



Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project

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Dear Reader:

This package contains two documents: the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP), and the proposed decision for the project. The Final EIS incorporates by reference the Supplemental Draft EIS, issued in March 2000. Therefore, it may be useful to use the Supplemental Draft EIS and the document in this package together, depending on the sections of interest.

The Final EIS responds to the comments we received on the Supplemental Draft EIS and reflects several clarifying changes, as explained in the preface. The proposed decision is the preferred alternative (Alternative S2) from the Supplemental Draft EIS, with refinements made in response to public comment and internal review.

Reaching a Final EIS and proposed decision for this project has involved close collaboration among the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Environmental Protection Agency, tribes, other federal agencies, and state and local governments. The public was instrumental in reviewing, commenting, and suggesting improvement for the documents. We greatly appreciate your participation over the past six years.

If you have participated in this ICBEMP planning process and have an interest that is, or may be, affected by approval of the proposed decision, you may protest such approval. The Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service will both use this protest process to provide the opportunity for administrative review of the proposed decision. The Forest Service appeal process, familiar to some readers, will not be used in reaching the Record of Decision. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process.

To protest the approval of the proposed decision for the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project use the following procedure:

- ♦ Put the protest in writing and mail it to the following address:
Director, Bureau of Land Management, and Chief, Forest Service
ICBEMP Protests
PO Box 65480
Washington, DC 20035
- ♦ The protest shall be filed within 30 days of the date the Environmental Protection Agency publishes the notice of receipt of the Final Environmental Impact Statement in the *Federal Register* (expected in mid December 2000). Public announcement of the exact date for protests will be made through local media and posted on the project website (www.icbemp.gov) when it is known.
- ♦ The protest shall contain:
 - ✓ The name, mailing address, telephone number, and interest of the person filing the protest;
 - ✓ A statement of the issue or issues being protested;
 - ✓ A statement of the part or parts of the proposed decision being protested;

- ✓ A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and
- ✓ A concise statement explaining why the responsible officials' proposed decision is believed to be wrong.

The BLM Director and the Forest Service Chief will promptly render a joint decision on the protest. The protest decision will be in writing and will set forth the reasons for the decision. The protest decision will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested.

The joint decision of the Director and Chief shall be the final decision on the protest of the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture.

Reviewers who do not protest the proposed decision on the project may not preserve their standing to litigate the final decision.

Once any protests are resolved, the responsible officials of the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management will sign the Record of Decision for the project.

For further information, please call Susan Giannettino, Project Manager, or Geoff Middaugh, Deputy Project Manager, at (208) 334-1770; or write to ICBEMP, 304 North 8th St., Room 250, Boise, Idaho 83702.

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Project Manager

Geoff Middaugh
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