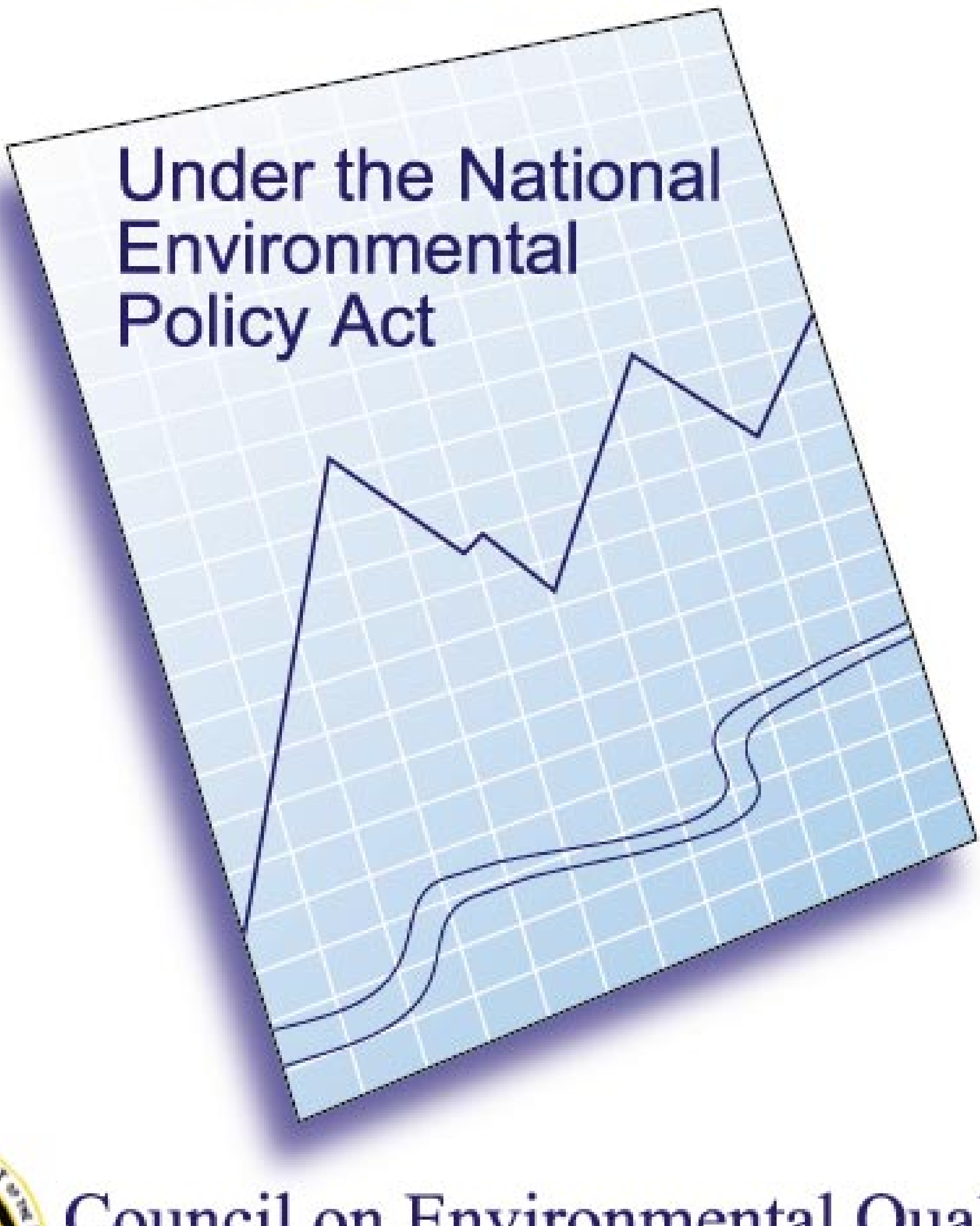
Considering Cumulative Effects



Council on Environmental Quality
Executive Office of the President

Considering Cumulative Effects Under the National Environmental Policy Act

Council on Environmental Quality

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PREFACE

This handbook presents the results of research and consultations by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) concerning the consideration of cumulative effects in analyses prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). It introduces the NEPA practitioner and other interested parties to the complex issue of cumulative effects, outlines general principles, presents useful steps, and provides information on methods of cumulative effects analysis and data sources. The handbook does not establish new requirements for such analyses. It is not and should not be viewed as formal CEQ guidance on this matter, nor are the recommendations in the handbook intended to be legally binding.

lative effects in either an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS). The handbook presents practical methods for addressing coincident effects (adverse or beneficial) on specific resources, ecosystems, and human communities of all related activities, not just the proposed project or alternatives that initiate the assessment process.

In their environmental analyses, federal agencies routinely address the direct and (to a lesser extent) indirect effects of the proposed

In many ways, scoping is the key to analyzing cumulative effects; it provides the best opportunity for identifying important cumulative effects issues, setting appropriate boundaries for analysis, and identifying relevant past, present, and future actions. Scoping allows the NEPA practitioner to "count what counts." By evaluating resource impact zones and the life cycle of effects rather than projects, the analyst can properly bound the cumulative effects analysis. Scoping can also facilitate the interagency cooperation needed to identify agency plans and other interactions those that substantially affect the resources. Then, they must describe the response of the resource to this environmental change using modeling, trends analysis, and scenario building when uncertainties are great. The significance of cumulative effects depend on how they compare with the environmental baseline and relevant resource thresholds (such as regulatory standards). Most often, the historical context surrounding the resource is critical to developing these baselines and thresholds and to supporting both imminent and future decision-making.

Undoubtedly, the consequences of human activities will vary from those that were predicted and mitigated. This will be even more problematic because of cumulative effects; therefore, monitoring the accuracy of predictions and

[illegible] analysis, ecosystem analysis, economic impact analysis, and social impact analysis.

This handbook was developed by reviewing the literature and interviewing practitioners of environmental impact assessment. Most agencies that have recently developed their own guidelines for analyzing cumulative effects recognize cumulative effects analysis as an integral part of the NEPA process, not a separate effort. This handbook is not formal guidance nor is it exhaustive or definitive; it should assist practitioners in developing their own study-specific approaches. CEQ expects that the handbook (and similar agency guidelines) will be updated periodically to reflect additional experience and new methods, thereby, constantly improving the state of cumulative effects analysis.

analysis and lays out ten specific steps that the NEPA practitioner can use to analyze cumulative effects. The next three chapters parallel the environmental impact assessment process and discuss analyzing cumulative effects while (1) scoping, (2) describing the affected environment, and (3) determining environmental consequences. Each component in the NEPA process is the logical place to complete necessary steps in cumulative effects analysis, but practitioners should remember that analyzing for cumulative effects is an iterative process. Specifically, the results of cumulative effects analysis can and should contribute to refining alternatives and summaries of 11 of these methods.

Cumulative effects analysis is an emerging discipline in which the NEPA practitioner can be overwhelmed by the details of the scoping and analytical phases. The continuing challenge of cumulative effects analysis is to focus on important cumulative issues, recognizing that a better decision, rather than a perfect cumulative effects analysis, is the goal of NEPA and environmental impact assessment professionals.

Table E-1. Incorporating principles of cumulative effects analysis (CEA) into the components of environmental impact assessment (EIA)

EIA Components	CEA Principles
Scoping	• Include past, present, and future actions. • Include all federal, nonfederal, and private actions. • Focus on each affected resource, ecosystem, and human community. • Focus on truly meaningful effects.
Describing the Affected Environment	• Focus on each affected resource, ecosystem, and human community. • Use natural boundaries.
Determining the Environmental Consequences	• Address additive, countervailing, and synergistic effects. • Look beyond the life of the action. • Address the sustainability of resources, ecosystems, and human communities.

define cumulative effects as

> the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions (40 CFR § 1508.7).

lative effects. Specifically, NEPA requires that all related actions be addressed in the same analysis. For example, the expansion of an airport runway that will increase the number of passengers traveling must address not only the effects of the runway itself, but also the expansion of the terminal and the extension of roadways to provide access to the expanded terminal. If there are similar actions planned

Throughout this handbook discussion of the environment will focus on resources (entities such as air quality or a trout fishery), ecosystems (local or landscape-level units where nature and humans interact), and human communities (sociocultural settings that affect the quality of life). The term resources will sometimes be used to refer to all three entities. Table 1-1 lists some of the common cumulative

> ...as a result of the failure to formulate a comprehensive national environmental policy... environmental problems are only dealt with when they reach crisis proportions..... Important decisions concerning the use and shape of man's environment continue to be made in small but steady increments which perpetuate requirements.

Table 1-1. Examples of cumulative effects situations faced by federal agencies including both multiple agency actions and other actions affecting the same resource

Federal Agency	Cumulative Effects Situations
Army Corps of Engineers	■ incremental loss of wetlands under the national permit to dredge and fill and from land subsidence
Bureau of Land Management	■ degradation of rangeland from multiple grazing allotments and the invasion of exotic weeds
Department of Defense	■ population declines in nesting birds from multiple training missions and commercial tree harvests within the same land unit
Department of Energy	■ increased regional acidic deposition from emissions trading policies and changing climate patterns
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	■ blocking of fish passage by multiple hydropower dams and Corps of Engineers reservoirs in the same river basin
Federal Highway Administration	■ cumulative commercial and residential development and highway construction associated with suburban sprawl
Forest Service	■ increased soil erosion and stream sedimentation from multiple timber permits and private logging operations in the same watershed
General Services Administration	■ change in neighborhood sociocultural character resulting from ongoing local development including new federal office construction
National Park Service	■ degraded recreational experience from overcrowding and reduced visibility

towards sustainable development, i.e., development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987; President's Council on Sustainable Development 1996). To a large extent, the goal of cumulative effects analysis, like that of NEPA itself, is to inject environmental considerations into the planning process as early as needed to improve decisions. If cumulative effects become apparent as agency programs are being planned or as larger strategies and policies are developed then potential cumulative effects should be analyzed at that time.

Cumulative effects analysis necessarily involves assumptions and uncertainties, but useful information can be put on the decision-making table now. Decisions must be supported by the best analysis based on the best data we have or are able to collect. Important research and monitoring programs can be identified that will improve analyses in the future, but their absence should not be used as a reason for not analyzing cumulative effects to the extent possible now. Where substantial uncertainties remain or multiple resource objectives exist, adaptive management provisions for flexible project implementation can be incorporated into the selected alternative.

> growing economy that provides equitable opportunities for satisfying livelihoods and a safe, healthy, high quality of life for current and future generations. Our nation will protect its environment, its natural resource base, and the functions and viability of natural systems on which all life depends.
>
> The Council concluded that in order to meet the needs of the present while ensuring that future generations have the same opportunities, the United States must change by moving from conflict to collaboration and adopting stewardship and individual responsibility as tenets by which to live. This vision is similar to the first environmental policy listed in NEPA— that each generation should fulfill its responsibilities as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations. Analyzing for cumulative effects on the full range of resources, ecosystems, and human communities under NEPA provides a mechanism for addressing sustainable development.

AGENCY EXPERIENCE WITH CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS

Federal agencies make hundreds, perhaps thousands, of small decisions annually. Sometimes a single agency makes decisions on decisions are made at the program or policy level (e.g., National Energy Strategy, National Transportation Plan, Base Realignment and Closure Initiative), the environmental effects are generally assessed at the project level (e.g., coal-fired power plant, interstate highway connector, disposal of installation land). Cumulative effects analysis should be the tool for federal agencies to evaluate the implications of even project-level environmental assessments (EAs) on regional resources.

Federal agencies have struggled with preparing cumulative effects analyses since CEQ issued its regulations in 1978. They continue to find themselves in costly and time-consuming administrative proceedings and litigation over the proper scope of the analysis. Court cases throughout the years have affirmed CEQ's requirement to assess cumulative effects of projects but have added little in the way of guidance and direction. To date, there has not been a single, universally accepted conceptual approach, nor even general principles accepted by all scientists and managers. States and

in recent years could exacerbate the cumulative effects problem. Agencies today prepare substantially more EAs than EISs; in a typical year 45,000 EAs are prepared compared to 450 EISs. An agency's decision to prepare an EIS is important because an EIS tends to contain more rigorous analysis and more public involvement than an EA. EAs tend to save time and money because an EA generally takes less time to prepare. They are a cost-effective way to determine whether potentially significant effects are likely and whether a project can mitigate these effects. At the same time, because EAs focus on whether effects are significant, they tend to underestimate the cumulative effects of their projects. Given that so many more EAs are prepared than EISs, adequate consideration of cumulative effects requires that EAs address them fully. One study analyzed 89 EAs announced in the *Federal Register* between January 1, 1992, and June 30, 1992, to determine the extent to which treatment of cumulative effects met CEQ's requirements (Figure 1-2). Only 35 EAs (39%) mentioned cumulative

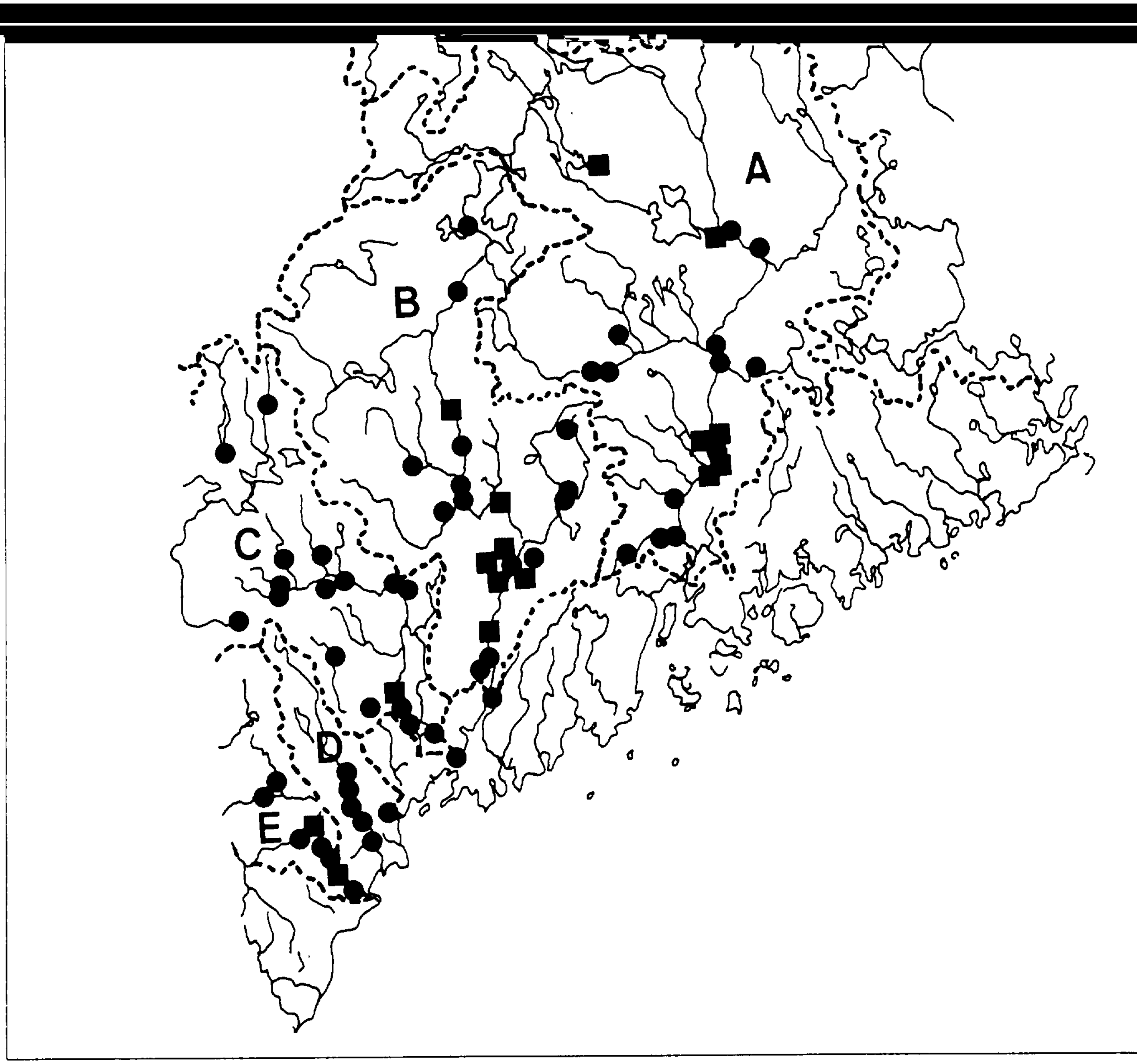
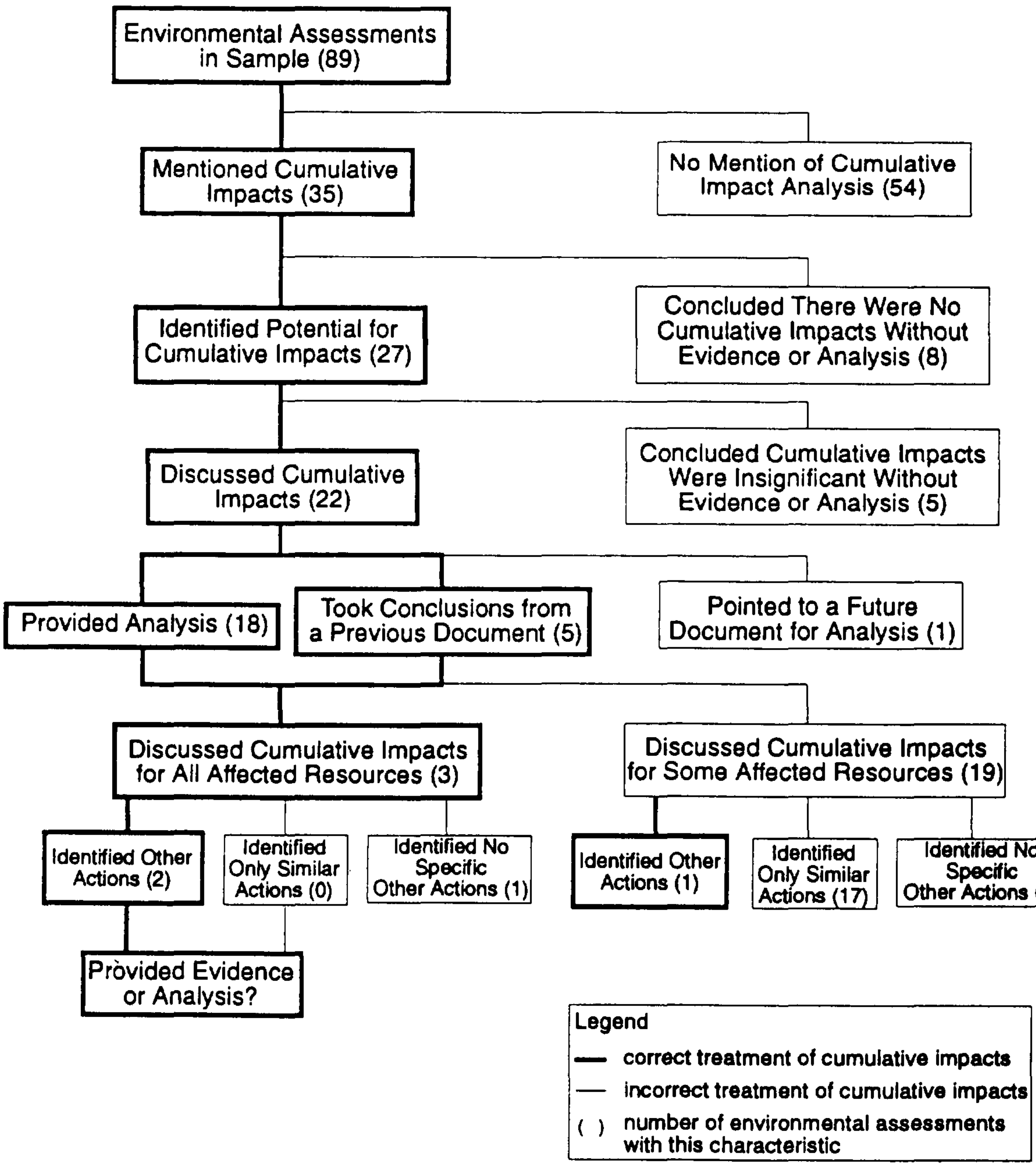


Figure 1-1. River basins and associated FERC related hydroelectric projects in Maine (undated)



For the 22 environmental assessments (EAs) that discussed cumulative impacts, the three treatments are not mutually exclusive. One EA in the sample provided analysis for some resources, took the conclusions from a previous document for one resource, and pointed to a future document for another resource. For this reason, the numbers in the boxes sum to 24 instead of 22.

Figure 1-2. Consideration of cumulative effects in environmental assessments (McCold and Holman 1995) important to decisionmakers, in part because they are more certain. Nonetheless, the importance of acid rain, climate change, and other cumulative effects problems has resulted in many efforts to undertake and improve the analysis of cumulative effects. Although no universally accepted framework for cumulative effects analysis exists, general principles have gained acceptance (Table 1-2).

Each of these eight principles illustrates a property of cumulative effects analysis that differentiates it from traditional environmental impact assessment. By applying these principles to environmental analysis of all kinds, cumulative effects will be better considered, and the analysis will be complete. A critical principle states that cumulative effects analysis should be conducted within the context of resource, ecosystem, and human community thresholds–levels of stress beyond which the desired condition degrades. The magnitude and extent of the effect on a resource depends on whether the cumulative effects exceed the capacity of the resource to sustain itself and remain productive. Similarly, the natural ecosystem and the human community have maximum levels of cumulative effects that they can desired conditions can best be defined by the cooperative efforts of agency officials, project proponents, environmental analysts, nongovernmental organizations, and the public through the NEPA process. Ultimately, cumulative effects analysis under NEPA should be incorporated into the agency's overall environmental planning and the regional planning of other federal agencies and stakeholders.

HOW ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS ACCUMULATE

Cumulative effects result from spatial (geographic) and *temporal* (time) crowding of environmental perturbations. The effects of human activities will accumulate when a second perturbation occurs at a site before the ecosystem can fully rebound from the effect of the first perturbation. Many researchers have used observations or environmental change theory to categorize cumulative effects into different types. The diversity of sources, processes, and effects involved has prevented the research and assessment communities from agreeing on a standard typology. Nonetheless, it is useful to review the eight scenarios for accumulating effects shown in Table 1-3.

3. **Cumulative effects need to be analyzed in terms of the specific resource, ecosystem, and human community being affected.**

   Environmental effects are often evaluated from the perspective of the proposed action. Analyzing cumulative effects requires focusing on the resource, ecosystem, and human community that may be affected and developing an adequate understanding of how the resources are susceptible to effects.

4. **It is not practical to analyze the cumulative effects of an action on the universe; the list of environmental effects must focus on those that are truly meaningful.**

   For cumulative effects analysis to help the decisionmaker and inform interested parties, it must be limited through scoping to effects that can be evaluated meaningfully. The boundaries for evaluating cumulative effects should be expanded to the point at which the resource is no longer affected significantly or the effects are no longer of interest to affected parties.

5. **Cumulative effects on a given resource, ecosystem, and human community are rarely aligned with political or administrative boundaries.**

   Resources typically are demarcated according to agency responsibilities, county lines, grazing allotments, or other administrative boundaries. Because natural and sociocultural resources are not usually so aligned, each political entity actually manages only a piece of the affected resource or ecosystem. Cumulative effects analysis on natural systems must use natural ecological boundaries and analysis of human communities must use actual sociocultural boundaries to ensure including all effects.

6. **Cumulative effects may result from the accumulation of similar effects or the synergistic interaction of different effects.**

   Repeated actions may cause effects to build up through simple addition (more and more of the same type of effect), and the same or different actions may produce effects that interact to produce cumulative effects greater than the sum of the effects.

7. **Cumulative effects may last for many years beyond the life of the action that caused the effects.**

   Some actions cause damage lasting far longer than the life of the action itself (e.g., acid mine drainage, radioactive waste contamination, species extinctions). Cumulative effects analysis needs to apply the best science and forecasting techniques to assess potential catastrophic consequences in the future.

8. **Each affected resource, ecosystem, and human community must be analyzed in terms of its capacity to accommodate additional effects, based on its own time and space parameters.**

   Analysts tend to think in terms of how the resource, ecosystem, and human community will be modified given the action's development needs. The most effective cumulative effects analysis focuses on what is needed to ensure long-term productivity or sustainability of the resource.

[redacted]

Table 1-4. Types of cumulative effects		
	Additive Process	**Interactive Process**
Single Action	**Type 1** — Repeated "additive" effects from a single proposed project. Example: Construction of a new road through a national park, resulting in continual draining of road salt onto nearby vegetation.	**Type 2** — Stressors from a single source that interact with receiving biota to have an "interactive" (nonlinear) net effect. Example: Organic compounds, including PCBs, that biomagnify up food chains and exert disproportionate toxicity on raptors and large mammals.
Multiple Actions	**Type 3** — Effects arising from multiple sources (projects, point sources, or general effects associated with development) that affect environmental resources additively. Example: Agricultural irrigation, domestic consumption, and industrial cooling activities that all contribute to drawing down a groundwater aquifer.	**Type 4** — Effects arising from multiple sources that affect environmental resources in an interactive (i.e., countervailing or synergistic) fashion. Example: Discharges of nutrients and heated water to a river that combine to cause an algal bloom and subsequent loss of dissolved oxygen that is greater than the additive effects of each pollutant.

	capacity to withstand stresses. 6. Characterize the stresses affecting these resources, ecosystems, and human communities and their relation to regulatory thresholds. 7. Define a baseline condition for the resources, ecosystems, and human communities.
Determining the Environmental Consequences	8. Identify the important cause-and-effect relationships between human activities and resources, ecosystems, and human communities. 9. Determine the magnitude and significance of cumulative effects. 10. Modify or add alternatives to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant cumulative effects. 11. Monitor the cumulative effects of the selected alternative and adapt management.

2

SCOPING F[redacted] CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

PRINCIPL[redacted]

- Include past, present, a[redacted]
- Include all federal, non[redacted] actions.
- Focus on each affec[redacted] ecosystem, and hu[redacted]
- Focus on truly me[redacted]

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EH DFFRPSOLVK[redacted]
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1RW DOO SRWHQWLDO FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV LVVXHV LGHQWLILHG GXULQJ VFRSLQJ QHHG WR EH LQFOXGHG LQ DQ ($ RU DQ (,6 6RPH PD\ EH LUUHOHYDQW RU LQFRQVHTXHQWLDO WR GHFLVLRQV DERXW WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ DQG DOWHUQDWLYHV &XPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV VKRXOG FRXQW ZKDW FRXQWV QRW SUR GXFH VXSHUILFLDO DQDO\VHV RI D ORQJ ODXQGU\ OLVW RI LVVXHV WKDW KDYH OLWWOH UHOHYDQFH WR WKH HIIHFWV RI WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ RU WKH HYHQWXDO GHFLVLRQV %HFDXVH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV FDQ UHVXOW IURP WKH DFWLYLWLHV RI RWKHU DJHQFLHV RU SHUVRQV WKH\ PD\ KDYH DOUHDG\ EHHQ DQDO\]HG E\ RWKHUV DQG WKH LPSRUWDQFH RI WKH LVVXH GHWHUPLQHG)RU LQ VWDQFH DQ DJHQF\ SURSRVLQJ DQ DFWLRQ ZLWK PLQRU HIIHFWV RQ ZHWODQGV VKRXOG QRW XQL ODWHUDOO\ GHFLGH WKDW FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV RQ ZHWODQGV LV QRW DQ LPSRUWDQW LVVXH &XPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV VKRXOG FRQVLGHU WKH FRQFHUQV RI DJHQFLHV PDQDJLQJ DQG UHJXODWLQJ ZHWODQGV DV ZHOO DV WKH UHJLRQDO KLVWRU\ RI FXPXODWLYH ZHWODQG ORVVHV DQG GHJUDGDWLRQ DQG WKH SUHVHQFH RI RWKHU SURSRVDOV WKDW ZRXOG SURGXFH IXWXUH ZHWODQG ORVVHV RU GHJUDGDWLRQ

BOUNDING CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS

2QFH WKH VWXG\ JRDOV RI WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV DUH HVWDEOLVKHG WKH DQDO\VW PXVW GHFLGH RQ WKH VSHFLILF FRQWHQW RI WKH VWXG\ WKDW ZLOO PHHW WKRVH UHTXLUHPHQWV $QDO\]LQJ FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV GLIIHUV IURP WKH WUDGLWLRQDO DSSURDFK WR HQYLURQPHQWDO LPSDFW DVVHVVPHQW EHFDXVH LW UHTXLUHV WKH DQDO\VW WR H[SDQG WKH JHRJUDSKLF ERXQGDULHV DQG H[WHQG WKH WLPH IUDPH WR HQFRPSDVV DGGLWLRQDO HIIHFWV RQ WKH UHVRXUFHV HFRV\VWHPV DQG KXPDQ FRPPXQLWLHV RI FRQFHUQ

Identifying Geographic Boundaries

)RU D SURMHFW VSHFLILF DQDO\VLV LW LV RIWHQ VXIILFLHQW WR DQDO\]H HIIHFWV ZLWKLQ WKH LPPH GLDWH DUHD RI WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ :KHQ DQD O\]LQJ WKH FRQWULEXWLRQ RI WKLV SURSRVHG DFWLRQ WR FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV KRZHYHU WKH JHRJUDSKLF ERXQGDULHV RI WKH DQDO\VLV DOPRVW DOZD\V VKRXOG EH H[SDQGHG 7KHVH H[SDQGHG ERXQGDULHV FDQ EH WKRXJKW RI DV GLIIHUHQFHV LQ KLHUDUFK\ RU VFDOH 3URMHFW VSHFLILF DQDO\VHV DUH XVXDOO\ FRQGXFWHG RQ WKH VFDOH RI FRXQWLHV IRUHVW PDQ DJHPHQW XQLWV RU LQVWDOODWLRQ ERXQGDULHV ZKHUHDV FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV VKRXOG EH FRQGXFWHG RQ WKH VFDOH RI KXPDQ FRPPXQLWLHV ODQGVFDSHV ZDWHUVKHGV RU DLUVKHGV &KRRVLQJ WKH DSSURSULDWH VFDOH WR XVH LV FULWLFDO DQG ZLOO GHSHQG RQ WKH UHVRXUFH RU V\VWHP)LJXUH LOOXVWUDWHV WKH XWLOLW\ RI XVLQJ WKH HFRORJLFDOO\ UHOHYDQW ZDWHUVKHG ERXQGDU\ RI WKH $QDFRVWLD 5LYHU EDVLQ UDWKHU WKDQ WKH SROLWLFDO ERXQGDULHV RI ORFDO JRYHUQPHQWV WR GHYHORS UHVWRUDWLRQ SODQV

$ XVHIXO FRQFHSW LQ GHWHUPLQLQJ DSSURSULDWH JHRJUDSKLF ERXQGDULHV IRU D FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV LV WKH **project impact zone**

Table 2-1. Identifying potential cumulative effects issues related to a proposed action

1. What is the value of the affected resource or ecosystem? Is it:
   - protected by legislation or planning goals?
   - ecologically important?
   - culturally important?
   - economically important?
   - important to the well-being of a human community?

2. Is the proposed action one of several similar past, present, or future actions in the same geographic area? (Regions may be land management units, watersheds, regulatory regions, states, ecoregions, etc.) *Examples: timber sales in a national forest; hydropower development on a river; incinerators in a community.*

3. Do other activities (whether governmental or private) in the region have environmental effects similar to those of the proposed action? *Example: release of oxidizing pollutants to a river by a municipality, an industry, or individual septic systems.*

4. Will the proposed action (in combination with other planned activities) affect any natural resources; cultural resources; social or economic units; or ecosystems of regional, national, or global public concern? *Examples: release of chlorofluorocarbons to the atmosphere; conversion of wetland habitat to farmland located in a migratory waterfowl flyway.*

5. Have any recent or ongoing NEPA analyses of similar actions or nearby actions identified important adverse or beneficial cumulative effect issues? *Examples: National Forest Plan EIS; Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Basinwide EIS or EA.*

6. Has the impact been historically significant, such that the importance of the resource is defined by past loss, past gain, or investments to restore resources? *Example: mudflat and salt-marsh habitats in San Francisco Bay.*

7. Might the proposed action involve any of the following cumulative effects issues?
   - long range transport of air pollutants resulting in ecosystem acidification or eutrophication
   - air emissions resulting in degradation of regional air quality
   - release of greenhouse gases resulting in climate modification
   - loading large water bodies with discharges of sediment, thermal, and toxic pollutants
   - reduction or contamination of groundwater supplies
   - changes in hydrological regimes of major rivers and estuaries
   - long-term containment and disposal of hazardous wastes
   - mobilization of persistent or bioaccumulated substances through the food chain
   - decreases in the quantity and quality of soils
   - loss of natural habitats or historic character through residential, commercial, and industrial development
   - social, economic, or cultural effects on low-income or minority communities resulting from ongoing development
   - habitat fragmentation from infrastructure construction or changes in land use
   - habitat degradation from grazing, timber harvesting, and other consumptive uses
   - disruption of migrating fish and wildlife populations
   - loss of biological diversity

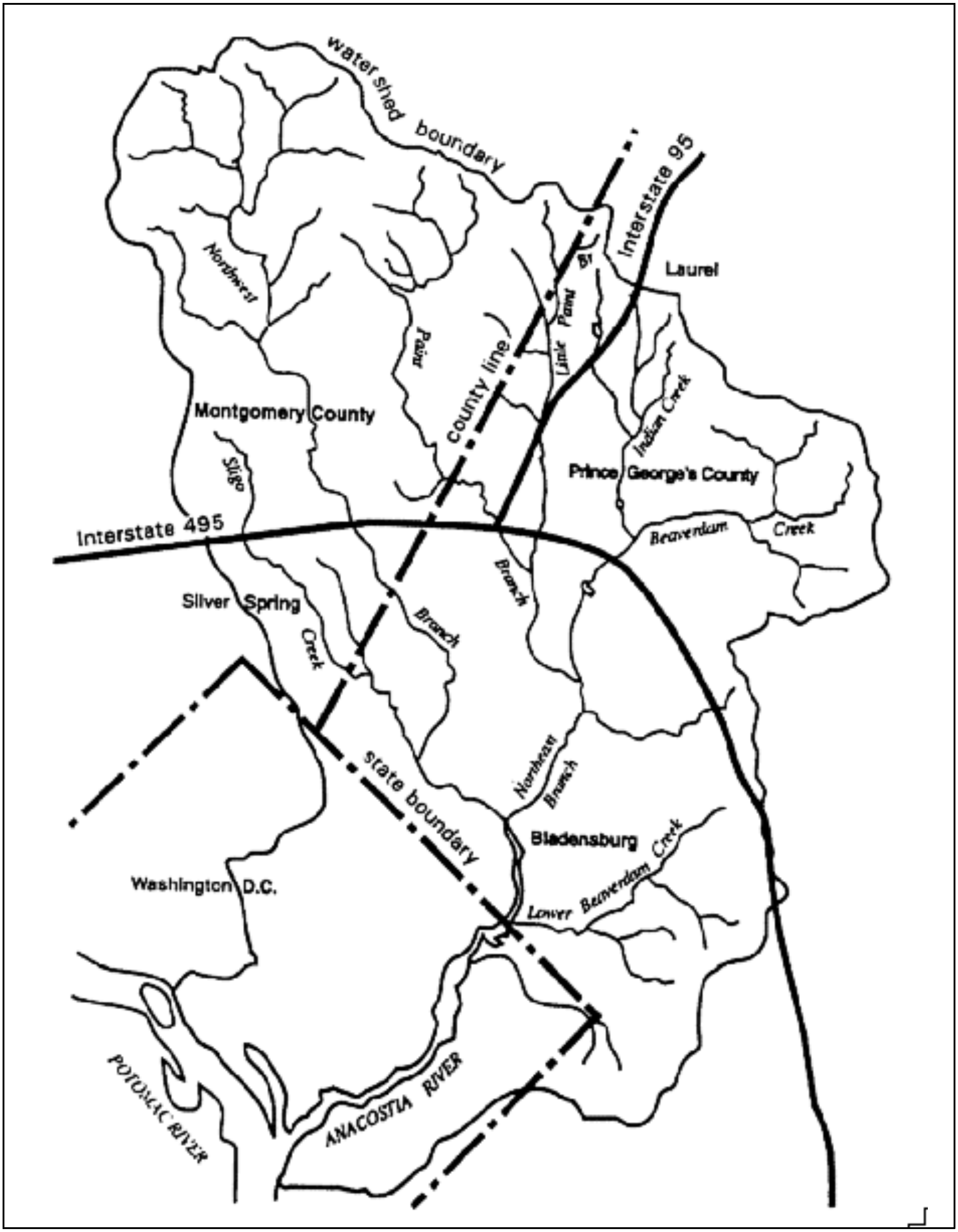

Figure 2-1. Juxtaposition of natural and political boundaries surrounding the Anacostia River

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- 'HWHUPLQH WKH JHRJUDSKLF DUHDV RFFXSLHG E\ WKRVH UHVRXUFHV RXWVLGH RI WKH SURMHFW LPSDFW]RQH ,Q PRVW FDVHV WKH ODUJHVW RI WKHVH DUHDV ZLOO EH WKH DSSURSULDWH DUHD IRU WKH DQDO\VLV RI FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV
- 'HWHUPLQH WKH DIIHFWHG LQVWLWXWLRQDO MXULV GLFWLRQV ERWK IRU WKH SURSRVLQJ DJHQF\ DQG RWKHU DJHQFLHV RU JURXSV

3URMHFW LPSDFW]RQHV IRU D SURSRVHG DFWLRQ DUH OLNHO\ WR YDU\ IRU GLIIHUHQW UHVRXUFHV DQG HQYLURQPHQWDO PHGLD)RU ZDWHU WKH SURMHFW LPSDFW]RQH ZRXOG EH OLPLWHG WR WKH K\GURORJLF V\VWHP WKDW ZRXOG EH DIIHFWHG E\ WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ)RU DLU WKH]RQH PD\ EH WKH SK\VLR JUDSKLF EDVLQ LQ ZKLFK WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ ZRXOG EH ORFDWHG /DQG EDVHG HIIHFWV PD\ RFFXU ZLWKLQ VRPH VHW GLVWDQFH IURP WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ ,Q DGGLWLRQ WKH ERXQGDULHV IRU DQ LQGL YLGXDO UHVRXUFH VKRXOG EH UHODWHG WR WKH UHVRXUFHV GHSHQGHQFH RQ GLIIHUHQW HQYLURQ PHQWDO PHGLD 7DEOH SURYLGHV VRPH SRVVLEOH JHRJUDSKLF ERXQGDULHV IRU GLIIHUHQW UHVRXUFHV 7KLV OLVW LV *not* LQFOXVLYH 7KH DSSOLFDEOH JHR JUDSKLF VFRSH QHHGV WR EH GHILQHG FDVH E\ FDVH

Table 2-2. Geographic areas that could be used in a cumulative effects analysis

Resource	Possible Geographic Areas for Analysis
Air quality	Metropolitan area, airshed, or global atmosphere
Water quality	Stream, watershed, river basin, estuary, aquifer, or parts thereof
Vegetative resources	Watershed, forest, range, or ecosystem
Resident wildlife	Species habitat or ecosystem
Migratory wildlife	Breeding grounds, migration route, wintering areas, or total range of affected population units
Fishery resources	Stream, river basin, estuary, or parts thereof; spawning area and migration route
Historic resources	Neighborhood, rural community, city, state, tribal territory, known or possible historic district
Sociocultural resources	Neighborhood, community, distribution of low-income or minority population, or culturally valued landscape
Land use	Community, metropolitan area, county, state, or region
Coastal zone	Coastal region or watershed
Recreation	River, lake, geographic area, or land management unit
Socioeconomics	Community, metropolitan area, county, state, or country

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LV WR FRQVLGHU WKH GLVWDQFH DQ HIIHFW FDQ WUDYHO
)RU LQVWDQFH DLU HPLVVLRQV FDQ WUDYHO VXE
VWDQWLDO GLVWDQFHV DQG DUH DQ LPSRUWDQW SDUW RI
UHJLRQDO DLU TXDOLW\ $LU TXDOLW\ UHJLRQV DUH
GHILQHG E\ WKH (3$ DQG WKHVH UHJLRQV DUH DQ
DSSURSULDWH ERXQGDU\ IRU DVVHVVPHQW RI WKH
FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV RI UHOHDVHV RI SROOXWDQWV WR WKH
DWPRVSKHUH)RU ZDWHU UHVRXUFHV DQ DSSUR
SULDWH UHJLRQDO ERXQGDU\ PD\ EH D ULYHU EDVLQ RU
SDUWV WKHUHRI :DWHUVKHG ERXQGDULHV DUH XVHIXO
IRU FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV EHFDXVH SRO
OXWDQWV DQG PDWHULDO UHOHDVHG LQ WKH ZDWHUVKHG
PD\ WUDYHO GRZQVWUHDP WR EH PLQJOHG ZLWK RWKHU
SROOXWDQWV DQG PDWHULDOV PLJUDWRU\ ILVK PD\
WUDYHO XS DQG GRZQ WKH ULYHU V\VWHP GXULQJ
WKHLU OLIH F\FOH DQG UHVRXUFH DJHQFLHV PD\
KDYH EDVLQ ZLGH PDQDJHPHQW DQG SODQQLQJ
JRDOV)RU ODQG EDVHG HIIHFWV DQ DSSURSULDWH
UHJLRQDO ERXQGDU\ PD\ EH D IRUHVW RU UDQJH D
ZDWHUVKHG DQ HFRORJLFDO UHJLRQ HFRUHJLRQ RU
VRFLRHFRQRPLF UHJLRQ IRU HYDOXDWLQJ HIIHFWV RQ
KXPDQ FRPPXQLWLHV :KLFK ERXQGDU\ LV WKH
PRVW DSSURSULDWH GHSHQGV ERWK RQ WKH DFFXPX
ODWLRQ FKDUDFWHULVWLFV RI WKH HIIHFWV EHLQJ
DVVHVVHG DQG DQ HYDOXDWLRQ RI WKH PDQDJHPHQW
RU UHJXODWRU\ LQWHUHVWV RI WKH DJHQFLHV LQYROYHG

Identifying Time Frames

7KH WLPH IUDPH RI WKH SURMHFW VSHFLILF DQDO\
VLV VKRXOG DOVR EH HYDOXDWHG WR GHWHUPLQH LWV
DSSOLFDELOLW\ WR WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV
7KLV DVSHFW RI WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV
PD\ DW ILUVW VHHP WKH PRVW WURXEOHVRPH WR
GHILQH &(4"V UHJXODWLRQV GHILQH FXPXODWLYH
HIIHFWV DV WKH §LQFUHPHQWDO HIIHFW RI WKH DFWLRQ
ZKHQ DGGHG WR RWKHU SDVW SUHVHQW DQG UHDVRQ
DE\ IRUHVHHDEOH IXWXUH DFWLRQV &)5
,Q GHWHUPLQLQJ KRZ IDU LQWR WKH IXWXUH
WR DQDO\]H FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV WKH DQDO\VW VKRXOG
ILUVW FRQVLGHU WKH WLPH IUDPH RI WKH SURMHFW
VSHFLILF DQDO\VLV ,I WKH HIIHFWV RI WKH SURSRVHG
DFWLRQ DUH SURMHFWHG WR ODVW ILYH \HDUV WKLV WLPH
IUDPH PD\ EH WKH PRVW DSSURSULDWH IRU
WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV 7KH DQDO\VW
VKRXOG DWWHPSW WR LGHQWLI\ DFWLRQV WKDW FRXOG
UHDVRQDEO\ EH H[SHFWHG WR RFFXU ZLWKLQ WKDW
SHULRG

7KHUH PD\ EH LQVWDQFHV ZKHQ WKH WLPH IUDPH
RI WKH SURMHFW VSHFLILF DQDO\VLV ZLOO QHHG WR EH
H[SDQGHG WR HQFRPSDVV FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV
RFFXUULQJ IXUWKHU LQWR WKH IXWXUH)LJXUH
)RU LQVWDQFH HYHQ WKRXJK WKH HIIHFWV RI D
SURSRVHG DFWLRQ PD\ OLQJHU RU GHFUHDVH VORZO\
WKURXJK WLPH WKH WLPH IUDPH IRU WKH SURMHFW
VSHFLILF DQDO\VLV XVXDOO\ GRHV QRW H[WHQG EH\RQG
WKH WLPH ZKHQ SURMHFW VSHFLILF HIIHFWV GURS EHORZ
D OHYHO GHWHUPLQHG WR EH VLJQLILFDQW 7KHVH
SURMHFW VSHFLILF HIIHFWV KRZHYHU PD\ FRPELQH
ZLWK WKH HIIHFWV RI RWKHU DFWLRQV EH\RQG WKH WLPH
IUDPH RI WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ DQG UHVXOW LQ VLJ
QLILFDQW FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV WKDW PXVW EH FRQ
VLGHUHG

IDENTIFYING PAST, PRESENT, AND REASONABLY FORESEEABLE FUTURE ACTIONS

$V GHVFULEHG DERYH LGHQWLI\LQJ SDVW SUHV
HQW DQG IXWXUH DFWLRQV LV FULWLFDO WR HVWDEOLVKLQJ
WKH DSSURSULDWH JHRJUDSKLF DQG WLPH ERXQGDULHV
IRU WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV ,GHQWLI\LQJ
ERXQGDULHV DQG DFWLRQV VKRXOG EH LWHUDWLYH
ZLWKLQ WKH VFRSLQJ SURFHVV

$ VFKHPDWLF GLDJUDP VKRZLQJ WKH DUHD LQ
ZKLFK WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ LV ORFDWHG WKH ORFD
WLRQ RI UHVRXUFHV DQG WKH ORFDWLRQ RI RWKHU
IDFLOLWLHV H[LVWLQJ RU SODQQHG KXPDQ FRP
PXQLWLHV DQG GLVWXUEHG DUHDV FDQ EH XVHIXO IRU
LGHQWLI\LQJ DFWLRQV WR EH LQFOXGHG LQ WKH FXP
XODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV)LJXUH $ JHR
JUDSKLF LQIRUPDWLRQ V\VWHP *,6 RU D PDQXDO
PDS RYHUOD\ V\VWHP FDQ EH XVHG WR GHSLFW WKLV
LQIRUPDWLRQ VHH $SSHQGL[$ IRU D GHVFULSWLRQ RI
PDS RYHUOD\V DQG *,6 6XFK D GLDJUDP LV LV
XVHIXO IRU GHWHUPLQLQJ SURMHFW VSHFLILF LPSDFW
]RQHV DQG WKHLU RYHUODS ZLWK DUHDV DIIHFWHG E\
RWKHU QRQSURMHFW DFWLRQV

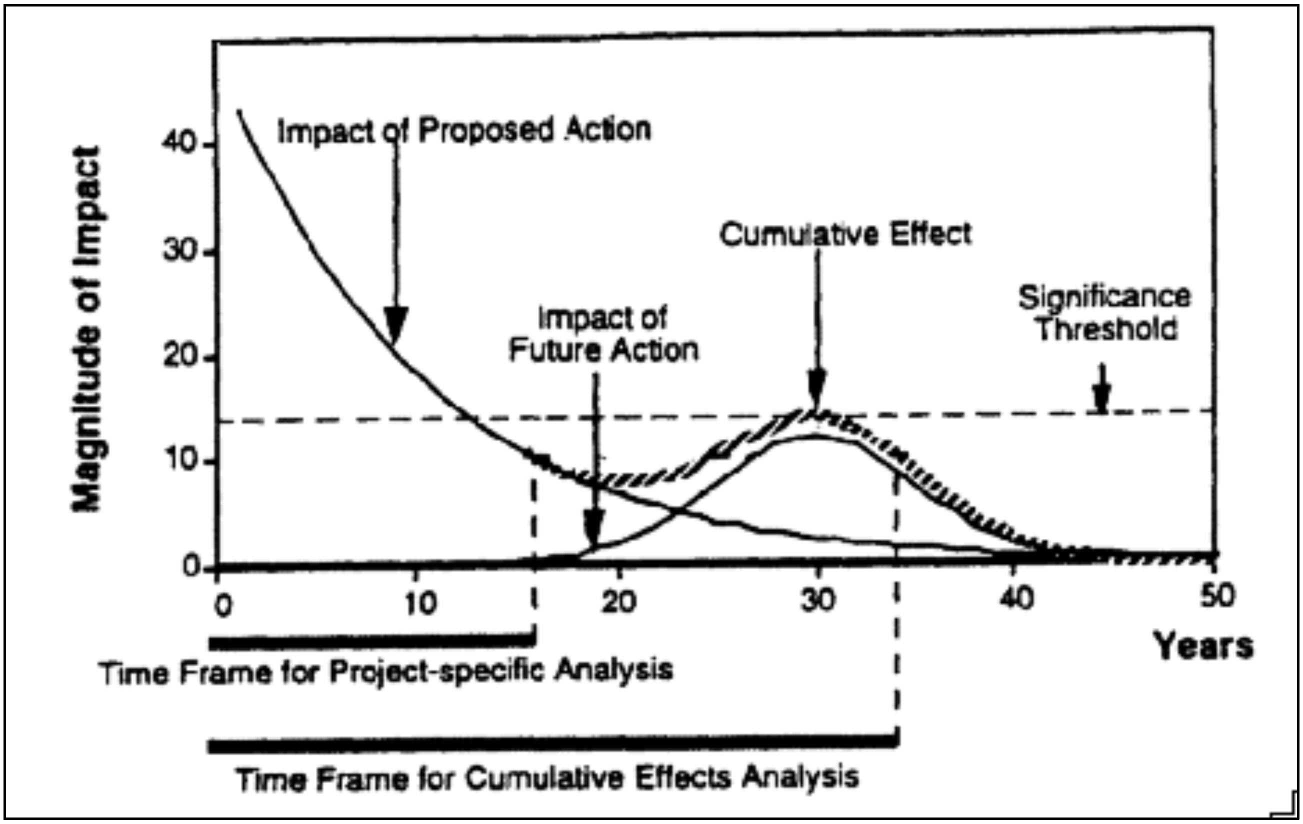

Figure 2-2. Time frames for project-specific and cumulative effects analyses

%\ H[DPLQLQJ WKH RYHUODS RI LPSDFW]RQHV RQ WKH DUHDV RFFXSLHG E\ UHVRXUFHV LW VKRXOG EH SRVVLEOH WR UHILQH WKH OLVW RI SURMHFWV RU DFWLYLWLHV SDVW SUHVHQW RU IXWXUH WR EH LQFOXGHG LQ WKH DQDO\VLV 3UR[LPLW\ RI DFWLRQV PD\ QRW EH VXIILFLHQW MXVWLILFDWLRQ WR LQFOXGH WKHP LQ WKH DQDO\VLV ,Q WKH H[DPSOH VKRZQ LQ)LJXUH WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV IRU WURXW VKRXOG FRQVLGHU WKH HIIHFWV RI WKH H[LVWLQJ PLQH DQG WKH SODQQHG ORJJLQJ DFWLYLW\ EHFDXVH WKHVH DFWLYLWLHV ZRXOG KDYH HLWKHU SUHVHQW RU IXWXUH HIIHFWV RQ WKH WURXW VSDZQLQJ DUHD EHORZ WKH SURSRVHG SRZHU SODQW IDFLOLW\ $OWKRXJK DQ DJULFXOWXUDO DUHD LV QHDUE\ LW FDQ EH H[FOXGHG IURP WKH DQDO\VLV EHFDXVH LWV VHGLPHQW ORDGLQJ HIIHFWV RFFXU GRZQVWUHDP RI WKH WURXW VSDZQLQJ DUHD 3UR[LPLW\ RI RWKHU DFWLRQV WR WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ LV QRW WKH GHFLVLYH IDFWRU IRU LQFOXGLQJ WKHVH DFWLRQV LQ DQ DQDO\VLV WKHVH DFWLRQV PXVW KDYH VRPH LQIOXHQFH RQ WKH UHVRXUFHV DIIHFWHG E\ WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ ,Q RWKHU ZRUGV WKHVH RWKHU DFWLRQV VKRXOG EH LQFOXGHG LQ DQDO\VLV ZKHQ WKHLU LPSDFW]RQHV RYHUODS DUHDV RFFXSLHG E\ UHVRXUFHV DIIHFWHG E\ WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ

&RPSOHWLQJ WKH JHRJUDSKLF RU VFKHPDWLF GLD JUDP GHSHQGLQJ RQ DSSO\LQJ FDXVH DQG HIIHFW PRGHOV WKDW OLQN KXPDQ DFWLRQV DQG WKH UH VRXUFHV RU HFRV\VWHPV 7KLV WRR LV DQ LWHUDWLYH SURFHVV ,GHQWLI\LQJ RWKHU DFWLYLWLHV FRQWULEXW LQJ WR FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV FRXOG UHVXOW LQ WKH DGGLWLRQ RI QHZ HIIHFW SDWKZD\V WR WKH FDXVH DQG HIIHFW PRGHO ,Q WKH H[DPSOH DGGLWLRQ RI DQ H[LVWLQJ PLQH WR WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV FRXOG UHTXLUH DGGLQJ D SDWKZD\ IRU WKH HIIHFWV RI FKHPLFDO SROOXWLRQ RQ WURXW &KDSWHUV DQG DQG $SSHQGL[$ GLVFXVV FDXVH DQG HIIHFW PRGHO LQJ DQG QHWZRUN DQDO\VLV

7KH DYDLODELOLW\ RI GDWD RIWHQ GHWHUPLQHV KRZ IDU EDFN SDVW HIIHFWV DUH H[DPLQHG $OWKRXJK FHUWDLQ W\SHV RI GDWD H J IRUHVW FRYHU PD\ EH DYDLODEOH IRU H[WHQVLYH SHULRGV LQ WKH SDVW L H VHYHUDO GHFDGHV RWKHU GDWD H J ZDWHU TXDOLW\ GDWD PD\ EH DYDLODEOH RQO\ IRU

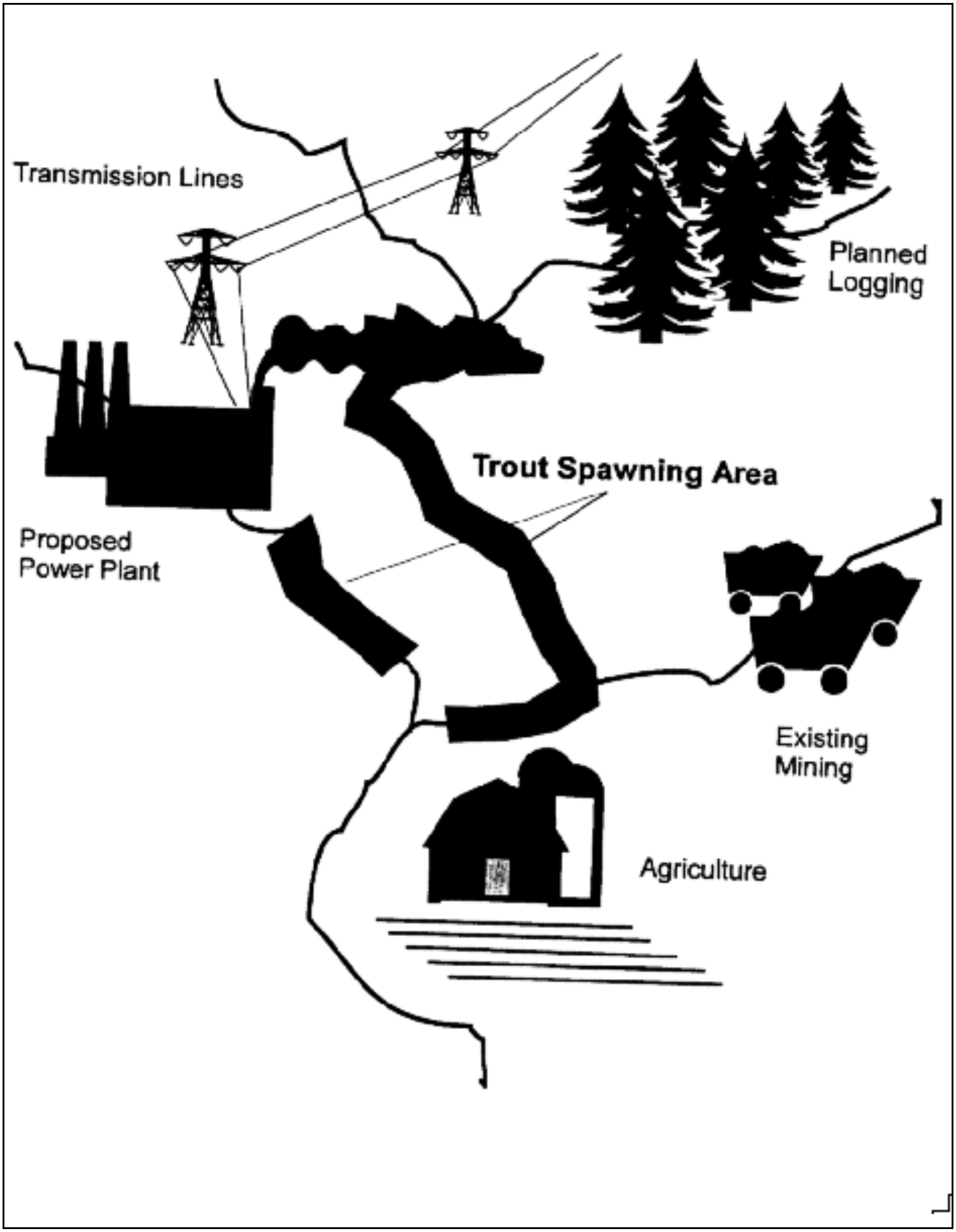

Figure 2-3. Impact zones of proposed and existing development relative to a trout population

PXFK VKRUWHU SHULRGV %HFDXVH WKH GDWD GHVFULE LQJ SDVW FRQGLWLRQV DUH XVXD00\ VFDUFH WKH DQD0 \VLV RI SDVW HIIHFWV LV RIWHQ TXD0LWDWLYH

,GHQWLI\LQJ VLP L0DU DFWLRQV SUHVHQW0\ XQGHU ZD\ LV HDVLHU WKDQ LGHQWLI\LQJ SDVW RU IXWXUH DFWLRQV EXW LW LV E\ QR PHDQV VLPS0H %HFDXVH PRVW RI WKH DQD0\WLFD0 HIIRUW LQ DQ HQYLURQPHQWD0 LPSDFW DVVHVVPHQW GHD0V ZLWK WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ WKH DFWLRQV RI RWKHU DJHQFLHV DQG SULYDWH SDUWLHV DUH XVXD00\ 0HVV ZH00 NQRZQ (IIHFWLYH FXPX0DWLYH HIIHFWV DQD0\VLV UHTXLUHV F0RVH FRRUGLQDWLRQ DPRQJ DJHQFLHV WR HQVXUH WKDW HYHQ D00 SUHVHQW DFWLRQV PXFK 0HVV SDVW DQG IXWXUH DFWLRQV DUH FRQVLGHUHG

7KH ILUVW VWHS LQ LGHQWLI\LQJ IXWXUH DFWLRQV LV WR LQYHVWLJDWH WKH S0DQV RI WKH SURSRQHQW DJHQF\ DQG RWKHU DJHQFLHV LQ WKH DUHD &RPPRQ0\ DQD0\VWV RQ0\ LQF0XGH WKRVH S0DQV IRU DFWLRQV ZKLFK DUH IXQGHG RU IRU ZKLFK RWKHU 1(3$ DQD0\VLV LV EHLQJ SUHSDUHG 7KLV DSSURDFK GRHV QRW PHHW WKH 0HWWHU RU LQWHQW RI &(4"V UHJX0D WLRQV ,W XQGHUHVWLPDWHV WKH QXPEHU RI IXWXUH SURMHFWV EHFDXVH PDQ\ YLDE0H DFWLRQV PD\ EH LQ WKH HDU0\ S0DQQLQJ VWDJH 2Q WKH RWKHU KDQG VRPH DFWLRQV LQ WKH S0DQQLQJ EXGJHWLQJ RU H[HFXWLRQ SKDVH PD\ QRW JR IRUZDUG 7R LQF0XGH D00 SURSRVD0V HYHU FRQVLGHUHG DV RWKHU DFWLRQV ZRX0G PRVW 0LNH0\ RYHUHVWLPDWH WKH IXWXUH HIIHFWV RI FXPX0DWLYH HIIHFWV RQ WKH UHVRXUFHV HFRV\VWHPV DQG KXPDQ FRPPXQLWLHV WKHUHIRUH WKH DQD0\VW VKRX0G GHYH0RS JXLGH0LQHV DV WR ZKDW FRQVWLWXWHV UHDVRQDE0\ IRUHVHHDE0H IXWXUH DFWLRQV EDVHG RQ WKH S0DQQLQJ SURFHVV ZLWKLQ HDFK DJHQF\ 6SHFLILFD00\ WKH DQD0\VW VKRX0G XVH WKH EHVW DYDL0DE0H LQIRUPDWLRQ WR GHYH0RS VFHQDULRV WKDW SUHGLFW ZKLFK IXWXUH DFWLRQV PLJKW UHDVRQDE0\ EH H[SHFWHG DV D UHVX0W RI WKH SURSRVD0 6XFK VFHQDULRV DUH JHQHUD00\ EDVHG RQ H[SHULHQFH REWDLQHG IURP VLP L0DU SURMHFWV 0R FDWHG H0VHZKHUH LQ WKH UHJLRQ ,QF0XGLQJ IXWXUH DFWLRQV LQ WKH VWXG\ LV PXFK HDVLHU LI DQ DJHQF\ KDV D0UHDG\ GHYH0RSHG D S0DQQLQJ GRFXPHQW WKDW LGHQWLILHV SURSRVHG IXWXUH DFWLRQV DQG KDV FRP PXWL0DWHG WKHVH S0DQV WR RWKHU IHGHUD0 DJHQFLHV DQG JRYHUQPHQWD0 ERGLHV LQ WKH DIIHFWHG UHJLRQ

:KHQ LGHQWLI\LQJ IXWXUH DFWLRQV WR LQF0XGH LQ WKH FXPX0DWLYH HIIHFWV DQD0\VLV UHDVRQDE0\ IRUHVHHDE0H DFWLRQV E\ SULYDWH RUJDQL]DWLRQV RU LQGLYLGXD0V DUH XVXD00\ PRUH GLIILFX0W WR LGHQWLI\ WKDQ WKRVH RI IHGHUD0 RU RWKHU JRYHUQPHQWD0 HQWLWLHV ,Q PDQ\ FDVHV 0RFD0 JRYHUQPHQW S0DQ QLQJ DJHQFLHV FDQ SURYLGH XVHIX0 LQIRUPDWLRQ RQ WKH 0LNH0\ IXWXUH GHYH0RSPHQW RI WKH UHJLRQ VXFK DV PDVWHU S0DQV /RFD0]RQLQJ UHTXLUHPHQWV ZDWHU VXSS0\ S0DQV HFRQRPLF GHYH0RSPHQW S0DQV DQG YDULRXV SHUPLWWLQJ UHFRUGV ZL00 KH0S LQ LGHQWLI\LQJ UHDVRQDE0\ IRUHVHHDE0H SULYDWH DFWLRQV VHH &KDSWHU IRU RWKHU VRXUFHV RI LQIRUPDWLRQ ,Q DGGLWLRQ VRPH SULYDWH 0DQG RZQHUV RU RUJDQL]DWLRQV PD\ EH ZL00LQJ WR VKDUH WKHLU S0DQV IRU IXWXUH GHYH0RSPHQW RU 0DQG XVH 7KHVH S0DQV FDQ EH FRQVLGHUHG LQ WKH DQD0\VLV EXW LW LV LPSRUWDQW WR LQGLFDWH LQ WKH 1(3$ DQD0\VLV ZKHWKHU WKHVH S0DQV ZHUH SUHVHQWHG E\ WKH SULYDWH SDUW\ UHVSRQVLE0H IRU RULJLQDWLQJ WKH DFWLRQ :KHQHYHU VSHFX0DWLYH SURMHFWLRQV RI IXWXUH GHYH0RSPHQW DUH XVHG WKH DQD0\VW VKRX0G SURYLGH DQ H[S0LFLW GHVFULSWLRQ RI WKH DVVXPSWLRQV LQYR0YHG ,I WKH DQD0\VW LV XQFHU WDLQ ZKHWKHU WR LQF0XGH IXWXUH DFWLRQV LW PD\ EH DSSURSULDWH WR ERXQG WKH SURE0HP E\ GHYH0RSLQJ VHYHUD0 VFHQDULRV ZLWK GLIIHUHQW DVVXPSWLRQV DERXW IXWXUH DFWLRQV

,Q JHQHUD0 IXWXUH DFWLRQV FDQ EH H[F0XGHG IURP WKH DQD0\VLV RI FXPX0DWLYH HIIHFWV LI

- WKH DFWLRQ LV RXWVLGH WKH JHRJUDSKLF ERXQGDULHV RU WLPH IUDPH HVWDE0LVKHG IRU WKH FXPX0DWLYH HIIHFWV DQD0\VLV
- WKH DFWLRQ ZL00 QRW DIIHFW UHVRXUFHV WKDW DUH WKH VXEMHFW RI WKH FXPX0DWLYH HIIHFWV DQD0\VLV RU
- LQF0XGLQJ RI WKH DFWLRQ ZRX0G EH DUEL WUDU\

$W WKH VDPH WLPH 1(3$ 0LWLJDWLRQ >*Scientists' Institute for Public Information, Inc., v. Atomic Energy Commission*) G ' & &LU @ KDV PDGH LW F0HDU WKDW UHDVRQDE0H IRUHFDVWLQJ LV LPS0LFLW LQ 1(3$ DQG WKDW LW LV WKH UHVSRQVLEL0LW\ RI IHGHUD0 DJHQFLHV WR SUHGLFW WKH HQYLURQPHQWD0 HIIHFWV RI SURSRVHG DFWLRQV EHIRUH WKH\ DUH IX00\ NQRZQ &(4"V UHJX0DWLRQV SURYLGH IRU LQF0XGLQJ WKHVH XQFHUWDLQWLHV LQ WKH HQYLURQPHQWD0 LPSDFW DVVHVVPHQW ZKHUH WKH

IRUHVHHDEOH IXWXUH DFWLRQ LV QRW SODQQHG LQ VXIIL FLHQW GHWDLO WR SHUPLW FRPSOHWH DQDO\VLV 6SHFLI LFDOO\ &(4"V UHJXODWLRQV VWDWH

> [w]hen an agency is evaluating reasonably foreseeable significant adverse effects on the human environment in an environmental impact statement and there is incomplete or unavailable information, ... [that] cannot be obtained because the overall costs of obtaining it are exorbitant or the means to obtain it are not known,... the agency shall include... the agency’s evaluation of such impacts based upon theoretical approaches or research methods generally accepted in the scientific community (40 CFR § 1502.22).

(YHQ ZKHQ WKH GHFLVLRQPDNHU GRHV QRW VHOHFW WKH HQYLURQPHQWDOO\ SUHIHUDEOH DOWHUQD WLYH LQFOXGLQJ WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV RI IXWXUH DFWLRQV LQ WKH DQDO\VLV VHUYHV WKH LPSRUWDQW 1(3$ IXQFWLRQ RI LQIRUPLQJ WKH SXEOLF DQG SRWHQWLDOO\ LQIOXHQFLQJ IXWXUH GHFLVLRQV

AGENCY COORDINATION

%HFDXVH WKH DFWLRQV RI RWKHU DJHQFLHV DUH SDUW RI FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV JUHDWHU HPSKDVLV VKRXOG EH SODFHG RQ FRQVXOWLQJ ZLWK RWKHU DJHQFLHV WKDQ LV FRPPRQO\ SUDFWLFHG)RUWXQDWHO\ ZKHQ IHGHUDO DJHQFLHV DGRSW WKH HFRV\VWHP DSSURDFK WR PDQDJHPHQW HVSRXVHG E\ WKH ,QWHUDJHQF\ (FRV\VWHP 0DQDJHPHQW 7DVN)RUFH VXFK FRQVXOWDWLRQ SUREDEO\ ZLOO EH HQKDQFHG VHH ER['XULQJ VFRSLQJ SHULRGLF FRRUGLQDWLRQ ZLWK RWKHU DJHQFLHV PD\ HQKDQFH WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV SURFHVV $V GHVFULEHG DERYH D FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV PLJKW

- LQFOXGH DQ DVVHVVPHQW RI DQRWKHU DJHQ F\‘V SURSRVHG DFWLRQ
- LQFOXGH DQ DVVHVVPHQW RI WKH HIIHFWV RI DQRWKHU DJHQF\‘V FRPSOHWHG DFWLRQV
- HYDOXDWH DQRWKHU DJHQF\‘V UHVRXUFH PDQ DJHPHQW SUDFWLFHV DQG JRDOV RU
- HYDOXDWH DQRWKHU DJHQF\‘V IXWXUH SODQV

Ecosystem Management

Vice President Gore’s National Performance Review called for the agencies of the federal government to adopt "a proactive approach to ensuring a sustainable economy and a sustainable environment through ecosystem management." The Interagency Ecosystem Management Task Force (IEMTF 1995) was established to carry out this mandate. The ecosystem approach espoused by IEMTF and a wide range of government, industry, and private interest groups is a method for sustaining or restoring natural systems in the face of the cumulative effects of many human actions. In addition to using the best science, the ecosystem approach to management is based on a collaboratively developed vision of desired future conditions that integrates ecological, economic, and social factors. Achieving this shared vision requires developing partnerships with nonfederal stakeholders and improving communication between federal agencies and the public. Many ecosystem management initiatives are underway across the United States. The lessons learned from these experiences should be incorporated into the scoping process under NEPA to address cumulative effects more effectively. The IEMTF specifically recommends that agencies develop regional ecosystem plans to coordinate their review activities under NEPA. These ecosystem plans can provide a framework for evaluating the environmental status quo and the combined cumulative effects of individual projects.

7KH VXFFHVV RI DQ\ RI WKHVH DFWLYLWLHV LV HQKDQFHG E\ FRRUGLQDWLRQ ZLWK WKH DIIHFWHG DJHQF\ $W D PLQLPXP WKH DQDO\VW VKRXOG HVWDEOLVK DQ RQJRLQJ SURFHVV RI SHULRGLF FRQVXOWDWLRQ DQG FRRUGLQDWLRQ ZLWK RWKHU DJHQFLHV HDUO\ LQ WKH VFRSLQJ SURFHVV ZKHQHYHU WKHUH DUH VLJQLILFDQW FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV LVVXHV   :KHUH DSSURSULDWH WKH OHDG DJHQF\ VKRXOG SXUVXH FRRSHUDWLQJ DJHQF\ VWDWXV IRU DIIHFWHG DJHQFLHV WR IDFLOLWDWH UHYLHZLQJ GUDIWV VXSSO\LQJ LQIRUPDWLRQ ZULWLQJ VHFWLRQV RI WKH GRFXPHQW DQG XVLQJ WKH

GRFXPHQW WR VXSSRUW PRUH WKDQ RQH DJHQF\¶V SURJUDPV

SCOPING SUMMARY

6FRSLQJ IRU FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV DQDO\VLV LV D SURDFWLYH DQG LWHUDWLYH SURFHVV ,W LQYROYHV D WKRURXJK HYDOXDWLRQ RI WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ DQG LWV HQYLURQPHQWDO FRQWH[W 'XULQJ WKH VFRSLQJ SURFHVV WKH DQDO\VW VKRXOG

- FRQVXOW ZLWK DJHQFLHV DQG RWKHU LQWHU HVWHG SHUVRQV FRQFHUQLQJ FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV LVVXHV
- HYDOXDWH WKH DJHQF\¶V SODQQLQJ DV ZHOO DV WKH SURSRVHG DFWLRQ DQG UHDVRQDEOH DOWHUQDWLYHV LQFOXGLQJ WKH QR DFWLRQ DOWHUQDWLYH WR LGHQWLI\ SRWHQWLDO FXPX ODWLYH HIIHFWV
- HYDOXDWH WKH LPSRUWDQFH RI WKH FXP XODWLYH HIIHFWV LVVXHV DVVRFLDWHG ZLWK D SURSRVHG DFWLRQ WR LGHQWLI\ DGGLWLRQDO UHVRXUFHV HFRV\VWHPV DQG KXPDQ FRP PXQLWLHV WKDW VKRXOG EH LQFOXGHG LQ WKH ($ RU (,6
- LGHQWLI\ WKH JHRJUDSKLF ERXQGDULHV IRU DQDO\VLV RI WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV RQ HDFK UHVRXUFH HFRV\VWHP DQG KXPDQ FRPPXQLW\
- LGHQWLI\ D WLPH IUDPH IRU WKH DQDO\VLV RI WKH FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV RQ HDFK UHVRXUFH HFRV\VWHP DQG KXPDQ FRPPXQLW\ DQG
- GHWHUPLQH ZKLFK RWKHU DFWLRQV VKRXOG EH LQFOXGHG LQ WKH DQDO\VLV DQG DJUHH DPRQJ LQWHUHVWHG SDUWLHV RQ WKH VFRSH RI WKH GDWD WR EH JDWKHUHG WKH PHWKRGV WR EH XVHG WKH ZD\ WKH SURFHVV ZLOO EH GRFXPHQWHG DQG KRZ WKH UHVXOWV ZLOO EH UHYLHZHG

$W WKH HQG RI WKH VFRSLQJ SURFHVV WKHUH VKRXOG EH D OLVW RI FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV LVVXHV WR EH DVVHVVHG D JHRJUDSKLF ERXQGDU\ DQG WLPH IUDPH DVVLJQHG IRU HDFK UHVRXUFH DQDO\VLV DQG D OLVW RI RWKHU DFWLRQV FRQWULEXWLQJ WR HDFK FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV LVVXH ,Q DGGLWLRQ GXULQJ VFRSLQJ WKH DQDO\VW VKRXOG REWDLQ LQIRUPDWLRQ DQG LGHQWLI\ GDWD QHHGV UHODWHG WR WKH DIIHFWHG HQYLURQPHQW &KDSWHU DQG HQYLURQPHQWDO FRQVHTXHQFHV &KDSWHU RI FXPXODWLYH HIIHFWV LQFOXGLQJ UHVRXUFH FDSDELOLWLHV WKUHVKROGV VWDQGDUGV JXLGHOLQHV DQG SODQQLQJ JRDOV

3
DESCRIBING THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

PRINCIPLES

- **Use natural boundaries.**
- **Focus on each affected resource, ecosystem, and human community.**

Characterizing the affected environment in a NEPA analysis that addresses cumulative effects requires special attention to defining baseline conditions. These baseline conditions provide the context for evaluating environmental consequences and should include historical cumulative effects to the extent feasible. The description of the affected environment relies heavily on information obtained through the scoping process (Chapter 2) and should include all potentially affected resources, ecosystems, and human communities. Determining the cumulative environmental consequences based on the baseline conditions will be discussed in Chapter 4. The affected environment section serves as a "bridge" between the identification during scoping of cumulative effects that are likely to be important and the analysis of the magnitude and significance of these cumulative effects. Specifically, describing the environment potentially affected by cumulative effects should include the following steps:

Step 5 Characterize the resources, ecosystems, and human communities identified during scoping in terms of their response to change and capacity to withstand stresses.

Step 6 Characterize the stresses affecting these resources, ecosystems, and human communities and their relation to regulatory thresholds.

Step 7 Define a baseline condition for the resources, ecosystems, and human communities.

Describing the affected environment when considering cumulative effects does not differ greatly from describing the affected environment as part of project-specific analyses; however, analyses and supporting data should be extended in terms of geography, time, and the potential for resource or system interactions. In project-specific NEPA analysis, the description of the affected environment is based on a list of resources that may be directly or indirectly affected by the proposed project. In cumulative effects analysis, the analyst must attempt to identify and characterize effects of other actions on these same resources. The affected environment for a cumulative effects analysis, pertinent environmental regulations and standards. Where possible, trends in the condition of resources, ecosystems, and human communities should be identified. The

- Deterioration of recreational uses from nonpoint-source pollution, competing uses for the water body, and overcrowding.

- Habitat fragmentation from the cumulative effects of multiple land clearing activities, including logging, agriculture, and urban development.
- Degradation of sensitive ecosystems (e.g., old growth forests) from incremental stresses of resource extraction, recreation, and second-home development.
- Loss of fish and wildlife populations from the creation of multiple barriers to migration (e.g., dams and highways).

Historic and Archaeological Resources

- Cultural site degradation resulting from streambank erosion, construction, plowing and land leveling, and vandalism.

The cumulative effects analyst should determine if the resources, ecosystems, and human communities identified during scoping include all that could potentially be affected when cumulative effects are considered. This means reviewing the list of selected resources in terms of their expanded geographic boundaries and time frames. It also requires evaluating the system interactions that may identify additional resources subject to potential cumulative effects. If scoping addresses a limited set of resources and fails to consider those with which they interact, the analyst should evaluate the need to consider additional resources. The analyst should return to the list of resources frequently and be willing to modify it as necessary; furthermore, the analyst should be able to identify and discuss conflicts between conditions at both the site and regional scales.

A second major innovation in indicators of resource or ecosystem condition is the development of landscape metrics. The discipline of landscape ecology recognizes that critical ecological processes such as habitat fragmentation require a set of indicators (e.g., habitat pattern shape, dominance, connectivity, configuration) at the landscape scale (Forman and Godron 1986; Risser et al. 1984). Investigators at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and elsewhere have developed several indicators that can be used in conjunction with remote sensing and GIS technologies to describe the environmental baseline for sites or regions (O'Neill et al. 1988, 1994). The comprehensive spatial coverage and

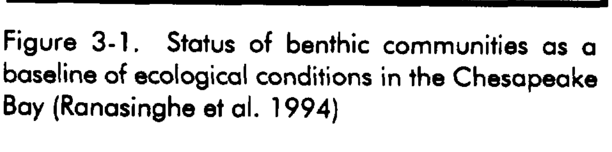

Figure 3-1. Status of benthic communities as a baseline of ecological conditions in the Chesapeake Bay (Ranasinghe et al. 1994)

Indicators have also been developed to gauge the well-being of human communities. Concern about human health and environmental conditions in minority and low-income communities has resulted in directives and guidelines for addressing environmental justice (see box). The structure, or societal setting, of human communities is analogous to the

[redacted]

is entirely consistent with NEPA and that disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations should be analyzed with the same tools currently intrinsic to the NEPA process. Specifically, the analysis should focus on smaller areas or communities within the affected area to identify significant effects that may otherwise have been diluted by an examination of a larger population or area. Demographic, geographic, economic, and human health and risk factors all contribute to whether the populations of concern face disproportionately high and adverse effects. Public involvement is particularly important for identifying the aspects of minority and low-income communities that need to be addressed. Early and sustained communications with the affected community throughout the NEPA process is an essential aspect of environmental justice.

activities contributing to cumulative effects are less well defined, a general stress level can be described. For instance, the affected environment discussion need not address every farm in the watershed, but it should note the presence of substantial agricultural activity.

Two types of information should be used to describe stress factors contributing to cumulative effects. First, the analyst should identify the types, distribution, and intensity of key social and economic activities within the region. Data on these socioeconomic "driving variables" can identify cumulative effects problems in the project area (McCabe et al. 1991). For example, population growth is strongly associated with habitat loss. A federal proposal that would contribute to substantial population growth in a specific region (e.g., a highway project traversing a remote area) should be viewed as a likely driving variable for environmental effects.

Table 3-1. Other activities (existing and proposed) that may cumulatively affect resources of concern for the Castle Mountain Mining Project (U.S. BLM 1990)

Description/Responsible Agency	Status	Anticipated Environmental Issues That Could Be Cumulative	Primary Impact Location
Utilities/Services			
1 AT&T Communication cable upgrading (BLMN)	E,P	4,1	IV
2 PacBell microwave sites (BLMN)	E,P	4,1	IV
3 Bio Gen power plant (SBC)	E	2	IV
4 Additional utility lines (1-15 corridor) (BLMN)	P	4,4	IV
5 Whiskey Pete's airstrip/waterline (BLMN)	P	4	IV
6 Solid waste landfill (UP Tracks near state line) (BLMN)	P	4,12	IV
7 Waste water ponds (Ivanpah Lake) (BLMN)	E	4,9	IV
8 Nipton waste site (BLMN)	P	4,9	IV
9 LA-Las Vegas bullet train (BLMN)	P	4,9,10	IV
Commercial and Residential			
10 Nipton land exchange (BLMN)	P	4,6,12	IV
11 Scattered residential units (BLMN)	E,P	--	LV
Recreation			
12 Ivanpah Lake landsailing (BLMN)	E	4,5,10	IV
13 Barstow to Vegas ORV race (BLMN)	E	4,5,10	IV
14 East Mojave Heritage Trail use (BLMN)	E	4,5,10	IV,LV,PV
15 Mojave Road use (BLMN)	E	4,5,10	IV,LV,PV
16 Clark Country Road A68P use (BLMS,CC)	E	4,5,10	PV
Mining			
17 Proposed Action/Alternative - precious metals (BLMN)	P	3,4,5,8,9	LV
18 Colosseum Mine - precious metals (BLMN)	E	3,4,5,8,9	IV
19 Caltrans borrow pits - aggregates (BLMN)	E	4,5	IV
20 Morning Star Mine - precious metals (BLMN)	E	3,4,5,8,9	IV
21 Vanderbilt - precious metals mill site (BLMN)	E	3,4,5,8,9	IV
22 Golden Quail Mine - precious metals (BLMN)	E	3,4,5,8,9	LV
23 Hart District Clay Pits (BLMN)	E	4,9	LV
24 Mountain Pass Mine - rare earth materials (BLMN)	E	3,4,5,8,9	IV
25 Exploratory activities (BLMN, BLMS)	E,P	4,5,9	LV,PV
Grazing			
26 Grazing leases (BLMN, BLMS)	E	4,5	IV,V,PV
Source of Information BLMN: BLM Needles BLMS: BLM Stateline SBC: San Bernardino County. Planning Department CC: Clark County. Planning Department	Status E: Existing P: Proposed	Issues 1 Earth 2 Air 3 Water 4 Wildlife 5 Vegetation 6 Transportation 7 Public Service/Utilities 8 Health/Safety 9 Visual Resources 10 Recreation 11 Cultural Resources 12 Land Use	Location PV: Piute Valley IV: Ivanpah Valley LV: Lanfair Valley

Regulations, Administrative Standards, and Regional Plans

Government regulations and administrative standards (e.g., air and water quality criteria) can play an important role in characterizing the regional landscape. They often influence developmental activity and the resultant cumulative stress on resources, ecosystems, and human communities. They also shape the manner in which a project may be operated, the amount of air or water emissions that can be released, and the limits on resource harvesting or extraction. For example, designation of a "Class I" air quality area can restrict some types of development in a region because the Prevention of Significant Deterioration (PSD) requirement establishes a threshold of cumulative air quality degradation.

criteria, and plans as are relevant to the cumulative effects problems at hand. Federal, state, and local resource and comprehensive plans guiding development activities should be reviewed and, where relevant, used to complete characterization of the affected environment. Agencies' future actions and plans pertaining to the identified resources of concern should be included if they are based on authorized plans or permits issued by a federal, state, or other governmental agency; highly speculative actions should not be included. Agency or regional planning documents can provide the analyst with a reasonable projection of future activities and their modes of operation. How project effects fit within the goals of governmental regulations and planning is an important measure of cumulative effects on the resources, ecosystems, and human communities of the region.

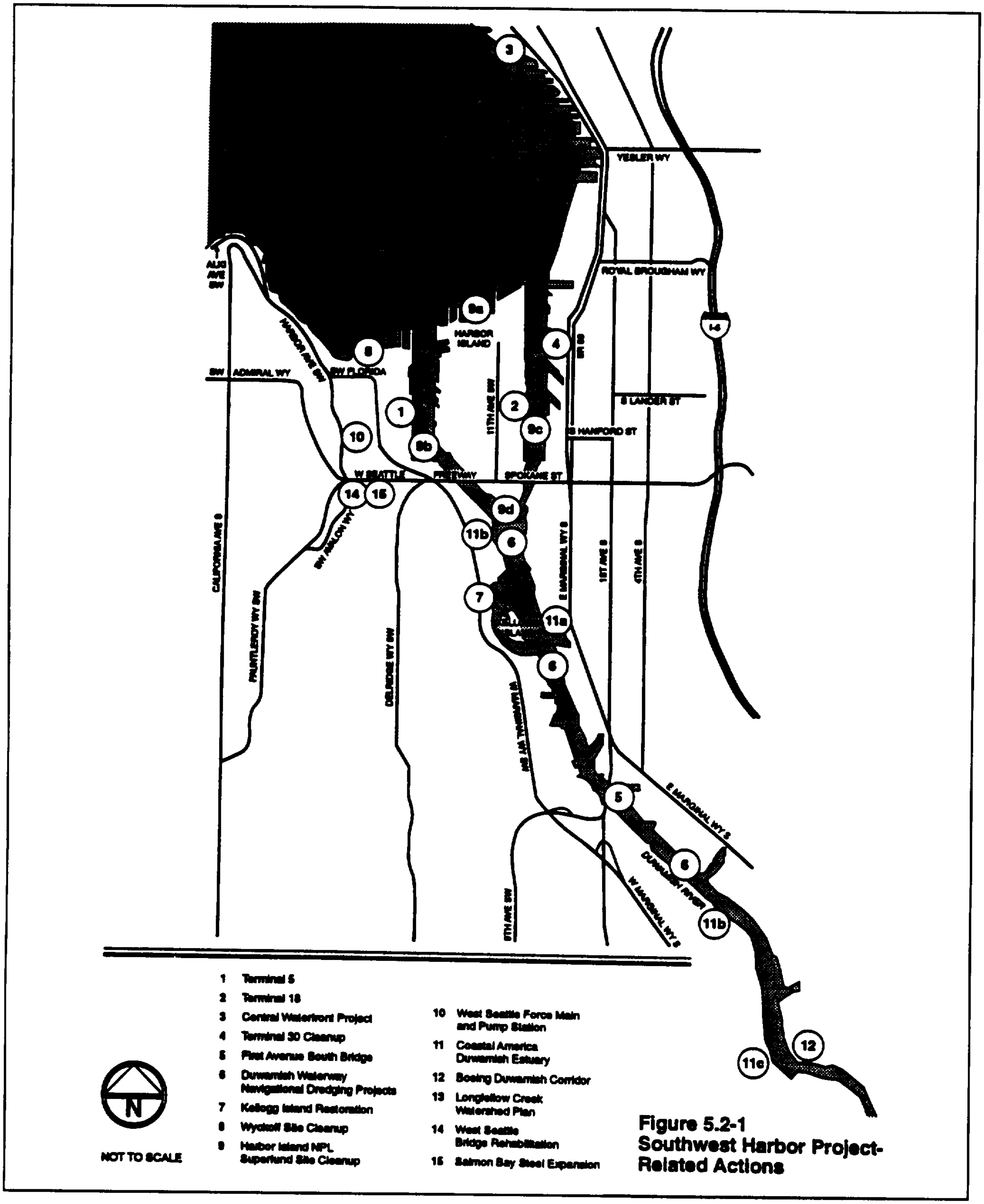

Figure 3-2. Regional map of projects and activities contributing to cumulative effects in Seattle's Southwest Harbor (USACE et al. 1994)

Trends

Cumulative effects occur through the accumulation of effects over varying periods of time. For this reason, an understanding of the historical context of effects is critical to assessing the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of proposed actions. Trends data can be used in three ways: (1) to establish the baseline for the affected environment more accurately (i.e., by incorporating variation over time), (2) to evaluate the significance of effects relative to historical degradation (i.e., by helping to estimate how close the resource is to a threshold of degradation), and (3) to predict the effects of the action (i.e., by using the model of cause and effects established by past actions).

The ability to identify trends in conditions of resources or in human activities depends on available data. Although data on existing conditions can sometimes be obtained for cumulative effects analysis, analysts can rarely go back in time to collect data (in some cases, lake sediment cores or archaeological excavations can reconstruct relevant historical conditions). Improved technologies for cost-effectively accessing and analyzing data that have been collected in the recent past, however, have been developed. Historical photographs and remotely sensed satellite information can be efficiently analyzed on geographic information systems to reveal trends. The analyst may use these tools to characterize the condition of a resource before contemporary human influences, or the condition at the period when resource degradation was first identified. As shown in Figure 3-3, remote sensing imagery was used to record the change in the condition of the Jemez Mountains, New Mexico (Allen 1994). The 1935 map (left) shows the location of railroads, dirt roads, and primitive roads in the landscape surrounding the Bandelier National Monument. By 1981 (right) the increase in roads and the appearance of several townsites is striking.

This 12-fold increase in total road length is an effective measure of cumulative environmental degradation resulting from the accompanying fire suppression, motorized disturbance of wildlife, creation of habitat edge in forest interiors, and introduction of weedy species along road corridors. The U.S. Forest Service has been using this landscape-scale GIS and remotely sensed information in planning efforts for the Bandelier's headwaters area to ensure that desired forest conditions are maintained (e.g., area and distribution of old growth and densities of snags).

OBTAINING DATA FOR CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS

Obtaining information on cumulative effects issues is often the biggest challenge for the analyst. Gathering data can be expensive and time consuming. Analysts should identify which data are needed for their specific purpose and which are readily available. In some cases, federal agencies or the project proponent will have adequate data; in other cases, local or regional planning agencies may be the best source of information. Public involvement can often direct the analyst to useful information or, itself, serve as an invaluable source of information, especially about the societal setting, which is critical for evaluating effects on human communities. In any case, when information is not available from traditional sources, analysts must be resourceful in seeking alternative sources. Table 3-2 lists some of the possible types and sources of information that may be of use for cumulative effects analysis.

Although most information needed to describe the affected environment must be obtained from regional and local sources, several national data centers are important. Census Bureau publications and statistical abstracts are commonly used for addressing demographic, housing, and general socioeconomic issues, as are several commercial business databases. Currently, an extensive inventory of environmental data coordinated by

The Nature Conservancy through state Natural Heritage Programs (NHPs) and Conservation Data Centers (CDCs) provides the most comprehensive information available about the abundance and distribution of rare species and communities (Jenkins 1988). NHPs and CDCs are continually updated, computer-assisted inventories of the biological and ecological features (i.e., biodiversity elements) of the region in which they are located. These data centers are designed to assist in conservation planning, natural resource management, and environmental impact assessment. Another promising source of data is the U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Resources Division, created by the consolidation of biological research, inventory and monitoring, and information transfer programs of seven Department of Interior bureaus. The mission of the Division is to gather, analyze, and disseminate the biological information necessary to support sound management of the nation's resources. The U.S. Geological Survey itself was originally created in response to the demands of industry and conservationists for accurate baseline data. Although substantial information can already be obtained from USGS, the implementation of the National Biodiversity Information Infrastructure (NAS 1993) may provide even greater access to comprehensive biological data.

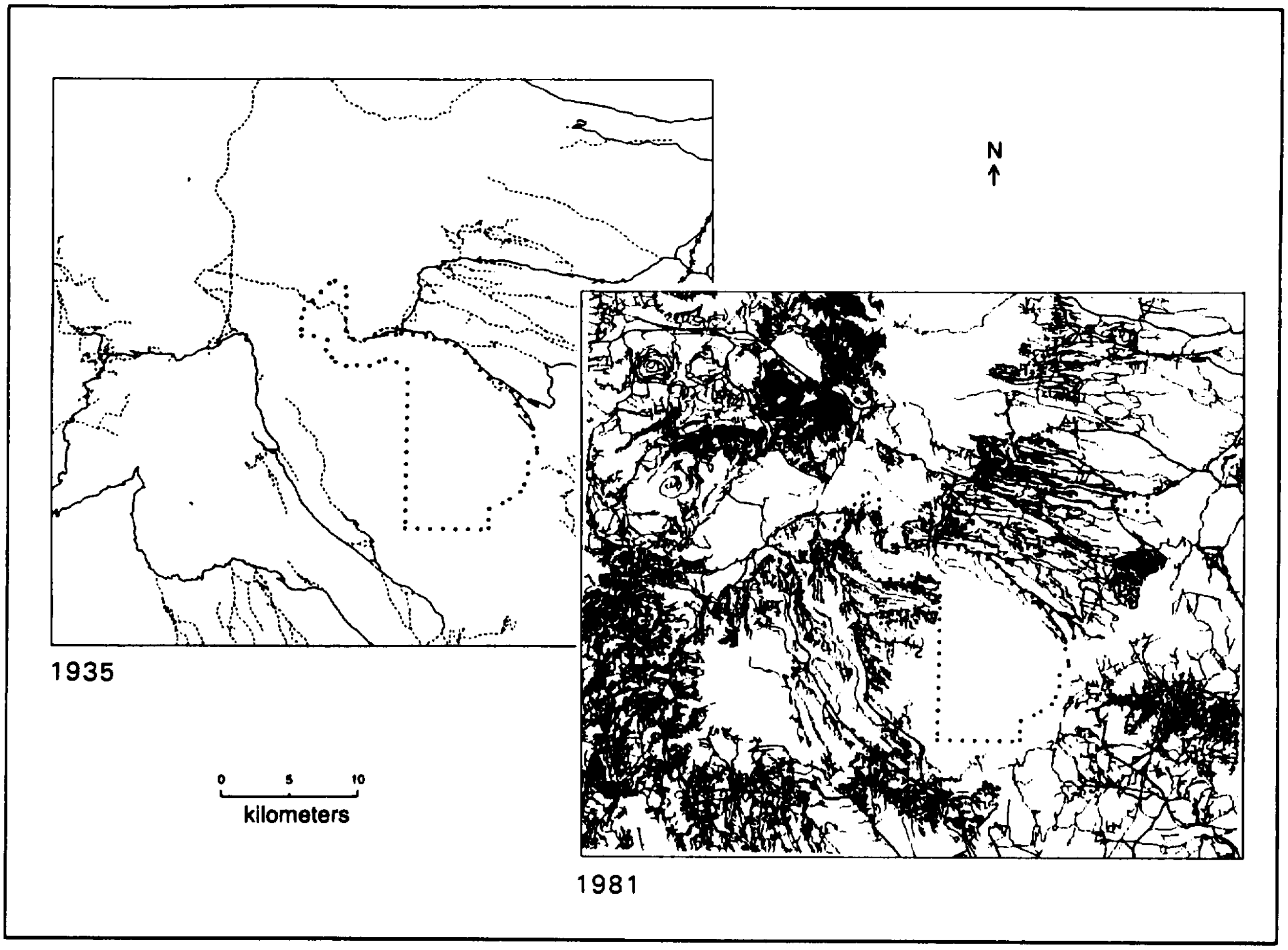

Figure 3-3. Remote sensing imagery illustrating the cumulative increase in roads between 1935 and 1981 across the same 187,858 ha of the Jemez Mountains, New Mexico. The crosshatched line is a railroad; the solid lines are dirt roads; the thin dashed lines are primitive roads' and dotted lines show the current boundary of Bandelier National Monument (Allen 1994).

Table 3-2. Possible sources of existing data for cumulative effects analysis	
Individuals	▪ former and present landholders ▪ long-time residents ▪ long-time resource users ▪ long-time resource managers
Historical societies	Local, state, and regional societies provide: ▪ personal journals ▪ photos ▪ newspapers ▪ individual contacts
Schools and universities	▪ central libraries ▪ natural history or cultural resources collections or museums ▪ field stations ▪ faculty in history and natural and social sciences
Other collections	Private, city, state, or federal collections in : ▪ archaeology ▪ botany ▪ zoology ▪ natural history
Natural history surveys	▪ private ▪ state ▪ national
Private organizations	▪ land preservation ▪ habitat preservation ▪ conservation ▪ cultural resources history ▪ religious institutions ▪ chambers of commerce ▪ voluntary neighborhood organizations
Government agencies	▪ local park districts ▪ local planning agencies ▪ local records-keeping agencies ▪ state and federal land management agencies ▪ state and federal fish, wildlife, and conservation agencies ▪ state and federal regulatory agencies ▪ state planning agencies ▪ state and federal records-keeping agencies ▪ state and federal surveys ▪ state and federal agricultural and forestry agencies ▪ state historic preservation offices ▪ Indian tribal government planning, natural resource, and cultural resource offices
Project proponent	▪ project plans and supporting environmental documentation

Although federal data sources are critical for compiling baseline data, they have substantial limitations. For the most part, federal environmental data programs have evolved to support a specific agency's missions. They are not designed to capture the interconnections among environmental variables or generate information needed for analyses that cut across sectorial and disciplinary lines. The fact that federal databases are often generated by monitoring programs designed to track progress in meeting regulatory goals further inhibits integration of data (Irwin and Rodes 1992). The only comprehensive effort to develop estimates of baseline ecological conditions across the United States has been the Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP). EMAP has successfully developed indicators for many resources and has applied them in regional demonstration programs to provide statistically rigorous estimates of the condition of ecosystems. Fully implemented, this program would be invaluable for analyzing cumulative effects (see box).

- EMAP focuses on assessing ecological condition by measuring biological indicators. Biological indicators provide integrated measures of response to natural and human-induced stress that cannot be obtained from traditional chemical and physical indicators of environmental stresses such as pollutants and habitat modification. The program maintains a core set of indicators that are implemented nationally with uniform methodology and quality control.
- EMAP uses a statistically rigorous sampling design. By measuring indicators within a network of probability samples rather than from sites selected using subjective criteria, EMAP produces unbiased estimates of the status of and changes in indicators of ecological condition with known confidence.
- EMAP takes an ecosystem-oriented approach to monitoring by sampling several ecological resources. EMAP maintains monitoring efforts in agricultural lands, rangelands, forests, estuaries, and surface waters (i.e., lakes and streams). It also maintains cross-cutting activities in landscape characterization, indicator development, and atmospheric deposition.

These attributes make EMAP uniquely suited to addressing cumulative effects. Where regional estimates of ecological condition have been developed, they can be used as baseline conditions for evaluating the effects of new projects. Although EMAP monitoring is currently limited to a few regions of the country, the EMAP approach is being applied to state monitoring efforts that will establish baseline conditions (see Southerland and Weisberg 1995 for application to Maryland streams).

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT SUMMARY

The description of the affected environment helps the decisionmaker understand the current conditions and the historical context of the important resources, ecosystems, and human communities. The analyst uses this phase of the NEPA process to characterize the region and determine the methodological complexity required to adequately address cumulative effects. In describing the affected environment, the cumulative effects analyst should

- identify common cumulative effects issues within the region;
- characterize the current status of the resources, ecosystems, and human communities identified during scoping;
- identify socioeconomic driving variables and indicators of stress on these resources;

- characterize the regional landscape in terms of historical and planned development and the constraints of governmental regulations and standards; and
- define a baseline condition for the resources using historical trends.

The affected environment section should include data on resources, ecosystems, and human communities; environmental and socioeconomic stress factors; governmental regulations, standards, and plans; and environmental and social trends. This information will provide the analyst with the baseline and historical context needed to evaluate the environmental consequences of cumulative effects (Chapter 4).

4

DETERMINING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

PRINCIPLES

- Address additive, countervailing, and synergistic effects.
- Look beyond the life of the action.
- Address the sustainability of resources, ecosystems, and human communities.

The diversity of proposed federal actions and the environments in which they occur make it difficult to develop or recommend a single method or approach to cumulative effects analysis. In this chapter, we attempt to provide insight into and general guidelines for performing analyses needed to determine the environmental consequences of cumulative effects. We assume the analysis has already been scoped, including stipulating geographic and time boundaries (see Chapter 2), and that appropriate data have been gathered for the resources, ecosystems, and human communities of concern (see Chapter 3). Reference is made, when appropriate, to specific cumulative effects analysis methods described in Chapter 5 and Appendix A.

The analyst must ensure that the resources identified during scoping encompass all those needed for an analysis of cumulative effects. The analyst must also ensure that the relevant past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions have been identified. As an iterative process, cumulative effects analysis often identifies additional resources or actions involved in cumulative effects during the analysis phase. In addition to confirming the resources and actions to be considered, the analyst should complete the following specific steps to determine the environmental consequences of the cumulative effects:

Step 8	Identify the important cause-and-effect relationships between human activities and resources, ecosystems, and human communities.
Step 9	Determine the magnitude and significance of cumulative effects.
Step 10	Modify or add alternatives to avoid, minimize, or mitigate significant cumulative effects.
Step 11	Monitor the cumulative effects of the selected alternative and adapt management.

CONFIRMING THE RESOURCES AND ACTIONS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS

Even though scoping has identified likely important cumulative effects, the analyst should include other important cumulative effects that arise from more detailed consideration of environmental consequences. In addition, as the proposed action is modified or other alternatives are developed (usually to avoid or minimize adverse effects), additional or different cumulative effects issues may arise. Specifically, the proposed action and reasonable alternatives (including the no-action alternative) could affect different resources and could affect them in different ways. For instance, hydroelectric facilities primarily affect aquatic resources by blocking fish migration routes, altering thermal regimes, and eroding stream channels as releases fluctuate. Reasonable alternatives for proposed hydroelectric facilities often include various types of power generating facilities that affect the environment in different ways. For example, the effects of coal-fired electric plants are most often related to coal-mining activities, the release of heated water to nearby water bodies in the cooling process, and the release of a variety of pollutants (including greenhouse gases) to the air during combustion. Nuclear plants also release heated water but they release radioactive materials to the air instead of greenhouse gases. Other past, present, or future actions also should be included in the analysis if evaluation of the cause-and-effect relationships identifies additional stresses affecting resources, ecosystems, and human communities of concern.

IDENTIFYING AND DESCRIBING CAUSE-AND-EFFECT RELATIONSHIPS FOR RESOURCES, ECOSYSTEMS, AND HUMAN COMMUNITIES

In preparing any assessment, the analyst should gather information about the cause-and-effect relationships between stresses and resources. The relationship between the percent of fine sediment in a stream bed and the emergence of salmon fry (Figure 4-1) is an example of a model of cause and effect that can be useful for identifying the cumulative effects on a selected resource. Such a model describes the response of the resource to a change in its environment. To determine the consequences of the proposed action on the resource, the analyst must determine which cumulative environmental changes (e.g., higher sediment load) will result from the proposed action and other actions.

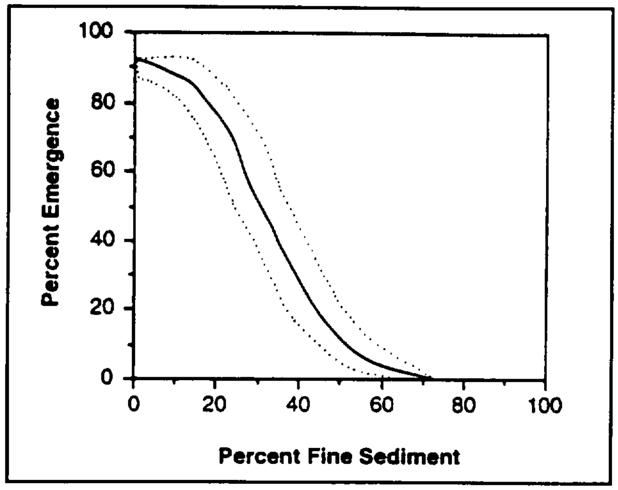

Figure 4-1. Empirical cause and effect relationship between emergence of salmon fry and percent of fine sediment in the stream bottom (Stowell et al. 1983)

Determining the Environmental Changes that Affect Resources

Using information gathered to describe the affected environment, the factors that affect resources (i.e., the causes in the cause-and-effect relationships) can be identified and a conceptual model of cause and effect developed. Networks and system diagrams are the preferred methods of conceptualizing cause-and-effect relationships (see Appendix A). The analyst can develop this model without knowing precisely how the resource responds to environmental change (i.e., the mechanism of the cause-and-effect relationship). If all pathways are identified, the model will be quite complex (Figure 4-2). Such a complex model can seldom be fully analyzed because sufficient data usually are not available to quantify each pathway. Because of this, the model should be simplified to include only important relationships that can be supported by information (Figure 4-3).

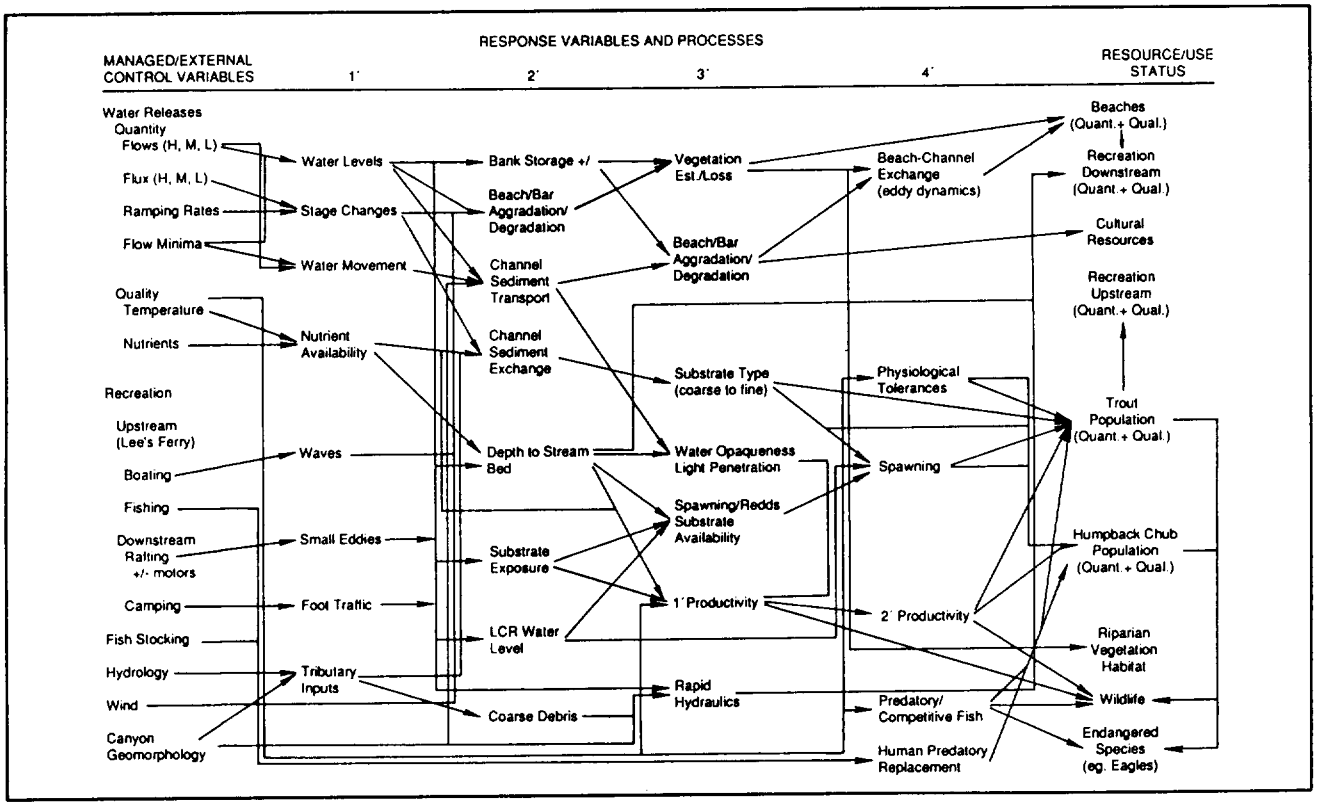

Figure 4-2. Example of a complex model of cause and effect

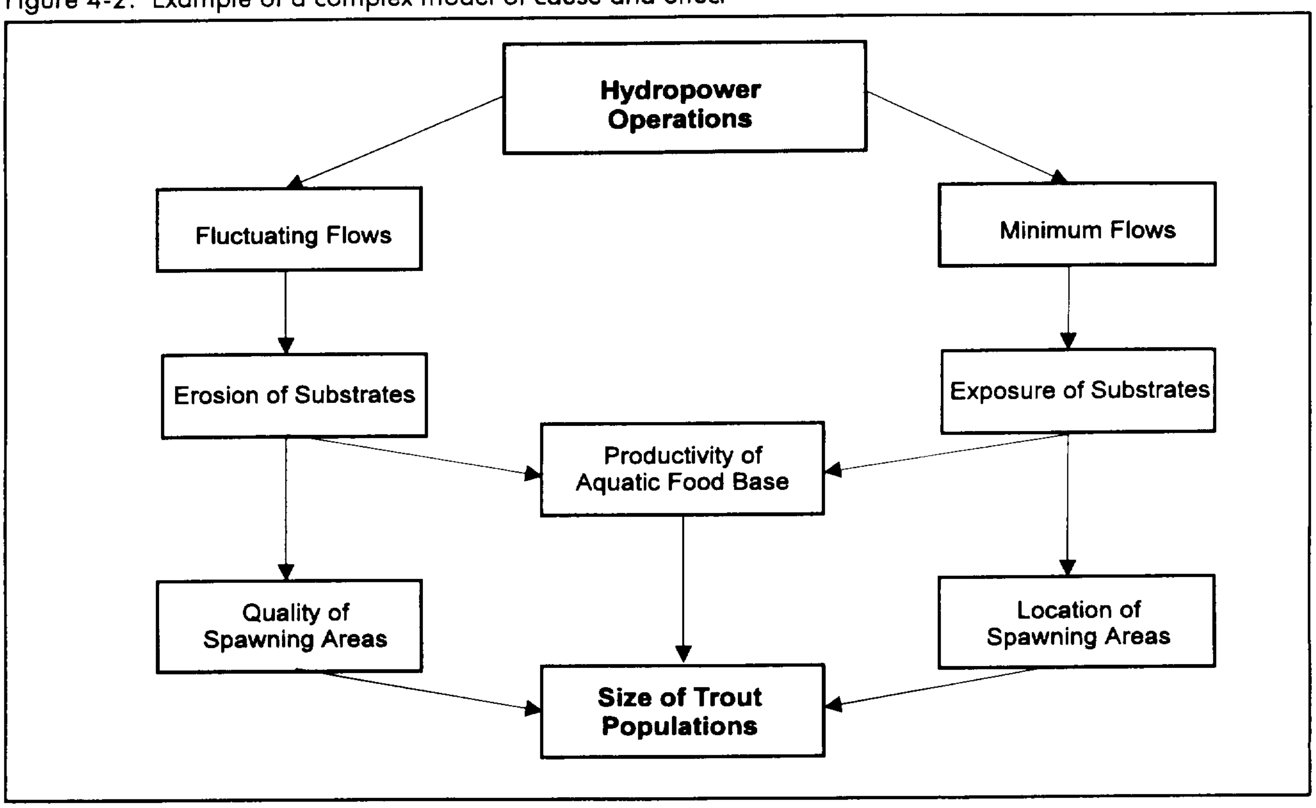

Figure 4-3. Example of a simplied model of cause and effect

A wide variety of cause-and-effect evaluation techniques have been described in the literature (see Chapter 5). Techniques for evaluating ecological resources include the set of Habitat Suitability Index Models (HSI;

One of the most useful approaches for determining the likely response of the resource, ecosystem, and human community to environmental change is to evaluate the historical effects of activities similar to those under consideration. In the case of road construction through a

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descriptive narrative of the types of effects that may occur. Often, the analyst will be limited to qualitative evaluations of effects because cause-and-effect relationships are poorly understood or because few site-specific data are available. Even when the analyst cannot quantify cumulative effects, a useful comparison of relative effects can enable a decisionmaker to choose among alternatives.

DETERMINING THE MAGNITUDE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

The analyst's primary goal is to determine the magnitude and significance of the environmental consequences of the proposed action in the context of the cumulative effects of other past, present, and future actions. To accomplish this, the analyst must use a conceptual model of the important resources, actions, and their cause-and-effect relationships. The critical element in this conceptual model is defining an appropriate baseline or threshold condition of the resource, ecosystem, and human community beyond which adverse or beneficial change would cause significant degradation or enhancement of the resource, respectively.

The potential for a resource, ecosystem, and human community to sustain its structure and function depends on its resistance to stress and its ability to recover (i.e., its resilience). Determining whether the condition of the resource is within the range of natural variability or is vulnerable to rapid degradation is frequently problematic. Ideally, the analyst can identify a threshold beyond which change in the resource condition is detrimental. More often, the analyst must review the history of that resource and evaluate whether past degradation may place it near such a threshold. For example, the loss of 50% of historical wetlands within a watershed may indicate that further losses would significantly affect the capacity of the watershed to withstand floods. It is often the case that when a large proportion of a resource is lost, the system nears collapse as the surviving portion is pressed into service to perform more functions.

The baseline condition should also include other present (ongoing) actions. For example, the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) inventory represents the universe of each group of effects is determined, cumulative effects can be calculated. The cumulative effects on a specific resource, however, will not necessarily be the sum of the effects of all

ative) enables the analyst to compare alternatives meaningfully.

Table 4-1. Example table using quantitative description of effects (within a given level of uncertainty) on various resources

Resource	Past Actions	Present Actions	Proposed Action	Future Actions	Cumulative Effect
Air Quality	No effect on SO_2	20% increase in SO_2	10% increase in SO_2	5% increase in SO_2	35% increase in SO_2
Fish	50% of 1950 population lost	2% of fish population lost	5% increase in fish population	1% of fish population lost	48% of 1950 fish population lost
Wetlands	78% of presettlement wetlands lost	1% of existing wetlands lost annually for 5 years	0.5% of existing wetlands lost	1.5% of existing wetlands lost annually for 10 years	95% of presettlement wetlands lost in10 years

The separation of effects into those attributable to the proposed action or a reasonable alternative versus those attributable to past and future actions also allows the analyst to determine the incremental contribution of each alternative. Situations can arise where an incremental effect that exceeds the threshold of concern for cumulative effects results, not from the proposed action, but from reasonably foreseeable but still uncertain future actions. Although this situation is generally unexplored, the decisionmaker is faced with determining whether to forgo or modify the proposed action to permit other future actions. Identifying incremental effects, therefore, is an important part of informing the decisionmaker.

Most cumulative effects analyses will identify varying levels of beneficial and adverse effects depending on the resource and the individual action. Aquatic species will experience entirely different effects from terrestrial ones. A warm water fishery (e.g., largemouth bass) may benefit from a change that is detrimental to a cold water fishery (e.g., trout), and effects that are beneficial to the well being of a human community (e.g., provision of social services) may be detrimental to natural systems (e.g., wetlands lost during construction of a hospital). Because of this mixture of beneficial and adverse effects, the decisionmaker is often hard pressed to determine which alternative is environmentally preferred. To overcome this problem, indices of overall cumulative effect can be developed. Some of the matrix methods used in cumulative effects analysis were developed specifically to address this need. These methods use unitless measures of effect (e.g., scales or ranks) to get around the problem of combining results from a variety of resources.

Presentation of overall cumulative effects can be controversial. Intentional or unintentional manipulation of assumptions can dramatically alter the results of aggregated indices (Bisset 1983), and experience indicates that complex quantitative methods for evaluating cumulative effects make it more difficult for the public to understand and accept the results. Effects on resources are usually presented separately, and professional judgment is used in determining the reasonable alternative with the greatest net positive cumulative effect. The U.S. EPA has developed guidelines for addressing specific kinds of risks (including cancer risks and the risks posed by chemical mixtures) and for comparing disparate kinds of risks (U.S. EPA 1993).

be analyzed in several contexts such as society as a whole (human, national), the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality" (40 CFR § 1508.27). Significance may vary with the setting of the proposed action.

Intensity refers to the severity of effect (40 CFR § 1508.27). Factors that have been used to define the intensity of effects include the

Duration and frequency refers to whether the effect is a one-time event, intermittent, or chronic. Where a quantitative evaluation is possible, specific criteria for significance should be explicitly identified and described. These criteria should reflect the resilience of the resource, ecosystem, and human community to the effects that are likely to occur.

Thresholds and criteria (i.e., levels of acceptable change) used to determine the significance of effects will vary depending on the type of resource being analyzed, the condition of the resource, and the importance of the resource as an issue (as identified through scoping). Criteria can be quantitative units of measure such as those used to determine threshold values in economic impact modeling, or qualitative units of measure such as the perceptions of visitors to a recreational area. No matter how the criteria are derived, they should be directly related to the relevant cause-and-effect relationships. The criteria used, including quantitative thresholds if appropriate, should be clearly stated in the assessment document.

Determinations of significance in an EA or an EIS are the focus of analysis because they lead to additional (more costly) analysis or to inclusion of additional mitigation (or a detailed justification for not implementing mitigation). The significance of adverse cumulative effects is a sensitive issue because the means to modify contributing actions are often outside the purview of the proponent agency. Currently, agencies are attempting to deal with this difficult issue by improving their analysis of historical trends in resource and ecosystem condition. Even where cumulative effects are not deemed to be significant, better characterization of historical changes in the resource can lead to improved designs for resource enhancement. Where projected adverse effects remain highly uncertain, agencies can implement adaptive management—flexible project implementation that increases or decreases mitigation based on monitoring results.

AVOIDING, MINIMIZING, AND MITIGATING SIGNIFICANT CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

If it is determined that significant cumulative effects would occur as a result of a proposed action, the project proponent should avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects by modifying or adding alternatives. The proponent should not overlook opportunities to enhance resources when adverse cumulative effects are not significant. The separation of responsibilities for actions contributing to cumulative effects makes designing appropriate mitigation especially difficult. In the case of the Lackawanna Industrial Highway, the Federal Highway Administration and Pennsylvania Department of Transportation sponsored development of a comprehensive plan for the valley that provides a mechanism for ensuring that secondary development accompanying construction of the highway would protect valued resources, ecosystems, and human communities (see box).

By analyzing the cause-and-effect relationships resulting in cumulative effects, strategies to mitigate effects or enhance resources can be developed. For each resource, ecosystem, and human community of concern, the key to developing constructive mitigation strategies is determining which of the cause-and-effect pathways results in the greatest effect. Mitigation and enhancement strategies that focus on those pathways will be the most effective for reducing cumulative effects.

It is sometimes more cost-effective to mitigate significant effects after they occur. This might involve containing and cleaning up a spill, or restoring a wetland after it has been degraded. In most cases, however, avoidance or minimization are more effective than remediating unwanted effects. For example, attempting to remove contaminants from air or water is much less effective than preventing pollution discharges into an airshed or watershed. Although such preventative approaches can be the most (or only) effective means of controlling cumulative effects, they may require extensive coordination at the regional or national scale (e.g., federal pollution control statutes).

mitigate potentially adverse cumulative effects from secondary actions beyond their direct control.

and direction of ecological and social change,

- appropriate timeframe,

- appropriate spatial scale,
- means of assessing causality,
- means of measuring mitigation efficacy, and
- provisions for adaptive management.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES SUMMARY

Although cumulative effects analysis is similar in many ways to the analysis of project-specific effects, there are key differences. To determine the environmental, social, and economic consequences of cumulative effects, the analyst should

- Select the resources, ecosystems, and human communities considered in the project-specific analysis to be those that could be affected cumulatively.
- Identify the important cause-and-effect relationships between human activities and resources of concern using a network or systems diagram that focuses on the important cumulative effects pathways.
- Adjust the geographic and time boundaries of the analysis based on cumulative cause-and-effect relationships.
- Incorporate additional past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions into the analysis as indicated by the cumulative cause-and-effect relationships.
- Determine the magnitude and significance of cumulative effects based on context and intensity and present tables comparing the effects of the proposed action and alternatives to facilitate decisionmaking.
- Modify or add alternatives to avoid, minimize, or mitigate cumulative effects based on the cause-and-effect pathways that contribute most to the cumulative effect on a resource.
- Determine cumulative effects of the selected alternative with mitigation and enhancement measures.
- Explicitly address uncertainty in communicating predictions to decisionmakers and the public, and reduce uncertainty as much as possible through monitoring and adaptive management.

Determining the environmental consequences entails describing the cause-and-effect relationships producing cumulative effects and summarizing the total effect of each alternative. These activities require developing a cumulative effects analysis methodology (Chapter 5) from available methods, techniques, and tools of analysis (Appendix A).

5

METHODS, TECHNIQUES, AND TOOLS FOR ANALYZING CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

Analyzing cumulative effects under NEPA is conceptually straightforward but practically difficult. Fortunately, the methods, techniques, and tools available for environmental impact assessment can be used in cumulative effects analysis. These methods are valuable in all phases of analysis and can be used to develop the conceptual framework for evaluating the cumulative environmental consequences, designing appropriate mitigations or enhancements, and presenting the results to the decisionmaker.

This chapter introduces the reader to the literature on cumulative effects analysis and discusses the incorporation of individual methods into an analytical methodology. Appendix A provides summaries of 11 methods for analyzing cumulative effects. The research and environmental impact assessment communities continue to make important contributions to the field. In addition to methods developed explicitly for environmental impact assessment, valuable new approaches to solving cumulative effects problems are being put forth by practitioners of ecological risk assessment (Suter 1993; U.S. EPA 1992; U.S. EPA 1996), regional risk assessment (Hunsaker et al. 1990), and environmental planning (Williamson 1993; Vestal et al. 1995). Analysts should use this chapter and Appendix A as a starting point for further research into methods, techniques, and tools that can be applied to their projects.

LITERATURE ON CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS METHODS

Several authors have reviewed the wide variety of methods for analyzing cumulative effects that have been developed over the last 25 years (see Horak et al. 1983; Witmer et al. 1985; Granholm et al. 1987; Lane and Wallace 1988; Williamson and Hamilton 1989; Irwin and Rodes 1992; Leibowitz et al. 1992; Hochberg et al. 1993; Burris 1994; Canter and Kamath 1995; Cooper 1995; Vestal et al. 1995). In a review of 90 individual methods, Granholm et al. (1987) determined that none of even the 12 most promising methods met all of the criteria for cumulative effects analysis. Most of the methods were good at describing or defining the problem, but they were poor at quantifying cumulative effects. No one method was deemed appropriate for all types or all phases of cumulative effects analysis. In general, these authors grouped existing cumulative effects analysis methods into the following categories:

- those that describe or model the cause-and-effect relationships of interest, often through matrices or flow diagrams (see Bain et al. 1986; Armour and Williamson 1988; Emery 1986; Patterson and Whillans 1984);

EPA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration have developed two specific approaches to address the problems of cumulative wetlands loss (Leibowitz et al. 1992; Vestal et al. 1995).

These methods usually take one of two basic approaches to addressing cumulative effects (Spaling and Smit 1993; Canter 1994):

- **Impact assessment approach,** which analytically evaluates the cumulative effects of combined actions relative to thresholds of concern for resources or ecosystems.
- **Planning approach,** which optimizes the allocation of cumulative stresses on the resources or ecosystems within a region.

The first approach views cumulative effects analysis as an extension of environmental impact assessment (e.g., Bronson et al. 1991; Conover et al. 1985); the second approach regards cumulative effects analysis as a correlate of regional or comprehensive planning

from the available methods, techniques, and tools it is important to understand that a study-specific methodology is necessary. Designing a study-specific methodology entails using a variety of methods to develop a conceptual framework for the analysis. The conceptual framework should constitute a general causal model of cumulative effects that incorporates information on the causes, processes, and effects involved. A set of primary methods can be used to describe the cumulative effects study in terms of multiple causation, interactive processes, and temporally and spatially variable effects.

The **primary methods** for developing the conceptual causal model for a cumulative effects study are

1. **Questionnaires, interviews, and panels** to gather information about the wide range of actions and effects needed for a cumulative effects analysis.

2. **Checklists** to identify potential cumulative effects by reviewing important human activities and potentially affected resources.

3 **Matrices** to determine the cumulative effects on resources, ecosystems, and human communities by combining individual effects from different actions.

4 **Networks and system diagrams** to trace the multiple, subsidiary effects of various actions that accumulate upon resources, ecosystems, and human communities.

5 **Modeling** to quantify the cause-and-effect relationships leading to cumulative effects.

6 **Trends analysis** to assess the status of resources, ecosystems, and human communities over time and identify cumulative effects problems, establish appropriate environmental baselines, or project future cumulative effects.

7 **Overlay mapping and GIS** to incorporate locational information into cumulative effects analysis and help set the boundaries of the analysis, analyze landscape parameters, and identify areas where effects will be the greatest.

After developing the conceptual framework, the analyst must choose a method to determine and evaluate the cumulative effects of project actions. This method must provide a procedure for aggregating information across multiple resources and projects in order to draw conclusions or recommendations. The simplest method is the comparison of project (or program) alternatives qualitatively or quantitatively in tabular form.

Tables and matrices use columns and rows to organize effects and link activities (or alternatives) with resources, ecosystems, and human communities of concern. The relative effects of various activities can be determined by comparing the values in the cells of a table. The attributes of each cell can be descriptive or numerical. Tables are commonly used to present proposed actions and reasonable alternatives (including no-action) and their respective effects on resources of concern. Tables can be used to organize the full range of environmental, economic, and social effects. Depending on how the table is constructed, a cell may represent a combination of activities and, therefore, be cumulative, or it may include a separate column for cumulative effects.

Cumulative effects are increasingly appearing as a separate column in EISs. In the case of the cumulative mining effects in the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, Alaska (National Park Service 1990), the estimated effect of the proposed mining actions on each resource (e.g., riparian wildlife habitat) was evaluated both as a direct effect and as a cumulative effect in combination with past mining losses. Quantitative short-term and long-term effects (in acres) were calculated (Table 5-1). In the case of the Pacific yew (U.S. Forest Service 1993), the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on the genetic resource of the Pacific yew were summarized qualitatively (e.g., risk of genetic erosion at edge of range; Table 5-2).

Some tables are designed explicitly to aggregate effects across resources (including weighting different effects). Grand indices that combine effects include the Environmental Evaluation System (Dee et al. 1973) and ecological rating systems for wildlife habitat and other natural areas (e.g., Helliwell 1969, 1973). Such approaches have been relatively unsuccessful because intentional or unintentional manipulation of assumptions can dramatically alter the results of aggregated indices (Bisset 1983), and because complex quantitative methods for evaluating cumulative effects make it more difficult for the public to understand and accept the results. Westman (1985) concluded that aggregation and weighting of effects should be rejected in favor of providing information in a qualitative, disaggregated form. Although it may not be possible to combine highly disparate resource effects, different resource effects that cumulatively affect interconnected systems must be addressed in combination. In any case, greater efforts need to be made to present the full suite of adverse and beneficial effects to the decisionmaker so that comparisons are clear and understandable.

Table 5-1. Cumulative effects of mining on riparian habitat in Yukon-Charley National Preserve, Alaska (National Park Service 1990)							
Study Area Drainage	**Habitat (acres)**		**Long-Term Impacts (acres)**			**Short-Term Impacts (acres)**	
	Premining	**Existing (% Premining)**	**Past Mining Loss**	**Alternative A Loss**	**Cumulative Loss**	**Alternative A Loss**	**Cumulative Loss**
Wood chopper	1,227	1,101(89.7)	126	30	156	26	182
Coal	2,081	1,376 (66.1)	705	20	725	14	739
Sam	1,158	1,148 (99.1)	10	20	30	11	41
TOTAL	4,446	3,615 (81.2)	841	70	911	51	962
Fourth of July	833	777 (93.3)	56	20	76	16	92
GRAND TOTAL	5,299	4,402 (83.1)	897	90	987	67	1,054

Table 5-2. Cumulative effects on the genetic resources of the Pacific yew (U.S. Forest Service 1993)			
Alternative	**Direct Effects on Existing Levels of Genetic Variation**	**Indirect Effects on Levels of Genetic Variation in Future Generations**	**Cumulative Effects**
A	Risk of losing small populations at edge of range, thereby reducing existing levels.	Risk of losing small populations at edge of range, thereby reducing future levels.	Risk of genetic erosion at edge of range.
B	None.	None.	Would negate risk to small populations and halt genetic erosion.
C	Risk of slightly reducing levels within population for some populations. No effect on overall variation.	Risk of slightly reducing some populations. No effect on overall variation or values.	Would enhance gene variation.
D	Within population levels could be reduced more than in Alt. C. No effect on overall genetic variation.	Could be reduced more than in Alt. C. for some populations. No overall effect.	Same as Alt. C.
F	Within population levels could be reduced more than in Alt. D. Overall levels of variation would be reduced slightly.	Could be reduced more than in Alt D. Potential significant reduction in adaptability of some populations and some reduction in values.	Same as Alt. C.
G 1	Same as Alt. D.	Same as Alt. D.	Same as Alt. C
G 2	Same as Alt. D.	Same as Alt. D.	Gene conservation would not be well served because of fewer reserves.

Although tables and matrices are the most common method for evaluating the cumulative effect of alternatives, map overlays and modeling can be used to summarize and evaluate cumulative effects.

In general, the standard environmental impact assessment methods described above can be combined effectively to address cumulative effects (Figure 5-1). Two aspects of cumulative effects analysis, however, warrant special analysis methods: (1) the need to address resource sustainability, and (2) the need to focus on integrated ecosystems and human communities. By definition, cumulative effects analysis involves comparing the combined effect with the capacity of the resource, ecosystem, and human community to withstand stress. **Carrying capacity analysis** has been applied to a wide range of resources to address cumulative effects. Cumulative effects are a more complex problem for whole ecosystems, because ecosystems are subject to the widest possible range of direct and indirect effects. Analyzing the cumulative effects on ecosystems requires a better understanding of the interworkings of ecological systems and a more holistic perspective. Specifically, **ecosystem analysis** entails new indicators of ecological conditions including landscape-scale measures. In addition to these two special methods, analyzing cumulative effects on human communities requires specific **economic impact analysis** and **social impact analysis methods.**

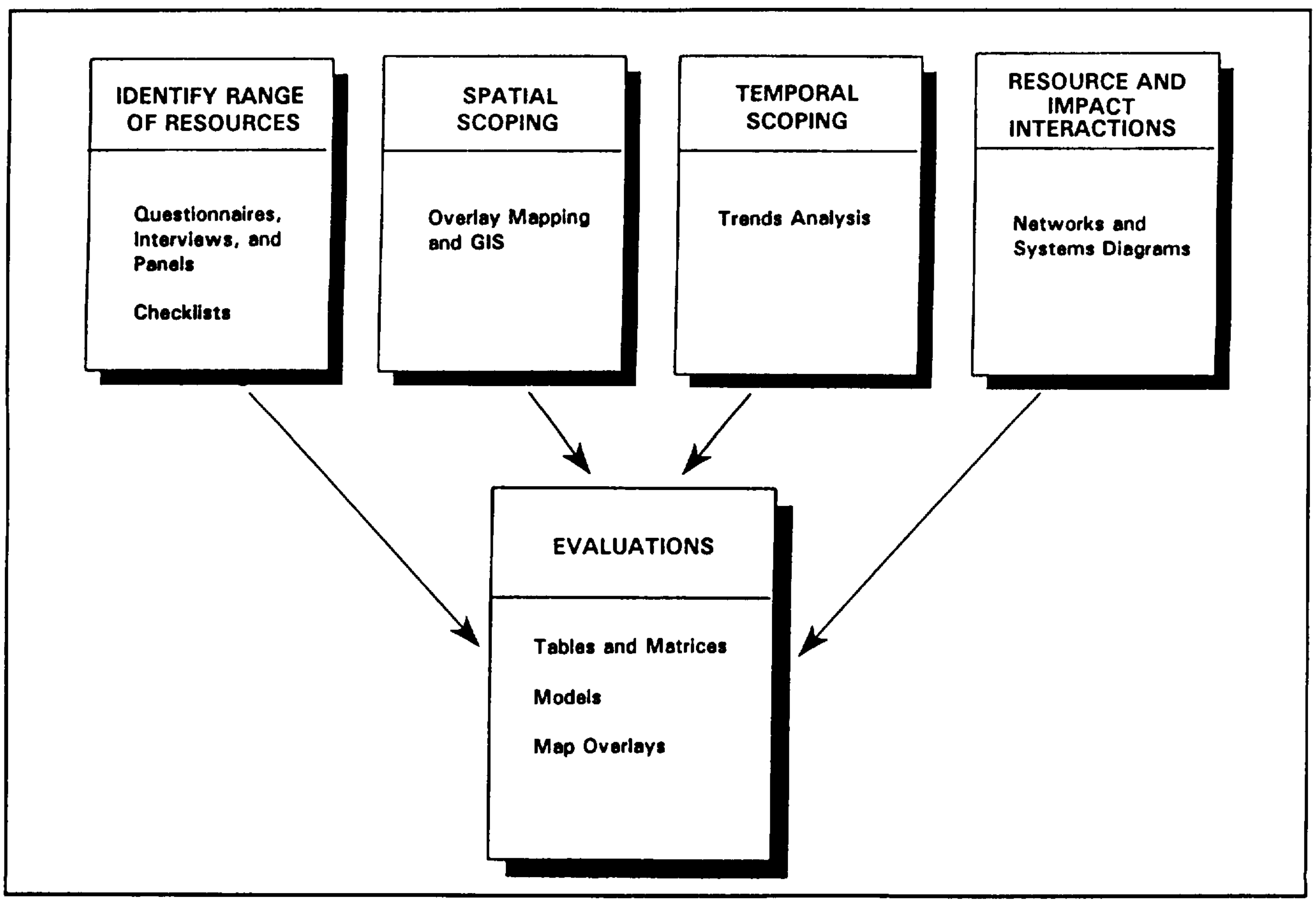

Figure 5-1. Conceptual model for combining primary methods into a cumulative effects analysis

sophisticated models that require solving complex equations or conducting simulations. General tools for illustrating cumulative effects include dose-response curves, cumulative frequency distributions, maps, and videography. Video simulation, wherein an existing site is captured through imagery and electronically altered to show how the site will look after a proposed action is implemented, is a promising new technology for analyzing effects and communicating them to the public (Marlatt et al. 1993).

Most importantly, **geographic information systems (GIS)** can manipulate and display the location-specific data needed for cumulative effects analysis. GIS can be used to manage large data sets, overlay data and analyze development and natural resource patterns, analyze trends, use mathematical models of effect with locational data, perform habitat analysis, perform aesthetic analysis, and improve public consultation (Eedy 1995). GIS can incorporate a statistically reliable locational component into virtually any cumulative effects analysis. Unlike manual mapping systems, the scale can be adjusted and the data layers easily updated. Once a GIS has been developed, it can drastically reduce the effort needed to analyze the effects of future projects, i.e., each new development proposal can be readily overlain on existing data layers to evaluate cumulative effects (Johnston et al. 1988).

existing environmental conditions, and quantitatively or qualitatively assess possible future trends in the environment. Although remote sensing is a relatively recent technological development, aerial photography available for most areas of the United States since the 1930s or 1940s, and space-based photographs and satellite imagery have been collected since the 1960s. For example, aerial photography from 1960, 1981, and 1990 (Figure 5-2) show change in the condition of small mountainous tributary streams to the North Fork Hoh River in the Olympic Peninsula. The photo taken in 1960 shows undisturbed old growth Sitka spruce-hemlock forest. The photos of the same location taken in 1981 and 1990 show extensive timber harvest and soil erosion. Each patch of harvested timber was approved under individual logging permits over a 30-year period. As a result of the cumulative timber harvest, the area has experienced severe landsliding and erosion, causing sedimentation in salmon spawning and rearing areas in the Hoh River and in lower portions of the tributary streams.

The combination of remote sensing and GIS has facilitated the development of a suite of landscape-scale indicators of ecosystem status that hold promise for quantifying ecological variables and improving the measurement of cumulative effects (Hunsaker and Carpenter 1990; Noss 1990; O'Neill et al. 1988, 1994).

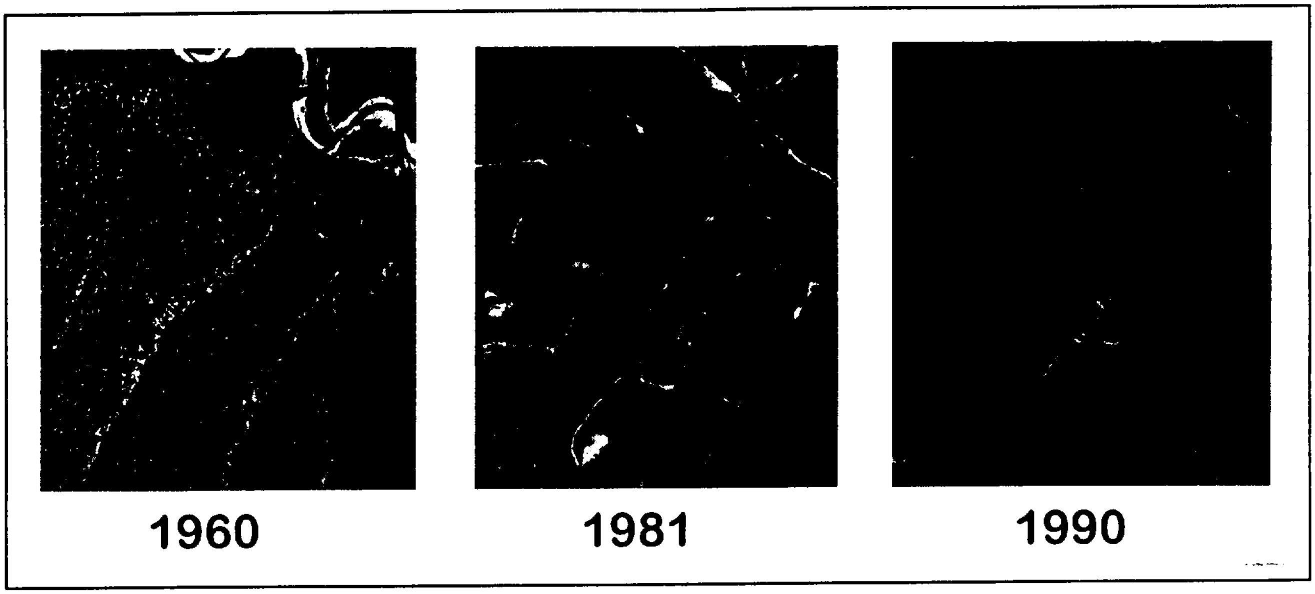

Figure 5-2. Deteriorating trend in watershed condition of the North Fork Hoh River, Washington as illustrated by a time-series of aerial photographs depicting cumulative loss of forest from individual timber sales (Dave Somers, The Tulalip Tribes, personal communication)

Table 5-3 summarizes the 11 important cumulative effects analysis methods discussed above. Appendix A provides standardized descriptions of these methods. Many cumulative effects analysis methods can be adapted for environmental or social impact assessment; the basic analytical frameworks and mathematical operations are often applicable to both social and environmental variables. Each of the 11 methods represents a general category that may contain more specific methods. When and where each method is appropriate for cumulative effects analysis depends on the following criteria:

1 Whether the method can assess

- effects of same and different nature
- temporal change
- spatial characteristics
- structural/functional relationships
- physical/biological/human interactions
- additive and synergistic interactions
- delayed effects
- persistence of impacts

2 Whether the method can

- quantify effects
- synthesize effects
- suggest alternatives
- serve as a planning or decision-making tool
- link with other methods, and

3 Whether the method is

- validated
- flexible
- reliable and repeatable.

[redacted]

Table 5-3. Primary and special methods for analyzing cumulative effects

Primary Methods	Description	Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Questionnaires, Interviews, and Panels	Questionnaires, interviews, and panels are useful for gathering the wide range of information on multiple actions and resources needed to address cumulative effects. Brainstorming sessions, interviews with knowledgeable individuals, and group consensus building activities can help identify the important cumulative effects issues in the region.	▪ Flexible ▪ Can deal with subjective information	▪ Cannot quantify ▪ Comparison of alternatives is subjective
2. Checklists	Checklists help identify potential cumulative effects by providing a list of common or likely effects and juxtaposing multiple actions and resources; - potentially dangerous for the analyst that uses them as a shortcut to thorough scoping and conceptualization of cumulative effects problems.	▪ Systematic ▪ Concise	▪ Can be inflexible ▪ Do not address interactions or cause-effect relationships
3. Matrices	Matrices use the familiar tabular format to organize and quantify the interactions between human activities and resources of concern. Once even relatively complex numerical data are obtained, matrices are well-suited to combining the values in individual cells of the matrix (through matrix algebra) to evaluate the cumulative effects of multiple actions on individual resources, ecosystems, and human communities.	▪ Comprehensive presentation ▪ Comparison of alternatives ▪ Address multiple projects	▪ Do not address space or time ▪ Can be cumbersome ▪ Do not address cause-effect relationships
4. Networks and System Diagrams	Networks and system diagrams are an excellent method for delineating the cause-and-effect relationships resulting in cumulative effects; they allow the user to analyze the multiple, subsidiary effects of various actions and trace indirect effects to resources that accumulate from direct effects on other resources.	▪ Facilitate conceptualization ▪ Address cause-effect relationships ▪ Identify indirect effects	▪ No likelihood for secondary effects ▪ Problem of comparable units ▪ Do not address space or time
5. Modeling	Modeling is a powerful technique for quantifying the cause-and-effect relationships leading to cumulative effects, can take the form of mathematical equations describing cumulative processes such as soil erosion, or may constitute an expert system that computes the effect of various project scenarios based on a program of logical decisions.	▪ Can give unequivocal results ▪ Addresses cause-effect relationships ▪ Quantification ▪ Can integrate time and space	▪ Need a lot of data ▪ Can be expensive ▪ Intractable with many interactions
6. Trends Analysis	Trends analysis assesses the status of a resource, ecosystem, and human community over time and usually results in a graphical projection of past or future conditions. Changes in the occurrence or intensity of stressors over the same time period can also be determined. Trends can help the analyst identify cumulative effects problems, establish appropriate environmental baselines, or project future cumulative effects.	▪ Addresses accumulation over time ▪ Problem identification ▪ Baseline determination	▪ Need a lot of data in relevant system ▪ Extrapolation of system thresholds is still largely subjective
7. Overlay Mapping and GIS	Overlay mapping and geographic information systems (GIS) incorporate locational information into cumulative effects analysis and help set the boundaries of the analysis, analyze landscape parameters, and identify areas where effects will be the greatest. Map overlays can be based on either the accumulation of stresses in certain areas or on the suitability of each land unit for development.	▪ Addresses spatial pattern and proximity of effects ▪ Effective visual presentation ▪ Can optimize development options	▪ Limited to effects based on location ▪ Do not explicitly address indirect effects ▪ Difficult to address magnitude of effects

Table 5-3. Continued			
Special Methods	**Description**	**Strengths**	**Weaknesses**
8. Carrying Capacity Analysis	Carrying capacity analysis identifies thresholds (as constraints on development) and provides mechanisms to monitor the incremental use of unused capacity. Carrying capacity in the ecological context is defined as the threshold of stress below which populations and ecosystem functions can be sustained. In the social context, the carrying capacity of a region is measured by the level of services (including ecological services) desired by the populace.	▪ True measure of cumulative effects against threshold ▪ Addresses effects in system context ▪ Addresses time factors	▪ Rarely can measure capacity directly ▪ May be multiple thresholds ▪ Requisite regional data are often absent
9. Ecosystem Analysis	Ecosystem analysis explicitly addresses biodiversity and ecosystem sustainability. The ecosystem approach uses natural boundaries (such as watersheds and ecoregions) and applies new ecological indicators (such as indices of biotic integrity and landscape pattern). Ecosystem analysis entails the broad regional perspective and holistic thinking that are required for successful cumulative effects analysis.	▪ Uses regional scale and full range of components and interactions ▪ Addresses space and time ▪ Addresses ecosystem sustainability	▪ Limited to natural systems ▪ Often requires species surrogates for system ▪ Data intensive ▪ Landscape indicators still under development
10. Economic Impact Analysis	Economic impact analysis is an important component of analyzing cumulative effects because the economic well-being of a local community depends on many different actions. The three primary steps in conducting an economic impact analysis are (1) establishing the region of influence, (2) modeling the economic effects, and (3) determining the significance of the effects. Economic models play an important role in these impact assessments and range from simple to sophisticated.	▪ Addresses economic issues ▪ Models provide definitive, quantified results	▪ Utility and accuracy of results dependent on data quality and model assumptions ▪ Usually do not address nonmarket values
11. Social Impact Analysis	Social impact analysis addresses cumulative effects related to the sustainability of human communities by (1) focusing on key social variables such as population characteristics, community and institutional structures, political and social resources, individual and family changes, and community resources; and (2) projecting future effects using social analysis techniques such as linear trend projections, population multiplier methods, scenarios, expert testimony, and simulation modeling.	▪ Addresses social issues ▪ Models provide definitive, quantified results	▪ Utility and accuracy of results dependent on data quality and model assumptions ▪ Social values are highly variable

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APPENDIX A

SUMMARIES OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS ANALYSIS METHODS

1

QUESTIONS, INTERVIEWS, AND PANELS

Questionnaires, interviews, and panels are important information gathering techniques for analyzing cumulative effects. Such techniques are especially valuable to the analyst, because they *collect information on the wide range of actions and effects needed to address* [illegible]

[illegible] identifying potential cumulative effects problems. Information gathering can be expanded to include structured interviews with key opinion leaders, indigenous peoples, and technical experts. These activities are essential components of the scoping process and, in many [illegible]

1 EXAMPLES:

Information gathering is essential to all environmental impact assessment and can become especially involved when scoping for cumulative effects in an EIS. Primarily, the analyst will use questionnaires, interviews, and panels to build a comprehensive list of environmental problems that could accumulate. During preparation of an EIS on the Castle Mountain open heap leach gold mine project, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (1990) compiled a wide range of information into a list of activities that, combined with the proposed action, might produce cumulative effects (Chapter 3, Table 3-1). For each of 26 individual activities, anticipated cumulative effects were identified for each of 12 resource issues. The status (existing or proposed) of these additional activities and the primary geographical location of effects were also listed.

The analyst will also use these information gathering techniques to help develop a community vision for the region when the cumulative effect of a suite of actions will restore resources. The Restoration Plan for the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill in Alaska involved identifying many individual restoration options that, when combined as an alternative, would have the cumulative beneficial effect of mitigating natural resource damages resulting from the spill. The Restoration Plan required an extremely high level of coordination among federal and state agencies, as well as commercial fishermen, local businesses, and Native American communities. The Restoration Team had the formidable task of determining whether the cumulative effect of a set of restoration options (an alternative) would meet the public's expectations for restoration of resources. To accomplish this, a scientific conference and many public meetings were held, producing a "Restoration Framework" that served as a scoping document under NEPA (EVOS Trustee Council 1992, 1993). In addition, a questionnaire was distributed to the public along with a summary of the draft Restoration Plan (EVOS Restoration Office 1993) as a means of soliciting public comment on the critical issues addressed by the Restoration Plan.

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2

CHECKLISTS

Checklists can help the analyst identify potential environmental effects by providing a list of common or likely effects. Checklists are especially valuable for analyzing cumulative effects because they *provide a format for juxtaposing multiple actions and resources in a way that highlights potential cumulative effects.* Checklists are potentially dangerous for the analyst who uses them as a shortcut to thorough scoping.

The strength of checklists is that they structure the analysis and reduce the likelihood that major effects will be overlooked; however, checklists are incomplete, they may cause important effects to be omitted. Because of the standard checklist format, checklists are more repeatable than ad hoc methods. They also provide a means of concisely presenting effects. At the same time, the simplicity of the checklist format has disadvantages. A checklist may be either an incomplete compilation of effects or a huge, unwieldy list with many irrelevant effects. In an attempt to be comprehensive, the checklist may also lead to "double counting" the same effect under different headings.

Many of these disadvantages are avoided by developing checklists for specific kinds of projects. Checklists can also be simplified by organizing potential effects into separate lists or hierarchical categories for each resource, ecosystem, and human community of concern. To address cumulative effects, checklists need to incorporate all of the activities associated with the proposed action and other past, present, and future actions affecting the resources. A promising approach is to use project-specific checklists (for each relevant past, present, and future action) to identify and quantify effects on resources and then transfer these effects to a cumulative checklist or interaction matrix (see Method 3). Two or more effects on a single resource indicate a potential cumulative effect; weighted effects can be summed to indicate the magnitude of the effect.

METHODS

2 EXAMPLES:

Specific checklists have been developed for many different classes of actions (e.g., housing projects, sewage treatment facilities, power plants, highways, airports). Several federal agencies have standard checklists for preparing EISs or EAs (e.g., U.S. DOE 1994). The California Department of Transportation (1993) has developed a checklist of 56 questions that must be answered for each state highway project

of projects. "Descriptive" checklists expand on the checklist concept by including information on measuring and predicting effects (Canter 1996). A more elaborate descriptive checklist is the environmental impact computer system developed by the U.S. Army Construction Engineering Laboratory (Lee et al. 1974). This system identifies potential environmental effects from 9 functional areas of Army activities on 11

Table A-1. Hypothetical checklist for identifying potential cumulative effects of a highway project

Potential Impact Area	*Proposed Action*			Past Actions	Other Present Actions	Future Actions	Cumulative Impact
	Construction	Operation	Mitigation				
Topography and Soils	**			*			**
Water Quality	**	*	+	*	*	*	***
Air Quality		**		*			**
Aquatic Resources	**	**	+	*		*	**
Terrestrial Resources	*	*		*			**
Land Use	*	***		*		*	***
Aesthetics	**	***	+	*			**
Public Services	*	+				+	+
Community Structure		*			*		*
Others							

KEY: * low adverse effect ** moderate adverse effect *** high adverse effect
+ beneficial effect ☐ no effect

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3
MATRICES

Matrices are two-dimensional checklists that attempt to quantify the interactions between human activities and resources or ecosystems of concern. They were designed to assess the magnitude and importance of individual interactions between activities and resources (Leopold et al. 1971) but have been extended to consider the cumulative effects of multiple actions on resources (Bain et al. 1986; Stull et al. 1987; LaGory et al. 1993).

Matrices alone cannot quantify effects, but they are a useful means of presenting and manipulating quantitative results of modeling, mapping, and subjective techniques. Once even relatively complex numerical data are obtained,

effects on various resources and does not allow the user to value resources differentially (e.g., through the use of numeric weights). Thus, a binary approach does not facilitate analyzing the cumulative effects on a resource, where the activities have consequences of varying degrees.

Analysts may instead choose to score effects based on factors such as magnitude, importance, duration, probability of occurrence, or feasibility of mitigation. The value entered may reflect some measurable value (e.g., soil loss may be expressed in tons/acre/ year), or it may reflect some relative ranking of the effect. Although complex weighting schemes allow the user to rank resource effects, the results may be difficult

3 EXAMPLES:

Matrices were first formally proposed for environmental impact assessment by the U.S. Geological Survey (Leopold et al. 1971). Since that time a number of matrix methods have been proposed for analyzing cumulative effects. One such methodology is the Cluster Impact Assessment Procedure (CIAP) developed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in the mid-1980s (FERC 1985, 1986a; Russo 1985). The methodology was developed specifically for use in assessing the cumulative effects of small hydroelectric facilities within single watersheds. The CIAP uses a matrix for each resource (e.g., salmon) consisting of relative effect ratings (on a scale from 1 to 5) arranged by project and resource components (e.g., for salmon, spawning habitat, migration). Each resource matrix table contains a summary column that represents the sum of effect ratings across components for each project (Figure A-1). An overall summary table is then developed that presents the effects of each project on all resources analyzed.

The CIAP does not incorporate or consider the possibility of synergistic interactions among projects that could result in nonadditive effects on resources; the effects of individual projects are simply added together to determine cumulative effects. This short-coming led to modification of the methodology to include interaction effects. With these modifications, cumulative effects are viewed as being equivalent to the sum of the effects of individual projects plus any interaction between pairs of projects. Modified CIAP procedures include the approach used in the Salmon River and Snohomish River EISs for hydroelectric development in those basins (FERC 1986b, 1987; Irving and Bain 1993). Other matrix methodologies that incorporate interaction effects have been proposed (Bain et al. 1986; Stull et al. 1987; LaGory et al. 1993). Each represents a further development of the approach with an attempt to more accurately quantify cumulative impacts; consequently, each succeeding methodology attains additional complexity.

The Integrated Tabular Methodology (Stull et al. 1987; LaGory et al. 1993) uses the same matrix approach as Bain et al. (1986) but involves a systematic (albeit relatively complex) method of quantifying and developing interaction coefficients. To determine interaction coefficients, this method requires identification of the impact zones for all projects being evaluated as well as knowledge of the response of resources to environmental change. The methodology is designed to be flexible and can use a wide variety of data and models. For example, the methodology can use evaluative criteria such as effect ratings, habitat suitability indices (USFWS 1980; Bovee 1982), or quantitative population models.

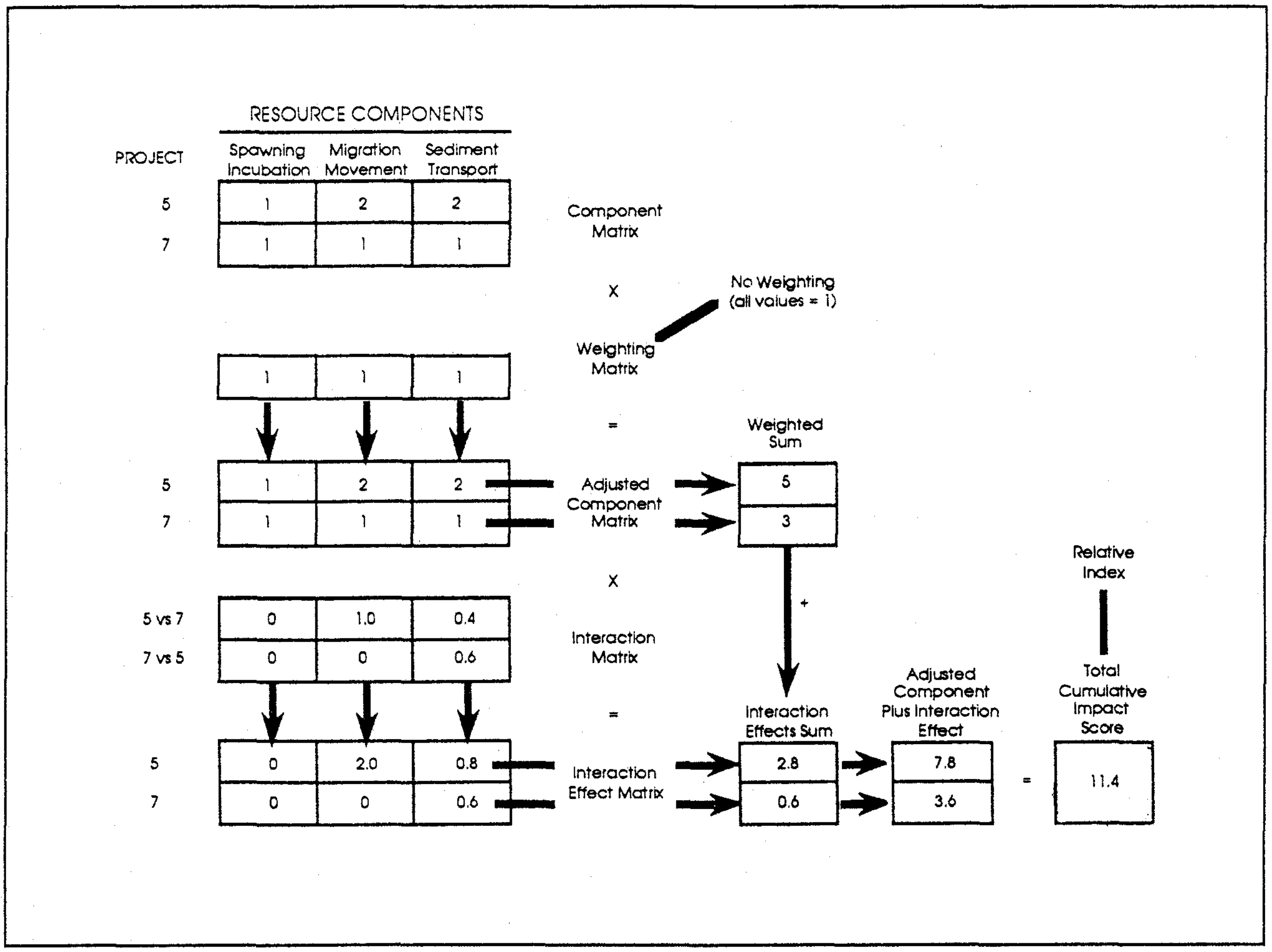

Figure A-1. Example of cumulative impact computations for a target resource with three resource components and two projects (FERC 1987).

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4

NETWORKS AND SYSTEM DIAGRAMS

Networks and system diagrams relate the components of an environmental or social system in a chain (network) or web (loop or system diagram) of causality and allow the user to trace cause and effect through a series of potential links. They allow the user to analyze the multiple, subsidiary effects of various actions and trace indirect effects on resources stemming from direct effects on other resources. In this way, the accumulation of multiple effects on individual resources, ecosystems, and human communities can be determined. Networks and system diagrams *are often the analyst's best method for identifying the cause-and-effect relationships that result in cumulative effects.*

Networks, loops, and system diagrams improve on the stepped matrix approach to illustrating the relationship among actions, effects, and environmental or socioeconomic conditions by using component boxes (or symbols) and linkage arrows (denoting processes). Networks and system diagrams concisely illu-

By definition, network analysis proceeds in only one direction (forward), whereas loops or system diagrams allow feedback of information output by one part of the system to any other part of the system. Networks also assume a strict hierarchical linkage among system variables and are thus not capable of showing all relationships among variables. In contrast, system diagrams are specifically designed to illustrate the interrelationships (and process pathways) among all components and thus are more realistic. The lack of an appropriate unit of measure for all system compartments can limit the analyst's ability to quantify system diagrams, but some success has been obtained by using the flow of water or energy flow as common units of measure (Gilliland and Risser 1977).

Expert systems can be used to implement network analysis. Expert systems are simply sets of logical rules that mirror the analysis process of an expert in some field. To identify cumulative effects, an expert system would (1) query the

4
EXAMPLES:

Since the introduction of network analysis for impact assessment by Sorensen (1971), networks and systems diagrams have been useful for describing cause-and-effect relationships in both natural and human-dominated systems. Figure A-2 illustrates how cumulative effects on socioeconomic conditions can be identified. The figure (modified from Rau and Wooten 1985) shows how the removal of both homes and businesses (following freeway construction) cumulatively results in an increase in property tax rate at the tetrary level of effects. A comprehensive network (Figure A-3) illustrating all causes, perturbations, primary effects, and secondary effects related to coastal zone development was prepared for the Australian (Commonwealth) Environmental Protection Agency (1994).

An example of the case of a single activity resulting in cumulative effects on a single resource through indirect effects is illustrated in Figure A-4 (Bisset 1983). This system diagram shows damage to fish spawning resulting from aerial application of herbicides through five different pathways resulting in low dissolved oxygen and high sediment stress. Low dissolved oxygen is caused by decreased plankton growth and increased oxygen consumption from debris pollution and erosion; increased sediment is also caused by debris pollution and increased erosion following the loss of riparian vegetation.

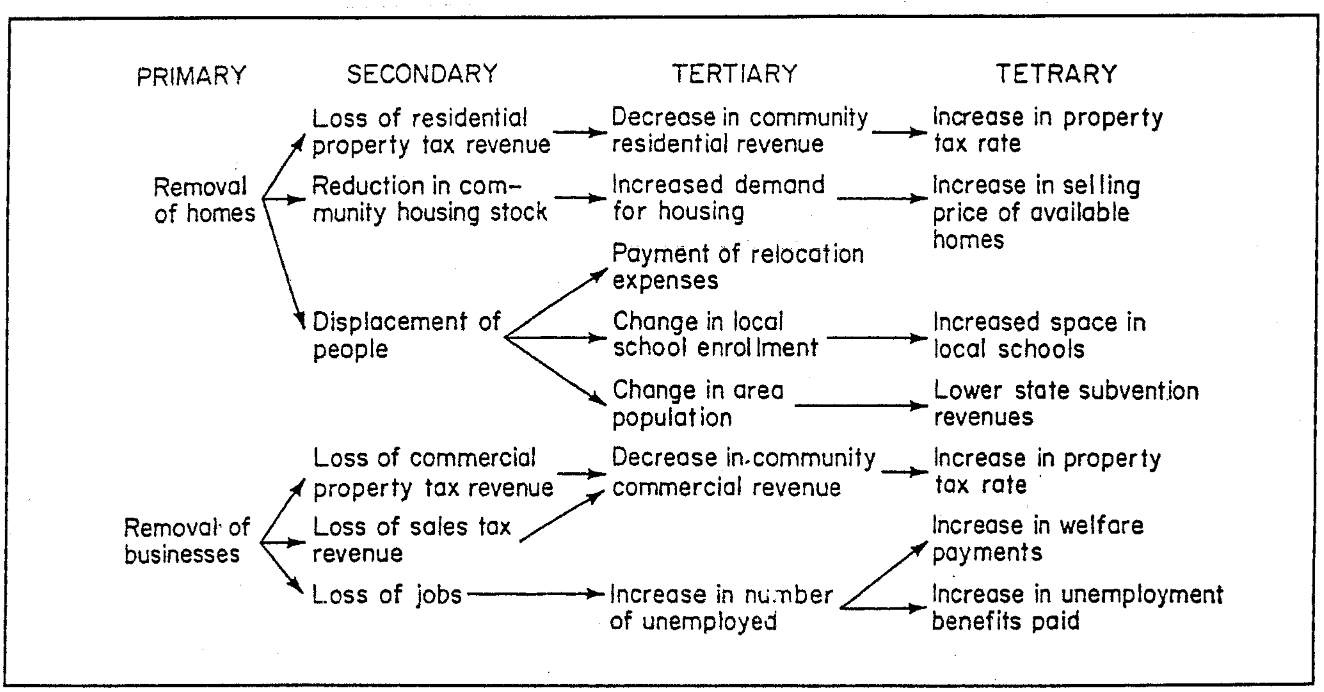

Figure A-2. Example of an "impact tree" for new freeway construction in an established downtown business district (modified from Rau and Wooten 1985)

COASTAL ZONE DEVELOPMENT CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

ALL CAUSES

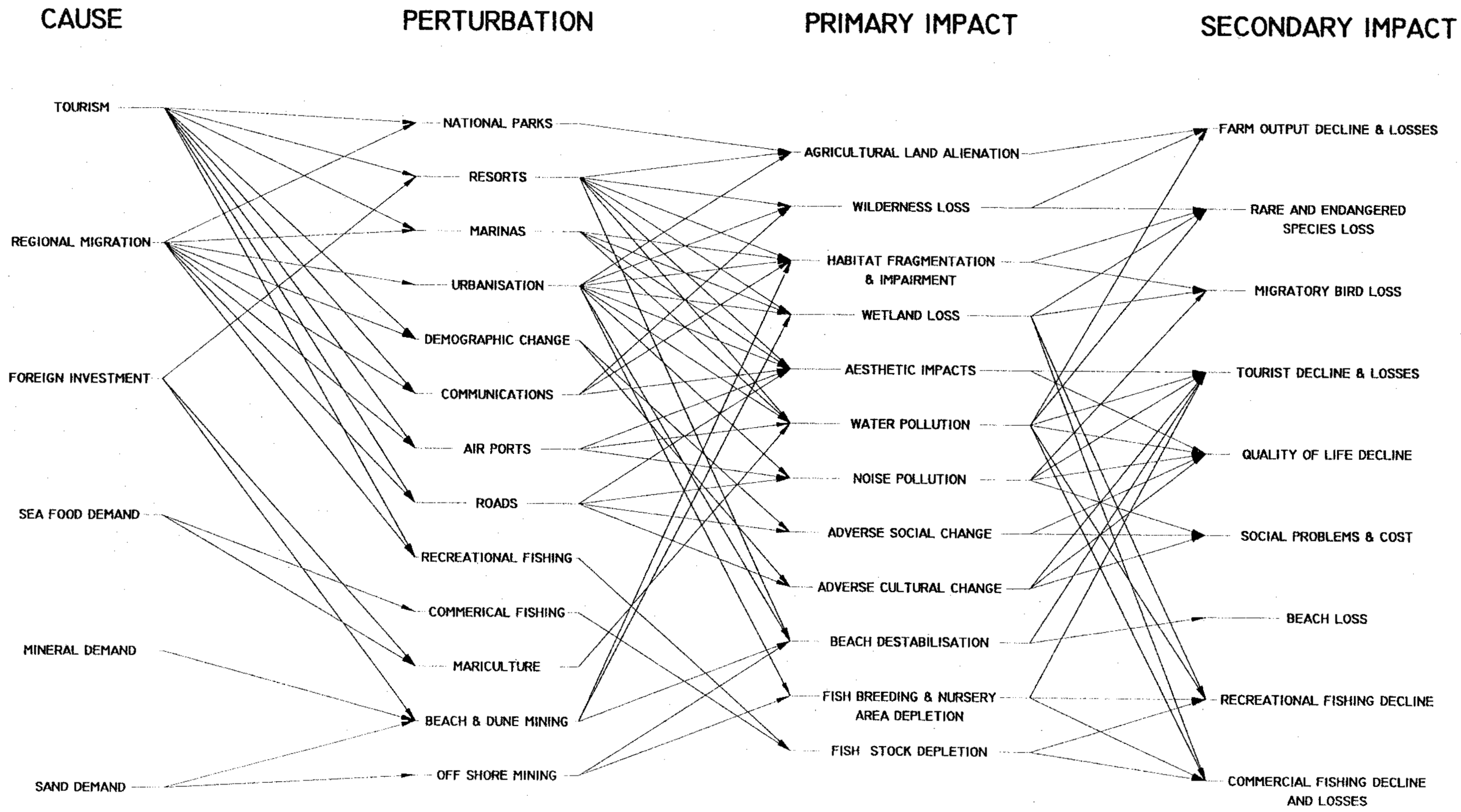

Figure A-3. A specific cause-and-effect network for coastal zone development cumulative impacts in Australia [Austrailian (Commonwealth) Environmental Protection Agency 1994]

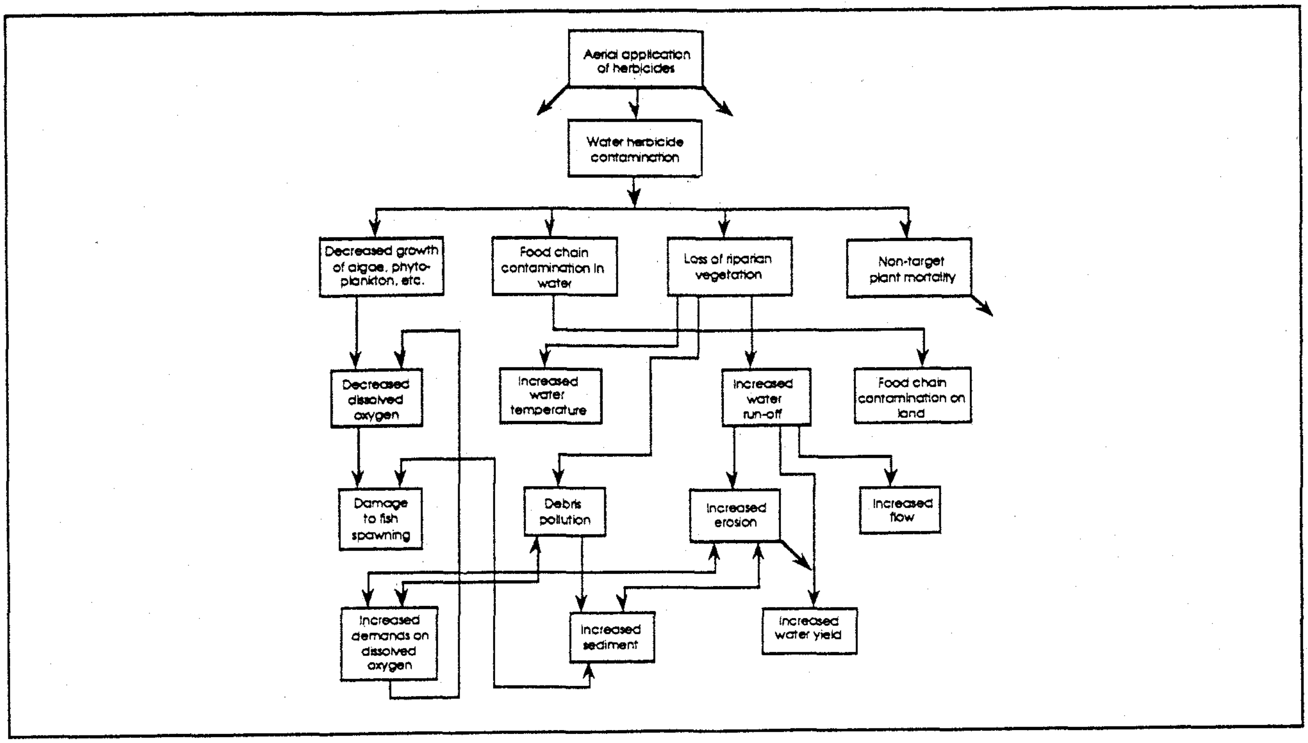

Figure A-4. System diagram showing cumulative indirect effects of aerial application of herbicide on an aquatic system (Bisset 1983).

As part of the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Plan, a cause-and-effect network analysis was conducted during a workshop charged with analyzing cumulative effects on the Bay (Williamson et al. 1987). This approach led the workshop away from focusing on development actions (near the start of the causal chains) or fish and wildlife species (near the end of the effect chains) to focusing on habitats as the hub of the cause-and-effect relationships contributing to cumulative effects on the Bay's living resources. This network analysis was instrumental in focusing the cumulative effects analysis on the appropriate ecological goals and remedial actions needed (Williamson 1993).

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5
MODELING

Modeling is a powerful technique for *quantifying the cause-and-effect relationships leading to cumulative effects.* Modeling can take the form of mathematical equations describing cumulative processes such as soil erosion, or it may constitute an expert system that computes the effect of various project scenarios based on a program of logical decisions. Modeling is also used in socioeconomic analyses, ranging from macroeconomic models to community-level demographics (see Methods 10 and 11).

Developing project-specific models requires substantial resources and time. For this reason, cumulative effects analysis will most often use or modify existing models. The lack of baseline data or project-specific data can also limit the use of sophisticated models. Nonetheless, modeling holds considerable promise for analyzing cumulative effects. In general, the use of models requires that an agency invest in (1) developing a given model or technique, or (2) obtaining baseline data for use in an existing model. The short-term investment usually reaps long-term benefits in analyzing cumulative effects. In some cases, the analyst may find a direct match between the model and the application to existing data. Examples where cumulative effects are routinely modeled include the following:

- Air dispersion models
- Hydrologic regime models
- Oxygen sag models
- Soil erosion models
- Sediment transport models
- Species habitat models
- Regional economic models.

Models that are easily defended and generally recognized in the scientific community should be used. Thus, general models form the basis for most practical work under NEPA, whereas more sophisticated models are often used on a case-by-case basis. Rarely are models used to combine and evaluate cumulative effects of the proposed and other actions. Tables and matrices provide a more straightforward means of displaying alternatives and their cumulative effects on individual resources. Nonetheless, it is possible to develop an evaluative model that assigns resources to compartments and quantifies effects and relationships mathematically. Generally, the assumptions required by this approach are many, and the likelihood of public understanding and acceptance is low.

5
EXAMPLES:

Concern for air quality has produced sophisticated air models that track local and regional emissions and estimate ambient (cumulative) pollutant concentrations. The original bubble concept in air pollution control was predicated on limiting the cumulative emissions at a site or region while allowing flexibility in the amount released by individual sources. Figure A-5 displays projected NO_2 concentration isopleths for the cumulative effects of an existing power plant and the proposed addition of a second generating unit in Healy, Alaska. This kind of model output can be combined with map overlay techniques to reveal potential adverse effects on mapped resources.

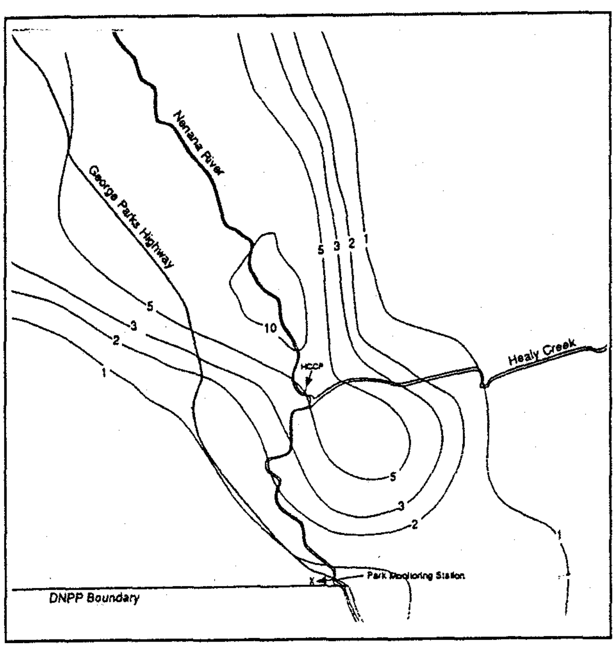

Figure A-5. Projected NO_2 concentration isopleths

Water quality-based modeling is another approach to addressing cumulative effects of multiple discharges. Specifically, the cumulative effect of pollutant discharges into a waterbody can be determined through the wasteload allocation procedure under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process. The wasteload allocation uses a simple equation to incorporate receiving water dilution, background concentrations of pollutants, numeric water quality criteria or whole effluent toxicity information, and effluent volume for discharges into the stream of concern.

waste load allocation =

$$[WQC\,(Qs + Qe) - (QsCs)]/Qe$$

- WQC = water quality criteria
- Q_s = upstream flow
- Q_e = effluent flow
- C_s = upstream concentration in toxic units

This wasteload allocation model sets the discharge limit so that the cumulative effect does not result in chronic toxicity to the aquatic biota of the stream. The most commonly used schemes for allocating waste loads among discharges are equal percent removal, equal effluent concentrations, and a hybrid method (where the criteria for waste reduction may not be the same for each point source).

Concerns over potential cumulative effects on aquatic resources resulting from decreases in dissolved oxygen (DO) concentrations prompted the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission concentrations by changing the amount of aeration that takes place at existing dams (from spillage over the dam), the cumulative effect on individual river reaches could only be determined by developing a simulation model (Figure A-6). This model first determined the amount of aeration provided by the dams, and then determined the change in DO caused by installing hydropower facilities. The amount of DO provided by dams was quantified by fitting field data to a statistical model. Then a mathematical model based on known biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and hydraulic characteristics was developed to determine how changes in aeration at each dam where hydropower was proposed would affect DO concentrations over the entire study area. Ultimately, the effects of proposed hydropower projects on DO concentrations were analyzed under appropriate flow conditions, and the cumulative effects of different alternatives (combinations of projects) on target resources were defined.

The cumulative effects on species of concern can be modeled by quantifying specific mortality factors (e.g., entrainment of migrating species in the turbines of multiple hydropower facilities) or loss of suitable habitat. The cumulative effects of micro-hydro development on the fisheries of the Swan River drainage in Montana was modeled using the bull trout as the primary species of concern (Leathe and Enk 1985). A land-type-based watershed model was used to estimate future cumulative sediment loads resulting from a combination of forest management and micro-hydro development scenarios. The relationship of sediment load to substrate quality was determined and the substrate quality score was correlated with the number of bull trout. Based on these models, the cumulative effect on fisheries from scenarios containing 4 to 20 micro-hydro projects was estimated. Within the drainage, a 7% reduction in juvenile bull trout abundance was attributed to forest road construction; 13% to 24% losses were predicted for micro-hydro project development.

Truett et al. (1994) concluded that the best approach for assessing the cumulative effects on wildlife is to focus on the habitat factors that control the distributions and abundances of wildlife populations. The most commonly used models of resource-habitat relationships are the Habitat Evaluation Procedures (HEP; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1980) and Instream Flow Incremental Methodology (IFIM; Armour et al. 1984) developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. HEP uses Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) models to provide estimates of habitat quality (Schamberger et al. 1982; Hayes 1989). An HSI is developed for each species by aggregating functional values for specific habitat parameters known to support the species of interest. HSI models have also been developed for a few animal communities such as those found in shelterbelts (Schroeder 1986). The cumulative effect of multiple activities on a species can be determined by estimating the number of habitat units (combined HSIs for each habitat available to the species) affected in the area. HEP and IFIM models provide a common currency (habitat suitability) that can be debited by a wide variety of cumulative effects.

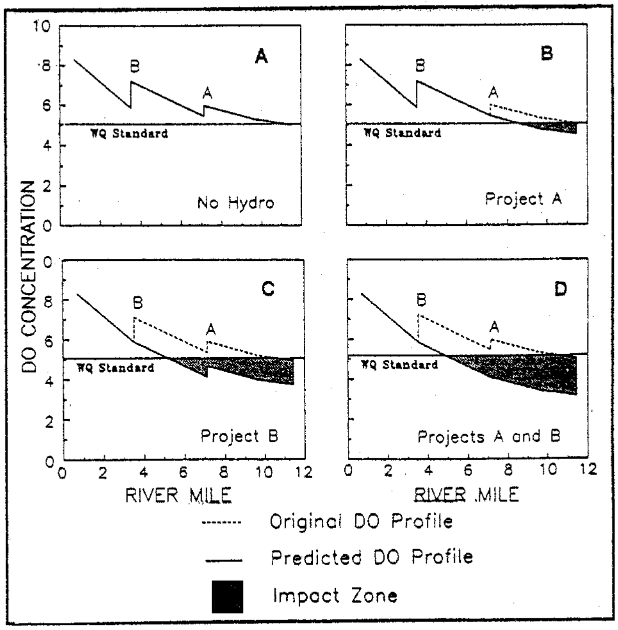

Figure A-6. Cumulative effects on dissolved oxygen caused by hydroelectric development, reduced spillages, and reduced aeration at dams (FERC 1988)

METHODS

Models are routinely used to assess regional economic effects. When the need to include

References

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6
TRENDS ANALYSIS

Trends analysis assesses the status of resources, ecosystems, and human communities over time and usually results in the graphical projection of past or future conditions. Changes in the occurrence or intensity of stress over time can also be determined. Trends analysis *provides the historical context that is critical to assessing the cumulative effects of proposed actions.* Specifically, trends analysis can assist the cumulative effects analyst by

- **Identifying cumulative effects problems.** When trends analysis demonstrates that a substantial amount of a resource has been lost, it usually reveals a cumulative effects problem that may be exacerbated by additional actions. For example, historical declines in a fishery resource may indicate that the fishery is near the threshold of population collapse.

- **Establishing appropriate environmental baselines.** When data on the current state of a resource are lacking (or too variable), trends data can be used to describe the existing condition. Trends information can also be used to develop historical baselines or regional goals against which to evaluate restoration efforts.

- **Projecting future cumulative effects.** Trends analysis can identify historical cause-and-effect relationships between stresses and resources or ecosystems. Common cumulative effects relationships can be used to predict future effects whenever the environmental conditions are similar. Historical trends may also reveal threshold points where cumulative effects become significant or qualitatively different.

By documenting the cumulative effects on the condition of resources over time, trends analyses have been used as planners to assist with the orderly development of communities (by charting the course of economic development), and by wildlife managers to develop appropriate harvest guidelines (by recording populations trends in species). Changes in the condition of resources or ecosystems can be illustrated in both simple and complex forms. A simple trends analysis might produce a line graph showing decreasing numbers of animals from annual surveys. Changes in habitat pattern might be illustrated with a series of figures, or in a 3-dimensional graphic where the amount of change is portrayed on the vertical axis. Video simulations can be used to show complex changes in geographic or aesthetic resources. Time-series information from aerial photographs or satellite imagery are increasingly available for trends analysis across the United States.

6 EXAMPLES:

Trends identified from long-term data sets greatly enhance the evaluation of cumulative effects analyses on individual species. For example, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) has identified declining bird populations that may be at greater risk from future cumulative effects (Robbins et al. 1986). As is the case with most long-term records, data gaps in the BBS require using advanced statistical methods to ensure accurate interpretation of trends. In this case, proportional trends for each survey route were estimated and then weighted to account for areal and data influences (Figure A-7). Trends analyses of bird surveys have identified a number of species with substantial declines in numbers, including many migratory songbirds (Atkins et al. 1990; Terborgh 1992).

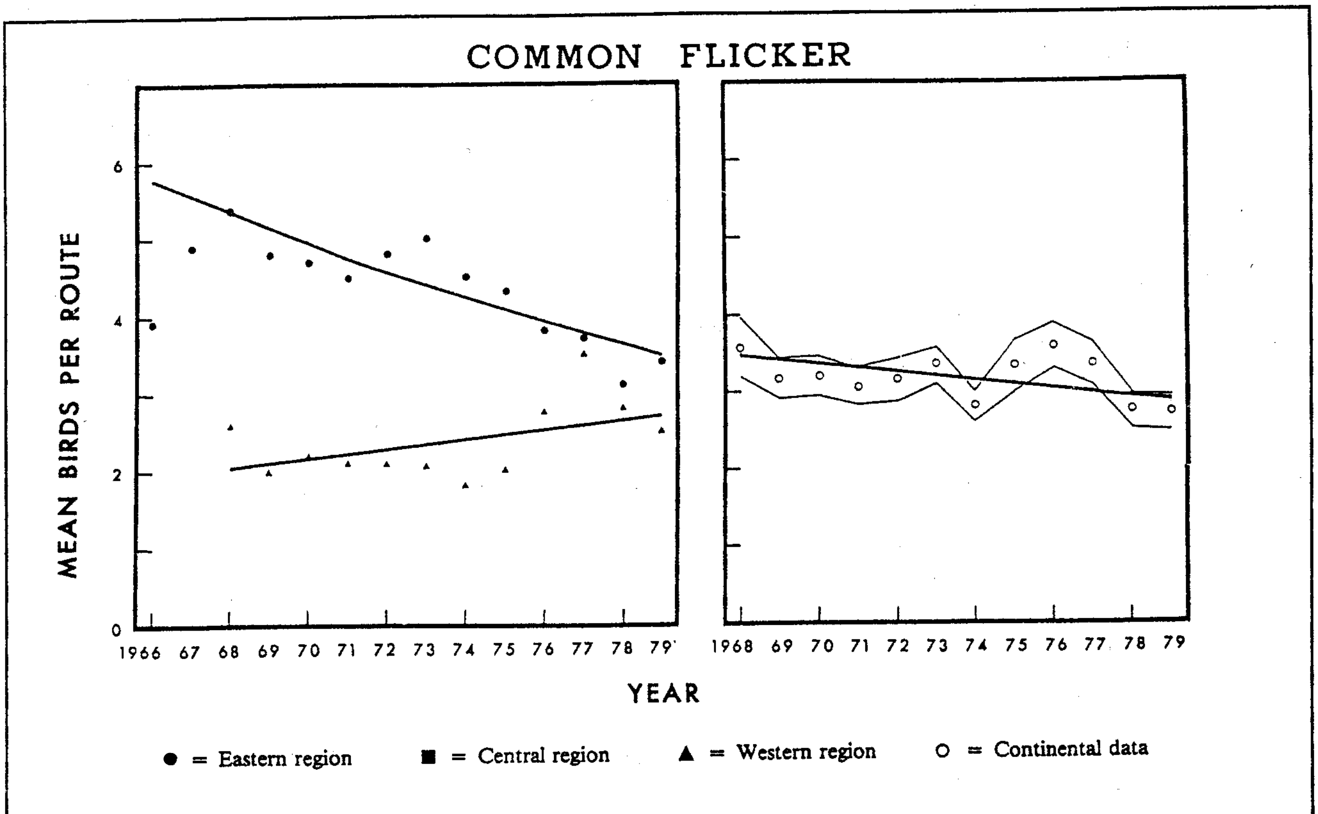

Figure A-7. Common flicker population trends (Robbins et al. 1986)

METHODS

Trends in the abundance and distribution of habitats are one of the most important indicators of cumulative effects problems. Figure A-8 dramatically illustrates the trend toward fragmentation of forested areas in Wisconsin (Curtis 1956 cited in Terborgh 1989). A recent study by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in cooperation with U.S. EPA, Fish and Wildlife Service, and NOAA (1993), addressed historical trends in special aquatic habitats of Commencement Bay, WA, resulting from numerous dredge and fill activities since 1877. To address changes over 140 years, the trends analysis study combined historical literature with the photographic record. The use of remotely sensed photographic imagery allowed analysts to combine measures of the areal extent of spoil disposal with written information on the volume of material dredged, and produced a dramatic illustration of downward trends in the area of both intertidal mudflats and marshes (Table A-2).

Many other examples of historical losses of wetlands have been reported by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetlands Inventory (NWI; Dahl et al. 1991). In addition to identifying (and quantifying) this cumulative effects problem, the NWI trends analysis has produced statistics (such as the remaining acreage of different wetlands types) that can be used to predict thresholds where future wetlands losses will likely affect watershed functioning. The "synoptic approach" to cumulative effects analysis developed by the U.S. EPA Environmental Research Laboratory in Corvallis (Leibowitz et al. 1992) proposes to use this information as a quantitative means of comparing wetlands losses among watersheds and determining where future wetland losses will have the greatest effect.

Trends analysis can also be used to construct the environmental baseline for cumulative effects analysis when adequate data on the state of a resource are lacking or are too variable. For example, sediment cores drawn from lakes or estuaries can often be used to obtain a more accurate picture of the state of contamination than can standard sediment samples. Landings of commercial fish species are notoriously vari-

Table A-2. Habitat loss by historic period in Commencement Bay, WA (modified from USACE 1993)

Historic Period	Habitat Type	Historical Records of Lost Habitat	Total Lost Habitat (includes historical records and photographic evidence)	Acres Remaining
1877 - 1894	mudflat marsh	11 20	0 0	2,074 3,874
1894 - 1907	mudflat marsh	208 41	605 415	1,469 3,459
1907 - 1917	mudflat marsh	51 35	542 64	927 3,395
1917 - 1927	mudflat marsh	48 0	162 72	765 3,320
1927 - 1941	mudflat marsh	143 399	133 1,676	632 1,44
1941 - Present	mudflat marsh	105 1,557	412 1,587	187 57
TOTALS	mudflat marsh	566 1,052	1,54 3,814	

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7

OVERLAY MAPPING AND GIS

Overlay mapping and geographic information systems (GIS) incorporate locational information into cumulative effects analysis. Simple mapping characterizes the spatial aspects of resources, ecosystems, and human communities and helps set the boundaries of the analysis. Overlay mapping can directly evaluate cumulative effects by identifying areas where effects will be the greatest. Mapping and GIS can also address concerns, such as landscape connectivity, that are difficult, if not impossible, to address with other methods. Map overlays *are extremely useful for any form of visual representation.*

The most direct use of overlay mapping for analyzing cumulative effects is "impact-oriented," wherein a composite cumulative effects map is produced by overlaying individual effects from different actions. Examples include the combined effects of both air deposition and water discharge of contaminants to a river, as well as the cumulative effects of multiple land uses in a forested watershed. The more common map overlay approach, however, combines thematic maps of different landscape features to rate areas or resources as to their suitability for development or risk from degradation. In this "resource-oriented" approach, cumulative effects in specific areas can be compared to land suitability determinations (resource or ecosystem thresholds) for those areas. The result is a suitability map that combines development opportunities and environmental and socioeconomic constraints (e.g., both endangered species habitats and public transportation routes) to identify parcels suited to each activity type (McHarg 1969).

Resource-oriented overlay mapping supports the planning approach to cumulative effects analysis and is often called resource capability analysis. Resource capability analysis can be used to optimize the integration of a site's natural and cultural features with various site design elements (Rubenstein 1987), or to minimize wastefulness in resource utilization (McKenzie 1975). Resource capability analysis uses opportunity, constraint, and suitability maps (Rubenstein 1987). Opportunity maps generally depict conditions related to factors such as soil types or topographic slopes that are suitable for development; constraint maps depict areas that for various reasons, such as the presence of wetlands, floodplains, or cultural resources, are not conducive to development. The land suitability map combines the information in the opportunity and constraints maps to identify those areas best suited for the activities planned.

Suitability ratings can be used to express the responses of resources, ecosystems, and human communities in the absence of more sophisticated quantitative cause-and-effect models (Contant and Wiggins 1993). Where these suitability ratings are based on thresholds above which effects he capacity of the affected resources to sustain themselves, the evaluation is equivalent to carrying capacity analysis. Resource-oriented overlay mapping usually identifies the areas most sensitive to disturbance or the areas where disturbance will have the greatest consequences (e.g., those that are most valued or have endured the greatest past losses).

METHODS

Overlay maps and land suitability maps have rapidly evolved from handmade transparencies to GIS-based computer overlays (for potential problems see Bailey 1988). In the simplest case, map layers are hand drawn on transparent sheets and then overlain. Each sheet represents a single map layer containing a certain type of information. Within each sheet (or overlay), the importance (or weight) assigned to different data categories is represented by the degree of shading used. The shading seen when all map overlays are stacked atop each other reveals graphically the overall suitability of different areas within the mapped region for the user-defined purpose. In the effect-oriented approach, darker shading may be used to identify areas subject to the greatest cumulative effects (from multiple actions).

Using a GIS to implement overlay mapping allows the analyst to electronically overlay natural and cultural features and produce composite maps quickly (Johnson et al. 1988). In some cases, GIS maps are derived directly from satellite images using land cover interpretation algorithms. Like the user of the manual transparent map overlay technique, the GIS user can develop weighted functions to assign numeric weights to each map area (or groupings of grid cells) within a map layer. Such weights might be determined by an expert in the field, or based on a statistical classification drawn from field measurements.

7
EXAMPLES:

Examples of the use of overlay mapping and GIS to analyze cumulative effects include both the effect-oriented approach (e.g., where two or more contaminant sources are mapped over a single resource) and the resource-oriented approach (e.g., where the map overlays are used to characterize land areas in terms of their suitability for development). The former approach is typified by GIS-based groundwater analyses where multiple plumes of contaminated water are overlain on the aquifer of interest to determine the cumulative effects. Many other resources and ecosystems have important geographical characteristics that must be considered in analyzing cumulative effects. For example, overlay mapping can reveal the cumulative fragmentation of a spatially contiguous forest (critical to many migratory songbirds) from activities such as road and building construction. In the Corridor Selection Supplemental Draft EIS for the construction of the Appalachian Corridor H highway near Elkins, West Virginia (West Virginia DOT 1992), GIS map overlays produced estimates of the amount of forest fragmentation, reduction in core forest area, and spatial contact of construction with remote habitat areas.

The resource-oriented overlay mapping approach is commonly used to select the preferred development option (e.g., the right-of-way route that minimizes cumulative effects on resources, ecosystems, and human communities). In his classic *Design With Nature,* Ian McHarg (1969) described the use of map overlays for planning coastal island development, highways, open space in Philadelphia, suburban growth near Baltimore, land use on Staten Island, and regional development around metropolitan Washington, D.C. In the highway development example, he used overlay mapping to determine a "minimum-social-cost alignment" to replace the originally proposed highway corridor.

Master plans often use resource capability analysis to address the cumulative effects of multiple actions. The resources to be included in the capability analysis depend on the activities being undertaken, and analyses range from comprehensive assessments of all physical, biological, and socioeconomic factors in a regional planning area to limited analyses of the potential for sediment runoff related to the slope, soil, and permeability of a given plot of land. For example, overlays of a site's topographic features (e.g., geology, soils, slope, and vegetation) can be used to designate areas where construction will not contribute to cumulative runoff problems (i.e., soils with low erosion potential). Overlay mapping is also critical to planning conflicting land uses, such as combat training activities and natural resource conservation on military installations. The intersection of impact areas (e.g., aircraft flight corridors, tank maneuvers, large weapon firing areas, ordinance impact areas) and sensitive environments (e.g., wildlife refuges and endangered species habitats) can be determined through overlay mapping as illustrated in Figure A-9 (produced from map archives, Department of the Navy, Naval Air Station Patuxent River, MD, 1996).

Overlay mapping and GIS can also be used to document past cumulative effects and help predict future effects. Walker et al. (1987) used remote sensing data and GIS to evaluate the indirect effects of oil field development in the Prudhoe Bay Oil Field, Alaska. Aerial photographs revealed surface disturbance (flooding and thermokarst) extending beyond the areas directly affected by construction. These unanticipated effects on frozen arctic soils and thaw-lake wetlands constitute an important cumulative effects problem for oil field activities. Overlay mapping of the spatial properties of areas (e.g., vegetation, amount of open water, land and surface form types, and soil type) where these indirect effects were more pronounced can be used to predict future cumulative effects and better plan resource extraction in this fragile ecosystem.

The promise of GIS as a tool for solving cumulative effects problems is evidenced by the rapidly increasing applications of GIS to land management of forests (Sample 1994) and wetlands (Lyon and McCarthy 1995). Jerry Franklin (1994) states that GIS may be the most important technology resource managers have acquired in recent memory. He predicts that GIS will be invaluable in (1) inventory and monitoring, (2) management planning, (3) policy setting, (4) research, and (5) consensual decisionmaking. In a much publicized example, the

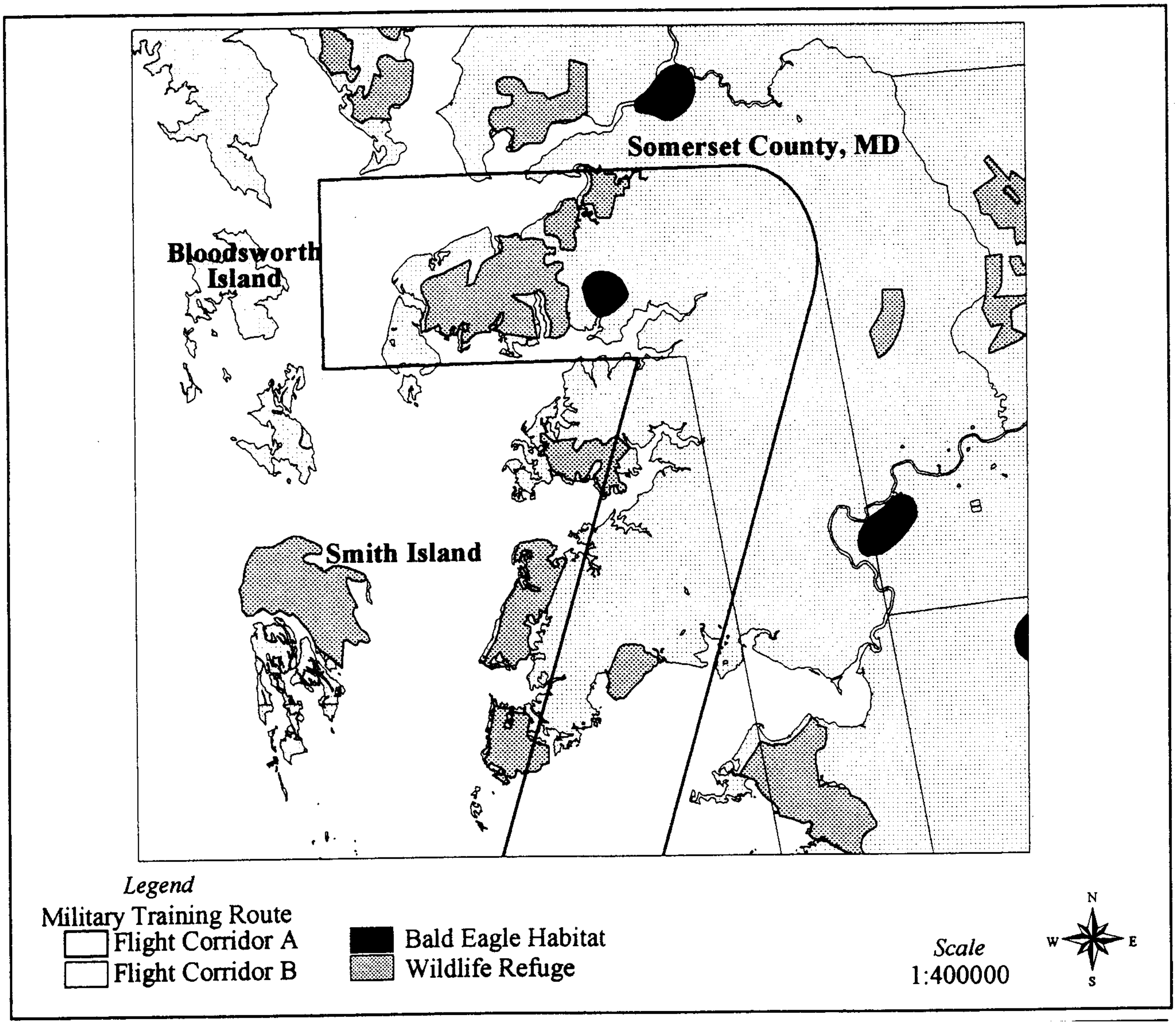

Figure A-9. Hypothetical intersection between aviation flight corridors and environmental resources near a typical U.S. military installation (Department of the Navy 1996) resolution of the Pacific Northwest forest controversy would have been impossible without GIS. Only when GIS was combined with remote sensing information was the actual extent (or lack) of old growth forest determined. Perhaps more importantly, various scientific panels were charged with developing and evaluating alternatives for protecting late-successional forest ecosystems and associated species (e.g., northern spotted owl). Only when an effective GIS capability was developed, was it possible to display and modify the alternatives before decision-makers (including Congressional delegations) so that reasonable consensus could be achieved.

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8
CARRYING CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Carrying capacity analysis derives from the fact that inherent limits, or thresholds, exist for many environmental and socioeconomic systems. Carrying capacity in the ecological context *is defined as the threshold of stress below which populations and ecosystem functions can be sustained.* In the social context, the carrying capacity of a region is the sum of human activities that can be maintained while providing the level of services (including ecological services) desired by the populace. When cumulative effects exceed the carrying capacity of a resource, ecosystem, and human community, the consequences are significant.

As a method for evaluating cumulative effects, carrying capacity analysis serves to identify thresholds for the resources and systems of concern (as constraints on development) and provide mechanisms to monitor the incremental use of unused capacity. Carrying capacity analysis begins with the identification of potentially limiting factors (e.g., the supply of water in a desert riparian ecosystem). Mathematical equations are then developed to describe the capacity of the resource or system in terms of numerical limits (thresholds) imposed by each limiting factor. In this way, projects can be systematically evaluated in terms of their effect on the remaining capacity of limiting factors (Contant and Wiggins 1993).

Carrying capacity analysis can be especially useful for assessing cumulative effects in the following situations:

- Infrastructure and public facilities
- Air and water quality
- Wildlife populations
- Recreational use of natural areas
- Land use planning

The determination of carrying capacity is straightforward for public facilities such as water supply systems, sewage treatment systems, and traffic systems. A reservoir can only supply water to a finite number of consumptive users. In the case of air and water quality control programs, statutory limits (or standards) are regulatory thresholds of the carrying capacity of air or water in the region of interest. Cumulative effects can be estimated through physical and mathematical models and then compared with these standards. Unlike engineered systems, thresholds involving subjective human uses must be based on goal-oriented statements of public opinion and can only be obtained through opinion survey information or the scoping process. Such thresholds include the degree of enjoyment obtained from a recreational experience. In natural systems, the carrying capacity of well-studied populations (usually game species) can be adequately modeled, but the capacity of whole ecosystems to withstand and recover from stress (i.e., their resilience) has yet to be modeled precisely and at best is expressed in gross probabilistic terms (i.e., the likelihood of a set of events occurring).

8
EXAMPLES:

The air and water quality criteria provisions of the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, respectively, represent carrying capacity approaches to dealing with cumulative effects (as opposed to best available technology approaches). Under the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, states measure the cumulative effect of all sources on the concentration of air pollutants in specified attainment areas using regional models. New stationary sources are not permitted if they are determined to cause, in the aggregate, the concentration of a pollutant of concern to exceed its standard (the presumed carrying capacity of the area). Similarly, total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) are calculated for water bodies receiving point and nonpoint discharges as part of the NPDES permit process to ensure that the cumulative effects on water quality do not exceed the assimilation capacity of the receiving waters. If the cumulative effect remains below standards, capacities are not exceeded, and new proposals can be authorized (Contant and Wiggins 1993).

Wildlife and fisheries managers have been conducting carrying capacity analyses for many years (Smith 1974). Specifically, managers have used the maximum-sustained-yield concept to determine the amount of harvest of fish or game populations that will not result in deterioration of the population (i.e., not exceed the capacity of the population to renew itself). The U.S. Forest Service developed *Management Recommendations for the Northern Goshawk in the Southwestern United States* based on the concern that the goshawk, a forest habitat generalist, may be experiencing declining populations and reproduction associated with tree harvests and other factors affecting the carrying capacity of western forests (Reynolds et al. 1992). These guidelines will be used to develop national forest plans in the Southwestern Region that will maintain the forest carrying capacity (i.e., specific habitat attributes and important prey species) needed to sustain goshawk populations despite the cumulative effects of human influences and natural perturbations, including loss of an herbaceous and shrubby understory, reduction in the amount of older forests, and increased areas of dense tree regeneration.

Managers of natural areas also employ the carrying capacity concept to prevent parks and other recreation areas from becoming overused. Techniques used to evaluate the cumulative effects of recreation applications involve use thresholds (i.e., standards) based on social values (e.g., opportunities for solitude) and ecological factors (e.g., presence of rare and endangered species). The recreational carrying capacity concept is explicitly linked to the notion of nondegradation, where current conditions set a baseline or standard for environmental quality. For example, Forest Service researchers have devised the Limits of Acceptable Change process for setting and monitoring recreational carrying capacity in a wilderness area (Stankey et al. 1985). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (1993) addressed both the social carrying capacity and the resource carrying capacity of the Fox waterway in Illinois as it developed permitting policy guidelines for the area. Based on a definition of when people feel crowded, the social carrying capacity was determined to be approximately 854 boats and 236 jet skis on the open areas of the waterway. Based on a water quality definition that used a threshold of water clarity needed for vegetation growth, the resource carrying capacity was determined to be 350 cruising boats (i.e., the number that could use the deeper water areas that did not support sensitive vegetation).

Carrying capacity analysis is a critical part of land use planning for sustainable development. Ideally, knowledge of the carrying capacity of an area provides the basis for developing suitability maps to guide future growth (including proposed federal projects). When applied to human communities, carrying capacity can be defined as "the ability of a natural or man-made system to absorb population growth or physical development without significant degradation or breakdown" (Schneider et al. 1978). As part of comprehensive planning for Sanibel Island, Florida, land capability analysis was conducted to determine the cumulative effects of development actions on the structure and functions of the ecological zones of the island (Clark 1976). This analysis led to a comprehensive set of management guidelines based on the carrying capacity of these natural systems for sustaining human development. Figure A-10 illustrates the combinations of population numbers and population density that are possible without exceeding the carrying capacity of interior wetlands to assimilate runoff from developed areas.

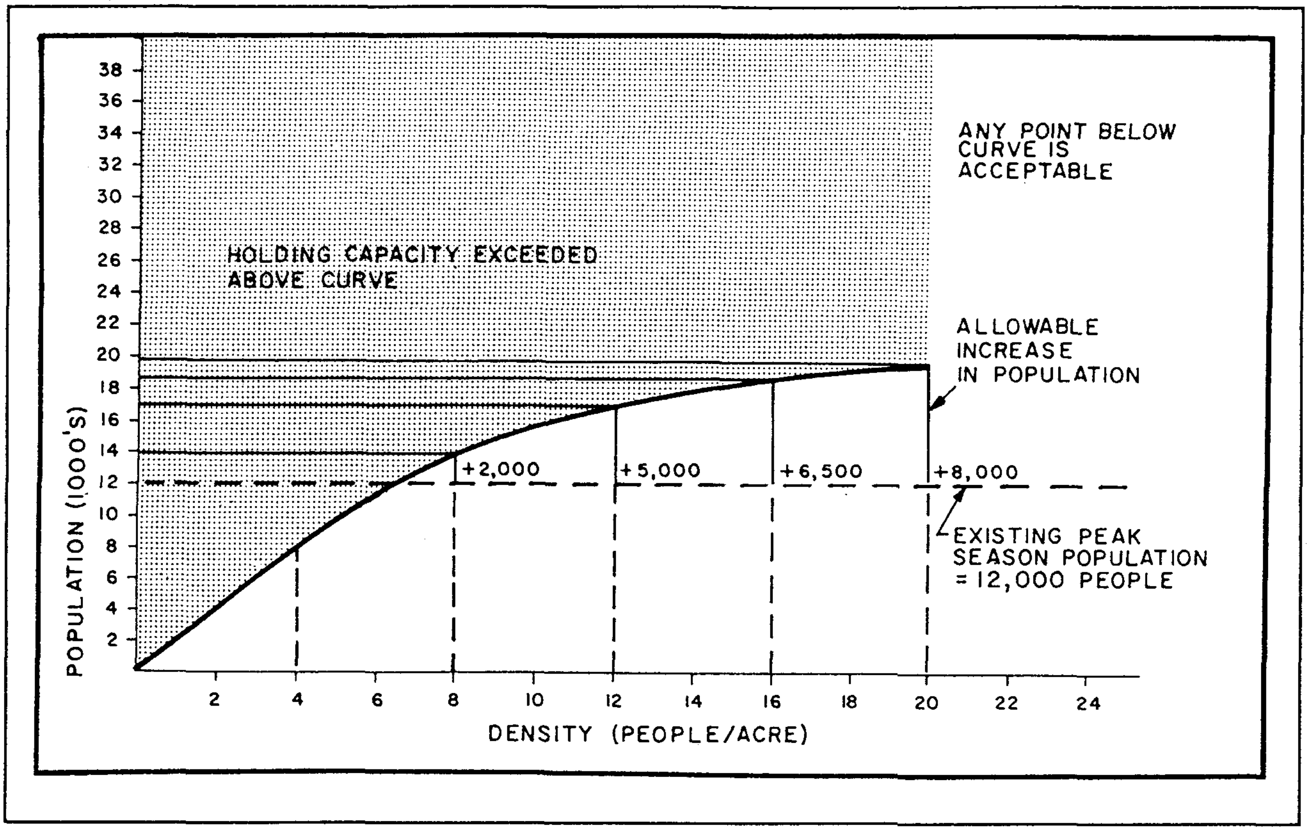

Figure A-10. Sanibel Island, Florida population versus runoff assimilation capacity (Clark 1976)

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9
ECOSYSTEM ANALYSIS

Ecosystem analysis involves considering the full range of ecological resources and their interactions with the environment. This approach can improve cumulative effects analysis by *providing the broad regional perspective and holistic thinking needed to address the following cumulative effects principles*:

- **Focus on the resource or ecosystem.** Ecosystem analysis specifically addresses biodiversity and uses the full range of indicators of ecological conditions ranging from the genetic to species to local ecosystem to regional ecosystem levels.

- **Use natural boundaries.** Ecosystem analysis uses ecological regions, such as watersheds and ecoregions, to encompass ecosystem functioning and landscape-scale phenomena such as habitat fragmentation.

- **Address resource or ecosystem sustainability**. The ecosystem approach to management explicitly addresses the ecological interactions and processes necessary to sustain ecosystem composi-

system or watershed approaches to environmental protection. Since 1991, the U.S. EPA (1996) has embraced the watershed approach as the major mechanism for addressing cumulative nonpoint-source pollution. Specific applications include watershed-based TMDLs (U.S. EPA 1994) and the "watershed analysis" approach to addressing cumulative effects and improving resource management on timber land (Washington State Department of Natural Resources 1992; Regional Interagency Executive Committee 1995).

By its nature, biodiversity conservation is a cumulative effects issue. Because it encompasses all the structural and functional components of the biological environment (and its interactions with the physical world), biodiversity is constantly affected by a wide range of stresses. For this reason, the goals of biodiversity and ecosystem protection are usually coincident with those of cumulative effects analysis; therefore, the analyst should employ an ecosystem approach whenever biodiversity is an issue.

indices, and (3) addressing the myriad interactions among ecological components that are needed to sustain ecosystem functioning. Applying the ecosystem approach to cumulative effects analysis entails using biological indicators (e.g., indices of biotic integrity for surface waters; Karr 1991; U.S. EPA 1990) as integrators of cumulative effects and landscape indices (e.g., patch distribution of wetlands; Preston and Bedford 1988; Leibowitz et al. 1992) as measures of the cumulative diminution of ecosystem functioning. Natural resource agencies may soon be able to provide guidance on assessing and mitigating environmental effects at the ecosystem level (Truett et al. 1994).

PRINCIPLES OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION (CEQ 1993)

1. Take a "big picture" or ecosystem view.
2. Protect communities and ecosystems.
3. Minimize fragmentation.
   Promote the natural pattern and connectivity of habitats.
4. Promote native species.
   Avoid introducing non-native species.
5. Protect rare and ecologically important species.

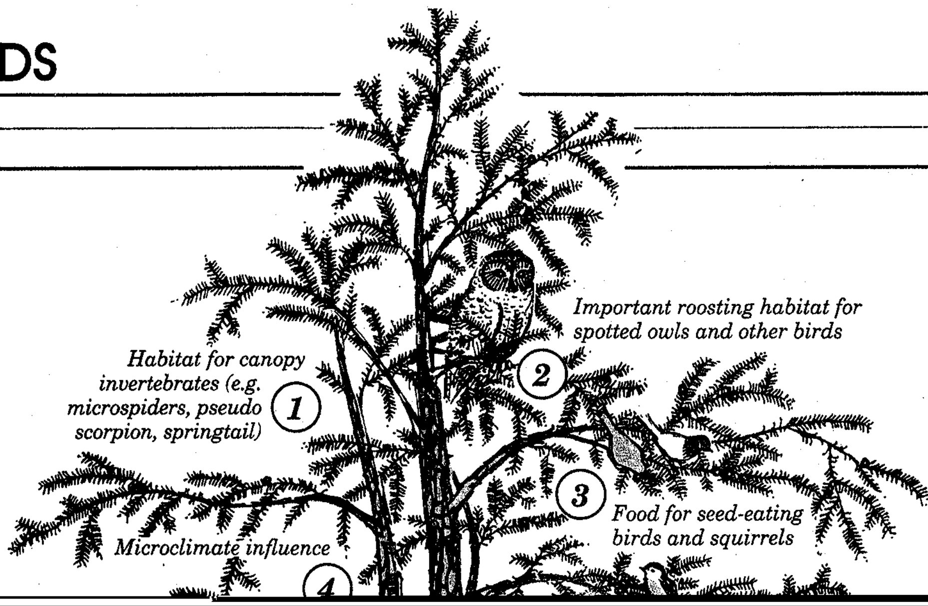
9 EXAMPLES:

Constructing precise models of ecosystem structure and function sometimes exceeds the capabilities of NEPA practitioners. Considerable progress, however, has been made in applying the principles of ecosystem analysis to analyzing cumulative effects by extending considerations beyond species to the ecosystem and by looking at landscape-scale processes such as habitat fragmentation.

The most celebrated example where ecosystem analysis was used to extend the analysis of cumulative effects beyond a single species is the *Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl* (U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management 1993). Expert panels were convened to determine the likelihood of maintaining viable populations of a comprehensive suite of species and groups of species based on available habitat. Addressing the entire ecosystem involved considering terrestrial forest ecosystems (i.e., amounts of late-successional and old-growth forests and the viability of species ranging from fungi to bats), aquatic ecosystems (habitat conditions, riparian ecosystem processes), and aquatic and riparian dependent organisms (e.g., anadromous salmonids, resident fish species and subspecies, and other aquatic, riparian, and wetland organisms). The U.S. Forest Service (in conjunction with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and Food and Drug Administration) also incorporated ecosystem analysis into the *Pacific Yew Final Environmental Impact Statement* by defining the role of the Pacific yew in the forest ecosystem (Figure A-11; U.S. Forest Service 1993). The cumulative effects of harvesting Pacific yew on federal lands in the Pacific northwest for taxol production (for use as a cancer treatment) were analyzed in three different contexts: the Pacific yew itself (including its genetic diversity), the forest ecosystem that supports yew populations, and the relationship of the yew and human communities.

The ecosystem analysis approach implemented by the Forest Ecosystem Assessment Team (FEMAT) in the spotted owl EIS also considered ecosystem processes affected by the cumulative actions on lands owned and managed by states, tribes, corporations, individuals, and other nonfederal agencies. The analysis included an aquatic conservation strategy based on the designation of key watersheds and the use of watershed analysis. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (1992) recently published a watershed analysis manual including a set of technically rigorous procedures that can be used to determine what processes are active in a watershed, how these processes are distributed in time and space, what the current upland and riparian conditions are, and how all of these factors influence ecosystem services or other beneficial uses. Watershed analysis is being expanded to encompass other aspects of the ecosystem approach to management (Montgomery et al. 1995; Regional Interagency Executive Committee 1995). In the **synoptic landscape approach** to cumulative effects analysis developed by the U.S. EPA Environmental Research Laboratory in Corvallis, OR, the landscape is the unit of analysis (Leibowitz et al. 1992). Synoptic indices are chosen from the following landscape-level measures: function value, functional loss, and replacement potential. Subsequently, landscape indicators are chosen as

METHODS


Important roosting habitat for spotted owls and other birds
Habitat for canopy invertebrates (e.g. microspiders, pseudo scorpion, springtail)
1
2
3
Food for seed-eating birds and squirrels
Microclimate influence
4

first-order approximations of the synoptic indices. This approach provides a framework for

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10

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

Economic impact analysis satisfies the mandate under NEPA to "...fulfill the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans" [National Environmental Policy Act, Title I Sec. 101 (a)]. *It is an important component of analyzing cumulative effects, because the economic well-being of a local community depends on many different actions.* The following effects are the minimum that an economic impact analysis should determine:

- change in business activity
- change in employment
- change in income
- changes in population.

The three primary steps in conducting an economic impact analysis are (1) establishing the region of influence, (2) modeling the economic effects, and (3) determining the significance of the effects.

The definition of the geographic region of influence (ROI) is often controversial. Most regional and urban analysts prefer to use a functional area concept for defining study regions (Fox and Kuman 1965). Regions defined in this way explicitly consider the economic linkages between the residential population and the businesses in the geographic area. Specifically, the affected region should include all of the self-sustaining ingredients of region-local businesses, local government, and local population (Chalmers and Anderson 1977). Although no standard methodology exists, the definition of a ROI should consider residence patterns of the affected populace, availability of local shopping opportunities, "journey-to-work" time for employees, and local customs and culture.

Economic models are invaluable for analyzing cumulative effects. The suite of economic models can vary from simple to complex (Richardson 1985; Treyz 1993). As a rule, economic models are sets of mathematical equations that represent the interactions among the integral components of the regional economy; the modeled relationships are based upon economic principals that have a long history of accuracy and use. Data to "drive" the models are critical to performing an impact analysis and acquiring data is often the limiting factor for the analyst. Although they are focused on economic relationships, economic models can incorporate demographics. Ultimately, economic models are used to project effects under each alternative.

Once model effects projections are obtained, additional tools, such as the rational threshold value (RTV) and the forecast significance of impacts (FSI) approaches, can provide timely and cost-effective evaluations of the significance of the effect (Huppertz and Bloomquist 1993). These analytical tools review the historical trends for the defined region and develop measures of historical fluctuations in sales activity, employment, income, and population. This use of time-series data provides the analyst with a historical context in which to evaluate significance. The use of economic impact models in combination with the RTV and FSI techniques has proven successful in addressing cumulative economic impacts.

METHODS

10 EXAMPLES:

Three kinds of models are most often used in

Econometric models use time-series data to show

METHODS

[redacted]

11
SOCIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

Social impact analysis fulfills the mandate under CEQ's regulations that the "human environment" in NEPA be "interpreted comprehensively" to include "the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with the environment" (40 CFR§ 1508.14). The social sciences have *made considerable progress in addressing cumulative effects related to environmental stewardship by focusing on key social impact variables.* The Interorganizational Committee on Guidelines and Principles (1994) has identified five basic categories of social impact variables:

1. Population characteristics such as its size and expected size, ethnic and racial diversity, and the influx and outflux of temporary (e.g., seasonal or leisure) residents.

2. Community and institutional structures including the size, structure, and linkages of local government; the historical and present patterns of employment and industrial diversification; and the size, activity, and interactions of voluntary associations, religious organizations, and interest groups.

3. Political and social resources such as the distribution of power and authority, the identification of interested and affected parties, and the leadership capacity within the community or region.

4. Individual and family changes including factors that influence the daily life of individuals and families (and indigenous and religious subcultures) in the community or region such as attitudes toward the proposed policy, alterations in family and community networks, and perceptions of risk, health, and safety.

5. Community resources such as patterns of natural resource and land use; the availability of housing; and community services including health, police, fire protection, and sanitation facilities.

The key to analyzing the cumulative effects on these social impact variables is incorporating multiple actions into projections of future social conditions. The following general categories describe the range of methods used to predict future social effects:

- linear trend projections (identifying taking an existing trend and projecting the same rate of change into the future);

- population multiplier methods (a specified increase in population implies designated multiples of some other variable);

- scenarios (characterization of hypothetical futures through a process of mathematically or schematically modeling the assumptions about the variables in question);

- expert testimony (experts can be asked to develop scenarios and assess their implications);

- simulation modeling (mathematical formulation of premises and a process of quantitatively weighing variables).

11 EXAMPLES:

Social impact analysis differs from other analyses of cumulative effects because it must deal with the subjective perception of effects. Social effects appraisal and social well-being accounts are examples of methods for analyzing subjective social variables.

Social effects appraisal determines the social meaning and significance of the objective changes produced by cumulative actions. The social analyst assesses the social meaning of the changes from the different perspectives of the affected groups. One way to measure the meaning of a change is to tap the knowledge of opinion leaders (formally or informally) within the affected groups to determine the values they assign to each change. For example, an influx of 200 construction workers and their families might be viewed positively by families suffering from a stagnant economy but negatively by retirees looking for a quiet neighborhood. The social analyst needs to acknowledge that while some negative social effects can be remedied materially (perhaps by economic growth), others are qualitative and defy mitigation.

The social well-being account is a display that summarizes findings by cross tabulating levels of analysis, evaluation categories, and effect factors with a social effects evaluation of the present condition and each of the alternatives (including no-action). It provides either a quantitative (numerical) or qualitative rating of each alternative's overall social effect and a description of the rating scale. The Multi-Attribute Tradeoff System (MATS) and other computer programs assist in producing a systematic numerical evaluation of social effects. The result is an overall quantitative ranking for each alternative, reflecting the alternative's relative social benefit to the affected group.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) frequently deals with social impact issues related to its transportation projects. FHWA (1996) recently prepared a primer for analysts who assess the effects of proposed transportation actions on human communities. FHWA states that community impact studies must include secondary effects and influences from outside developmental pressures to determine the ability of an area to survive removal of housing, businesses, and community services. Also, such studies must describe a community's ability to absorb relocated residents and businesses in terms of social and economic disturbance (e.g., available housing, public services affected, areas zoned for business use). The primer describes nine impact categories to be analyzed, including social and psychological aspects, physical aspects, visual environment, land use, economic conditions, mobility and access, provision of public services, safety, and displacement. Considering these effects naturally includes environmental justice issues. Community impact analysis is analogous to ecosystem analysis in that the human community should be thought of as an integral unit with a characteristic social setting and operation. Decisions about avoiding and mitigating effects should be based on consensus visions of the desired condition of the community. Lastly, if community effects are to receive attention comparable to that given the natural environment, special effort to ensure public involvement must be employed (e.g., using nontraditional and informal approaches).

References

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APPENDIX B

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Contributors

Gene Cleckley
Fred Skaer
Wendell Stills
Bob Wheeler
Federal Highway Administration
400 7th Street, SW, Room 3301
Washington, D.C. 20590
(202) 366-2029

Allison Cook
1305 East Capitol Street, SE Apt. #2
Washington, DC 20003

William V. Cork
ICF Kaiser International, Inc.
21515 Great Mills Road
Lexington Park, MD 20653
(301) 866-2020

Robert Cunningham
Office of Polar Programs
National Science Foundation
4201 Wilson Blvd., Suite 755
Arlington, VA 22230
(703) 306-1031

Peggy Currid
Robert Eltzholtz
Coe-Truman Technologies
206 Burwash Avenue
Savoy, IL 61874
(217) 398-8594

William Dickerson
Pat Haman
Anne Miller
Jim Serfis
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, SW, MC-2252
Washington, D.C. 20460
(202) 564-2410

John Farrell, Retired
Office of Environmental Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240
(202) 208-7116

Horst Greczmiel
U.S. Coast Guard
2100 Second Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20593
(202) 267-0053

Charles Herrick, Ph.D.
Margo Burnham
Meridian Corporation
4300 King Street, Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22308-1508
(703) 998-3600

Argonne, IL 60439
(630) 252-3169
(603) 252-7169

Patrice "Pat" LeBlanc
Carmen Drouin
Federal Environmental Assessment Review Office
Government of Canada
13th Floor, Fontaine Building
Hull, Quebec, Canada K1A OH3
(819) 953-2530

Phil Mattson
Planning and Environmental Affairs
USDA Forest Service
333 Southwest First Avenue
P.O. Box 3623
Portland, OR 97802-3865
(503) 326-3865

Matt McMillen
Energetics Corporation
501 School Street, SW
Suite 440
Washington, D.C. 22024
(202) 479-2747

Paul Petty
Bureau of Land Management
2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, CO 80215
(303) 239-3736

(206) 653-0220

Mark Southerland, Ph.D.
Versar, Inc.
9200 Rumsey Road
Columbia, MD 21045-1934
(410) 964-9200

Ron Webster
Robert Lozar
Department of the Army - CERL
2902 Newmark Drive
Champaign, IL 61821-1706
1-800-872-2375

Dick Wilderman
Branch of Environmental Projects Coordination
Minerals Management Service
381 Eldon Street, Mail Stop 4320
Herndon, VA 22070
(703) 787-1670

Gary Williams, Ph.D.
Argonne National Laboratory
955 L'Enfant Plaza North, S.W.
Suite 6000
Washington, D.C. 20024
(202) 488-2418

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Peer Review Panel

Richard Carpenter
Rt. 5, Box 277
Charlottesville, VA 22901

Mark Bain, Ph.D.
Cornell University
Department of Natural Resources
208A Fernow Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853

Larry W. Canter, Ph.D.
University of Oklahoma
Environmental and Groundwater Institute
200 Felgar Street, Room 127
Norman, OK 73019-0470

Cheryl Contant, Ph.D.
University of Iowa
Department of Urban and Regional Planning
347 Jefferson Hall
Iowa City, IA 52242-1316

Alex Hoar
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589

Lance McCold
Oak Ridge National Laboratory
P.O. Box 2008
Oak Ridge, TN 37831-6206

B.J. Quinn
North Carolina Department of Transportation
Planning and Environmental Branch
P.O. Box 25201
Raleigh, NC 27611-2501

Michael V. Stimac
HDR Engineering
500 108th Avenue, Suite 1200
Bellevue, WA 98004