

### Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed action is to select a coordinated, broad-scale strategy that best achieves a combination of the following:

- ♦ Restore and maintain long-term ecosystem health and ecological integrity.
- ♦ Support economic and/or social needs of people, cultures, and communities, and provide sustainable and predictable levels of products and services from lands administered by the Forest

Service or the BLM, including fish, wildlife, and native plant communities.

- ♦ Update or amend, if necessary, current Forest Service and BLM management plans with long-term direction, primarily at regional and subregional levels.
- ♦ Provide consistent direction at regional and subregional levels to assist federal managers in making decisions at a local level within the context of broader ecological considerations.
- ♦ Emphasize adaptive management over the long term.
- ♦ Help restore and maintain habitats of plant and animal species, especially those of threatened, endangered, and candidate species, and of special interest to tribes.
- ♦ Provide opportunities for cultural, recreational, and aesthetic experiences.
- ♦ Provide long-term, broad-scale management direction that will replace interim strategies (PACFISH, Eastside Screens, and Inland Native Fish Strategy).

The alternative management strategies in this EIS are based on underlying needs for:

- ♦ **Restoration and maintenance of long-term ecosystem health and ecological integrity on Forest Service- and BLM-administered lands.** There is a need to restore and maintain forest, rangeland, aquatic, and riparian ecosystem health and integrity. There is also a need to identify desired conditions of vegetation structure, composition, and distribution; hydrologic processes and functions; and aquatic habitat structure and complexity.
- ♦ **Support of the economic and/or social needs of people, cultures, and communities, through availability of sustainable and predictable levels of products and services from Forest Service- and BLM-administered lands.** There is a need to contribute to the vitality and resiliency of human communities. There is also a need to provide for people's uses and values of natural resources consistent with maintaining healthy, diverse ecosystems.

## Project Area

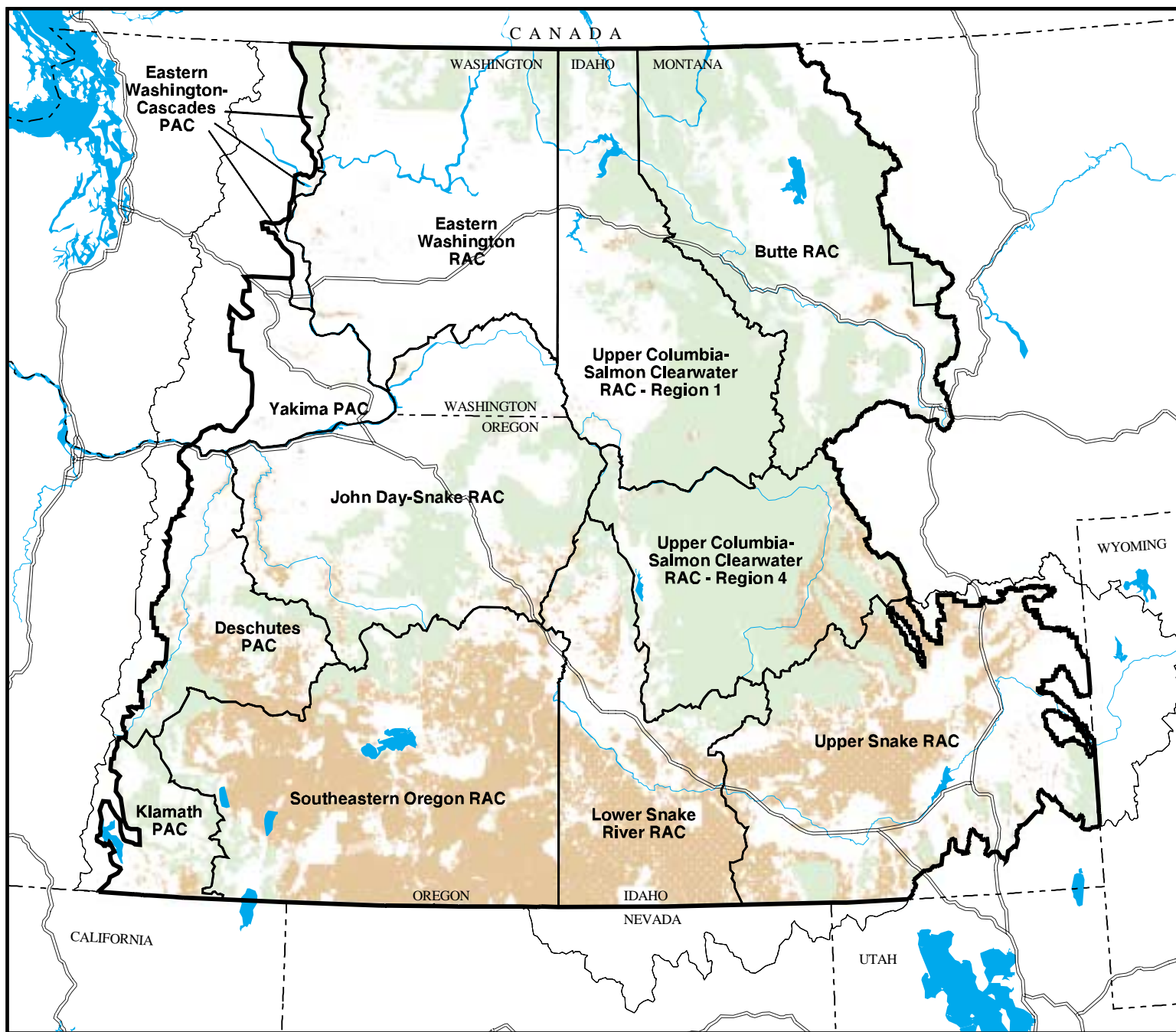
The ICBEMP project area includes approximately 63 million acres of land administered by the BLM or Forest Service in the portions of the interior Columbia River Basin, upper Klamath Basin, and northern Great Basin that lie east of the range of the northern spotted owl (east of the Northwest Forest Plan boundary) in Oregon and Washington, and the parts of Idaho and western Montana that are drained by the Columbia and Snake rivers. Map 1-1 shows these agency-administered lands to which the proposed decision (Alternative S2) applies. It also shows Resource Advisory Council (RAC) and Provincial Advisory Committee (PAC) boundaries. It is intended that some of the implementation and coordination will be conducted by RAC or PAC area. See Table 1-1 (page 1-7, Chapter 1 of Supplemental Draft EIS) for list of national forests and BLM districts affected by this EIS.

## Decisions to be Made

The broad-scale nature of this EIS does not include site-specific decisions. Those decisions will be made by local managers (BLM district managers, field office managers, and area managers; and forest supervisors and district rangers) during finer-scale planning processes within the context of the broad-scale ICBEMP direction.

Decisions that are not within the scale or the scope of the ICBEMP decision, and therefore will not be included in the Record of Decision, include: statutory requirements, national policy, specific allocations of resource products, funding levels and allocations, activity plan-level decisions, site-specific-level decisions, and administrative actions for which a land use plan decision is not needed.

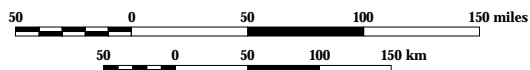
The *decision space* for this EIS defines which decisions deciding officials can make (such as management actions on lands they administer) and cannot make (such as decisions assigned to another agency). The lower limits of decision space are often defined by minimum requirements or conditions (thresholds) required by federal and state laws (such as the Clean Water Act and



**Map 1-1.**  
**BLM- and Forest Service-**  
**Administered Lands**

INTERIOR COLUMBIA  
BASIN ECOSYSTEM  
MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Final EIS  
2000



- |   |                                   |   |                      |
|---|-----------------------------------|---|----------------------|
|  | Forest Service-Administered Lands |  | Major Rivers         |
|  | BLM-Administered Lands            |  | Major Roads          |
|  | Water                             |  | RAC/PAC Borders      |
|   |                                   |  | Planning Area Border |

Endangered Species Act). The upper limits are often defined by the biological potential (maximum capabilities) of the land and resources. The proposed decision is within the decision space.

The decision for the ICBEMP will provide direction only for public lands administered by the Forest Service or BLM in the project area. No decisions are made for state, local (city or county), tribal, or private lands in the project area.

This plan is subject to valid existing rights on Forest Service-or BLM-administered lands. However, to meet the objectives of an alternative, some reasonable changes in the way activities are carried out may be required.

## Planning Issues

The proposed strategies outlined in the Final EIS address several critical issues identified during public scoping:

- ♦ In what condition should ecosystems be maintained?
- ♦ To what degree, and under what circumstances should restoration be active (with human intervention) or passive (letting nature take its course)?
- ♦ What emphasis will be assigned when trade-offs are necessary among resources, species, land areas, and uses?
- ♦ To what degree will ecosystem-based management support economic and/or social needs of people, cultures, and communities?
- ♦ How will ecosystem-based management incorporate the interactions of disturbance processes across landscapes?
- ♦ How will ecosystem-based management contribute to meeting treaty and trust responsibilities to American Indian tribes?

## Modifications Made to ICBEMP Supplemental Draft EIS Chapter 1

### Page/Column/Paragraph or Table/Fig/Map/Photo

### Change Made (bold = new; strikeout = delete)

1-8/Map 1-2

***Change title to:*** Areas within Interior Columbia Basin Excluded from the ICBEMP Decision Space.

### Decisions to be Made

1-15/left/Management  
Priorities/1<sup>st</sup> bullet

***Revise:*** Protecting Ecosystems. The agencies work to ensure the health and diversity of ecosystems ~~while meeting people's needs in order to~~ **meet people's needs.**

1-20/left/Other Planning Efforts

***Insert after 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph:*** A federal caucus of nine agencies (Bonneville Power Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Forest Service) with responsibility for the recovery of listed Columbia River salmon released the *Draft Basin-Wide Salmon Recovery Strategy* on July 27, 2000 (Federal Caucus 2000). The strategy addresses human activities that have caused the decline of salmon. These activities are referred to as the "all Hs" - habitat, harvest, hatcheries, and hydropower. The draft strategy presents options for recovery actions in each of the Hs and shows how the options can be combined into integrated alternatives, representing broad policy choices. The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project's Final EIS represents the *federal habitat component* of the salmon recovery strategy.

1-20/right/Roadless Area

***Replace 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph with the following:*** On October 19, 1999, the Forest Service filed a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register* (volume 64, number 201, page 56306 - 56307) to prepare an EIS, thereby initiating a public rulemaking process to propose the protection of remaining roadless areas within the National Forest System.

A Final EIS was issued on November 13, 2000. The preferred alternative contains elements that would affect Forest Service-administered lands within the ICBEMP project area. The preferred alternative would prohibit road construction, reconstruction, and timber harvest except for stewardship purposes within inventoried roadless areas, except for road reconstruction needed for road safety improvements, and Federal Aid Highway Projects. Stewardship purpose timber harvest could only be used where it maintains or improves roadless characteristics and:

- ♦ improves threatened, endangered, proposed, or sensitive species habitat;
- ♦ reduces the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire effects; or
- ♦ restores ecological structure, function, processes, or composition.

Social and economic mitigation measures are incorporated into the preferred alternative.

The final decision will be documented in a Record of Decision and final rule, which is expected in December 2000.

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## Modifications Made to ICBEMP Supplemental Draft EIS Chapter 1 (Continued)

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Page/Column/Paragraph or  
Table/Fig/Map/Photo

Change Made (bold = new; strikeout = delete)

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1-21/left/top of column

*Insert at the top of the page:*

### Other Forest Service Proposed Regulations

The Forest Service has two other ongoing or recently completed rulemaking efforts related to the proposed Roadless Area Conservation Rule and to ICBEMP: the National Forest System Land and Resource Management Planning Rule and the proposed National Forest System Road Management and Transportation System Rule. The planning rule revises the framework for National Forest System planning and management; makes sustainability the foundation for National Forest System planning and management; establishes requirements for implementation, monitoring, evaluation, amendment, and revision of land and resource management plans; ensures collaboration with the public; integrates science into the process; and incorporates new information and opportunities. The final rule was published on November 8, 2000.

The proposed road management rule would revise regulations concerning the development, use, maintenance, and funding of the National Forest transportation system to shift the emphasis from transportation development to sustaining environmentally sound access. Road construction and reconstruction in inventoried roadless and other unroaded areas would require a science-based roads analysis and a Regional Forester-signed EIS. The final road management policy is scheduled for completion by late 2000.

### Forest Service Cohesive Strategy

On October 13, 2000 the Forest Service issued *Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems: A Cohesive Strategy*. The strategy establishes a framework to restore and maintain ecosystem health in fire-adapted ecosystems for priority areas across the interior West, including Forest Service-administered lands in the ICBEMP project area. The intent is to:

- ◆ Improve the resilience and sustainability of forests and grasslands at risk;
  - ◆ Conserve priority watersheds, species, and biodiversity;
  - ◆ Reduce wildland fire costs, losses, and damages; and
  - ◆ Better ensure public and firefighter safety.
-

Page/Column/Paragraph or  
Table/Fig/Map/Photo

Change Made (bold = new; strikethrough = delete)

The *Cohesive Strategy* focuses treatment on: urban-rural-wildland, readily accessible municipal watersheds, threatened and endangered species habitat, and maintenance of existing low risk “Vegetation Condition Class 1” areas. These are areas where fire regimes are within or near the historical range of variability, the risk of losing key ecosystem components is low, and plant species composition and structure is intact and functioning within its historical range.

The *Cohesive Strategy* addresses institutional objectives and priorities, program management budgets and authorities, and social awareness and support. The strategy is based on the alignment of these institutional, program management, and constituency elements. The cohesion of this strategy stands on the collective strength of these three core elements. This report describes a cohesive set of actions from which the Forest Service may choose to initiate restoration and maintenance objectives within fire-adapted ecosystems.

1-21/left/3<sup>rd</sup> para/following  
2<sup>nd</sup> sentence

***Insert:*** The ICBEMP decision will provide long-term, broad-scale management direction to replace the interim PACFISH, INFISH, and Eastside Screens strategies, which amended Forest Service and BLM land use plans. With the exception of these interim strategies, the ICBEMP decision would not alter management direction that addresses listed species in the land use plans.

1-21/right/para under  
Recovery Plans/4<sup>th</sup> sentence

***Revise:*** The intent of the ICBEMP decision is to require actions to be ~~tiered to approved~~ **consistent with adopted** recovery plans....”

