# CHAPTER 2
# KEY QUESTIONS

Key questions focus the analysis on particular types and locations of cause-and-effect relationships, and discern conditions as they relate to values and uses of the watershed. The questions have been grouped into five categories: commodity aspects, amenity aspects, public use within the watershed, and environmental quality and ecology with its two components, terrestrial and aquatic. The page numbers referenced under each key question serve as a "quick index" to specific subjects within this analysis.

**A. COMMODITY ASPECTS OF ELK RIVER** **Page**

*What type of local employment have the Elk River and its watershed contributed in the past?* *

*Can the Elk River watershed contribute to local employment opportunities in the future?* *

**B. AMENITY ASPECTS OF ELK RIVER**

*What is the present scenic condition of the watershed and how will it change?* *

**C. PUBLIC USE ASPECTS OF ELK RIVER**

*What is the present recreational use of the watershed?* *

*What are the anticipated trends for recreation in the watershed?* *

*How has the watershed been accessed in the past and today?* *

*What are the anticipated access trends for the watershed?* *

*Who owns and manages the land in the watershed and what policies govern its use?* *

**D. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ECOLOGY: TERRESTRIAL COMPONENTS**

***Vegetation***

*What type of vegetation grows in the watershed?* *

*What important plant habitats exist in the watershed?* *

*What plant species are present?* *

*What sensitive and rare plant species are present?* *

*What exotic plant species are present, and what is their influence on native vegetation?* *

*How is Port-Orford-cedar and it's associated root disease distributed across the watershed?* *

*What historic disturbance phenomena have occurred across the landscape?* *

*What are the influences of human activities?* *

*How have past disturbances affected vegetative patch sizes?* *

*How has large woody material accumulated in the watershed?* *

***Wildlife***

*What are the processes and events that guide wildlife species presence and distribution?* *

*What wildlife species are present?* *

*What Proposed, Endangered, Threatened, Sensitive or Rare species are present, and what is their status?* *

*What Management Indicator Species (MIS) and other species of interest are present, and what is their status?* *

*What Survey and Managed Species are present, and what is their status?*

*What exotic species are present, and what is their influence on native species?* *

*What are the influences of human activities on wildlife populations?* *

*How can wildlife harassment be decreased?* *

*What are the predicted future trends for wildlife populations in the watershed?* *

*What important wildlife habitats are present?* *

*How are these habitats arranged across the landscape?* *

*What habitat enhancement projects have been done in the past?* *

*How can wildlife habitats be restored?* *

**E. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY AND ECOLOGY: AQUATIC COMPONENTS**

**Landslides and Surface Erosion**

*What are the processes which deliver sediment, and where do they occur?* *

*How much sediment has been delivered by natural processes and by human-caused activities and where?* *

*How can human-caused sediment be reduced?* *

**Water Clarity**

*What current human uses affect water clarity?* *

**Large Wood Supply Affecting the Aquatic Ecosystem**

*What are the processes which deliver large wood and where do they occur?* *

*Where have management activities reduced the large wood supply below natural levels?* *

*Where are the areas of concern for future wood supply?* *

*How can the supply of large wood be restored?* *

**Riparian Canopy Disturbance and Stream Temperature**

*What processes reduce shade and increase stream water temperature and where do they occur?* *

*Where have management activities increased solar exposure and stream water temperature over natural levels?* *

*What are the future trends in stream temperature?* *

*What are the existing temperatures and are they changed from historic ranges?* *

*How can stream temperature be improved?* *

**Stream Flow**

*What management-related processes have the potential to change the natural magnitude and frequency of stream flow?* *

**Stream Channel Morphology**

*Where are channels sensitive to increased sediment and decreased large wood?* *

*Is there evidence that channel morphology and sediment storage have changed from historic conditions?* *

*What are the expected channel morphology and storage condition trends?* *

*How can the channel conditions be improved?* *

**Stream Water Temperature Effects on Fish Habitat**

*Where are fish habitats sensitive to increased stream water temperatures?* *

**Productive Flats**

*What are productive flats and where do they occur within the watershed?* *

**Fish Habitat, Distribution, and Populations**

*What fish species inhabit the watershed? Are these different from the historic species?* *

*What are the current fish habitat conditions, basinwide and in susceptible reaches?* *

*Is there evidence that fish habitat conditions have changed from historic?* *

*What are the expected trends in fish habitat conditions?* *

*How can the fish habitat be improved?* *