



Chapter 4.

Ecoregions

The previous chapter provides an examination of the status of individual natural systems and resources. In this section, the Science Panel considers the interaction of many natural systems in particular regions of the state.

Because Oregon is a large and diverse place, it was necessary to take a closer look at regions where environmental conditions are relatively homogeneous. The Science Panel selected the well-established system of ecoregions used by the Environmental Protection Agency (see: Figures 4 through 7 in the *SOER Statewide Summary*). These ecoregions are based on similarity of several environmental variables such as geology, vegetation, and average precipitation.

The maps contained in this chapter and in the statewide summary (Figures 22 through 37 in the *SOER Statewide Summary*) help orient the reader to the physiographic boundaries of each ecoregion, as well as the major river basins that drain them.

The ecoregion summaries are not meant to be an exhaustive examination of each part of the state. Instead, they each serve as an overview to the current condition of the regional environment, its strengths and threats, and its key resource issues. The framework for each summary is based on the Science Panel's three perspectives of ecosystem health. They draw on evidence from the preceding summary resource chapters to provide an integrated picture of each ecoregion's landscape structure and function, biological community composition, production of goods and services, and regional policies. Each summary outlines regional land ownership patterns and includes a socioeconomic profile of the ecoregion.