

1 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
2 UNITED STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
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4  
5 NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL  
6 DRAFT RECOVERY PLAN  
7

8 PUBLIC HEARING  
9

10 May 31, 2007  
11

12 St. Martin's University  
13 5300 Pacific Avenue Southeast  
14 Lacey, Washington

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15 ORIGINAL

16 Taken Before:

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*Northern Spotted Owl Draft Recovery Plan - Public Hearing*

	<u>SPEAKER INDEX</u>	
	<u>SPEAKER:</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1		
2		
3	MR. RUESINK	5
4	MR. WESLEY	6
5	MR. RUESINK	27
6	MR. DICK	30
7	MS. PHILLIPS	33
8	MS. MORAN	36
9	MS. REMLINGER	38
10	MR. BLAKLEY	39
11	MS. EWING	40
12	MR. PARAMESWARAN	41
13	MR. JOYCE	44
14	MR. HARLOW	46
15	MS. SKUMANICH	50
16	MR. CANTRELL	52
17	MS. KOSIDOWSKI	54
18	MS. JOHNSON	57
19	MS. JOINES	59
20	MR. MORGAN	62
21	MR. IRVING	65
22	MR. DODD	68
23	MR. DRUGGE	71
24	MR. STRUCK	73
25		

*Northern Spotted Owl Draft Recovery Plan - Public Hearing*

	<u>SPEAKER INDEX</u> (continued)	
	<u>SPEAKER:</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1		
2		
3	MS. GOLD	74
4	MS. HEISTERKAMP	76
5	MR. MILLER	78
6	MS. ELLIOTT	79
7	MS. DANVER	82
8	MS. ANGELL	84
9	MR. RUESINK	85
10	MS. GIDDINGS	86
11	MR. RUESINK	87
12	MS. SNOW	87
13	MR. FLOWERS	88
14	MR. RUESINK	89
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

1 BE IT REMEMBERED that on Thursday, May 31, 2007, at  
2 6:38 p.m., at St. Martin's University, 5300 Pacific  
3 Avenue Southeast, Lacey, the following proceedings were  
4 had, to wit:

5  
6 \* \* \* \* \*

7  
8 MR. RUESINK: We're on the record.

9 Good evening. On behalf of the United States Fish  
10 and wildlife Service, I welcome you to this public  
11 meeting on the Draft Recovery Plan for the northern  
12 spotted owl.

13 My name is Robert Ruesink. The last name is  
14 spelled R-u-e-s-i-n-k. I will be serving as the  
15 presiding officer for this listening session this  
16 evening. My role is to conduct this session in order  
17 that we receive your comments accurately. I am not  
18 involved in any decision-making regarding this issue.

19 Here with me also at the front table are the  
20 following representatives from the U.S. Fish and  
21 wildlife Service:

22 To my left is Dave Wesley. Dave is a deputy  
23 regional director of the Pacific Region and the team  
24 leader for the northern spotted owl recovery team.

25 To my right is Ken Berg; ken is the manager for

1 the western Washington Fish and Wildlife office here in  
2 Lacey.

3 We also have Sue Garcia, our court reporter this  
4 evening. And the purpose of having the court reporter  
5 is to ensure that we do get an accurate transcript or  
6 an accurate record of the comments and the statements  
7 that you present here on the northern spotted owl Draft  
8 Recovery Plan.

9 Outside the meeting room you have seen information  
10 written and display materials that are available about  
11 the Draft Recovery Plan. There are also staff members  
12 from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and  
13 Bureau of Land Management available to answer your  
14 questions and address any concerns or comments that you  
15 might have about that Draft Recovery Plan.

16 At this point I'd like to introduce Dave Wesley,  
17 who will give a presentation on the Draft Recovery  
18 Plan.

19 MR. WESLEY: Good evening. Everybody hear me  
20 okay? You hear me okay? Good.

21 Thank you all for coming.

22 First of all, what I'm going to do is take the  
23 first few minutes of this public meeting and just give  
24 you a little bit of a background in sort of how we got  
25 to where we are today.



1 done. So we'll going to go ahead and walk through this  
2 power plan first.

3 This is the critter that we're here to talk about  
4 tonight, the northern spotted owl and the recovery  
5 planning process. A little bit of a background. The  
6 species was listed as a threatened species in 1990  
7 under the Endangered Species Act. There was an  
8 interagency steering committee or scientific group that  
9 was formed to begin to do some of the analysis, and --  
10 also in '90, and draft critical plan -- critical  
11 habitat for the owl was designated in 1992, and a draft  
12 recovery plan was also completed in 1992.

13 That draft plan was never finalized, and the  
14 current administration at that time decided not to  
15 proceed with the actual final preparation of the plan,  
16 even though it went through the draft phase and into  
17 the final phase. Our group hopes that that doesn't  
18 happen to this plan. We hope that we'll be able to  
19 complete it and get a final plan out.

20 In 1994, the Northwest Forest Plan -- and most  
21 people that live in the Northwest are familiar with  
22 happened in 1994 and that President Clinton and Vice  
23 President Gore were out and they conducted some  
24 meetings in Portland. And for a long time they got  
25 together, and that culminated in the preparation of the

1 forest plan in 1994.

2 And in 2004, as part of our ongoing  
3 responsibilities to update information with regard to  
4 threatened and endangered species -- the Endangered  
5 Species Act requires us to do reviews on a five-year  
6 basis, and we contracted with an independent contractor  
7 to do a five-year review of the northern spotted owl.  
8 And they took that opportunity to go back and look at  
9 all the science and the information that had been  
10 developed since the 1992 draft and since the '94 forest  
11 plan and consolidate and summarize all of that  
12 information in a report for us in 2004.

13 So when we started our work in 2006, we felt that  
14 we had a lot of good information on which to base this  
15 plan. We used the information that had gone before us,  
16 and a lot of the summary information is shown in these  
17 documents that I just talked about.

18 So what is in a recovery plan? Well, a recovery  
19 plan is basically a road map. It gives an opportunity  
20 for to us outline and describe what we think is  
21 necessary to take a species from either a threatened  
22 category or endangered category and take it off the  
23 list.

24 What does it include? Well, it includes a  
25 strategy: How are we going to get there? What is it

1       that we need to be able to do to get there to get this  
2       plan -- to get this species recovered? It has specific  
3       objectives. what are those kinds of things? what are  
4       the population numbers? what are the habitat? what  
5       are the capabilities in regard to threats? And how are  
6       we going to deal with that?

7                what are those objectives? we often have to  
8       outline specific recovery actions. This plan lists 37  
9       different recovery actions that are specifically  
10      designed in all different areas, and I'll go through  
11      those in that few minutes about what is necessary for  
12      recovering of the owl.

13              And I need to advise you that the recovery plans  
14      are advisory in nature. They're not regulatory. They  
15      don't have any force and effect of law. They are used  
16      by the government, by federal agencies, by state  
17      agencies to help guide what it is that we need to do,  
18      and certainly it's important information that's there.  
19      But in and of themselves, they don't have any  
20      regulatory authority or any regulatory responsibility.  
21      They are what they are, and that is a plan, and they're  
22      advisory.

23              So how did we get to develop this recovery plan?  
24      we started in late April of 2006, just a little over a  
25      year ago, and the plan was developed by a team, and

1 I'll describe that in a little bit. The plan was  
2 developed with our original target date of completing  
3 it by the end of September in 2006. The team came up  
4 with one goal or one objective, one way to be able to  
5 develop the recovery plan, and it was submitted to  
6 Washington.

7 There was a group in Washington that reviewed it,  
8 liked what we did in the first option, but also asked  
9 us to come up with a second option with regard to how  
10 you establish habitat. And I'll describe that second  
11 option in more detail in a little bit.

12 That information then came back to the team, and  
13 the team, along with a support team that we had that  
14 was helping us that we called the IST, the interagency  
15 support team, worked on developing revisions to that  
16 plan. And in April of 2007, that plan was the plan  
17 that you see before you and what's displayed out in the  
18 lobby.

19 We're currently in the 60-day comment period, and  
20 right now -- I've just -- we got approval today that we  
21 will be announcing that the comment period is extended  
22 for an additional 60 days. So the -- I know that many  
23 people have been interested in making sure that their  
24 comments were received. Currently the closing comment  
25 period is June 25, but we're now going to be extended

1 that to August 24.

2 I encourage you, if you have comments to provide  
3 us written, that you did it as soon as possible. It's  
4 always better to get your comments in early. Just it's  
5 a good idea to do that. But we will be officially  
6 announcing it probably next week that we're going to be  
7 getting -- I just got a call from the Washington office  
8 today that the request had been approved.

9 And we also committed to having a public meeting  
10 in each state. The act and the regulations  
11 implementing the act don't require us to do that for a  
12 recovery plan. But during the development of the plan,  
13 we felt that it was important enough that we have an  
14 opportunity to hear from the public and provide an  
15 opportunity for that.

16 So we've -- like I said, we've done two in Oregon,  
17 one in California, and this is the fourth we've done,  
18 and it's here in Washington. And our goal is to  
19 complete the plan by April of 2008. We think the year  
20 from the date of publication will give us the adequate  
21 time, and hopefully we'll be able to -- (coughing).

22 So what did -- the recovery team is basically a  
23 guidance, and it's information, and it's important --

24 I think that just came on louder. Is it that  
25 better? Yeah. Maybe I don't have to hold it now.

1       Amazing what a volume button will do. Fourth one of  
2       these, you'd think I'd be able to do this by now.

3               But the recovery team is -- like I said, it's an  
4       advisory group. And it's important to understand that  
5       this was a service document. We did have a team, and  
6       we did try to work by consensus, but we weren't able to  
7       reach consensus in all areas. So the document that you  
8       see before you is, in fact, a service document. And it  
9       is -- what it is, it's represented by the Fish and  
10      wildlife Service. It was informed by the deliberations  
11      and the information that was provided by the recovery  
12      team members.

13              The team did have 12 members. It was  
14      representative of the five federal agencies that are  
15      involved in land management and natural resource  
16      management: the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land  
17      Management, the Parks Service, the Fish and wildlife  
18      Service, and I always forget the fifth one. Who am I  
19      forgetting? The BIA. Thank you, the Bureau of Indian  
20      Affairs, they were the fifth agency.

21              For the three states, we asked the governor of the  
22      states to nominate the members of that. They were  
23      selected in accordance to the service policies, so the  
24      governors picked the members for the team; whether that  
25      was from their forestry department or their wildlife

1 department, they were the ones that made the  
2 recommendation.

3 And we also have representation from the timber  
4 industry, and we had two folks from the conservation  
5 community; so we felt we had a good balanced team that  
6 represented lots of different interests.

7 And like I said, we deliberated for about a year.  
8 We met face to face quite a few times. We met on  
9 conference calls also a lot of times. As you can see  
10 there, almost 30 different times we got together over  
11 the year.

12 We also conducted three different science panels  
13 to get the views of the scientists to see what they --  
14 what it is they said about the plan, what were -- to  
15 make sure that as much as of the plan that we could get  
16 was based on science and the most current science that  
17 was available to us.

18 We also had managers that were there that were  
19 familiar with dealing with owls on the ground and how  
20 you were going to go about doing that. And we used a  
21 lot of information building from the existing studies.  
22 There was a lot of information that was showing and  
23 kept coming back with the idea that it is important to  
24 have large blocks of habitat for the protection of the  
25 owl.

1           we were looking at that, so that became a key  
2 element that we looked into in preserving habitat and  
3 looking for large blocks of habitat. How we go about  
4 doing that is something we'll describe here in a few  
5 minutes.

6           And peer review, we also felt that it was very  
7 important for us to have peer review of the project.  
8 And some of the plan, primarily right now the  
9 biological portion has, already been peer reviewed by  
10 the scientists. So we feel that stands pretty good.  
11 And I will describe in a few minutes the other type of  
12 peer review that we're in the process of doing right  
13 now.

14           So what are the objectives? It's pretty much the  
15 standard kind of a thing that you see in a recovery  
16 plan. First of all, you talk about the populations,  
17 what are the populations of the bird, and how do you go  
18 about protecting them with regard to the fact that you  
19 get sufficient populations that the species no longer  
20 needs the protection of the Endangered Species Act.

21           well the species can't live in of themself, so  
22 it's important to protect the habitat. So you need to  
23 make sure that the habitat is there, that the habitat's  
24 protected, and that the habitat is adequately  
25 distributed throughout the range so that, in fact,

1       there is a place for these birds to live. So habitat.  
2       And maintaining habitat, of course, is another  
3       important element.

4               The third part is how do you deal with the  
5       threats? What is it that's causing the species to  
6       become a threatened species and hopefully not become an  
7       endangered species? So how do you deal with those, and  
8       how do you eliminate those threats or ameliorate those  
9       threats to try to compensate for what's happening to  
10      ensure that you can get the species recovered?

11              And one of the major threats that we came up with  
12      as we were working through it is the threat from barred  
13      owls. Everybody knows about what -- the impact that's  
14      happened over the years with regard to habitat, but  
15      barred owls was one of those things that came out. If  
16      you look back in the literature, it's mentioned but  
17      it's not mentioned near as much as the scientists  
18      imposed upon us and recommended to us with concern  
19      about the control of the barred owls.

20              Habitat loss, again, like I said, is an important  
21      element. It's something that we didn't wanted to lose  
22      track of. Maintaining the habitat and making sure that  
23      it is provided there for opportunities for the bird to  
24      exist is a critically important element.

25              But back to the barred owl, it is interesting to

1 note that one of the recommendations from the team is  
2 to form a barred owl working group. This group would  
3 be a group of scientists and managers that would help  
4 us work through this situation to look at what is it  
5 that we have to do with this barred owl. Are control  
6 mechanisms the best way to go? If it is controlled,  
7 how would we do it? where would we do it? How would  
8 we do it? Under what circumstances would it be done?  
9 So we need to have research to better understand this  
10 threat and then some perhaps proposed experimental  
11 reduction or elimination.

12 Appendix G of the plan describes some experimental  
13 removal of populations of barred owls or individuals of  
14 barred owls. There is some preliminary work out of  
15 California that would indicate that if you takes the  
16 barred owls out, the spotted owls come back and respond  
17 very quickly. But again, anything that we would move  
18 forward on that would be done through a management  
19 group, through a research group. what's the best way  
20 to do it, like I said, where, when, how often, to what  
21 extent?

22 When you get with habitat, this is, of course, an  
23 important element, and there are two different options  
24 on how you would address habitat. The team, when we  
25 initially went through it, only had one option, and

1 that was to fall back on a lot of the historical work  
2 that had been done, and that is fixed reserves.

3 People feel comfortable with fixed reserves.  
4 They're used to seeing it in the forest plan. They're  
5 used to seeing it other land-use allocations where  
6 there's lines on a map where you can go to at any given  
7 time and look at it and say, "Here's the area that's  
8 being set aside for owls, and here's the area that's  
9 being set aside for conservation."

10 So Option 1, the original plan, the original  
11 option developed by the recovery team, looked at this  
12 option and said, "That's the best way to go. Have  
13 fixed reserves on the landscape, and have them  
14 established so that everybody knows where they are."

15 We came up with our own acronym for them.  
16 Everybody's got to have an acronym, right, with regard  
17 to those things? If you're familiar with the  
18 literature, you're used to seeing DCAs, designated  
19 conservation areas, or HCAs, habitat conservation  
20 areas, we came up with managed owl conservation areas  
21 so MOCAs. So if you look at the maps out there, if you  
22 have an opportunity, you're looking at managed owl  
23 conservation area.

24 And in Option 1 those owl -- managed owl  
25 conservation areas are about 7.7 million acres of land.

1 In Option 2, when the plan was back to the --  
2 Washington and it was reviewed by some folks back  
3 there, they wanted to know whether it was possible for  
4 us to provide any additional flexibility. Is it  
5 possible to be able to have reserves and not be fixed  
6 into specific areas already predrawn on a map?

7 They asked us also to look at barred owls, and we  
8 need to -- how aggressive do we need to be with barred  
9 owls? And they also asked to us look about  
10 organization of the plan. And those are really the  
11 only three things that were asked with regard to the  
12 Washington group to do that.

13 (Alarm sound.) Maybe my time's up.

14 But so Option 2, rather than have fixed lines on a  
15 map, what the recovery team wrestled with, and the  
16 support team that was working with the recovery team,  
17 is: Could we develop a rule set that would allow  
18 habitat areas to be set aside and protected but didn't  
19 prescribe specific areas? Is there a way to be able to  
20 describe to the local land manager, who may be more  
21 familiar with the local area, how those lands -- how  
22 that reserve should be put on the land?

23 What is the size of that, should it be? What is  
24 the distance between it? How often should they be  
25 located? What's the distance between them? How many

1 would they be? How often should they be put together?  
2 So we developed this rule set that would be used in  
3 Option 2.

4 And depending upon how you started and where you  
5 put it, it's possible that Option 2 actually could  
6 include more land than what was in MOCAs. It just  
7 depends on how you put them there, where you put them,  
8 and how aggressive you were with putting them in there.

9 Realizing that it's difficult to look at a concept  
10 without an example, what we did then is take Option 2  
11 and put it on a map. We used the experience of the  
12 staff from the Forest Service and BLM that worked with  
13 us from the IST and we put it on a map; and that's what  
14 those maps that you've seen out in the entranceway on  
15 the recovery plan. It's just an example of what  
16 Option 2 could look like. It may not be the actual one  
17 that will exist under an Option 2, but it's an example.

18 And in the example that's there, it's just under  
19 7 million acres of land that's set aside. So there's  
20 about a 700,000-acre difference between the two. It's  
21 important to recognize and remember that both options  
22 treat much of the recovery all the same.

23 The recovery team developed the options, the  
24 criteria, the recovery actions, the listing -- the  
25 delisting criteria, and objectives, all during the

1       Option 1, all done by the recovery team and all  
2       approved by the recovery team. There wasn't any  
3       involvement from the Washington office. Nothing was  
4       changed with regard to any of those recovery actions,  
5       the goals and objectives, the criteria. They're all  
6       the same whether it's in Option 1 or Option 2.

7               And Option 2 includes less land that's in the  
8       Northwest Forest Plan late-successional reserves. Now,  
9       you got to remember that the Northwest Forest Plan was  
10      developed and implemented for a lot more than just the  
11      northern spotted owl. They had marbled murrelet, they  
12      had salmon, and they had hundreds of other species  
13      included in the survey and managed. So to try to  
14      compare what's the best thing for the owl and the  
15      Northwest Forest Plan is really not a good comparison,  
16      in our opinion. There needs to be looked at what needs  
17      to be done for the owl.

18              And MOCAs contain federal land and exclude  
19      virtually all matrix land. So essentially the  
20      recovery -- and it was a conscientious effort on the  
21      part of the recovery plan to try to focus the recovery  
22      on federal land.

23              So what are these criteria that I've been talking  
24      about? There's basically five criteria:

25              The first one is the stable or increasing

1 population trend. Many people ask all the time, "How  
2 many owls do you need?" You know, that's a traditional  
3 kind of thing that we see in recovery plans when we put  
4 an absolute number out. Well, it's very expensive to  
5 try to come up with a number. It's very difficult to  
6 come up with a number of exact owls. So what we want  
7 to look at is a trend. Is it stable or increasing over  
8 a period of ten years? So that's the first criteria.

9 Those populations need to be well distributed.  
10 How do you distribute them throughout the range? And  
11 there's a criteria. And there it talks about numbers  
12 of pairs in each number of these habitat areas; so  
13 there has to be a certain number of pairs in certain  
14 number of those MOCAs distributed throughout the range  
15 of the owl.

16 Sufficient habitat and conservation areas. We  
17 need to make sure that the habitat blocks or -- habitat  
18 reserve blocks under Option 2, with MOCAs under  
19 Option 1, are established and they're there and there's  
20 sufficient habitat to support them.

21 Threats to the barred owl. Again, the barred owl  
22 was pointed out as the only actions in the recovery  
23 plan that received a priority one action. Those were  
24 also all done by the recovery teams before any  
25 involvement from the Washington office. Those were all

1 decided and voted on and agreed to by the recovery  
2 team.

3 And monitoring. We need to make sure that we have  
4 a monitoring plan. The law requires us to have in  
5 place a monitoring plan that will describe how you  
6 would monitor the species once it's taken off the list,  
7 so ensure that it doesn't need to be put back on the  
8 list.

9 Both of the recovery options in this recovery plan  
10 include recovery actions. They include the 37  
11 different actions that I've talked about before, and  
12 they're in four basic actions. They are management  
13 actions, actions that would be taken by managers to do  
14 things on the ground, for example, develop prey  
15 producing stands for owls, look at how you would manage  
16 after a postfire situation.

17 Research actions. There's clearly a continuing  
18 need for us to increase our knowledge base about the  
19 northern spotted owl. So there are a number of  
20 specific actions that talk about reserve and research  
21 priorities that need to be made.

22 Regulatory actions. Certainly the timber  
23 industry, communities, public are interested in what  
24 kind of regulations would be developed or implemented  
25 to deal with the spotted owl. And there are some

1 recommendations in there on how to deal with regulatory  
2 actions, particularly in the areas of habitat  
3 conservation plans and those things.

4 And there are also, of course, these monitoring  
5 actions, things to be able to monitor both the habitat,  
6 the species, and how the bird is doing overall.

7 So how much and how long? What's the prognosis  
8 from the team with regard to that? If fully  
9 implemented and successful, the plan indicates that  
10 they think the recovery could occur in as few as 30  
11 years at a cost of just under \$200 million.

12 And peer review. I want to close on the notion of  
13 peer review. This is an element that the team felt  
14 very strongly about. As we worked our way through it,  
15 we used a lot of science, and we used a lot of  
16 information. And we wanted to make sure that the  
17 information in the plan was based on good science, was  
18 grounded in good science, and we had an opportunity to  
19 make sure that the scientists that we used their  
20 information gave us an opportunity to review how we  
21 used it.

22 So we're basically employing two different  
23 processes:

24 One is we've contracted with two professional  
25 societies to do independent reviews. We're using the

1 American Ornithological Union and the Society for  
2 Conservation Biology. We've asked each of those  
3 organizations to go to their membership and to conduct  
4 two separate reviews; so we'll get two reviews by  
5 Society for Conservation Biology and two from the  
6 American Ornithological Union. We think that will help  
7 give us an overall review from the scientific community  
8 of what they think about the plan and how we used the  
9 science.

10 And we also developed a direct questionnaire to go  
11 back to the scientists whose data we have specifically  
12 used and ask them to make sure that we've used that  
13 information correctly, did we interpret their science  
14 correctly, and are there any other comments that they'd  
15 like to make based upon their knowledge of the science.

16 All of that's underway. We hope to have those  
17 done, and we've asked for that information to be done  
18 by our original comment date of June 25. So we're  
19 anxious to get that information, and we're anxious to  
20 see what the reviews are and the comments that come  
21 back from the scientific community.

22 Just so -- just in summary, our next steps.  
23 Again, the plan was published in late April. We're  
24 doing these public meetings. We do now have a 120-day  
25 comment period as opposed to the 60-day comment period.

1 The peer review is under review, as I mentioned, and we  
2 hope to have that concluded by the end of June. And we  
3 do have a goal of trying to finalize the plan. We hope  
4 to have the plan finalized by April of 2008.

5 When you came in, you -- there's a card -- a  
6 contact card out there. If you didn't pick one up,  
7 there's a card that has all the information on it with  
8 regard to where you can send comments. There's  
9 multiple ways to send us comments. You can do it  
10 electronically. You can send it by fax. And Bob will  
11 go over all that. But pick up one of these cards if  
12 you haven't.

13 There's also a website. There's a dedicated  
14 website to this place for what we've been doing.  
15 There's a lot of information that we have on our  
16 website. We will be putting up the transcript if  
17 you're interested in seeing the transcripts from the  
18 public meetings. So our goal will be, once we get  
19 those all transcribed and in from them, we will be  
20 putting that information up on the website, as well.  
21 So there's a great website at the URLs shown here. So  
22 there's an opportunity for you to be able to get that  
23 information and keep up with what we're doing right  
24 now.

25 So that's the quick overview of what we're going

1 to do. I'm going to turn it back over to Bob now, and  
2 we're going to get to the portion where we hear from  
3 you. Thank you all.

4 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Dave.

5 Notice of this public meeting was published in the  
6 Federal Register on April 26, 2007, beginning on page  
7 20865.

8 And we've already made reference to this, but the  
9 comment period stated in that Federal Register notice  
10 said that the comment period closed on June 25 of 2007.  
11 We have just received approval to extend that public  
12 comment period, and that closing date now will be  
13 August 24 of 2007. And there will be a notice given of  
14 that extension of the comment period.

15 After review and consideration of your comments  
16 and all other information that is gathered during this  
17 comment period, the Fish and wildlife Service will  
18 publish a final recovery plan. The purposes of these  
19 session are twofold: one, to provide information on the  
20 Draft Recovery Plan; and two, to receive your comments.  
21 Comments on all aspects of the draft plan are very  
22 important and will be carefully considered.

23 Because of the importance of your comments, it is  
24 necessary that we follow certain procedures here this  
25 evening. If you wish to present oral comments at this

1 session, please register at the table outside this  
2 room. When you register, indicate any agency or  
3 organization that you are representing with your  
4 comments.

5 When you are called to present your comments,  
6 please come forward to the microphone in front. Begin  
7 your presentation by stating your full name, spell it  
8 for the record, and indicate if you do represent an  
9 agency or an organization.

10 If you are reading comments, I would ask that you  
11 please take care to read them slowly and clearly so the  
12 court reporter can understand them and get an accurate  
13 transcript for the record. Also, if you do have a copy  
14 of your comments, I'm sure the reporter would  
15 appreciate receiving a copy, again to ensure that we  
16 have an accurate record.

17 You will not be questioned in connection with your  
18 comments. They will be recorded to preserve them for  
19 the record. Because the purpose of the session is to  
20 receive your comments, we presume that any questions  
21 that you raise are for the record. The agency's formal  
22 response to questions and issues raised during the  
23 comment period, including at this hearing this evening,  
24 will be published in the final notice for the recovery  
25 plan. We will not respond to questions that are posed

1 during your comments this evening.

2 Also, please keep in mind that the reporter will  
3 not record any statements that are made from the  
4 audience or statements made to the audience. Comments  
5 need to be made directly into the microphone and facing  
6 the front of the room.

7 Again, I would remind you of the displays, the  
8 information, and the staff members that are available  
9 outside this room to help give you information and to  
10 answer questions that you might have. Feel free to go  
11 back and forth between this room and that information  
12 area.

13 I would only ask that, as you come back into this  
14 room, you be considerate of the speakers and the  
15 reporter so that, again, we get an accurate account of  
16 the comments that you're presenting.

17 Instead of presenting oral comments here this  
18 evening or in addition to oral comments, you may also  
19 submit comments in writing. Written comments may be  
20 submitted to the staff this evening at the registration  
21 table, or they may be mailed to the Fish and wildlife  
22 Service. And again, the card that's available at the  
23 registration table has the address where you can send  
24 the comments and also other methods of getting comments  
25 to the Fish and wildlife Service.

1           There's other methods include fax, courier,  
2           e-mail, or over the Internet. And again the card has  
3           the details that you need to transmit comments in those  
4           ways. Written comments are given the same  
5           consideration as oral comments that we take this  
6           evening and that we have taken at the other public  
7           meetings.

8           We do have a number of individuals that have  
9           indicated they wish to speak this evening. So I would  
10          ask that speakers try to limit their comments to four  
11          minutes. We do have a timer that will be set to four  
12          minutes when you begin your comments. And when that  
13          timer goes off, you'll have a little time to finish up  
14          the comments; so you may want to consider summarizing  
15          your comments tonight and then submitting a longer or a  
16          complete version in the mail or by one of the other  
17          methods.

18          At this point we are ready for our first speaker.  
19          Mr. Bob Dick, would you please come to the microphone,  
20          state your name and spell it for the record, and  
21          indicate if you're representing anyone with your  
22          comments. Go ahead, please.

23                 MR. DICK: Good evening. I am Bob Dick,  
24                 spelled B-o-b D-i-c-k. I represent the American Forest  
25                 Resource Council, which is an association of forest

1 products manufacturers throughout the western states.  
2 we've been deeply involved with the development of both  
3 science and policy related to the northern spotted owl  
4 and offer the following comments:

5 Spotted owl reserve began in earnest 20 years ago,  
6 beginning with basic biology and ecology. The  
7 knowledge base continues to grow as studies yield  
8 results. That knowledge base will continue to grow as  
9 we learn more about the species, its environment, its  
10 predator/prey relationships, and so on.

11 As you discussed, the most obvious advancement in  
12 our understanding of the spotted owl is its  
13 relationship with the barred owl. The barred owl is  
14 more aggressive, more of a generalist, and capable of  
15 displacing the spotted owl. In terms of threats faced  
16 by the spotted owl, all but the most zealous habitat  
17 protectionists accept the barred owl as the greatest  
18 threat faced by the spotted owl.

19 That leads us to two recommendations: First, we  
20 support Option 2. Option 2 requires professional land  
21 managers and biologists to make conscious decisions  
22 related to spotted owl management. Given the continuum  
23 of knowledge development, any other action will be  
24 stuck in the past and do more harm than good.

25 Number two, ignoring the obvious no longer is a

1 suitable management option. The spotted owl may not  
2 survive predation and competition from the barred owl  
3 throughout much of the spotted owl range. A strategy,  
4 as you've said, must be developed and actions proposed  
5 to recognize this possibility.

6 In closing, I would say that the fuss over the  
7 spotted owl may be overshadowed by Darwinian theory at  
8 work. Perhaps the best solution comes from an adage,  
9 if it ain't broke, don't fix it.

10 I will leave by offering a thought that is not  
11 written. I just heard it for the first time tonight.  
12 And that is that you have asked two professional  
13 societies to provide input and review. That's  
14 appropriate and the societies are appropriate.

15 However, why wouldn't you involve the Society of  
16 American Foresters to discuss forest management aspects  
17 of your revision -- proposed revision? That is the  
18 organization that is qualified to talk about forest  
19 management. The others can't do that.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments,  
22 Mr. Dick.

23 I should have asked before, is this coming through  
24 all right? Can you hear me in the back of the room all  
25 right?

1           Our next speaker is Bonnie Phillips.

2           MS. PHILLIPS: We're going to try something  
3 different, so we'll see if I can do this.

4           Okay. Can you hear me? Can you hear me? Thank  
5 you. Thank you.

6           My name is Bonnie Phillips, B-o-n-n-i-e  
7 P-h-i-l-l-i-p-s, and I represent the Olympic Forest  
8 Coalition. I'll be putting a much more detailed letter  
9 in for the record, but here are just some of short  
10 comments I've had.

11           I've work personally on the northern spotted owl  
12 issue since 1988, primarily through an Audubon chapter,  
13 who is involved in all the spotted owl litigation. I  
14 also wrote my master's thesis in 2002 after attending  
15 all of the scientific panel meetings that were  
16 occurring in '04. And I called my thesis *The Policy of*  
17 *Extinction: The Case of the northern spotted owl.*

18           Now the policy of extinction has been taken to its  
19 maximum. I am embarrassed for all of the federal staff  
20 represented here today because they have to present  
21 this political outrage from the Bush administration as  
22 if it were something that's actually not so bad. And I  
23 appreciated, Dave, that you said that the recovery plan  
24 would only be advisory.

25           But frankly, in order to incorporate most of your

1 suggestions, especially for Option 2, the Northwest  
2 Forest Plan would have to be changed. So as long as  
3 the Bush administration is in control, nothing sounds  
4 very good to me. Most of you know that the owl  
5 lawsuits were, of course, about the spotted owl, but  
6 were intended also to protect old-growth forests in the  
7 Pacific Northwest.

8 Judge William Dwyer, who heard all of the  
9 lawsuits, made that clear in the last lawsuit that led  
10 to the Northwest Forest Plan. He also made it clear  
11 that many other critters need to be protected.

12 Now, I appreciate how difficult it is to come up  
13 with a recovery plan for one species, especially the  
14 Option 2 where things can change all over. But  
15 according to the judge's ruling and the Northwest  
16 Forest Plan, you still have to protect murrelets, and  
17 you still have to protect all these other species. So  
18 it sounds like there is a potential for a tremendous  
19 amount of chaos.

20 The Bush administration has been trying to do what  
21 it can to weaken the Northwest Forest Plan through the  
22 withdrawal of the survey and managed provisions to  
23 protect other species and by seriously weakening the  
24 aquatic conservation strategy that was supposed to help  
25 protect and restore our unraveling watersheds. Well,

1 they lost both court cases, but we also lost a lot of  
2 time and saw a lot of damage during that time.

3 If either alternative of this owl plan goes  
4 forward, but especially option 2, we will have  
5 completely lost the Northwest Forest Plan because of  
6 all the next steps that will be occurring, and lawsuits  
7 and wars in the woods will start once again. That  
8 would be a real pity for all concerned.

9 The timber industry, through American Forest  
10 Resources Council, has tried to delist the owl in a  
11 lawsuit they filed, but were unsuccessful after a team  
12 of experts --

13 Is that my four minutes?

14 MR. RUESINK: Go ahead and finish your  
15 comments.

16 MS. PHILLIPS: Almost done. Almost done.

17 -- but they were unsuccessful after a team of  
18 expert scientists found that owl populations were  
19 decreasing far more rapidly, particularly in Washington  
20 state.

21 The great majority of citizens in this country do  
22 not want to see old-growth logging come back. If this  
23 plan goes forward, owls, murrelets, and a myriad of  
24 other species will head towards extinction, and  
25 old-growth logging will once again be part of

1 Washington state.

2 Thank you very much for --

3 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Ms. Phillips, for  
4 your comments.

5 Our next speaker is Bridget Moran.

6 MS. MORAN: Good evening. I'm Bridget Moran,  
7 spelled B-r-i-d-g-e-t M-o-r-a-n. I'm the environmental  
8 policy lead for the Washington Department of Fish and  
9 wildlife.

10 Washington Department of Fish and wildlife will be  
11 providing written comments on the plan to the spotted  
12 owl recovery team, but wanted to come here tonight and  
13 make a few points for the recovery team.

14 First of all, we would like to commend you in  
15 getting the recovery plan out. We're appreciative of  
16 that. My first comment was to ask for an extension of  
17 the comment period so that we could have time to review  
18 the peer review, and so I will skip that but say thank  
19 you for going ahead and doing that, and hope that that  
20 will become available for all people to see.

21 Washington Department of Fish and wildlife  
22 supports Option 1, the mapped approach, over Option 2  
23 because we see Option 2 as risky at this time,  
24 especially in Washington, when the population of the  
25 owl is decreasing so rapidly.

1           Option 1, we appreciate the recognition of the  
2           State's SOSEAs, the spotted owl special emphasis areas,  
3           and the CSAs, which has provided us a clear message as  
4           to the importance of those lands for the recovery of  
5           the species.

6           At this time the State of Washington is currently  
7           involved in litigation involving this northern spotted  
8           owl and would like to move away from that and towards  
9           recovery. We see Option 2 as potentially driving us  
10          away from recovery and, unfortunately, maybe back to  
11          the courtroom.

12          Department of Fish and Wildlife is pleased to see  
13          the barred-owl issue being raised so prominently. We  
14          believe this is a very significant issue for the  
15          recovery of the owl and wish to contribute to that  
16          effort. We see that there is reference to the barred  
17          owl working group in the plan, and we would like to be  
18          engaged in that.

19          More specifically, we have recently hosted a U.S.  
20          Fish and Wildlife Service funded barred owl/spotted owl  
21          interactions research design workshop that was held in  
22          Fort Collins, Colorado, earlier this month. That  
23          workshop brought together experts to design studies to  
24          understand the interaction between the barred owl and  
25          northern spotted owl. And we see that work -- that

1 group being an essential component of the barred owl  
2 working group and would like to work that out.

3 Finally, we see ourself as a partner to the U.S.  
4 Fish and wildlife Service and would like to work  
5 cooperatively with the service to aid in the recovery  
6 of the northern spotted owl. We're pleased to see that  
7 this plan, at least Option 1, is structured on the  
8 Northwest Forest Plan, which we support.

9 We're pleased to see that federal lands provide  
10 the backbone of the conservation lands for the owl, but  
11 that the importance of state and private lands have  
12 also been identified.

13 Thank you and best of luck.

14 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

15 Lisa Remlinger.

16 MS. REMLINGER: Hello and good evening. For  
17 the record, my name is Lisa Remlinger. It's L-i-s-a,  
18 and the last named is spelled R-e-m-l-i-n-g-e-r. And I  
19 am here tonight representing Audubon Washington. We  
20 are a state office of National Audubon Society. We  
21 have over 20,000 members statewide with 26 local  
22 chapters. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

23 Today we have before us a recovery plan that  
24 ignores sound science and substitutes political  
25 manipulation, that minimizes the most urgent threats

1 facing the owl in favor of scapegoats. If adopted,  
2 this plan would jeopardize not only the spotted owl,  
3 but the old-growth ecosystem on which they depend, and  
4 with them a host of other species, clean water, and the  
5 natural legacy for future generations.

6 We oppose both Option 1 and Option 2 because of  
7 political interference, ignored science, and the  
8 reduction of existing habitat. How can a recovery plan  
9 be a step backwards? Please maintain current  
10 protections until the plan can be redone based on best  
11 available science and free from political manipulation.

12 On a personal note, I am 27 years old. The  
13 spotted owl was listed as a threatened species under  
14 the Endangered Species Act when I was ten. A lot has  
15 happened in those years. We've made a lot of great  
16 accomplishments, achieved many things, and I know we  
17 can do better than this.

18 Thank you very much.

19 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

20 Nigel Blakley.

21 MR. BLAKLEY: Good evening. My name is Nigel  
22 Blakley, N-i-g-e-l B-l-a-k-l-e-y. I'm not here  
23 representing any particular organization; although I  
24 worked as a volunteer on this issue for some 20 years  
25 now. I volunteered for the Audubon Society and more

1 recently for the Olympic Forest Coalition.

2 I'm pleased to hear from you, Dave, tonight that  
3 there will be a peer review of this plan. On the other  
4 hand, I'm very disturbed by comments I've read from  
5 individual members of your recovery team. They're not  
6 real clear.

7 I note, in looking at this recovery plan, that it  
8 provides considerable flexibility to land managers and  
9 the service. The underlying assumption is that they  
10 will act responsibly and in good faith to promote the  
11 recovery of the northern spotted owl. This assumption  
12 has already been violated by the blatant and widely  
13 reported political interference with the drafting of  
14 this recovery plan.

15 You need to begin again and produce an untainted  
16 plan before it can have any credibility. Thank you.

17 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Blakley.

18 Donna Ewing.

19 MS. EWING: Good evening. I'm Donna Ewing,  
20 D-o-n-n-a E-w-i-n-g, and I'm with League of Women  
21 Voters of Thurston County and Washington. I wanted to  
22 speak on this proposal tonight because the League --

23 Sorry. Okay. Is that better?

24 MR. RUESINK: That microphone, I think you  
25 need to get pretty close to it.

1 MS. EWING: Okay. Okay.

2 The League of Women Voters has been striving to  
3 promote conservation for decades. A study was done  
4 within the league on the forestry here in Washington  
5 within the last decade, and what was one of the  
6 conclusions of that study is that we need to preserve  
7 what we have left of the old-growth forest.

8 As an individual who's worked in the league on  
9 global warming for the past 11 years, I would like to  
10 say that that forest, as well as much of other -- the  
11 rest of our forests, need to be preserved, not only as  
12 habitat, but because we need them as carbon sink. We  
13 have to act on global warming, and this plan is another  
14 form of reducing what's available to help us solve the  
15 global warming problem.

16 Finally, I think there is a great need for a  
17 balance in any kind of forestry plan, and I think that  
18 the only way a balance can be maintained with these  
19 proposals is to have Fish and Wildlife be the overseer  
20 of this and not have it turned over to Bureau of Land  
21 Management and Forestry Service.

22 Thank you.

23 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

24 Shiva Parameswaran.

25 MR. PARAMESWARAN: Yep.

1 MR. RUESINK: Is that --

2 MR. PARAMESWARAN: Let me do you a favor.

3 I'll give this written one so --

4 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

5 MR. PARAMESWARAN: I want to thank the Fish  
6 and wildlife Service for this opportunity. My name is  
7 G. Shiva Parameswaran, and I'm a volunteer with the  
8 Seattle Audubon Society. Since I've already given a  
9 copy to the court reporter, I don't need to spell my  
10 name, hopefully, and torture you all. So . . .

11 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

12 MR. PARAMESWARAN: You know, I wanted to  
13 start it off by just stepping back a little and  
14 thinking about 200 years ago, 202 years ago to be  
15 exact, with the Corps of Discovery by Lewis and Clark.  
16 And also -- today also happens to be Rachel Carson's  
17 hundredth birthday. So we have to kind of step back  
18 and kind of contemplate what these great people have  
19 informed us over these years and what lessons have we  
20 learned and what lessons have we squandered and not  
21 learned.

22 In my casual perusal of this very complicated  
23 plan, I don't see any interest in preserving something  
24 that is very important, which is habitat, which is a  
25 treasure, not just to the spotted owl but to all of us.

1 It is the place where we get most of our clean water  
2 from. It is the place where we have our fishes and  
3 wild animals, which improve our quality of life.

4 Yet we seemed to be operating on a plain as if  
5 none of these things matter, as if we're only  
6 interested in finding scapegoats. I think it's time to  
7 ask a rhetorical question: Can we be productive  
8 citizens if we are homeless? That is what spotted owl  
9 has gone through ever since they were Europeans, and  
10 it's no exaggeration. Even many of your literature  
11 points out to that. It is time to stop this mess.

12 I don't know why, being such a technologically and  
13 scientifically advanced nation, that we simply are  
14 refusing to limit old -- to do away with old-growth  
15 logging and preserve all the old-growth habitat that we  
16 have. It is in our self-interest to do so, and that is  
17 exactly what they should do.

18 The irony of Option 1 is that it doesn't do much.  
19 The irony of Option 2 is it that it is the political  
20 option; it is a diluted Option 1, which ironically, by  
21 logging old-growth, is going to increase the habitat  
22 for barred owls, which you blame as the major scapegoat  
23 for spotted owl. I mean, I don't get this, and it is  
24 really a joke.

25 So I just want to convey that this plan is

1 political. It should be trashed into the dustbin of  
2 history. We have a duty to ask the question, "what if  
3 Lewis and Clark were to visit us now? What would they  
4 think of us?" That is the question we should be  
5 asking, and I think we should end all this by  
6 preserving all the old-growth habitat that we have.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

9 Gerald Joyce.

10 MR. JOYCE: Thank you. My name's Gerald  
11 Joyce. I'll provide a written copy of my comments. My  
12 name is spelled G-e-r-a-l-d J-o-y-c-e. While I'm a  
13 volunteer at Seattle Audubon, I am speaking for myself.

14 Why do reason, logic, and truth seem to play a  
15 diminished role in the way America now makes important  
16 decisions? Former Vice President Al Gore wrote this in  
17 his new book examining the state of decision making in  
18 our country. This is not a partisan question. This is  
19 one asked across the country.

20 I am a former U.S. Fish and Wildlife biologist and  
21 a consultant to federal and international agencies, who  
22 work -- who has worked on recovery and management of  
23 endangered species. In that work there was often  
24 pressure to adjust findings of research and resulting  
25 recommendations derived from the scientific studies.

1        However, no biologist would ever modify the results for  
2        political considerations. If they did, they would no  
3        longer be considered scientists.

4                I understand that times have changed. Now  
5        individuals and entire agencies are threatened with  
6        sanctions if they do not accept modifications to their  
7        work to comply with the current government opinions.

8                This is why option 2 is presented as part of this  
9        plan. It is based solely on opinion and not on  
10       science. I ask that the biologists in this agency  
11       stand strong for science and renounce the imposition of  
12       political opinion in this proposed recovery plan.

13               To quote someone wiser than I, and probably all of  
14       us, "There are two" -- "there are in fact two things,  
15       science and opinion; the former begets knowledge, the  
16       latter ignorance." That was written more than 2,400  
17       years ago by Hippocrates and should remain as a central  
18       value when we evaluate what has been said and what must  
19       be done.

20               If you value science over political opinion, you  
21       will reject option 2 for it is not based on science,  
22       only opinion. Option 1 is based on science; however,  
23       as many within the scientific community will tell you,  
24       this science is based on flawed data. The value of and  
25       a need for old-growth habitat in the life cycle of

1 spotted owls is dramatically underestimated.

2 I urge you to reexamine the basis for the  
3 conclusions in Opinion 1, direct the erroneous data and  
4 assumptions, and develop a modified plan that will work  
5 for the recovery instead of the extinction of spotted  
6 owls. We must be true to science and logic. You must  
7 be honest to the people of America and honest guardians  
8 of the creatures that inhabit these lands.

9 Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

10 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Joyce.

11 Eric Harlow.

12 MR. HARLOW: Good evening. My name is David  
13 Eric Harlow, D-a-v-i-d E-r-i-c H-a-r-l-o-w, and I'm  
14 speaking on behalf of the Washington Forest Law Center.  
15 I'm staff scientist at the Washington Forest Law  
16 Center, and I have been working on spotted owl issues  
17 for the past four years and have attended most of the  
18 public meetings that have occurred on the spotted owl.  
19 I am currently working on a Section 9 take case  
20 involving the spotted owl in southwest Washington and  
21 the state of Washington.

22 First, I would like to review the comments that I  
23 made leading up to the -- the spotted owl recovery team  
24 in August 2006. In that letter I stated that my chief  
25 concern with the recovery planning process is the

1 interjection of politics into the process.

2 The recovery team should present decision-makers  
3 with objective, science-based criteria and  
4 recommendations that will achieve the goal of delisting  
5 the owl. Our concern is that the current process will  
6 produce a recovery plan that is a political compromise  
7 rather than credible, technically valid recovery plan.

8 And we were initially concerned with the makeup of  
9 the recovery team and the fact that it did not -- was  
10 not composed of leading spotted owl biologists. But at  
11 the time we could not have predicted that a second  
12 option would be crafted over the objections of some of  
13 the members of the recovery team and that it would have  
14 little or no basis in established science.

15 In proceeding with my comments, I would like to  
16 briefly review some of the history leading to the  
17 current -- the current recovery planning process  
18 beginning with the Northwest Forest Plan. Seattle  
19 Audubon legally challenged the Northwest Forest Plan on  
20 the basis that the final supplemental EIS would not --  
21 did not adequately consider the demographic data  
22 available at the time showing population declines of  
23 about 4.5 percent per year. But it was ruled  
24 sufficient because it was based on a viability model  
25 that established a reasonable probability of success in

1 the long-term.

2           However, the most recent demographic study data  
3 show that populations had been declining at a rate  
4 greater than was expected both in Washington and across  
5 the range of the owl. In Washington the worst case  
6 scenario has been exceeded with declines of 50 to  
7 60 percent over the past 15 years.

8           The Northwest Forest Plan predicted a gradual  
9 decline in spotted owl populations for the next 50  
10 years until sufficient habitat had regrown on federal  
11 lands. This analysis did not include potential effects  
12 from barred owls.

13           In 2004 the five-year status review confirmed that  
14 the conservation strategy of the reserve systems that  
15 underpin the Northwest Forest Plan was based on sound  
16 scientific principles that -- and those principles have  
17 not substantially changed with new science.

18           And one of the panelists on the five-year status  
19 review, Dr. Jerry Franklin, stated during the summary  
20 meeting for that process that existing suitable habitat  
21 could be important to the persistence of the northern  
22 spotted owl; that is, risk to the northern spotted owl  
23 may increase if additional suitable habitat is removed.

24           It is not clear where the spotted owl may find a  
25 refuge or refuges from new threats within existing

1 suitable habitat. Barred owl intrusions do not negate  
2 the need for structurally complex forests to sustain  
3 the northern spotted owl based on existing knowledge.

4 Therefore, it is unclear how the current recovery  
5 plan can predict recovery in 30 years given that it did  
6 not consider the additional threats of the barred owl  
7 and wildfire identified in the current recovery plan  
8 while simultaneously proposing reductions in federal  
9 reserves, negligible contributions from private lands,  
10 and the fact that HCPs in general function as  
11 population sinks and take -- and allow the take of  
12 spotted owls up front in exchange for marginal habitat  
13 in the future.

14 In conclusion, neither of the options presented in  
15 the Draft Recovery Plan are based on the best available  
16 science nor have any basis for concluding that they're  
17 likely to recover the spotted owl. That the  
18 populations continue to decline despite science-based  
19 efforts, such as the Northwest Forest Plan, are used  
20 for increased protections for the spotted owl and their  
21 habitat until the causes of accelerating declines have  
22 been determined.

23 The proposed Draft Recovery Plan needs to be  
24 revised to reflect the realities of declining  
25 populations, the uncertainties surrounding its decline,

1 the current research, and the opinions of the best  
2 available scientists.

3 Thank you.

4 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Harlow.  
5 Marina Skumanich.

6 MS. SKUMANICH: Good evening. My name is  
7 Marina Skumanich, M-a-r-i-n-a S-k-u-m-a-n-i-c-h,  
8 Skumanich. I am the president of Seattle Audubon but  
9 speaking for myself this evening.

10 I am a longtime birder, hiker, and back-country  
11 skier with a deep connection to our old-growth forest  
12 and other wildlands. I am also a proud citizen of  
13 Washington state, who cares deeply about the economic  
14 well-being of all of the people of this state.

15 I believe that with all the tremendous human,  
16 scientific, technological, and financial resources we  
17 have, we can find win-win solutions that both address  
18 the environmental issues confronting us while also  
19 providing for human welfare.

20 It is with this spirit that I urge you to abide by  
21 your duty under the Endangered Species Act, while  
22 strongly and repeatedly supported by the public, to  
23 return to the drawing board and develop a credible,  
24 science-based recovery plan for the northern spotted  
25 owl.

1           In Washington state, studies indicate that spotted  
2 owl populations have decreased by a stunning 50 percent  
3 in ten years. This precipitous drop is consistent with  
4 many birders' anecdotal experiences over the past few  
5 years, but meanwhile was unexpected by the scientists,  
6 who have been involved with spotted owl planning since  
7 the '90s.

8           It clearly is a wake-up call that requires all  
9 agencies to examine strategies for protecting the owl  
10 and to look for ways to improve their efforts. In  
11 particular, it requires you, as members of the U.S. Fish  
12 and Wildlife Service, to produce a scientifically based  
13 and a visionary recovery plan that will do the best job  
14 it can to recover and protect this species.

15           It is widely recognized that the situation facing  
16 the spotted owl is complicated and that the risks are  
17 myriad and some of the emerging threats are poorly  
18 understood. It is also true that recovery outcomes are  
19 uncertain, but these difficulties cannot be a  
20 justification for a weak recovery plan. Indeed, the  
21 complications and the biological condition make the  
22 urgency of a good comprehensive plan all the more  
23 important.

24           The Fish and Wildlife Service should thus take  
25 current conclusions as a not-to-be-missed opportunity

1 to renew our national commitment to old-growth forests  
2 and other healthy ecosystems, which are, of course, the  
3 foundation for species protection.

4 I urge you to drop the current proposed recovery  
5 plan, which is directed by the poorly qualified  
6 oversight committee, and return to the recommendations  
7 of the original planning team. Specifically, I urge  
8 you to return to a more credible plan that focuses on  
9 protecting owl habitat and a network of old-growth  
10 forest reserves.

11 Protecting the old-growth forest is the single  
12 best approach to recovery of the northern spotted owl.  
13 It is what is needed here, and it's something we, as a  
14 society, can and should do, not only for our northern  
15 spotted owl, but for other wildlife that also depend on  
16 healthy forests.

17 And finally, we should do it for the people, too,  
18 so that we and our children can enjoy the legacy of  
19 healthy old-growth forests in all their richness from  
20 now into the future.

21 Thank you.

22 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

23 Shawn Cantrell.

24 MR. CANTRELL: My name is -- excuse me. My  
25 name is Shawn Cantrell. That's S-h-a-w-n

1 C-a-n-t-r-e-l-l.

2 I was born and raised here in the Pacific  
3 Northwest, and the old-growth forests of this region  
4 have been an integral part of my experience since I was  
5 a young child some 40-plus years ago. From Boy Scout  
6 camping trips to hiking in the days with my family, I  
7 spent incredible amounts of time and wonderful hours in  
8 old-growth forests in the Cascade and the Olympic  
9 mountains.

10 These forests provided critical habitat, not only  
11 for countless plants and animal species, many of which  
12 are now endangered, but also for huge numbers of people  
13 that enjoy spending time there, as well as the  
14 municipal water supply for millions more Northwest  
15 residents.

16 Any credible recovery plan for the northern  
17 spotted owl must be based on sound science. It must  
18 include habitat protection. The irony we're faced with  
19 here this evening is that the Draft Recovery Plan  
20 options would allow federal land managers to  
21 dramatically reduce the forest protections currently in  
22 place.

23 The first commenter this evening noted, "If it  
24 ain't broke, don't fix it." well, the habitat  
25 protections on federal land as embodied in the

1 Northwest Forest Plan are generally working. The  
2 recovery plan should recognize that success. Instead  
3 of creating new uncertainty in the name of flexibility  
4 or shifting mosaics on federal lands, the recovery plan  
5 should, in fact, look at better protections on  
6 nonfederal lands instead of reducing the protections on  
7 federal lands.

8 I'm now raising my own kids here in western  
9 Washington. The decisions we make today about owls and  
10 ancient forests will set the course for what they will  
11 be able to experience 40-plus years from now. I urge  
12 the Fish and wildlife Service to go back and start over  
13 again, this time developing a recovery plan that is  
14 truly grounded in science.

15 The ability for the next generation to explore  
16 old-growth forests, possibly hear a spotted-owl call in  
17 the wild, fish for salmon and steelhead, and have a  
18 clean source of drinking water depends upon it. Let's  
19 make sure we get this right.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

22 Kristen Kosidowski, you're our next speaker.

23 MS. KOSIDOWSKI: Good evening. My name is  
24 Kristen Kosidowski. That's K-r-i-s-t-e-n  
25 K-o-s-i-d-o-w-s-k-i. Great pronunciation. Thank you.

1           Good evening and again thank you for having us  
2 here and again for extending that time period for  
3 public comments.

4           Unlike Shawn, who just spoke to us, I am not from  
5 the Northwest. I am from the Midwest, and I'm here  
6 tonight with that perspective just as a public citizen  
7 as a member now of the Northwest community. And  
8 growing up in the Midwest, I was instilled with a few  
9 core values. One was the value of a good day's work,  
10 and one was a value of the long day out in the woods.

11           And it wasn't much that could lure me away from  
12 the beauty of the Midwest within this country -- excuse  
13 me -- aside from the legacy of the Northwest and its  
14 natural beauty. And here I am. And now for a living I  
15 do conservation work. And so I come from something of  
16 that background, and that's the -- that's a perspective  
17 from which I suppose my professional life is  
18 influenced.

19           But I want to jump back a minute, because when I  
20 was in college in the Midwest, some of the keystone  
21 issues that we really talked about were things like  
22 wolfs, the Klamath basin, and actually owls and ancient  
23 forests. And looking back now, I have to think, "well,  
24 wolves, we had wolves, yeah." And the Klamath basin,  
25 well, that was an issue of water and tribes'

1 sovereignty and things like that. Those are all things  
2 we could relate to in the Midwest.

3 But owls and ancient forests, now that was  
4 something different. That was something bigger. And  
5 the reason I bring this up is because I just wanted to  
6 impress upon everyone how big this issue is, how big  
7 the legacy is here of the Northwest and our ancient  
8 forests, how very far it permeates into the culture,  
9 the natural landscape of this country, and our identity  
10 within this country. I think that's really a -- really  
11 a critical piece of this for me.

12 Now, I can't, of course, claim to be an expert on  
13 the -- on the recovery plan, but I am relatively  
14 familiar with it. And from what I know and from what  
15 I'm hearing from our experts and from your explanation  
16 tonight -- Mr. Wesley, thank you -- is that we have to  
17 go forward now with a recovery plan that creates a new  
18 legacy and one that's based on science, credible  
19 science, and not politics.

20 I fully support some of the ideas in Option 1 and  
21 the interest in making it a flexible plan for both  
22 healthy people and healthy economies and healthy  
23 environment. I think that's critical. But I don't  
24 think it's sufficient. I think that it must be science  
25 based. It cannot be loaded with political bias, and

1 that's what we're seeing right now.

2 I think that Option 1 is interesting, but it falls  
3 short of what we ultimately need. I think it cuts  
4 short the legacy of protections that we've been  
5 building for our ancient forests, which extends far  
6 beyond the spotted-owl issue and far beyond an issue  
7 just of the Northwest.

8 And I think that, finally, it's our responsibility  
9 to preserve what we have now and to move forward to set  
10 the groundwork for a new legacy of old-growth  
11 protections for my children, who aren't even here yet.

12 Thank you.

13 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

14 Linda Johnson.

15 MS. JOHNSON: Good evening. My name is Linda  
16 Johnson, L-i-n-d-a J-o-h-n-s-o-n. I'm a volunteer  
17 president for Black Hills Audubon Society, which covers  
18 Thurston, Mason, and Lewis counties.

19 And, unfortunately, I'm probably the most naïve  
20 person in the room tonight when it comes to the  
21 northern spotted owl Recovery Plan, the nits and gnats  
22 of the plan. But I am intelligent enough to know that  
23 if we are politically manipulating this plan for  
24 economic gain, then we are making a severe mistake.

25 If we were the endangered species and our habitat

1 was thoroughly, totally destroyed on a continuing basis  
2 and we had to have a recovery plan for our species,  
3 would this be an adequate job? would we survive? If  
4 the answer is "no," then we need to go back to the  
5 drawing board and rethink this and rethink the entire  
6 attitude of what we are doing in this country with  
7 regard to our habitat because pretty soon, in another  
8 hundred or two hundred years, it is indeed going to be  
9 us who are endangered.

10 And we are going to be endangered because we have  
11 allowed ourselves to take the easy way out, to take the  
12 economic road, to destroy our habitat, to not care  
13 enough about the creatures who share this earth with  
14 us. We are the ones who are supposed to have the  
15 intelligence and the understanding to be stewards of  
16 this earth, but that is not what we are doing.

17 And I applaud that we are making the effort, we  
18 need to make the effort work. We need to save the  
19 forest. All of the forest, the old-growth forest, the  
20 urban forest, the rural forest, and we need to save the  
21 species that live here with us so that, indeed, we may  
22 survive as a species.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Ms. Johnson.

25 Denise Joines.

1 MS. JOINES: Hi. My name is Denise Jones,  
2 D-e-n-i-s-e J-o-i-n-e-s. I am a founding member of the  
3 International Canopy Network, a network of scientists  
4 and conservationists that are studying the delicate and  
5 unique ecosystem of tropical and temperate forest  
6 canopies.

7 And I'm also with a grant-making foundation that  
8 provides over \$11 million of support annually to  
9 science in advocacy for the protection and restoration  
10 of ecologically affected landscapes in western North  
11 America. But tonight I'm speaking for me.

12 Thanks for taking my public statement on the  
13 northern spotted owl recovery plan.

14 We in the Northwest are fortunate to live in a  
15 place where we still have ancient forests, wild salmon,  
16 grizzly bears, and spotted owls.

17 I appreciate the hard work members of our federal  
18 land management agencies have done to maintain and  
19 restore our Northwest ecosystems. Unfortunately, both  
20 options of the Spotted Owl Recovery Plan not only fail  
21 to protect the owl and the forests it depends on, but  
22 by advancing logging of our irreplaceable ancient  
23 forests potentially restarts the timber wars of the  
24 1980s and the early '90s. Our region has successfully  
25 transitioned from the old-growth logging. Do not take

1 us back into those bad old days.

2 The Northwest Forest Plan and the protection of  
3 ancient forests and owl habitat is about much more than  
4 just the owl. It's about clean drinking water for  
5 millions of people. It's about wild salmon runs. It's  
6 about clean air, carbon sequestration, and other  
7 ecosystem services that intact functioning landscapes  
8 provide American citizens.

9 The Bush administration should not dismantle this  
10 agreement forged in the 1990s, but this spotted owl  
11 recovery plan will do just that. It's clear, based on  
12 statements from scientists involved in the recovery  
13 team process, that politics interfered in what should  
14 be a recovery plan based on the best available science.  
15 This is an abrogation of our trust as citizens in the  
16 decision-making processes of the federal agencies.

17 In fact, the oversight committee in Washington,  
18 D.C., that rejected the recovery team's plan and  
19 ordered a scientifically unfounded de-emphasis of the  
20 fact that spotted owls are not old-growth dependent  
21 included the now-disgraced now-former Deputy Assistant  
22 Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Julie  
23 MacDonald.

24 From the U.S. Department of Interior's Office of  
25 Inspector General's letter to Congressman Nick Rahall

1 dated March 23, 2007, regarding an investigation into  
2 Julie MacDonald's actions, quote, "The Office of  
3 Inspector General initiated this investigation based on  
4 an anonymous complaint alleging that Julie MacDonald,  
5 Deputy Assistant Secretary, Fish, Wildlife, and Parks,  
6 has been involved in unethical and illegal activities.  
7 Specifically, the complainant alleged that MacDonald  
8 has bullied, insulted, and harassed the professional  
9 staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to change  
10 documents and alter biological reporting regarding the  
11 Endangered Species Program. As our investigation  
12 progressed, we also developed information that McDonald  
13 has disclosed nonpublic information to private sector  
14 sources.

15 (as read) "Through interviewing various sources,  
16 including Fish and Wildlife employees and senior  
17 officials, and reviewing pertinent documents and  
18 e-mails, we confirm that MacDonald has been heavily  
19 involved with editing, commenting on, and reshaping the  
20 Endangered Species Program's scientific reports from  
21 the field. MacDonald admitted that her degree is civil  
22 engineering and that she has no formal educational  
23 background in natural sciences, such as biology,"  
24 unquote.

25 As an American citizen that cares about future

1 generations and ecosystems they depend on, I have two  
2 demands:

3 One, because of inference with science by this  
4 oversight committee and the resulting wholly inadequate  
5 Spotted Owl Recovery Plan, the draft plan should be  
6 scrapped and the entire process should begin again,  
7 this time including independent owl scientists that can  
8 work free from political interference and then  
9 subjected to peer review;

10 And two, an investigation into former-Deputy  
11 Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks,  
12 Julie MacDonald's influence in the northern spotted owl  
13 Recovery Plan that must be initiated and then the  
14 results communicated to the public.

15 we all have a stake in keeping our forests  
16 healthy. We're doing our part in providing oversight  
17 to governmental processes. Please do yours by staying  
18 true to our laws and to science.

19 Thank you very much.

20 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

21 Alex Morgan.

22 MR. MORGAN: I'm Alex Morgan, A-l-e-x  
23 M-o-r-g-a-n. And you might have to excuse me if I  
24 cough. I've got a bit of a cold here. I'm Alex  
25 Morgan, conservation director for Seattle Audubon.

1 Seattle Audubon has advocated for the protection of  
2 birds and their habitats since our founding in 1916.

3 It's now 2007 and the northern spotted owl was  
4 listed as threatened in 1990. By law the recovery plan  
5 should have been completed 15 years ago. Instead,  
6 we're here to review a draft plan that's more the  
7 result of political meddling than of science.

8 Both options within this draft plan strive to  
9 increase harvests in old-growth forests rather than to  
10 recover this embattled species. The public has spoken  
11 again and again on the issue of old-growth forests, and  
12 the public wants the few remaining old-growth forests  
13 in our region protected permanently.

14 It seems the D.C. oversight committee would rather  
15 dredge up old conflicts than use best available science  
16 to move us forward in a positive and collaborative  
17 manner. We are left to wonder how a plan that  
18 significantly reduces the amount of habitat available  
19 to spotted owls will allow for recovery in 30 years.

20 Neither of these options is based on best  
21 available science, and neither will recover the species  
22 with measurable objective criteria as the law sets  
23 forth.

24 We respectfully request that you redraft the  
25 recovery plan for the species. We hope that a new

1 draft of the recovery plan will be based on best  
2 available science and the expertise of well-respected  
3 independent scientists in the field of owl  
4 conservation.

5 I think we all know who the names are. A couple  
6 of them are in the room here. There's Jerry Franklin,  
7 Eric Forsman, Rocky Gutierrez, and others. These  
8 scientists should be driving conservation and recovery  
9 strategies, rather than an engineer and an economist  
10 from D.C., who played key roles in this draft, as we've  
11 learned from this month's congressional hearing and as  
12 the last speaker testified.

13 This draft purposefully de-emphasizes habitat  
14 protection and places the main focus on barred owl  
15 control above habitat protection. While the recovery  
16 plan should address all threats to the species,  
17 including barred owls, habitat is and must be the basis  
18 for recovery, as was confirmed in the 2000 status --  
19 2004 status review.

20 Even more disturbing, the fact that state and  
21 private lands are essentially unaffected with both  
22 options writing off millions of acres of the owls'  
23 range. In Washington state, where population declines  
24 are steepest, you're essentially excluding one-half of  
25 the forested landscape from recovery of the species.

1           As we've seen in the past, when state and private  
2 lands are designed to be complimentary for recovery,  
3 it's a free pass for state agencies to write them off.  
4 Our complementary rules in Washington allow landowners  
5 to log up to and including the nest tree outside of the  
6 nesting season on some points of the landscape.

7           Clearly, state and private lands need to be more  
8 than complementary. Southwest Washington, with over a  
9 million acres in the owls' range, is a key corridor  
10 between the Olympic Peninsula and both Oregon and the  
11 Cascades. Currently, this region has zero protection.

12           Without guidance from the federal recovery plan to  
13 better protect this region, you may be writing off the  
14 owls in this region as well as all the owls in the  
15 Olympic Peninsula. The science is clear: Because the  
16 owl is declining rapidly from multiple threats, it  
17 needs more habitat protected and fixed reserves, not  
18 less.

19           We hope you'll redraft this recovery plan based on  
20 science and not politics. Thank you.

21           MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Morgan.

22           Steve Irving, you're our next speaker.

23           MR. IRVING: Steve -- I'm Steve Irving,  
24 S-t-e-v-e I-r-v-i-n-g, just representing myself  
25 tonight.



1           And I just want to make a few observations that I  
2           have -- I've been here most of my life. And as a boy I  
3           was walking up old CCC trails into secret lakes where  
4           I'd go fishing, and it was still all an old-growth.  
5           And it was -- you know, I wasn't noticing that. I was  
6           kind of focused then on getting to the lake or the  
7           stream.

8           I -- as time went by in my youth and early  
9           adulthood, that's when the big logging push -- I lived  
10          up in northern Washington, up in Whatcom County, and  
11          road after road, followed by clear-cuts, was  
12          fragmenting the forest that I loved, also covering up  
13          the trails with roads, which was very irritating, as a  
14          lot of other people getting to my lakes. That's what I  
15          was focusing on.

16          This process continued. And it just -- it seemed  
17          like it was accelerating. It was just taking up the  
18          whole forest. I saw the elk -- I wasn't a hunter of  
19          elk, but I observed them a lot in the places I'd go,  
20          and I appreciated them. I wasn't focused in on the  
21          spotted owl, but I wasn't surprised when it started to  
22          have the trouble.

23          And the last remaining -- as the owl controversy  
24          grew and they came up with the Northwest Forest Plan,  
25          then all of a sudden everything stopped, and it was

1 frozen in time. And here we have -- and I've walked  
2 these in search of new wilderness area proposals and  
3 things, and you can see the delineation of where the  
4 roadless area starts. And, of course, it continuous up  
5 into the wilderness, the already established  
6 wilderness, but is so dramatic.

7 The forest is recovering a little bit, but it's  
8 going to be, who knows, hundreds of years before it  
9 gets back to where I experienced it at first, which I  
10 probably won't be around to -- a couple hundred years  
11 from now, I probably won't be here, but I appreciate  
12 forest and -- you know, as you get older you, slow down  
13 a little bit, you start looking around, and know how  
14 precious it is.

15 And if this plan -- I don't have the scientific  
16 background enough to really look at this plan. But if  
17 it isn't -- if it isn't an honest scientific approach,  
18 if it doesn't help the -- it helps the spotted owl,  
19 which it's supposed to, then it doesn't make any sense  
20 to me.

21 But I do know one thing: Just leaving the land  
22 the way it is now with the roadless areas will help all  
23 the species that live there. It's just common sense.  
24 So I would like this plan -- if it either be done right  
25 and, you know, just look at it, make sure it's an

1 honest approach, or else just at least save the  
2 roadless areas, save the places that have been set  
3 aside for the owl in the past.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Irving.  
6 Hudson Dodd.

7 MR. DODD: Hello. Thank you for letting me  
8 speak. Thank you for having this public hearing.

9 My name is Hudson Dodd, H-u-d-s-o-n D-o-d-d. I  
10 also live in Whatcom County and traveled down here with  
11 other folks who are concerned citizens, who are  
12 concerned about this plan. We are upset to see that  
13 there seems to be political machinations at work rather  
14 than good science informing public policy.

15 I also have lived elsewhere in the country. I  
16 live in the Pacific Northwest by choice, not by  
17 heritage, and that is giving me a perspective that --  
18 that I think a lot of folks in the Northwest take for  
19 granted, that -- the incredible geographic beauty and  
20 the culture that comes with it, the quality of life  
21 that we talk about quite a bit in the Pacific  
22 Northwest.

23 A lot of that has to do with the incredible intact  
24 ecosystems, the old-growth forests that are still here.  
25 The rest of the country looks with envy at the Pacific

1 Northwest and harkens back to a past when systems were  
2 intact, wildlife was abundant.

3 The spotted owl is an indicator of the health of  
4 those systems. It's a canary in the coal mine. That's  
5 why we're here today. That's why it was listed under  
6 the Endangered Species Act. That's why your agency is  
7 doing so much work to come up with a recovery plan. I  
8 salute that work. I appreciate that work.

9 But I am dismayed that the recovery plan as it  
10 reads does not look like recovery. It looks like  
11 further degradation of habitat. And while the barred  
12 owl and wildfire may be issues that need to be  
13 addressed in barred owl -- or in spotted owl recovery,  
14 clearly the fundamental issue with the recovery of any  
15 species is intact habitat.

16 And it is well documented in science that spotted  
17 owls rely on maturing old-growth forest, as do many  
18 other species of plants, animals, and other living  
19 things that can't live anywhere else.

20 And that is why I am here: I believe that the  
21 beauty and the geography of the Pacific Northwest that  
22 is so integral to our quality of life should be  
23 preserved for future generations. I believe it is our  
24 duty to pass on to future generations what we have  
25 inherited and enjoyed.

1           And it seems to me that the spotted owl recovery  
2 plan will not do that. And that is the job of this  
3 agency, is to make sure that the owl survives. And if  
4 the owl needs old-growth forest, well, we better focus  
5 on protecting the old-growth forest.

6           I can tell you that there are a lot of people who  
7 would have liked to be here tonight. We appreciate the  
8 fact that you're holding a hearing in Olympia, at least  
9 one in Washington state. I understand that by law  
10 you're not required to hold any public hearings. I  
11 find it very valuable.

12           I will be submitting written comments. I work  
13 with Conservation Northwest, which is a conservation  
14 organization representing over 5,000 households, and  
15 we're submitting comments to you in writing. I'm not  
16 representing the group here tonight, but the reason I'm  
17 here is because I think it's important for people to  
18 get together and talk to each other face to face.

19           I salute everyone in this room for being here,  
20 taking the time out of your day to make the effort to  
21 be here. If you're sitting there contemplating  
22 speaking, I hope you will.

23           And thank you very much for your time, folks.

24           MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Dodd. You're  
25 stealing my thunder here.

1           Next speaker is Dean Drugge.

2           MR. DRUGGE: Good evening. My name is Dean  
3 Drugge, D-e-a-n D-r-u-g-g-e, a lifetime resident of  
4 Washington, Grays Harbor area, and currently public  
5 educator for 28 years.

6           I'm in opposition to the current spotted owl  
7 recovery plan.

8           After many years and much study to develop the  
9 1994 Northwest Forest Plan, which I followed,  
10 supported, and spoke in favor of, along with millions  
11 of other citizens, it would be foolish and  
12 disheartening to see this plan, which offers less  
13 protection to the endangered and Keystone Northwest  
14 species, the northern spotted owl, *Strix occidentalis*  
15 *caurina*, made into law. The foolishness is about the  
16 description of this so-called recovery plan, and it's  
17 disheartening to think of the increased loss of rare  
18 and unique species, the further loss of this old-growth  
19 habitat.

20           By maintaining scientifically credible science and  
21 reliable numbers, it is clear that we can retain and  
22 enhance the ecosystem of this species, the stunning and  
23 vital habitat of this ancient forest, to preserve clean  
24 sources of water, retain and restore fish habitats,  
25 support survival of rare plants and animals connected

1 to this ecosystem, and most proudly allow this  
2 extraordinary natural heritage to be here for future  
3 generations.

4 As a teacher in the early '90s and still teaching,  
5 I had the opportunity to study and share my passion, my  
6 understanding, and the science of this forest  
7 habitat -- examples, mycorrhizal fungi, carbon sink,  
8 spotted and barred owl -- and structure and function of  
9 the ancient forest with my students.

10 We had so much success and interest that a group  
11 of students and parents went back to Washington, D.C.,  
12 to express our knowledge of the old-growth ecosystem  
13 and share this unique feature of the Northwest with  
14 elected officials. Some of these students even spoke  
15 that year in this very room or at least a building in  
16 this area at a similar public hearing with the Forest  
17 Service.

18 The kids encouraged these officials to adopt the  
19 '94 Northwest Forest Plan, which was later to be  
20 enacted. It was a great success, and the students --  
21 now doctors, managers, parents -- and all with my best  
22 wishes, are full of invaluable memories and knowledge  
23 about where they live, and they know what it takes to  
24 keep their environment beautiful and intact.

25 It's no easy task for you or for me, but we must

1 be credible, honest in our words, in our work, and in  
2 our passions. A suggestion might be that the -- a  
3 large area of forest unit to support both owls instead  
4 of one or the other, and then the natural balance of  
5 the owls' existence will play out as nature does, and  
6 also science can then use that as a source of more  
7 science.

8 And I thank you for your time.

9 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

10 Fred Struck.

11 MR. STRUCK: I'm terrified. My name's Fred  
12 Struck. My name's Fred Struck, F-r-e-d S-t-r-u-c-k,  
13 and I, like a lot of other people, put my life on the  
14 line coming down here today on I-5.

15 First comment, I went out early after the  
16 explanation of the options 'cause I didn't really  
17 understand the difference between Option 1 and  
18 Option 2. And it turned out, to make a long story  
19 short, they're both a map.

20 And the thing I found interesting asking --  
21 inquiring out here is the two reviewing bodies, the  
22 scientists, were not asked to recommend one of those  
23 options. I don't quite understand that.

24 what was explained to me was, well, the scientists  
25 will evaluate the plan. The option is up to the

1       policymakers. Policy, it's politics. Policy should be  
2       the scientist draw the map. Okay? That's kind of  
3       simple.

4               The other thing is, compromise -- this is kind a  
5       generality, but it seems like compromise always results  
6       in a little bit less of that old-growth, and it's  
7       almost too late. Got to quit.

8               Thank you.

9               MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

10              Raelene Gold.

11              MS. GOLD: I am Raelene Gold. It's spelled  
12       R-a-e-l-e-n-e G-o-l-d. I am vice president of the  
13       Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs, an organization  
14       founded in 1932, that currently has 54 outdoor  
15       recreation and conservation member organizations in  
16       eight western states.

17              My interest in this issue was formed when I  
18       returned to Seattle in late 1989 and saw the massive  
19       clear-cutting --

20              MR. RUESINK: Excuse me. Could you speak  
21       into the microphone just a little more directly.

22              MS. GOLD: -- when I saw the massive  
23       clear-cutting of the huge moonscapes --

24              MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

25              MS. GOLD: -- of my state of Washington.

1 From 1990 to 1994, I was a volunteer at Seattle Audubon  
2 and chaired their forest committee, and I followed this  
3 issue since that time.

4 I'm going to speak in defense of our native  
5 coastal temperate homegrown forests that were under  
6 massive assault towards extinction in the 1980s. In  
7 response, there was an equally massive movement to  
8 protect them from clear-cutting and devastation that  
9 grew in the late '80s and the early 1990s.

10 In 1993, when President Clinton held the Northwest  
11 Forest Conference in Portland, 80,000 people attended a  
12 rally at Riverside Park in support of old-growth-forest  
13 protection. Since the 1981 work of Jerry Franklin on  
14 the ecological characteristics of old-growth Douglas  
15 fir forests, we have increasingly appreciated their  
16 special characteristics and benefits to wildlife,  
17 humans, and their -- for their ecological functions.

18 The importance of protecting the habitat of the  
19 northern spotted owl is even more important today than  
20 it was in 1994 when the Northwest Forest plan was  
21 developed. I think, especially with the eminent threat  
22 of global warming, our forests are a vital ally and  
23 asset.

24 Also, there's been the watershed book by Richard  
25 Louv on *Last Child Left in the Woods*, and I think it's

1 increasingly important that we realize for our children  
2 the importance of the physical, emotional, cognitive  
3 benefits of their being in the woods and in nature.

4 I couldn't read the whole plan. It was too long.  
5 But I would have been more interested in knowing, since  
6 1994, how much old-growth, late-successional forest  
7 we've lost and have that -- and then to know the  
8 percentage, what has been through timber operations and  
9 what has been through disturbances and what kinds, and  
10 then what we can do to ameliorate some of those  
11 threats, as well as some consideration of global  
12 climate change and disturbance and how that's going to  
13 impact our overall habitat.

14 I guess I'm equally -- I oppose the plan that  
15 would reduce any of our old-growth forest. Thank you.

16 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

17 Gwen Heisterkamp.

18 MS. HEISTERKAMP: Good evening. Thank you  
19 for the opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Gwen,  
20 G-w-e-n, Heisterkamp, H-e-i-s-t-e-r-k-a-m-p.

21 I'd like to start by saying that, as a Washington  
22 native, I feel fortunate to live in a place where, in  
23 just a few hours, I can reach the majesty and  
24 character of old-growth forests. More importantly, I  
25 feel very strongly that these old-growth forests and

1 the plants and animals that call them home have an  
2 intrinsic right to exist completely outside of our need  
3 or desire for them.

4 As we know, the spotted owl was listed under the  
5 ESA in 1990, the year that I turned 11 years old. I'm  
6 currently 28 years old and work in the conservation  
7 field; and from my perspective, that's a very long time  
8 ago.

9 I grew up in a small logging town and clearly  
10 remember the raging debate over the spotted owl from my  
11 childhood, including the "save a logger, eat an owl"  
12 paraphernalia that was commonly spotted around my town.  
13 I also clearly remember romping through the woods near  
14 Mount Rainier and having wonderful day hikes. And I  
15 thank the folks that historically have made it possible  
16 for me to have those experiences.

17 Frankly, I'm shocked and saddened that in 2007 the  
18 spotted owl is still an issue and that an adequate  
19 recovery plan has not yet been developed. Despite 30  
20 years of research, there is still a lack of clarity on  
21 the reasons behind the decline of the spotted owl.  
22 It's because it's a very complicated issue. The owl is  
23 facing decline due to multiple threats, and the needs  
24 for protection are more rather than less.

25 The Bush-influenced recovery plan could reduce

1 old-growth habitat by as much as 25 percent. This  
2 iconic bird deserves a recovery plan based on sound  
3 science with dedicated reserves that will allow the  
4 bird to recover, not a plan based on flexible reserves  
5 subject to the whims of land managers and political  
6 influence.

7 Please scrap the Bush-administration recovery plan  
8 and stick to a plan based on science, not politics.  
9 The Northwest Forest Plan offers a scientifically  
10 credible framework for that, and I encourage you to  
11 follow it.

12 The little remaining old-growth forests in the  
13 Northwest must be protected for the sake of not only  
14 the spotted owl but other plants and animals that make  
15 up these majestic forests, as well as for future  
16 generations of humans that will seek solace in it.

17 Thank you for your time. Good night.

18 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

19 Dick Miller.

20 MR. MILLER: My name is Dick Miller, D-i-c-k  
21 M-i-l-l-e-r, I guess. Yeah. I have no -- I had no  
22 prepared comments here. I'm speaking as a private  
23 citizen, although I have about 30 years of science  
24 experience, U.S. Forest Service research branch. I'm  
25 also a private landowner. And I think my questions --

1 my comments more are questions to the group.

2 If you weighed the testimony this evening on a  
3 scale, it would very definitely be heavily weighted to  
4 the opinion that we should maintain a species at any  
5 cost. We should have more, not less old-growth. And  
6 I've raised the question as a citizen now: At what  
7 cost?

8 There's been a lot of disparaging remarks about  
9 politics and so on. But really if you look at  
10 decisions, you have to weigh the cost of things. And  
11 who's going to pay the costs when we do this plan? As  
12 an example, they say the recovery plan is going to cost  
13 about \$200 million. That's a pittance. The question  
14 is: Is that out-of-pocket costs? What about the  
15 opportunity costs? If we do one thing, then we can't  
16 do another.

17 And there are a lot of costs involved here. So I  
18 appreciate the passion with which people say we need  
19 more of this and more protection. But as a citizen I'm  
20 saying: who's going to pay the cost, and is there a  
21 limit to this?

22 Thank you.

23 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Miller.

24 Valerie Elliott.

25 MS. ELLIOTT: Good evening. My name is

1 Valerie Elliott, V-a-l-e-r-i-e E-l-l-i-o-t-t. I'm here  
2 tonight as an individual, but I do -- am a member of  
3 the National Audubon Society and the local chapter of  
4 Black Hills Audubon Society here in Thurston County.

5 Back in the late '80s, I was in the Jantzen Beach  
6 Red Lion Hotel in Portland, Oregon, testifying in favor  
7 of the listing of the spotted owl. Now, all these  
8 years later, I'm back here on a recovery plan. We've  
9 lost a lot of years in there to recover the spotted  
10 owl. We've had --

11 I know that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is  
12 under pressure to write recovery plans for the listed  
13 species. But throwing together a plan in a year's time  
14 on a species that's been in jeopardy for, you know,  
15 almost two decades or -- is just, to my book,  
16 ridiculous.

17 It shows from the comments here tonight, a lot of  
18 knowledge that the people have gotten up here to  
19 comment about it, that what's there isn't going to work  
20 or isn't likely to work. And particularly with the  
21 fact that the recovery plan is not a regulatory man --  
22 or regulatory legally mandated paper, there's no reason  
23 that everybody has to comply with it, either.

24 So, in light of that, we need to make sure that it  
25 is a firm, solid, based-on-good-science, credible --

1 credible report that, if anything, goes off the other  
2 end and can work backwards.

3 Natural habitat has been grossly and outrageously  
4 compromised in the last 40 years or so with the growth  
5 of -- or with the expansions of humans, with economics,  
6 politics, the whole nine yards. This plan continues  
7 that along the political, economical means, but doesn't  
8 provide for the recovery of the spotted owl.

9 We have two options here. Option 1 seems to be  
10 the lesser of two evils, but it's still not going to --  
11 not going to work when, after the spotted owl was  
12 listed, the U.S. Forest Service went in -- and I worked  
13 for them at the time. They went in and made all these  
14 circles around all these spotted owl things when they  
15 have people out there trying to find out where the  
16 spotted owls were, which is basically equivalent to  
17 these MOCAs that you're planning.

18 The habitats decreased since then. So exactly  
19 where is that going to take us to have all these MOCAs?

20 Option 2 is a crapshoot, you know. Is it going to  
21 have more or less habitat? Do we have people that are  
22 qualified to make these determinations, or is it going  
23 to be political and economically driven? That's not  
24 what it's all about.

25 It's about saving the spotted owl. What we have

1 is not going to do -- work. Killing barred owls,  
2 cutting or harvesting old-growth aren't the solutions  
3 to the recovery. There's a lot of factors in there.  
4 They need to all be considered. We need to look at  
5 them more thoroughly and get a plan that's more  
6 workable.

7 Thank you very much.

8 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

9 Sue Danver.

10 MS. DANVER: Good evening. My name is Sue,  
11 S-u-e, Danver, D-a-n-v-e-r. First, I would like to  
12 thank you for this opportunity to speak.

13 I am conservation chair for Black Hills Audubon  
14 Society, which is the local chapter. We have 1,100  
15 members in Thurston, Mason, and Lewis County. Black  
16 Hills will be presenting a more detailed comment later  
17 on, and I'm speaking for myself at this time.

18 I have two requests. Please do not dismantle the  
19 Northwest Forest Plan, and please protect the  
20 old-growth. Do not cut any more old-growth.

21 I happened to live in Corvallis, Oregon, in 1994  
22 and observed a lot of Oregon State University and local  
23 scientists working on the Northwest Forest Plan. I  
24 know how hard and how dedicated -- how hard those folks  
25 worked and how dedicated they were being put in a

1 gymnasium, I believe, and working as teams. And it was  
2 very, very, very hard, and actually the plan was even a  
3 compromise back then.

4 So please don't weaken the Northwest Forest Plan.  
5 I worry -- I haven't read things thoroughly, but I seem  
6 to think that I will object to Option 2 for reasons  
7 spoken earlier.

8 But I have one comment that hasn't been made so  
9 far, and that is Forest Service districts, larger  
10 forests, have observed a large reduction in staff over  
11 the years. And I hope -- but I hope that they would  
12 have the adequate time to work on anything that  
13 Option 2 would require, but wonder if they will have  
14 the staff to do what will be required for local  
15 decisions.

16 I also happened to be a seasonal biologist in the  
17 '90s in six forests in Oregon, Washington, and Alaska.  
18 I was able to work in 1992 studying the vegetation  
19 where spotted owl pairs had been radiotelemetry -- or  
20 identified. And we were looking at the vegetation. I  
21 have climbed many a steep slope and climbed over huge  
22 logs this high that we really needed crampons.

23 And that forest is irreplaceable. We're talking  
24 about an ecosystem that is lush and green and cool on  
25 the days that are 90 degrees. It's beautiful. It has

1 the red vole, upon which the spotted owl is -- well,  
2 they're obligate species.

3 And so I ask that you do not cut any more of that  
4 old-growth. I ask that you have connectivity between  
5 those patches. And they are patches now. The birds  
6 can fly, but the other animals need those corridors  
7 from one patch to another. It would be better to have  
8 large, large blocks.

9 So that's it. Thank you very much.

10 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

11 Our next speaker is Julia Angell.

12 MS. ANGELL: Thank you for the opportunity to  
13 comment. My name is Julia Angell. It's J-u-l-i-a,  
14 Angell, A-n-g-e-l-l.

15 I've had the honor of hearing but not seeing a  
16 spotted owl in the wild. I spoke as a citizen and  
17 outdoor enthusiast and a birder. I grew up with  
18 western screech owls hooting in the woods behind my  
19 home. And my father, the artist Tony Angell, used owls  
20 as inspiration for his artwork and on the cover of his  
21 book *Owls*.

22 This love of nature and the wild was instilled in  
23 me from an early age. I am proud to be from this  
24 wonderful state that possesses ancient forest with holy  
25 grail species such as the northern spotted owl and the

1 marbled murrelet.

2 It alarms me when I hear about another problematic  
3 wildlife management plan. A recovery plan for an  
4 endangered species needs to preserve a species, not  
5 endanger it by further enabling habitat loss. I  
6 encourage you to redraft this recovery plan so that it  
7 removes no owl habitat, which is critical to the  
8 spotted owl's survival.

9 Thank you.

10 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

11 One additional speaker, Maria Victoria Peeler  
12 (phonetic), had earlier indicated that she wished to  
13 speak, but then, I believe, had changed her mind. Is  
14 Ms. Victoria Peeler here at this time?

15 If not, then I have called the names of all those  
16 that had indicated they wished to speak this evening.  
17 Is there anyone else that does wish to provide  
18 comments? I would ask that you fill out a registration  
19 card, and we will give you an opportunity to do so.

20 We were scheduled for the listening session -- or  
21 receiving the public comments through 8:30, and it's  
22 just about 8:30. But if there are additional folks  
23 that would like to provide comments, we'll certainly  
24 keep this meeting open and take those comments.

25 You would like to speak, ma'am?

1 MS. GIDDINGS: I would.

2 MR. RUESINK: And go ahead. And I would ask  
3 you to fill out a card when you complete your comments.  
4 And, again, please state your name, spell it for the  
5 record, and indicate if you're representing anyone.

6 MS. GIDDINGS: I'm Roxy Giddings, R-o-x-y  
7 G-i-d-d-i-n-g-s.

8 I just wanted to say that I am from Pierce County,  
9 where we have some of those owls up in the forest up  
10 towards Mount Rainier, and I remember being asked in  
11 about 1995 if I would go into the forest with the  
12 scientists and look for spotted owls because they had  
13 run out of time and money to continue the studies that  
14 they were doing at that time.

15 And so it looks to me like maybe we don't have  
16 some of science that we would otherwise have had. I  
17 didn't do it. I didn't have time. I've got kids and  
18 grandkids, and now I've got great grandkids. And so  
19 I've been doing this since -- well, I guess I'm old as  
20 dirt. But we just can't continue, and I feel like we  
21 waste our time going through these things over and over  
22 when we won't pay attention to the people that know  
23 what they're doing.

24 And I just -- I hate politics being involved in  
25 this. And I hate for the State to have to come up and

1 say, "We want one or the other" when they're both  
2 awful. And so I just think we should just drop this  
3 stuff and stop doing this kind of thing. We can't  
4 afford it. We can't afford it. I can't afford it.

5 And I can't afford to lose my clean air, my clean  
6 water. I can't pay for clean air, I can't pay for  
7 clean water, I can't pay for good health if I don't  
8 have a healthy forest around me and healthy water and  
9 all the goods things that come from it. So I suggest  
10 that we stop doing this sort of thing.

11 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

12 Is there anyone else that wishes to provide  
13 comments at this time?

14 An additional speaker. And again, please come up  
15 to the microphone, and I would ask that we get a card  
16 from you at the conclusion of your remarks. Go ahead,  
17 please.

18 MS. SNOW: My name is Donna Snow. It's  
19 D-o-n-n-a S-n-o-w. And I grew up in Hoquiam, where I  
20 developed a great appreciation for nature and the  
21 forest and the water we have here. And I went on to  
22 major in zoology at University of Washington, and I  
23 have just continued to appreciate living in the great  
24 state of Washington in the Northwest.

25 And we need to protect the remaining old-growth

1 forests that we have for the spotted owl, for the  
2 barred owl, for all of the creatures, and for the  
3 people who live here, and for future generations. So I  
4 urge you to save as much -- and all the old-growth  
5 forest that remains because it's a small percentage of  
6 what was here originally.

7 Thank you.

8 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

9 We now do have one additional speaker. Tod  
10 Flowers.

11 MR. FLOWERS: Okay. Hello. My name Tod  
12 Flowers. That's T-o-d --

13 MR. RUESINK: Could you come up to the  
14 microphone a little closer, please?

15 MR. FLOWERS: Yes. Okay. Thank you. That's  
16 T-o-d F-l-o-w-e-r-s. And I would like to voice my  
17 opinion to be strongly against compromising any of the  
18 original protected area as outlined in the original  
19 recovery plan -- recovery zone, critical habitat for  
20 the spotted owl.

21 And sorry I'm late. I don't really have anything  
22 prepared. I was just running behind.

23 But for the record, you know, I would like to say  
24 that I'm strongly against compromising any of the  
25 original recovery zone protected habitat for the

1 endangered species, the spotted owl, and any -- opening  
2 up any of that for development, I think, would be a  
3 huge mistake.

4 Thank you.

5 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

6 Is there anyone else that wishes to provide  
7 comments? I'm not seeing anyone come forward or not  
8 seeing any additional registration cards brought  
9 forward from the table.

10 So at this time, on behalf the U.S. Fish and  
11 wildlife Service, I would like to thank all of you who  
12 have come out this evening, and especially the  
13 speakers. I think that you've's done a very good job.  
14 You've stayed very close to the time limit.

15 I know that the information you've provided has  
16 been noted. It's a part of the record now that will be  
17 considered by the Fish & wildlife Service as they  
18 gather additional information and move forward to  
19 finalize the recovery plan for the northern spotted  
20 owl. Those comments will be carefully considered in  
21 coming to that final decision.

22 This session for listening and for gathering your  
23 public comments is now closed. We're off the record.

24 (Proceedings concluded at 8:32 p.m.)  
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, SUE E. GARCIA, a duly authorized Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Washington, residing at Tacoma, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing proceedings were taken before me on the 31st of May, 2007, and thereafter transcribed by me by means of computer-aided transcription, that the transcript is a full, true, and complete transcript of said proceedings;

That I am not a relative, employee, attorney, or counsel of any party to this action or relative or employee of any such attorney or counsel, and I am not financially interested in the said action or the outcome thereof;

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal this June 13, 2007.



  
SUE E. GARCIA, CCR, RPR  
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