Overview of Terrestrial Science Assessments for the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project[TWS]

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The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (ICBEMP) is a multi-resource, multi-disciplinary effort to develop an ecosystem-based strategy for managing National Forest and BLM lands within the 145-million acre Interior Columbia River Basin (Basin). Terrestrial science assessments of the ICBEMP, which consist of a myriad of publications, databases, reports, and computer maps, provide a compelling basis for ecosystem-based management of the Basin's plant and animal species. Three terrestrial science publications are of particular interest to managers and biologists: (1) the terrestrial component assessment ("Terrestrial Ecology of the Basin," by Marcot et al. [1997]), which synthesized a wealth of knowledge regarding the ecology of plant and animal species and communities in the Basin; (2) the analysis of source habitats and road effects ("Source Habitats for Terrestrial Vertebrates of Focus in the Interior Columbia Basin," by Wisdom et al. [in press]), which evaluated habitat trends and road effects for selected species of viability concern; and (3) the analysis of ecosystem management alternatives on terrestrial species viability ("Historical and current status of terrestrial species and the effects of proposed alternatives," by Lehmkuhl et al. [1997], which assessed effects of proposed alternatives of the ICBEMP's Draft Environmental Impact Statements on terrestrial species viability. Findings from these publications, each of which is available as a general technical report from the USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Research Station in Portland, are the basis for three of our presentations. In addition, our last presentation describes on-going work regarding the use of Bayesian belief network models to evaluate viability effects for selected species as part of the final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision. The composite of these terrestrial science assessments will form the basis for critical land management decisions in the Basin, and as such, resource managers and biologists in the Basin will benefit from a strong working knowledge of this work.