

Lesson 2. Exercise 4b. Potential Solution

Chapter 4.2: Environmental Consequences for Bicknell's Thrush Habitat

Assumptions

These are the assumptions we used to determine the potential impact of Alternative B, designation of a special recreation management area for high density winter recreation in the project area, on Bicknell's Thrush habitat:

- 2,500 acres of suitable Bicknell's Thrush habitat falls within the proposed SRMA boundary.
- 40 birds (20 nesting pairs) have been observed in the area (observation, 2006). 50% of the birds use the suitable habitat within the SRMA (observation, 2006; Citation, 2004)
- Presence and noise from people recreating in the SRMA disrupts the Bicknell's Thrush life activities (such as breeding, nesting, feeding, and shelter) and displaces them while people are present. If disturbed too often, they move out of the area permanently (Citation, 2004).
- If 5% of the suitable habitat is within the SRMA, and the birds are permanently displaced from the area, then that habitat would no longer be suitable and 1 nesting pair would be displaced. *(This is a comparison of potential impacts to existing habitat [Affected Environment], providing the context and severity of the impact, which helps you determine whether the impacts are significant or not. For more information on significance, see Lesson 3.)*

Methodology

GIS maps were used to calculate the following information:

- geographic location and acreage of the potential SRMA (10,000 acres),
- acres of suitable Bicknell's Thrush habitat in the area (50,000 acres),
- acres of habitat that overlaps with the SRMA (2,500 acres),
- percentage of total habitat that overlaps with the SRMA (5%)

BLM field surveys in 2006 and 2007 identified 20 nesting pairs of Bicknell's Thrush in the area.

Impacts of the Proposed Action

Short-term impacts would be disruption and displacement of 1 nesting pair and up to 20 individual birds while people are active in the area.

Long-term impacts would be the loss of 2,500 acres (5%) of suitable habitat for Bicknell's Thrush and permanent displacement of one nesting pair within the SRMA; however, the nesting pair would probably relocate to other suitable habitat in the area so it would result in no net loss of birds.

Impacts of the No Action Alternative

If the SRMA was not designated, then the use in the area would not increase, there would be no loss of suitable habitat for Bicknell's Thrush, no displacement of birds, and no loss of birds.