

BLM STUDY REVIEW of HELLS CANYON COMPLEX STUDIES

Effects of Constructing and Operating the Hells Canyon Complex Wildlife Habitat

3.2-44

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1. INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this study was to compare wildlife habitat conditions during the 1950's and the 1990's.

2. CONCLUSION

"Construction of HCC undoubtedly caused immediate large scale loss of habitat in areas inundated by reservoirs. However, the quality of all of these effected habitats had been substantially reduced by over 70 years of unrestricted and abusive use."

In most cases these affected habitats could have been restored if they had not been inundated. The loss of island habitat no matter the vegetation condition was very important.

"The reduction in fine sediments downstream has probably resulted in decline in sandbar willow. The elimination of livestock grazing in HCNRA resulted in greatly improved up-land riparian habitats. The loss of sandbar willow also resulted in less sediment entrapment. Grazing on BLM and USFS still limits recovery on up-land, especially riparian."

3. STUDY ADEQUACY

The study didn't mention wildlife species affected by habitat changes, except passing reference to mule deer winter range. Anthropogenic disturbances were listed, but possibly the most important, roads, was not mentioned. Roads are important for erosion and sediment, movement of livestock, loss of riparian, and spread of noxious weeds. Fluctuating pool levels limit or riparian vegetation has been minimized, and the shoreline soil loss blessed as a way to prevent noxious weeds. The study missed its purpose; which was, "What are the impacts of HCC on Wildlife Habitat."

4. BLM CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

This paper is primarily opinions with little or no documentation. The primary effort was placed on pre-1950 and not 1950 to 1990. Other comments were about livestock grazing and not HCC and its effect on Wildlife habitat.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that a study that documents tree and shrub species present in 1950 and again in 1990 be initiated. Photos have to be present for both time periods. A 1950 tree and shrub list would provide the opportunity to find native species that may survive if reestablished.