

ON ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS AND CONSERVATION PLANNING ^{TWS}

Fred B. Samson

USDA Forest Service, Region 1, Missoula, MT 59804

Strategies that influence environmental use are often broad in scale and are rarely spatially explicit or focused on individual species because of the unfeasibility and cost of implementation. In reality, broad-scale information in concert with the conservation of individual species must be used in a way to develop conservation priorities, a more integrated ecosystem protection strategy, and to satisfy legal and policy requirements. Moreover, failure in conservation action whether in ecological assessments or conservation planning may be attributed to this lack of ecological understanding, organizational dysfunction, or to appreciate the human sense of place. In this session, needs for (1) an

ecological assessment are reviewed, (2) major agency and organizational approaches to ecological assessments and conservation planning are compared, and (3) their place in biodiversity conservation is outlined. Practical solutions to improve ecological assessments and conservation planning regardless of location are offered.