Alternatives for Management of Late-Successional Forests of the Pacific Northwest

A Report to the Agriculture Committee and The Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives

By
The Scientific Panel on Late-Successional Forest Ecosystems
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- First regional strategy for managing old-growth ecosystems
- Intended to help congress understand science-based options for forest management
- Included strategies for watershed protection and salmon restoration
THE FOREST PLAN
FOR A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY
AND A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Developed in response to injunctions shutting down federal timber sales in the NW

Refocused management of FS and BLM forests

Created a system of old-growth reserves, an aquatic conservation strategy, and matrix lands

Established an interagency ecosystem office

Targeted funding for regional economic transition
INTERIOR COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROJECT (ICBEMP) - 1993

Map MA90022-11
Office of Wetlands, Oceans & Watersheds

Columbia River
Scale: approximately 1:6,125,000
Sources: NOAA, ARC USA
July 31, 1995
Map MA90022-11
EPA
Office of Wetlands, Oceans & Watersheds

- Watershed
- Major Rivers
- State Boundary
- County Boundary
PRESIDENT CLINTON’S “ROADLESS RULE” - 2000

• Purpose: to resolve long-standing debate over future of unroaded NF lands
• Inventory and analysis of 58 mill. ac. of NF lands
• Facilitated public debate through GIS
• Implemented thru rulemaking
WESTERN SOLAR ENERGY ZONES - 2012

- Facilitated solar energy development on public lands
- Identified 21 SEZs on 280K acres
- Permitted solar on 19 mill. ac. of variance lands
- 79 mill. ac. off limits
- Expedited permitting
Common elements of large landscape conservation plans to date

1. Cover large portions of **federally-managed** landscapes (multi-state)
2. Driven by a dominant issue/concern
3. Often reactive – developed in response to a crisis or issue of concern
4. Are data/assessment driven
5. Have tended to be controversial – seen as “top – down”, “one size fits all”, and less collaborative
WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?
DESERT RENEWABLE ENERGY CONSERVATION PLAN – in development

- Purpose: Identify areas for RE development and conservation
- Covers 28 million ac.
- Includes public (BLM) and private lands
- Combines NEPA and NCCP processes
- Partners: BLM, FWS, CEC, CDNR, counties
STRATEGY TO CONSERVE THE GREATER SAGE-GROUSE – 2015

- FWS determined listing was warranted but precluded
- 11 states affecting fed, state, and private land
- BLM – 56% of habitat
- Sage Grouse TF
- Redefining 21st century conservation
Planning Area Structure

2 Regions
Great Basin
Rocky Mountain

15 Sub-regions/EISs

Great Basin (All Amendments)
Oregon, Nevada/NE California, Idaho/SW Montana, and Utah

Rocky Mountain (Revisions & Amendments)
NW Colorado, WY 9 Plan, Lander Revision (WY), Bighorn Basin Revision (WY), Buffalo Revision (WY), Billings/Pompey's Pillar NM Revision (MT), Lewistown Amendment (MT), HiLine Revision (MT), Miles City Revision (MT), South Dakota Revision, North Dakota Amendment

98 LUPs Being Amended (includes BLM and FS)
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Management Zones outlined in Blue
Utah
Oil & Gas Leases
Utah
Oil & Gas Potential
Non-Habitat

- PAC & Priority Habitat
- Non-Habitat Potential
  - High
  - Medium
Oil and Gas (O&G) Production Potential in the Western U.S. (# of acres by habitat type)

Copeland et al, 2010

Medium O&G Potential
- 6,420,198 acres (12%)
- 7,718,441 acres (14%)
- 39,924,215 acres (74%)

High O&G Potential
- 9,056,037 acres (18%)
- 26,664,104 acres (54%)
- 13,748,447 acres (28%)

Low O&G Potential
- 42,728,345 acres (9%)
- 32,386,227 acres (7%)
- 394,904,786 acres (84%)

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Common Elements Moving Forward

- Landscape-scale assessments of resource characteristics can be completed **IN ADVANCE**
- Identifying and mapping land uses can highlight where conservation and land use conflicts are likely to occur
- We can use this information to:
  - improve planning for conservation AND development
  - increase certainty of outcomes for both
  - reduce additional environmental reviews and permitting delays
  - identify mitigation options in advance
  - **CUT PROJECT PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COSTS**
- Resource managers can be **PROACTIVE** rather than reactive in guiding future conservation decisions
CHALLENGES TO ACCELERATING USE OF A LANDSCAPE APPROACH TO CONSERVATION

1. Access to data
2. Access to and understanding of available technology
3. Analytical capability in resource management agencies
4. Fear of change/organizational culture/“ownership”
5. Real/perceived conflicts w/ existing policies, rules, laws
6. Distrust of government
7. Lack of “Translators”
8. Declining access to resources to implement strategies
9. Lack of “success stories”
10. Geopolitical boundaries/state sovereignty