

Appendix 16

SAG Assumptions for Modeling the SDEIS Alternatives

Appendix 14 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 14-1 through 14-28 in Volume 2 of the Supplemental Draft EIS. The content is briefly summarized below, with changes following the summary.

Summary

The Science Advisory Group (SAG) developed assumptions about the management direction in the Supplemental Draft EIS so they could better project

the potential effects of the alternatives. Included in this appendix are assumptions that clarified interpretation of direction, intent, and/or rationale; provided enough detail to derive outcomes for effects determinations for species of broad-scale concern; and described reasonable implementation for elements not fully described in the supplemental Draft EIS, such as implementation strategy, step-down processes, monitoring strategy, data management, and technology transfer.

The SAG also found it necessary to make several more assumptions to evaluate changes between Alternative S2 in the Supplemental Draft EIS and the modifications to Alternative S2 in the Final EIS. They are summarized in the table on the next page.

Modifications Made to ICBEMP Supplemental Draft EIS

Appendix 16

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SAG found it necessary to make several assumptions for evaluating changes between the effects of Alternative S2 for the Supplemental Draft EIS and the revisions to Alternative S2 for the Final EIS. These are summarized below.

- ◆ **The exemption from EAWS triggers as described in B-S5 (S2) revision, [“The only exceptions are where impacts are anticipated to be negligible, short term, and localized in scope or in the case where there is imminent threat to scarce natural resources, human life or property.”], should have minimal impact on effects as analyzed for the Supplemental Draft EIS. SAG assumes activities covered by these exemptions will have small spatial extents (100s of acres) occurring over short time periods (yrs). Using the imminent threat exemption for activities covering larger areas or for longer time periods would change long-term effects compared to those projected for the Supplemental Draft EIS preferred alternative.**
 - ◆ **Changing time frames for completing high priority restoration subbasin reviews as, described in BS-4 (S2), from two to three years following ROD approval, and from five years to seven years for completing all other subbasin reviews, will not likely affect the long-term outcomes estimated by SAG for the Supplemental Draft EIS. There may be a short-term delay in predicted broad-scale efficacy of management activities.**
 - ◆ **The reduction in livestock grazing effects resulting from the application of guidelines, standards, and objectives for the Supplemental Draft EIS alternatives were outputs (authorized AUMs and uncharacteristic grazing) of the Supplemental Draft EIS effects analysis rather than assumed inputs. SAG had no rationale or information to use in assuming sharp future departure from current trends in analyzing the effects of the Supplemental Draft EIS alternatives. SAG analysis of the potential effects of additional restoration effort and deleterious grazing effects reduction in the sage grouse and Columbian sharp-tailed grouse ranges illustrates the potential effects of more dramatic changes in grazing impacts from those projected for the Supplemental Draft EIS Preferred Alternative (Hemstrom et al. 2000a, Wisdom et al. 2000b).**
 - ◆ **SAG assumes wildfires are reoccurring events that can be widespread producing severe local impacts. For the Supplemental Draft**
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EIS, SAG estimated an annual average of approximately 1 million acres burned in the short-term (10 years) under all three alternatives. In any 10-year period an average of 10 million acres are expected to burn. In any one year thousands to millions of acres would be expected to burn averaging 10 million in any 10-year period. Since neither the occurrence, location or effects of a fire can be predicted with any accuracy, there is no evidence that any of the wildfire episodes of the last 10-years were outside projections of Supplemental Draft EIS effects.

- ◆ SAG assumes that A2 watersheds will be actively restored fulfilling Objective A2-O2 (that is, “restore habitats supporting important native fish population centers while minimizing disruption to functioning hydrologic processes”). Consequently, the analysis of the effects of the Supplemental Draft EIS preferred alternative used landscape prescriptions that include prescribed fire, thinnings, suppression of wildfires etc. while minimizing disruptions to hydrologic processes. This is not a new assumption but a restatement of one used in the Supplemental Draft EIS effects analysis and is included to dispel confusion about the level of restoration intended for A2 areas in the Supplemental Draft EIS and how that intent was modeled by SAG. This differs from the objectives for A1 subwatersheds: “Conserve current aquatic and riparian habitats that support important native fish population centers” (Supplemental Draft EIS, Chapter 3, page 133, Objective A1-O1).
 - ◆ The SAG assumed the Bureau of Land Management would use a roads analysis process similar to the one developed and used by Forest Service (USFS 1999).
 - ◆ For the aquatic evaluation, SAG interpretation of the A2 objective (“Restore habitats supporting important native fish population centers...”) was that aquatic habitat restoration was the primary restoration emphasis in A2 watersheds since aquatic considerations were the basis for their identification and special management. Although restoration activities to achieve other activities could occur and could be beneficial for the aquatic population, they would be conservative (“low risk”) with respect to aquatic concerns, as stated in the objective. Thus, we would expect there would be lower levels of non-aquatic restoration in A2 watersheds than in non-A2 watersheds, particularly in priority restoration subbasins, and all restoration (including aquatic) in A2 watersheds would be done to minimally degrade aquatic habitats and populations.
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