

Preface

Introduction

This Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS) was developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (Forest Service) and the U.S. Department of the Interior (Bureau of Land Management [BLM]), in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Marine Fisheries Service. The Draft EISs (Eastside and Upper Columbia River Basin) were published and distributed in June 1997 and the Supplemental Draft EIS was published and distributed in March 2000.

The EIS describes and evaluates a range of reasonable alternatives for managing BLM- and Forest Service-administered lands in the interior Columbia Basin, upper Klamath Basin, and parts of the Great Basin. It also describes the environmental consequences of those alternatives.

Seven alternatives were presented and evaluated in the Draft EISs. Almost 83,000 letters and postcards were received during the 11-month comment period on the Draft EISs. The ICBEMP strategy was redesigned and refocused based on: these public comments; input from the Forest Service, BLM, and the Science Advisory Group; new scientific information; and discussions with tribal and interagency partners. As a result of this new approach, three alternatives were presented and evaluated in the Supplemental Draft EIS. Alternative S1, which would continue

current management (referred to as the “no-action alternative” in the National Environmental Policy Act) is the same as Alternative 2 in the Draft EISs, as updated with current information. Alternative S2, the preferred alternative, was based on Alternative 4, the preferred alternative in the Draft EISs, but it was redesigned and refocused based on public comments. Alternative S3 is similar to the preferred alternative, but with the acceptance of more short-term risk.

Approximately 530 letters and e-mails were received during the concurrent 3-month comment period on the Supplemental Draft EIS and 4-month comment period on the *Report to the Congress on the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (Report to the Congress)*.

The Final EIS consists of this document and the Supplemental Draft EIS (which is incorporated by reference, in accordance with Council of Environmental Quality [CEQ] regulations). Therefore, it may be useful to use the Supplemental Draft EIS and this document together, depending on which sections the reader is interested in. The proposed decision is enclosed as a separate document (The Interior Columbia Basin Final Environmental Impact Statement: Proposed Decision).

Copies of the Supplemental Draft EIS can be found on the project's website (www.icbemp.gov), by calling the project office at (208) 334-1770, or by writing to ICBEMP, 304 N. 8th Street, Room 250, Boise, ID 83702. Copies are also available for viewing in Forest Service and BLM offices throughout the project area.

The Final EIS, including the incorporated material, was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and contains the following:

- ♦ A statement of the purpose and need for the action (Chapter 1). This chapter also provides background for the ICBEMP, and describes the proposed action, project area, decisions to be made, and the public involvement process, including planning issues.
- ♦ A description of the affected environment, including the existing condition of the project area and trends from historical conditions (Chapter 2).
- ♦ A description of all the alternatives analyzed in detail (Chapter 3), including the preferred alternative/proposed decision (Proposed Decision document).
- ♦ An analysis of potential environmental, social, and economic consequences of implementing each alternative (Chapter 4).
- ♦ Other information required by NEPA (such as the list of preparers of this document, as well as a list of tribes, agencies, organizations, businesses, and groups who either contacted or were contacted by the project staff in Chapter 5; Glossary, Literature Cited, and Index; and the response to public comments on the Supplemental Draft EIS).
- ♦ Appendices.

Protest Process

The Forest Service and BLM decision-makers agreed to use one administrative review process—the BLM's protest process.

Any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest that is or may be adversely affected by the approval of the proposed decision may protest the approval. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process.

To protest the proposed decision, the steps outlined in the cover letter of the Final EIS must be followed.

The protest must be in writing and mailed to the Director of the BLM and the Chief of the Forest Service within 30 days of the date the Environmen-

tal Protection Agency publishes the notice of receipt of the Final EIS in the *Federal Register*.

Several pieces of information need to be included in the protest, including the interest that could be affected by the proposed decision, the issue or issues being protested, copies of the documents submitted by the protesting party during the planning process or an indication of the dates the issues were discussed, and a statement explaining why the proposed decision is believed to be wrong.

The BLM Director and Forest Service Chief will render a joint decision on the protest. This will be the final decision of the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture.

The BLM and Forest Service will issue one Record of Decision (ROD), which will be signed (approved) by the BLM State Directors and Forest Service Regional Foresters within the project area. Any portion of the proposed decision being protested will not be approved until the protest is resolved.

Reviewers who do not request administrative review of the proposed decision may not preserve their standing to litigate the final decision.

Differences Between the Supplemental Draft and Final EIS

Changes, corrections, and clarifications have been made to the Supplemental Draft EIS based on public comments and internal review. Most of the changes were made to improve the clarity and intent of the management direction. The changes reflected in the Final EIS are within the scope and analysis of the Draft and Supplemental Draft EISs and do not alter the analysis of the environmental consequences. (The Science Advisory Group reviewed the changes made to the alternatives and determined that only minor differences in effects were evident, except for those related to the changes to the A1/A2 subwatersheds; however, even those changes in effects are still within the range of effects projected in their analysis of Supplemental Draft EIS alternatives.)

The preferred alternative in the Supplemental Draft EIS, Alternative S2, has been modified in response to internal (Forest Service and BLM) review and public

comments. It is presented, in its entirety, as the Interior Columbia Basin Final EIS: Proposed Decision.

Each chapter and appendix in the Final EIS consists of a summary followed by the specific changes to that chapter/appendix. Following is a summary of those changes:

Chapter 1

- ♦ Made minor edits to a few sections.
- ♦ Added a paragraph describing a *Draft Basin-wide Salmon Recovery Strategy*.
- ♦ Updated the Roadless Areas Policies section.
- ♦ Added sections on Other Forest Service Proposed Regulations and the Forest Service Cohesive Strategy.

Chapter 2

- ♦ Corrected erroneous numbers and dates.
- ♦ Better described the criteria used to select the species analyzed in the Draft and Supplemental Draft EISs.
- ♦ Updated information on species listings.
- ♦ Updated and corrected wildlife information; corrected carnivore habitat map (Map 2-11b).
- ♦ Added a section and a new map (Map 2-28a) of Natural Areas.
- ♦ Added an evaluation of how the year 2000 wildfires affected the ecosystem conditions in the interior Columbia Basin.

The changes reflected in the Final EIS are within the scope and analysis of the Draft and Supplemental Draft EISs and do not alter the analysis of the environmental consequences.

Chapter 3

- ♦ Modified the definitions of Guideline and Objective.
- ♦ Clarified the management intent that threatened and endangered species direction

takes precedence over other ICBEMP direction (if it conflicts).

- ♦ Clarified the management intent for Step-Down (Subbasin Review and Ecosystem Analysis at the Watershed Scale).
- ♦ Clarified the definition and use of collaboration.
- ♦ Added an objective to assess risks of prescribed fire and wildfires.
- ♦ Clarified and strengthened management direction for coordinating smoke management and monitoring.
- ♦ Clarified management intent of Road Management and added a sidebar summarizing Roads Management Intent.
- ♦ Added a sidebar on prioritizing terrestrial restoration and conservation opportunities.
- ♦ Clarified management direction for determining snag numbers.
- ♦ Updated the management direction for watershed condition indicators to reflect that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service matrices of pathways and indicators of biological and habitat conditions were combined.
- ♦ Clarified the management direction relating to recovery plans.
- ♦ Clarified the management direction and intent for providing predictable and sustainable resources.
- ♦ Clarified the intent of funding for restoration management activities.
- ♦ Clarified management intent and direction for T watersheds.
- ♦ Modified management intent, criteria, and direction for A1 and A2 subwatersheds to reflect a validation exercise conducted in summer 2000; added new map showing the revised A1/A2 subwatersheds (Map 3-11a).

Chapter 4

- ♦ Corrected Map 4-4 (data for eastern Oregon and eastern Washington was unintentionally left off).
- ♦ The Science Advisory Group (SAG) explored various options to further slow the decline of certain rangeland terrestrial habitats. Added two sidebars summarizing this additional work on the

modeled outcomes for sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse.

- ♦ Clarified grizzly bear outcomes.
- ♦ Added change in effects from validating the criteria for the A1 and A2 subwatersheds and updating the data. (All of the effects remain within the range of effects discussed in the Supplemental Draft EIS.)
- ♦ Modified the outcomes for grasshopper sparrow, northern goshawk (summer), Lewis' woodpecker, hoary bat due to an analysis error.
- ♦ Clarified the use of the term Animal Unit Months (AUMs) by adding the word "authorized", where appropriate.
- ♦ Added a section on effects of the alternatives on natural areas.
- ♦ Expanded the discussion of cumulative effects to address the *Cohesive Strategy for Protecting People and Sustaining Resources in Fire-Adapted Ecosystems*, and the Fiscal Year 2001 wildland fire emergency appropriations.

- ♦ Updated Appendix 9 (Additional Aquatics Guidance and USFWS and NMFS Matrices) to describe the combined matrices from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service and their intended use as measureable indicators.
- ♦ Added a section on an implementation organization and a section on implementation monitoring to Appendix 10 (Implementation Framework).
- ♦ Made minor editorial corrections to Appendix 12 (Requirements for Snags and Downed Wood).
- ♦ Added additional assumptions made by SAG while they reviewed the changes made to the Supplemental Draft EIS to Appendix 16 (Science Advisory Group Assumptions for Modeling the Supplemental Draft EIS Alternatives).
- ♦ Clarified the use of the terms "old forest" and "late-seral forest" in Appendix 17a (Definitions for Old Forest).
- ♦ Added a new appendix, Appendix 18 (A1 and A2 Subwatershed Update Process).

Chapter 5

- ♦ Updated the List of Preparers.

Appendices

- ♦ Combined and updated Appendix 3 (Public Involvement) and Appendix 4 (Response to Comments). Added responses to public comments on the Supplemental Draft EIS and on the Report to the Congress (as required in the 2000 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations language).
- ♦ Made minor editorial corrections to Appendix 7 (Socio-Economic Information for Counties and Communities).

Glossary, Literature Cited, Index

- ♦ Created an abbreviated Glossary (subset of words from the full Glossary in the Supplemental Draft EIS). Revised some definitions for clarity and consistency and added a few new definitions.
- ♦ Created an abbreviated Literature Cited, based on what is cited in the Final EIS and proposed decision.
- ♦ Updated terms and page numbers for the index.