

## Economic Considerations Within the Endangered Species Act

With respect to the consideration of economic impacts, the U.S. Endangered Species Act draws a distinction between listing and designating critical habitat for endangered and threatened species. On one hand, when deciding whether or not a species should be listed as endangered or threatened, the Secretary of the Interior *does not* consider economic impacts. The decision is to be based on the best available biological and commercial data. On the other hand, for the designation of critical habitat, the Secretary *is* required to consider economic impacts that are based on biological and economic findings. This process allows the Secretary to exclude areas from designation when the benefits from excluding the area outweigh the costs of specifying that area as critical habitat. (U.S. Code Title 16, Chapter 35, Sec. 1533)

- ? **How do the Endangered Species Act's provisions for balancing costs and benefits compare to the results of your debate?**
- ? **What do you think about the exclusion of cost/benefit analysis for listing endangered and threatened species?**
- ? **What do you think about using a cost/benefit analysis for critical habitat designation?**
- ? **What are the tradeoffs a policy maker might have to consider when applying a cost/benefit analysis to the designation of a critical habitat for a listed endangered or threatened species?**

