

# 5 Environmental Consequences





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This section analyzes and discusses the potential environmental effects or consequences that can be expected by the implementation of each management alternative described in chapter 3. Table 2 gives a comparison of the environmental consequences of each alternative.

## EFFECTS COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental justice refers to the principle that all citizens and communities are entitled to:

- equal protection from environmental, occupational health, or safety hazards;
- equal access to natural resources, and;
- equal participation in the environmental and natural resource policy formulation process.

On February 11, 1994, President Clinton issued EO 12898: Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Income Populations. The purpose of this order is to focus the attention of federal agencies on human environmental health and to address inequities that may occur in the distribution of: costs and benefits, land-use patterns, hazardous material transport or facility siting, allocation and consumption of resources, access to information, planning, and decision making.

Within the spirit and intent of EO 12898, no minority or low-income populations will be impacted by any Service action under the two alternatives presented in this document.

### SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

Economic impacts are typically measured in terms of number of jobs lost or gained and the associated result on income. Neither alternative will significantly impact the economics of the local area.

### CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are the potential effects of the action or no-action alternatives in combination with past, present, and future actions. NEPA regulations 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 nonfederal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over time.” (40 Code of Federal Regulations 1508.7.)

The cumulative effects analysis for this project is based on reasonably foreseeable future actions that, if

implemented, will contribute to the effects of the action or no-action alternative. No reasonably foreseeable actions are anticipated.

## EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE A

Under the no-action alternative, the Service will continue to manage the refuge within the parameters of the cooperative agreement with the SDGFP. Existing habitat within the easement and all public programs will continue to be administered and maintained by the state.

### HABITATS AND WILDLIFE

Under alternative A, the refuge will maintain the current habitat management program administered through the cooperative agreement with the state. The uplands and wetlands will be managed as part of the state park, and passive management of the existing habitat within the easement will continue giving the refuge staff little ability to promote species diversity.

Because of multiple uses and alterations of the landscape and the size and connectivity of habitat patches, which makes movement of wildlife or genetic information between parcels of land difficult or impossible, the habitat can no longer support species diversity.

### WATER MANAGEMENT

The water cycle on Bear Butte Lake under both alternatives will continue to be dependent on spring runoff and annual rainfall. The ability to hold water levels and wetland conditions through water management would continue to be dependent on annual precipitation. Water cycle conditions would have little to no effect on current bird populations. There will be no change in existing water-quality conditions and sedimentation trends.

### PUBLIC USE

All public programs are administered by the state under alternative A. Conflicting purposes of the state and the Service do not allow the Service to provide opportunities for the six priority public-use activities. The state, for example, provides campgrounds within the refuge boundary. Campgrounds are not a priority use on refuges nor are they wildlife compatible or wildlife dependent, and as such are generally not allowed. In a few situations they are allowed to support priority public uses, but in this case camping does not support these uses.

Current on- and off-refuge opportunities for wildlife viewing, education, and interpretation will be retained. This includes informational kiosks, hiking trails, day-use areas, a fishing platform, and educational programs. These programs will continue to place an emphasis on

the state park and its programs. Visitors will not be aware that they are visiting a refuge.

Under alternative A, there will be no change in current management of hunting and fishing opportunities.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Under alternative A, there will be no changes to cultural resource management. Current management activities will continue to be carried out solely by the state under the cooperative agreement.

### **OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

Under alternative A, there will be no change in current operations and maintenance activities.

### **SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS**

Under alternative A, there will be no change in socioeconomic climate.

## **EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVE B**

Under alternative B, the refuge will be taken out of the Refuge System (divested) and transferred to the state. Under this alternative, the habitat, public use, cultural resources, and operations will be managed by the landowners. The Service's easement requirements will no longer exist. The Service will divest its interest in the refuge.

### **HABITATS AND WILDLIFE**

Since the state currently maintains habitats and wildlife, there will be no change. The cooperative agreement will no longer be in place and easement will be removed.

### **WATER MANAGEMENT**

Since the state is currently responsible for water issues, there will be no change. The cooperative agreement will no longer be in place and easement will be removed.

### **PUBLIC USE**

Since the state is currently responsible for issues relating to public use, there will be no change. The cooperative agreement will no longer be in place and easement will be removed.

### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

Since the state is currently responsible for issues relating to cultural resources, there will be no change. The cooperative agreement will no longer be in place and easement will be removed.

### **OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE**

Since the state is currently responsible for operations and maintenance, there will be no change. The cooperative agreement will no longer be in place and easement will be removed.

### **SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS**

Since there will be no change to the aforementioned categories, there should not be any change to the socioeconomic impact.



*Bear Butte NWR*

**Table 2. Description of consequences by alternative**

<i>Issue</i>	<i>Preferred Alternative A (no action)</i>	<i>Alternative B</i>
Habitats and Wildlife	Continued reliance on state to manage habitats and wildlife.	Same as A except cooperative agreement would no longer be in place and easement would be removed.
Water Management	Continued dependence on annual rainfall. Continued emphasis on providing recreational activities. No change in existing water-quality conditions and sedimentation trends.	Same as A except cooperative agreement would no longer be in place and easement would be removed.
Public Use	Review existing non-wildlife-dependent recreation uses for compliance with the Improvement Act and accompanying regulations and policies through a CD process.	Current public-use activities, including non-wildlife-dependent activities, would continue. Non compliance with Improvement Act would no longer be an issue.
Cultural Resources	The state will continue to manage the cultural resources.	Same as A except cooperative agreement would no longer be in place.
Operations and Maintenance	Continue current level of operations and maintenance under cooperative agreement.	Current operations and maintenance activities would continue.
Socioeconomic Impacts	No change to socioeconomic climate.	No change to socioeconomic climate.



