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III.E. Cumulative Effects

The USFWS and NMFS (1998) *Endangered Species Consultation Handbook Procedures for Conducting Consultation and Conference Activities Under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act* at page 4-30 define cumulative effects:

Cumulative effects include the effects of future State, tribal, local or private actions that are reasonably certain to occur in the action area considered in this biological opinion.

Future Federal actions that are unrelated to the proposed action are not considered in this section because they require separate consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Act.

Cumulative effects of continued timber harvest, road system management, and other reasonably certain effects of future state, tribal, local, or private actions on aquatic habitat combined with implementation of IFP management commitments in the IFP area are likely to be beneficial; instream habitat conditions within enrolled lands are likely to improve as a result of implementing the IFP management measures. As demonstrated in Section III, Effects of the Action, instream LWD within potentially enrolled lands is likely to increase from current levels, sediment delivered to streams from roads and riparian areas is likely to decrease, fish passage will be improved, and stream temperatures may generally decrease as stream shade generally increases in response to increased buffer width and leave-tree requirements.

Existing baseline effects in areas of mixed land uses and ownership are often dominated by activities emanating from non-forested areas (the majority of all lands in the Salmon River basin and much of the Clearwater River basin). However, substantial changes in land use patterns and practices are not anticipated in the Clearwater and Salmon River basins, and substantial change in the level of effects from these areas and land uses are not anticipated.

One exception to this general trend is that several Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) assessments and load allocations required by section 303(d) of the Federal Clean Water Act for water quality limited streams have been recently completed by the Idaho DEQ and approved by the EPA. Implementation plans for completed and in-progress TMDL assessments may gradually improve grazing, farming, and other major land use management practices, and may further improve aquatic habitat conditions of many streams found within and downstream from state and private timberlands. Additional beneficial trends may occur due to increased enrollment of private land riparian areas in conservation reserve program (CRP) and other related Federal programs on farmlands, and conservation easements on pasturelands.