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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL DRAFT  
RECOVERY PLAN.

**ORIGINAL**

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PUBLIC COMMENT MEETING

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2007

6:30 P.M.

REDDING, CALIFORNIA

REPORTED BY: DEBBIE J. BENSON, C.S.R.

LICENSE NO. 6527

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PRESENTATION PANEL

ROBERT RUESINK,  
PRESIDING OFFICER

PHIL DETRICH,  
PROJECT LEADER, YREKA FIELD OFFICE

DAVID WESLEY,  
RECOVERY TEAM LEADER

--oOo--

1 MR. RUESINK: Would you please take your seats.  
2 I'd like to open the meeting.

3 We are on the record. Good evening. On behalf  
4 of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, I  
5 welcome you to this public meeting and the Draft  
6 Recovery Plan for the Northern Spotted Owl.

7 My name is Robert Ruesink; the last name is  
8 spelled R-u-e-s-i-n-k. I will be serving as presiding  
9 official for this listening session this evening. My  
10 role is to conduct this session in order that we receive  
11 your comments accurately. I am not involved in any  
12 decision making regarding this issue.

13 Here also are the following representatives  
14 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. On my far  
15 right is Dave Wesley. Dave is the Deputy Regional  
16 Director of the Pacific Region and the team leader for  
17 the Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Team.

18 To my immediate right is Phil Detrich. Phil is  
19 the field supervisor of the Yreka Fish and Wildlife  
20 office.

21 We have a court reporter here this evening  
22 whose purpose is to ensure that we accurately record and  
23 preserve in the record any comments and statements that  
24 you make regarding this issue.

25 Outside the meeting room where you first came

1 in, you saw an information area. We have written and  
2 display materials about this Draft Recovery Plan in that  
3 area, as well as staff from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
4 Service, Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management  
5 to assist you and answer any questions you might have.

6 At this point, I'd like to introduce Dave  
7 Wesley who will give a presentation on the Draft  
8 Recovery Plan.

9 MR. WESLEY: Good evening. Thank you all for  
10 coming. Rather than stand up here and do it from the  
11 dais, I'd feel more comfortable getting down and walking  
12 around, so if you permit me to do that. My purpose is  
13 to spend a few minutes with you to explain a little  
14 about the recovery planning process, a little bit about  
15 what the recovery team did to develop this plan and give  
16 you background about the plan.

17 I know many of you have heard about the plan,  
18 but some of you may not have had a chance to read it all  
19 or understand what it is, so I thought I'd take a few  
20 minutes and give you a background on it, a little bit of  
21 update what it says. So we'll take your comments after  
22 I get done.

23 Of course, the species we're here to talk about  
24 is the Northern Spotted Owl. And the species was listed  
25 in 1990 as a threatened species under the Endangered

1 Species Act. In 1990, there was an interagency  
2 scientific committee that was formed to gather  
3 information about the Spotted Owl and prepare a  
4 scientific summary of what was known about the species  
5 at the time.

6 There was critical habitat designated for the  
7 species through a legal process and published in the  
8 Federal Register in 1992. In 1992 also, a group of  
9 scientists were commissioned by the Fish and Wildlife  
10 Service to prepare a Draft Recovery Plan.

11 They did that plan, and in December of 1992  
12 they completed that draft, but the draft was never  
13 finalized. There was a decision made that plan wouldn't  
14 go forward because of the upcoming developing of the  
15 Northwest Forest Plan.

16 In 1994, the government approved and sanctioned  
17 the Northwest Forest Plan, which at that time was  
18 considered to be the federal contribution to the  
19 recovery of the Northern Spotted Owl.

20 And in 2004, in accordance with the  
21 requirements under the Endangered Species Act, the Fish  
22 and Wildlife Service conducted a five-area review.  
23 We're required on a periodic basis to look at the  
24 species list, go ahead and do an analysis on the science  
25 to see if the listing is appropriate.

1           That was done in 2005 under a contract to  
2 another consulting firm. And what was nice about that  
3 is it summarized all of the scientific information that  
4 was available since the draft plan in 1992 and the  
5 completion of that report in 2004. So when the recovery  
6 team was formed and we began our work a couple of years  
7 later, we were able to use a lot of this information,  
8 and it was fortunate for us that we had a lot of that  
9 information already analyzed and put together for us.

10           So what's in a recovery plan? A recovery plan  
11 is basically a road map that tells us what we need to do  
12 in order to recover a species or take it off the  
13 Endangered Species List. It includes a number of  
14 components.

15           One of those is a strategy, what is necessary  
16 to recover, how do you get to recovery of the species.  
17 There are specific objectives. What is it we're looking  
18 for? What are the specific things necessary for us to  
19 achieve before we can recover? They have to have some  
20 measurable criteria.

21           One of the things the law is very clear about:  
22 We can't just get to a point we say, oh, we think it's  
23 capable of being delisted. We have to have specific  
24 criteria measurable that we announce ahead of time and  
25 say these are the things we're looking for that must be

1 met before we can delist the species. We also must  
2 specifically describe particular recovery actions that  
3 would be necessary to be taken to get the species off  
4 the list.

5 I want to remind you a recovery plan is  
6 advisory only. It is not a regulation. It's not a  
7 regulatory process. It's an advisory document. Like I  
8 said, it's a road map, doesn't have any force and effect  
9 of law. It helps inform people about the species. It  
10 helps inform regulatory agencies about information they  
11 need to be able to conduct information and analysis for  
12 the Spotted Owl. In and of itself, it has no regulatory  
13 authority for responsibility.

14 So how do we develop this recovery plan? We  
15 started in April of 2006 by appointing a recovery team.  
16 We completed a draft in September of 2006. And that was  
17 our target. We were told we needed to have it done by  
18 the end of September in 2006. And we submitted it to  
19 the Washington office and it was reviewed, and they  
20 asked us to look at it and come up with some other  
21 alternatives I'll explain to you in a little bit.

22 And then we made those revisions in April of  
23 this year. We announced the draft in the Federal  
24 Register and we're now in the process of the 60-day  
25 comment period. By law, again, we have a comment period

1 of 60 days for the public to submit comments, so we're  
2 looking to get your comments in by the 25th of June.  
3 That may be extended. We do have some requests and  
4 we're in the process of processing those requests.

5 Right now I'd encourage you, if you do have  
6 comments, make them to us. If you have written  
7 comments, try and get them to us by June 25th. That  
8 would be very good.

9 We also committed to have a public meeting. We  
10 realize there's a lot of interest about the Spotted  
11 Owl. The regulations and the law do not require us to  
12 have these public meetings. We felt it was important  
13 that we do that. So we're having two in Oregon, one in  
14 California, and one in Washington. Our goal will be to  
15 have the plan completed a year from the date which we  
16 announce the draft; so in April of 2008.

17 How did we get the assistance from the recovery  
18 team? The recovery team provided advice. You have to  
19 understand, the recovery plan in and of itself is a  
20 document of the Fish and Wildlife Service. We did have  
21 a lot of opinions about where to go on some of the  
22 science and some of the hard work that was there.

23 What's in the final draft? We may not  
24 represent the views of every one of the members, but it  
25 is a document that the Service prepared based upon the

1 information that was done and prepared and the work that  
2 was done by the recovery team. We did have 12 members.  
3 We felt it was important to get a broad spectrum of  
4 folks, so we had representatives from the five major  
5 federal agencies involved with the Spotted Owl.

6 There's the Department of Agriculture, with the  
7 Forest Service, and four bureaus within the Department  
8 of Interior: the Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of  
9 Indian Affairs, the Bureau of Land Management -- what's  
10 the fifth one? -- the Park Service. Thank you. I  
11 always forget the last one. So those five federal  
12 agencies. We had a representative from the three  
13 states, from California, Oregon, and Washington, and  
14 then we had representatives from the timber industry as  
15 well.

16 They were -- I'll get to it here. The timber  
17 industry, we had two folks from there and we had two  
18 folks from the environmental community. We had a total  
19 of ten. We do have a few of the members here tonight.  
20 Let's see who's here.

21 Lowell Diller is here. Lowell is one of the  
22 timber company representatives. In the back, Ed Murphy  
23 from the timber company and Mike Taskey from the Bureau  
24 of Land Management. I was the representative from the  
25 Fish and Wildlife Service. I don't see anybody else,

1 but that's the group. It was a great group.

2 The group was supported by a group called the  
3 IST, Interagency Support Team, which was made up of  
4 staff from Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land  
5 Management, the Forest Service. They did a tremendous  
6 job in supporting the team and providing a lot of help  
7 helping us get our job done.

8 The team met 28 times, either in person or via  
9 conference call. So we spent a lot of time together.  
10 We got to know each other, I think, quite well. Who  
11 preferred what kind of coffee and those kinds of things,  
12 but it was a great group to work with and we had a lot  
13 of exchange between ourselves.

14 We also incorporated the use of scientists. We  
15 had three different panels where we incorporated and  
16 asked scientists -- the leading scientists in Spotted  
17 Owl and Spotted Owl management -- come and had workshops  
18 with them, and used them to guide our information, the  
19 information and criteria, specifically the measures that  
20 we would use.

21 We also then kept hearing we should build on  
22 the science done from the earlier plan, the 1992 plan,  
23 that large scale blocks are important and the fact the  
24 best thing to be able to continue to use for recovery of  
25 the owl. And some portions of the plan are already peer

1 reviewed, primarily the biological section.

2 As you can imagine, there's a lot of science  
3 and knowledge known about the recovery of the owl. We  
4 already had the biology portion of it reviewed. We will  
5 be having the entire document peer reviewed, and I'll  
6 explain that in a couple of minutes.

7 What are the objectives? Pretty much the  
8 standard kind of thing we see in recovery plans where  
9 it's important to have adequate populations of the  
10 species; in this case, of course, the Northern Spotted  
11 Owl. Those populations have to be sufficiently large  
12 and distributed throughout the range of the owl.

13 You also then can't just have the birds by  
14 themselves. You have to have the habitat for them to be  
15 able to survive, and you also have to have that habitat  
16 in good condition and also spread throughout the range  
17 of the owl.

18 The third thing is we have to be able to deal  
19 with the threats. What are those actions causing this  
20 bird to be endangered or be threatened? We have to be  
21 able to look at those things, figure out a way to  
22 mitigate or eliminate or reduce them, and then keep them  
23 at a point the species could be taken off the Endangered  
24 Species List.

25 One of the things we found as we worked our way

1 through the process, Barred Owls are a lot more of a  
2 threat currently than they were originally thought to  
3 have been. Barred Owls are a native American raptor  
4 more traditionally found in the East. They've come west  
5 as a result of some speculation. They've come west as a  
6 result of man's impact on the environment.

7 We've allowed more trees to grow up and habitat  
8 created that allows the owls to move to the west.  
9 They're a little larger, more aggressive. They have  
10 ability to out compete the Spotted Owls.

11 The habitat loss, of course, is another  
12 important element that is a threat that needs to be  
13 maintained. We don't want to lose site of the fact that  
14 those are in fact an important element, maintaining and  
15 making sure there is adequate habitat for the owl.

16 Again, as I was talking about the Barred Owl,  
17 one of the recommendations in the plan is to form a  
18 working group of scientists and managers to deal with  
19 the Barred Owl. The Barred Owl is a big threat that's  
20 occurring right now, and we need to be able to look at  
21 how we will address that. We'll do that through a  
22 working group. They want to do research to better  
23 understand the threat, and then there's some proposal --  
24 actually be some experimental removal to see how the  
25 Spotted Owls respond.

1           If you remove the Barred Owls, will the Spotted  
2 Owls come back? How will we do that? Where will we do  
3 it? How often would we do it? And what ways would we  
4 do it? But the issue with regard to the Barred Owl  
5 needs to be addressed.

6           When you get to habitat, the recovery plan is  
7 different than many other recovery plans in that it has  
8 two options on how to address the habitat. Initially  
9 our plan only had one option, but as the result of some  
10 requests by some folks back in Washington, when this  
11 plan went back to Washington, we were asked to develop a  
12 second option to look at that.

13           We do have two different options, and I'll  
14 explain both of those to you. Option one builds on the  
15 previous work done by many of the previous authors with  
16 regard to setting aside specific areas for habitat  
17 protection. It uses specific areas with targeted  
18 recovery.

19           These areas are called "managed owl  
20 conservation areas." When you came in, if you look at  
21 the maps, there's a series of maps that show the managed  
22 owl conservation areas. In the draft that you have  
23 before you or in the plan, there's about 7.7 million  
24 acres of land that's included in the managed owl  
25 conservation areas for Option 1.

1           Option 2 also recognizes the need for large  
2 habitat blocks. Rather than have static reserves on the  
3 land, it develops a rule set that would develop or guide  
4 land managers on how to establish those areas. It gives  
5 flexibility to local land managers to be able to  
6 determine where those lines on the map would be and how  
7 those areas would be established. It still requires  
8 that these large blocks be preserved and these large  
9 blocks be on the land for the owl, but they do give some  
10 discretion for the local managers to retain it.

11           How those blocks were established used the  
12 basic science used in Option 1 in the number of pairs of  
13 owls necessary to support and the distance between those  
14 pairs of owls. In the example that's in the recovery  
15 plan, rather than just put out that information the way  
16 it was, we felt it was necessary to have an example  
17 people could look at to visualize. What we did was ask  
18 the recovery team and the IST to work together and come  
19 up with an example.

20           We have in the plan just -- what's in the plan  
21 now is strictly an example of what Option 2 would look  
22 like. The one that's there includes actually less than  
23 in the MOCA but could include more. The one in the  
24 recovery plan is just under 7 million acres. There's  
25 about a 700,000 acre difference between the two

1 approaches.

2           It's important to recognize that both options  
3 include establishing these protected areas in 10 of the  
4 12 provinces. The range of the owl is divided into 12  
5 physical graphic provinces where they occur. Two of  
6 them, the southwestern Washington lowlands and the land  
7 of valley currently south. Lowlands only have about a  
8 12 dozen owls. There was no habitat area set aside in  
9 any of those.

10           They also do include less plans that are in the  
11 Northwest Forest Plan. You have to remember the  
12 Northwest plan was developed for more species. The  
13 Northwest Forest Plan was established for a whole host  
14 of species, murrelets, salmon, and 4 or 500 species that  
15 are considered under managed survey. So it was  
16 important for us to identify what was just necessary for  
17 owl recovery.

18           The MACA lands contain federal land in the  
19 matrix only about -- exclusively in the federal lands,  
20 only about 1 percent or less than 1 percent are in the  
21 matrix lands. So the criteria, how will we know when we  
22 get there?

23           One of the things, it's important we have a  
24 stable and increasing population. People frequently are  
25 asking us how many owls do we need. It's very difficult

1 to get a number, very costly to do it. What we rely on  
2 is a trend rather than a specific number. We look for  
3 stable or increasing trend of population over a ten-year  
4 period. We also want to make sure that population as we  
5 described in the beginning is well distributed  
6 throughout the range; that there's sufficient habitat in  
7 conservation areas, be they in habitat blocks or habitat  
8 reserves or MOCAs described in Option 2, and that the  
9 threats to the Barred Owls are managed or eliminated.

10 Then the law requires before we can delist  
11 anything, to have a monitoring plan. What are you going  
12 to be able to do to monitor that species to make sure it  
13 doesn't get to the point where it needs to be put back  
14 on the list again?

15 Both recovery options include the same 37  
16 recovery actions. There are a series of actions in the  
17 plan that describe the kinds of things that are  
18 necessary for recovery, and they fall into four  
19 different categories. The first one is management  
20 actions. Those would include things like managing  
21 timber stands for prey of species and a whole host of  
22 other things in association with management. Also,  
23 research actions like doing research on fire prone areas  
24 or on Barred Owls and those kinds of things.

25 Regulatory actions. We realize that there's a

1 lot of actions out there that are controlled under  
2 regulatory process, and things like how to help HCPs or  
3 streamline consultations with federal agencies are ways  
4 we can help recover the owl. So that's the third area.

5 And the fourth are monitoring actions,  
6 monitoring the habitat, monitoring the species, how much  
7 and how long until we get to recovery. If all the  
8 actions were implemented and fully successful, we  
9 estimate we could recover the species in as few of 30  
10 years at a cost of about \$198 million.

11 And before I close out, I want to talk about  
12 peer review. There's been a lot of interest and concern  
13 about us using the best science and how do we go about  
14 doing that. We committed through the process we would  
15 use the best science and submit our work for peer  
16 review. We're going to employ two processes.

17 One of the first processes, we made a decision  
18 to use two professional societies to conduct reviews of  
19 the entire document. Those contracts have already been  
20 let and the Society for Conservation Biology is one that  
21 will review it for us. And the American Ornithological  
22 Union, the recognized experts on birds, will be the  
23 other. They will put out to their membership an  
24 opportunity to read two reviews from each of these  
25 societies.

1           We'll get four reviews from those two  
2 professional societies, and we'll also send direct  
3 questionnaires to the scientists whose information and  
4 research we used, to ask them if in fact we used their  
5 data correctly, and if the information that we used and  
6 extrapolate was properly done, and then also any other  
7 comments that they might have.

8           Where do we finish this up or where are we  
9 going to the end here? As I said at the beginning, we  
10 published the draft in April. We're doing these public  
11 meetings with the 60-day comment period. The peer  
12 review is ongoing as we speak. We're planning to  
13 finalize the plan by April of 2008. And if you want to  
14 submit comments after tonight, we are anxious to hear  
15 what you have to say tonight. We're open to that.

16           There's cards that have all this information on  
17 them and there's some contact information that's there.  
18 So with that bit of an overview, I thank you all for  
19 coming, and Bob will manage the meeting from here to  
20 receive your comments.

21           MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Dave.

22           Notice of this public meeting was published in  
23 the Federal Register on April 26th, 2007, beginning on  
24 page 20865. Currently, as Dave mentioned, the comment  
25 period on this Draft Recovery Plan ends at the close of

1 business on Monday, June 25th, 2007. All comments must  
2 be received by that time. After review and  
3 consideration of your comments and all other information  
4 gathered during this comment period, the Fish and  
5 Wildlife Service will publish a Final Recovery Plan.

6 The purposes of this session are twofold:  
7 No. 1, to provide information on the Draft Recovery  
8 Plan; and 2, to receive your comments. Comments on all  
9 aspects of the draft plan are very important and will be  
10 carefully considered.

11 Because of the importance of your comments, it  
12 is necessary that we follow certain procedures here this  
13 evening. If you wish to present oral comments at this  
14 session, please register at the table outside the room.  
15 When you register, indicate any agencies or organization  
16 that you are representing in your comments.

17 When you are called to present your comments,  
18 please come forward to one of the two microphones at the  
19 front of the room, begin your presentation by stating  
20 your full name, spell it for the record, and indicate if  
21 you represent an agency or an organization.

22 If you're reading your comments, I would ask  
23 that you please take care to read them slowly and  
24 clearly so that the court reporter can understand them  
25 and get an accurate record of the comments and the

1 statements you make. Also, if you're reading comments  
2 and if you do have a copy of those comments, it would be  
3 helpful if you could give a copy to the court reporter.

4 You will not be questioned in connection with  
5 your comments. Your comments or questions are being  
6 recorded to preserve them for the record. Because the  
7 purpose of the session is to receive your comments, we  
8 will presume that any questions you might raise are for  
9 the record.

10 The agency's formal response to questions and  
11 issues raised during the comment period, including at  
12 this hearing, will be published in the final notice for  
13 the recovery plan. We will not respond to questions  
14 that are posed during your comments.

15 Please keep in mind that the reporter will not  
16 record any statements from the audience or statements  
17 which are made to the audience. Comments should be made  
18 directly into the microphone and facing the front of the  
19 room.

20 We have several displays and staff members  
21 available in the entry area I previously mentioned.  
22 Those are there to provide information in the Draft  
23 Recovery Plan for the Northern Spotted Owl and the staff  
24 are available to answer questions that you may have  
25 about the draft plan.

1           Please feel free to go back and forth between  
2 the rooms, but I would ask that when you come into this  
3 room that you be considerate of the speakers and the  
4 reporter when you're coming back in, again so we get an  
5 accurate copy of any comments that speakers are making.

6           Instead of presenting oral comments here this  
7 evening or in addition to the oral comments, you may  
8 submit comments in writing. Written comments may be  
9 submitted to the staff at the registration table or they  
10 may be mailed to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The  
11 address is available at the registration and information  
12 tables that's outside the room.

13           Comments may also be submitted by fax, by  
14 courier, by e-mail, or over the Internet. Details on  
15 these methods are available in the Notice of  
16 Availability or on a card that was available at the  
17 registration table. This card also has the address if  
18 you choose to mail comments in to the Fish and Wildlife  
19 Service. Written comments are given the same  
20 consideration as oral comments that are presented here  
21 this evening.

22           We do have a number of individuals that  
23 indicate they wish to provide comments this evening. So  
24 at this time, I'd like to ask that the speakers try to  
25 limit your comments to about four minutes. We do have a

1 timer that will be operating that will alert you when  
2 four minutes is up, and we'll try to give you a little  
3 bit of time to finish comments after the timer goes  
4 off.

5 At this point, I believe we are ready for our  
6 first speaker, Mr. Mauro Oliveira. Would you please  
7 come to the microphone, state your name, spell it for  
8 the record, and indicate if you are representing anyone  
9 with your comments. Go ahead, sir.

10 MR. OLIVEIRA: My name is Mauro Oliveira,  
11 M-a-u-r-o O-l-i-v-e-i-r-a. I'm not affiliated tonight  
12 with anybody. I just got an e-mail this morning about  
13 this meeting. And I, admittedly, am lacking a lot of  
14 information which no doubt you've provided and given  
15 that we may get an extension into August, which I think  
16 is going to be really good because there's a lot of  
17 people that are in different circles that I work  
18 through, the Sierra Club, that aren't really aware of  
19 what's going on. We're honestly pretty busy with a lot  
20 of timber, like AB 994 and State issues like that.

21 But what I'd like to say is that the science,  
22 starting at the science, we're dealing with an  
23 administration that has been hiding science, as we know  
24 through the Senate hearings, with the scientists,  
25 particularly James Hanson and his associates at NASA.

1           We know the administration hasn't been  
2 forthright with what science they should be letting us  
3 see, and they've been editing science for what they want  
4 us to hear as evidenced by Phil Cooney (phonetic) who  
5 was the chief science officer at the White House who  
6 edited everything that all scientists that worked for  
7 the government did.

8           So believing the science that is behind any of  
9 these plans is very difficult, which is why the  
10 extension of time is a very good thing. Because I'm  
11 sure perfectly well a lot of people have good hearts  
12 with the intention with the Spotted Owl, but there's a  
13 lot of other things in play here.

14           For instance Ed Murphy, who was on the board  
15 that created this, is with SPI, Sierra Pacific. And  
16 Sierra Pacific has an official attitude that a 30-acre  
17 clear-cut is good for wildlife as stated by Mike Metzger  
18 in the Redding Searchlight.

19           You know, just really hard to accept Sierra  
20 sitting on the board like that. I'm not sure of the  
21 other timber company gentlemen over here. Again, they  
22 may have good hearts, but where is their science coming  
23 from? Certainly nobody who lives near a clear-cut would  
24 believe that wildlife is flourishing in it, yet that's  
25 the official position of the company. And now we have

1 the same companies, Weyerhaeuser, the trees and the  
2 gasoline.

3 So whenever the United States government is  
4 going to give land, lease land for timber or, you know,  
5 what falls as a timber practice within the Spotted Owl,  
6 we all have to look at it a lot closer. And frankly,  
7 June, July, August is much too quick for us. Like I  
8 said, we're busy. You Feds are running us around with a  
9 lot of issues right now as well as the State.

10 I'd also like to point out Mark Gray, who heads  
11 the protection of our forests under the Department of  
12 the Interior, he worked for the American Forest Products  
13 Institute or Association for 17 years before Bush put  
14 him in to protect our forest.

15 So his job was to get forest products from U.S.  
16 Forest, United States Forest Service. And when he was  
17 in town last, he had a conference over here on Hilltop,  
18 and it was all Dupont and all these chemical companies,  
19 how they were going to divvy up the Sierras. I think  
20 everybody gets my point. We need some time. Thank you.

21 MR. RUESINK: Thank you. Our next speaker is  
22 Randy Compton.

23 MR. COMPTON: Hello. My name is Randy Compton,  
24 R-a-n-d-y C-o-m-p-t-o-n. And I'm just representing  
25 myself and some neighbors here tonight.

1           You know, the Spotted Owl is just a symbol to  
2 me, that there's a whole lot more that that owl  
3 represents. What the owl represents is an environment  
4 that is healthy, an environment that includes a diverse  
5 species of plants and trees and as well as wildlife. So  
6 that's what it would take, a healthy forest to maintain  
7 not only Spotted Owls but all the many species that make  
8 a forest.

9           You know, I'm a lifelong resident of this  
10 county. I grew up in the woods. I would rather be in  
11 the woods than in a house. I've covered this whole  
12 country, and camping and recreation hiking. I worked in  
13 the timber industry. I've worked in logging. All of my  
14 family. I grew up in a logging camp. I know this whole  
15 country very well.

16           And in the last 35 years, you know, what we  
17 used to be, a strong healthy forest, very beautiful, is  
18 just a skeleton. It is being reduced to a skeleton  
19 now. And now that they are clear-cutting, they are  
20 scraping the rest of the remnants to bare earth,  
21 sterilizing it with herbicides and replanting little,  
22 small trees. And of course their science tells them  
23 that the wildlife is doing great.

24           And I'm just here to say that the Spotted Owl,  
25 along with everything else, is being crammed and forced

1 into the corners and into wherever they can survive.  
2 Anybody that is in a position to make decisions about  
3 our environment should go with their own eyes and stand  
4 in these clear-cuts, fly them over them and look and see  
5 what's going on and see with your own eyes and judge for  
6 yourself, is this good for the wildlife or is this good  
7 for the people, for everybody that lives here?

8 I think that somebody has to start to draw the  
9 line, because the forest and the environment is being  
10 pounded and the streams and the water is all dependent  
11 on that. So I just ask you guys to go take a good look.  
12 You can look on Google Earth. You can get in an  
13 airplane and get a closer look, and get on the ground  
14 and go out and look for yourself and just see what you  
15 think about modern logging practices. Thank you.

16 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Compton. Our next  
17 speaker is Doug Bennett.

18 MR. BENNETT: My name is Doug Bennett, Citizens  
19 for Responsibility Group, a local group in Redding,  
20 basically grass roots, that one of the major concerns of  
21 my group is global warming. And we have -- much like  
22 the previous speakers, I think you're going to find with  
23 this there's going to be a lot of skepticism for the  
24 reasons already noted.

25 There seems to be a lot of politicization

1 within the federal government at this time as reflected  
2 by the recent Justice Department and just about  
3 everything else we know from NASA and down. So the  
4 science is being questioned or the science is being  
5 suppressed.

6 So to ask the public to allow a wider range of  
7 management of these important areas seems, you know,  
8 you're going to have a lot of skepticism, a lot of doubt  
9 on the part of the American public that the federal  
10 government is going to be able to do that responsibly.  
11 Because we see it as being affected by basically insider  
12 special interest groups much like SPI. I notice on your  
13 board, it's hard to assimilate all that information.  
14 And I've taken your booklet and I intend to go through  
15 that.

16 I notice one fact out there that was  
17 interesting. It said decline of the Spotted Owl  
18 population, 2.4 percent on public lands. And then it  
19 said decline on all lands, 3.7 percent. So I did a  
20 little math. What that means is that private land is  
21 not being managed as well as public lands. We have  
22 people in the timber industry who basically are the ones  
23 managing that private land, advising your panel and, you  
24 know, apparently on some of these policies.

25 So what they've proven is they're not the ones

1 to listen to. So I'm hoping that with further study  
2 you're going to maybe reconsider what those conditions  
3 are, what the science is, what you're calling peer  
4 review.

5           You can name these societies. It means nothing  
6 to the public unless we do a little bit more research.  
7 We're going to be questioning is that peer review valid  
8 or has that been politicized. So I would hope that in  
9 all that you do and all the comments you take that  
10 you'll consider that there's a lot of skepticism.

11           I have another question. These areas being  
12 affected seem to be all on the coast, and yet here you  
13 are inland taking comments and having an open period in  
14 somewhat educational service to the public here inland.  
15 And yet most of the people going to be affected are  
16 habitats on the coast, which I think those people are  
17 much more reactionary and much more environmentally  
18 conscious than people inland here in Redding.

19           I hope you take this presentation and possibly  
20 the ability and those people should be able to make  
21 comment also that live in those areas on the coast of  
22 California. So that would be my suggestions. Thank  
23 you.

24           MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Bennett.

25           Lawrence Whitfield, you're next, please.

1 MR. WHITFIELD: I think I've had my questions  
2 answered.

3 MR. RUESINK: Mr. Whitfield does not wish to  
4 speak at this time; is that correct? We'll hold the  
5 card, and if you think you'd like to later on, we'll  
6 give you an opportunity to do so.

7 Daryl Chase.

8 MR. CHASE: My name is Daryl Chase, D-a-r-y-l  
9 C-h-a-s-e. I'm a native from Redding. Some background  
10 where I'm coming from, my father made his living in the  
11 logging industry. I've been a hunter and fisherman a  
12 good portion of my life. But then actually I got tired  
13 of killing things, so now I'm into rehab. And as far as  
14 eagles, hawks and owls, I handle them virtually on a  
15 daily basis rehabing them.

16 Before I go much further, I would like to  
17 congratulate U.S. Fish and Wildlife. I've lived here  
18 all my life, and just last year as a result of some of  
19 our practices with the bald eagles, we had a bald eagle  
20 fledgling out of a nest in Redding. That has never  
21 happened in my lifetime until last year, and we could  
22 walk to the nest from here.

23 But I have a real problem with your idea of  
24 shooting Barred Owls. I mean, discussing it with one of  
25 your people out in the lobby, and I was bringing up the

1 old definition of a species. And of course I was told  
2 right off the bat that's old hat. Well, it may be old  
3 hat, but we have many doctorates of biology and science  
4 that are teaching that at this very minute within our  
5 colleges. We have wildlife biologists in this area that  
6 are still living under that definition, which is two  
7 organisms freely breeding in the wild produce viable  
8 offspring.

9 That's what we got with our Barred Owl and  
10 Spotted Owl. And if you go start shooting these Barred  
11 Owls that are doing the same thing for man that the  
12 Spotted Owl is, controlling the rat, mice population,  
13 what do we get out of it? Human beings, nothing.  
14 Because they're doing the same thing. And under the old  
15 definition that I just mentioned, they are the same  
16 species and they've been separated for long periods of  
17 time, and speciation is probably starting to occur under  
18 microevolution.

19 At least there has been some allele changes in  
20 the feather coloring of these animals, but I think the  
21 last I seen they're probably the same bird and they're  
22 changing. And now you can call it whatever you like,  
23 Mother Nature, supreme being, whatever, they decide  
24 they're going to come back together. And we can go out  
25 there and shoot them, practice ethnic cleansing until

1 such a time that the Spotted Owl recovers to some  
2 extent.

3           Then you're going to walk away and the Barred  
4 Owl is going to keep right on coming into this area like  
5 they've been doing for, like, I know 40 years. And  
6 we're going to end up with the situation like we have in  
7 Mexico where the Barred Owl and the Spotted Owl  
8 coexist.

9           And species kill one another every day. Goss  
10 Hawks, of course it was a bigger female killed a smaller  
11 male, and that happens. That's part of the hard life  
12 out there that those animals have.

13           So you do whatever you want to save the old  
14 girl's tree, which I think this is what this is mainly  
15 about, but don't do ethnic cleansing just because they  
16 have a different look to their feathers. I mean, what  
17 if Homosapiens started doing ethnic cleansing? That  
18 doesn't work very well. We've been doing that for  
19 years.

20           MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Chase.

21           Stuart Farber.

22           MR. FARBER: Good evening. My name is Stuart  
23 Farber, S-t-u-a-r-t F-a-r-b-e-r. I'm with Timber  
24 Products Company. We own and manage about 120,000 acres  
25 of -- a lot of it -- Spotted Owl habitat in Siskiyou

1 County, and we have Spotted Owl management. We work  
2 with Brian Woodrich for maintaining no take of Spotted  
3 Owls in Siskiyou and Trinity and Shasta Counties. So we  
4 provided some written comments, and I thought I'd just  
5 go over a few of the highlights or written comments  
6 tonight.

7 First one is we'd like to see the Service  
8 emphasize recovery action 5. And this is the action  
9 kind of describes resource partitioning we think is  
10 actually occurring in California. And actually we see,  
11 when we look at some of the science in Oregon and  
12 Washington -- it's probably happening there, too --  
13 basically where Spotted Owls and Barred Owls coexist,  
14 where basically the Spotted Owl is more in the seric  
15 open canopy mixed forest and the Barred Owl more in the  
16 mesic closed canopy forest. And there seems to be some  
17 separation going on there.

18 Even in areas in Washington there's quite dense  
19 populations of Barred Owls. Spotted Owl seems to  
20 continue to exist in those kind of more open habitats.  
21 We'd encourage the Service to increase the funding and  
22 the effort and the emphasis in the recovery plan, that  
23 this is maybe probably the best long-term viable  
24 solution to have Barred Owls coexist for probably the  
25 next couple centuries with Spotted Owls.

1           Recovery action 32 which actually describes  
2 where you want to do some subcultural experiments, and  
3 we put a little twist on it to link action item 5 and 32  
4 together. Basically what we think you need to do is  
5 start looking in areas where the Barred Owls and Spotted  
6 Owls are coexisting, do your manipulation experiments in  
7 those areas, basically in areas that favor Spotted Owls,  
8 and discourage basically Barred Owl habitat which is  
9 basically, unfortunately, your old area habitat.

10           A lot of people are thinking doing experiments  
11 around Spotted Owls. We're suggesting doing experiments  
12 around the Barred Owls. Take the area where the Barred  
13 Owl is in, make it more dryer and more open. That seems  
14 to work in California because we actually have quite a  
15 few Spotted Owls living in those kinds of environments.

16           Third kind of item is basically this claim -- I  
17 heard it tonight -- was that in the draft plans with  
18 Option 1 and 2 that the only federal lands are in these  
19 MOCA's. You've got on page 145 and 153 just a couple of  
20 examples where they state only federal lands are used.  
21 Yet on page 49 in a footnote on the table basically  
22 describes your criteria and says in there habitat on  
23 nonfederal lands will provide habitat to meet the  
24 recovery criteria percentage.

25           So there seems to be a cross. There's a

1 mix-up. What you need to do is downplay your claim  
2 you're using only federal lands, because on that table  
3 it's pretty darn clear that you're going to rely on  
4 private lands in those areas.

5 The last thing is we want you to recognize  
6 that if you make a lot of claims about natural dynamic  
7 change of the habitat, we think that's going to happen  
8 over the next decade and centuries. Also, Spotted Owls  
9 are going to change. Spotted owl populations are going  
10 to go up and down as these habitats move around, and the  
11 Barred Owl population is going to change.

12 What we want the Service to clarify in the plan  
13 is how is the removal of Barred Owls -- why is that  
14 necessary when we know that that population is going to  
15 go up and down. Spotted owls go up and down. Seems  
16 like it meshes with your concept of changing dynamic  
17 ecosystems. But you don't want Spotted Owls -- you want  
18 them to stay the same but the habitat to move around  
19 seems to be somewhat of an inconsistency. We provided  
20 written comments, and thank you for your time.

21 MR. RUESINK: Rich Klug.

22 MR. KLUG: Rich Klug, K-l-u-g, for the last  
23 name. When I signed in, I gave an affiliation. And  
24 these comments are mine, not those of my affiliation.

25 I just want to say as long as regulatory, we

1 look at Barred Owls and Spotted Owls differently. I  
2 think we do. In fact, we need to address Barred Owls  
3 and their growing populations under some sort of either  
4 experimental manipulation or further study. I don't  
5 think we can reach the recovery goals of Spotted Owls  
6 without doing something with Barred Owls. And that's  
7 all I had.

8 MR. RUESINK: Thank you. Rich Fairbanks.

9 MR. FAIRBANKS: My name is Rich Fairbanks,  
10 R-i-c-h F-a-i-r-b-a-n-k-s. I represent the Wilderness  
11 Society. I believe the recovery team should strongly  
12 oppose political interference from Bush appointees in  
13 Washington, D.C., and use real expertise. Once you go  
14 down this road of analysis-free decision making, you're  
15 really going to lose your credibility fast. The agency,  
16 not you folks personally.

17 The recovery team should take a stand to oppose  
18 BLM's Western Plan Division's so-called "whopper"  
19 because it's pretty much going to torpedo. BLM does  
20 intend to eliminate both old growth preserves and  
21 streams, reservoirs, isolate owl populations on national  
22 forest lands and make it harder for owls to disperse to  
23 and from the Cascades' coast range and the Klamath  
24 mountains. Preventing a "whopper" should be a top  
25 priority, on par with addressing the Barred Owl.

1 "Whopper" is a serious problem in Western  
2 Oregon. The Bush recovery plan not only proposes fewer  
3 and smaller reserves than the Northwest Forest Plan, but  
4 the Bush plan also lowers the restoration project in the  
5 reserves from the current 80 percent suitable habitat to  
6 as low as 50 percent suitable habitat.

7 The Bush plan de-emphasizes the plan of  
8 habitat, and we believe this is irresponsible and  
9 misleading. The Bush plan says that the Northwest  
10 Forest Plan reserves can't stop the Barred Owl from  
11 invading. The truth is providing more and larger  
12 habitat reserves provides the best hope that Barred Owl  
13 and Spotted Owl can coexist.

14 The recovery plan should expand reserves, not  
15 shrink them. Fires will delay the recovery of owl  
16 habitat, killing seedlings and preventing the  
17 development of complex old forests with abundant legacy  
18 structures.

19 Salvage logging is a problem on a number of  
20 these lands that we're talking about. Owl recovery  
21 could result in a win-win for owls and people if the  
22 government would adopt a plan and protect remaining  
23 nature and old growth forests. Thank you.

24 MR. RUESINK: Scott Greacen.

25 MR. GREACEN: I'm Scott Greacen,

1 G-r-e-a-c-e-n. I represent the Environmental Protection  
2 Information Center. We're based in Humboldt County,  
3 California.

4 The Bush Administration has, once again,  
5 massively overreached its legal authority, reversed  
6 course on the Northwest Forest Plan in blatant  
7 contradiction on the scientific consensus on the needs  
8 of owl recovery.

9 This plan, if you can dignify it with that  
10 label, a document that says in many places it can't be  
11 enforced, is in the simplest terms the product of a  
12 corrupt process and a corrupt administration which  
13 pursues its political ends with no regard either for  
14 science or the expressed will of the American people.  
15 The requirement is that a recovery plan be based on the  
16 best available science contained not only in the  
17 Endangered Species Act but in the 2000 National Forest  
18 Act regulations the Forest Service claims to be  
19 following right now.

20 If this plan is, as you claim, based on the  
21 best available science, why wasn't it subject to peer  
22 review as our representatives on the committee requested  
23 prior to September? Why wasn't it subject to  
24 comprehensive peer review before it was released for  
25 public comment so the public would have the benefits of

1 peer review before it was asked to comment?

2           Why wasn't it a product of a recovery team  
3 composed, as all previous recovery teams have been, of  
4 top level Spotted Owl biologists rather than this ad hoc  
5 group of sort of folks from all kinds of different  
6 places? Why does the plan fundamentally depart in  
7 Option 1, which reduces by 27 percent the protected old  
8 growth reserves or completely reject in Option 2 the  
9 Northwest forest framework that it purports to be based  
10 on and follow?

11           The Northwest was endorsed in 2005 by the  
12 consensus group of Spotted Owl scientists who put  
13 together the Fish and Wildlife Services Status Review on  
14 the Spotted Owl. Why, even though the Spotted Owl is  
15 declining considerably faster than projected and  
16 anticipated by the Northwest Forest Plan, steeper  
17 declines, increased number of threats and increased  
18 intensity of threats, does this plan propose to reduce  
19 the amount of protected habitat? So fundamentally  
20 illogical, no amount of public relations can overcome  
21 it.

22           Why, if this plan is based on the best  
23 available science, does it reduce the habitat threshold  
24 for protected areas in California from the current 80  
25 percent to 50 percent? There's no justification for

1 that.

2 Why, if this plan is based on the best  
3 available science, has it based its most radical  
4 portions on only two studies, both the authors of which  
5 have now cautioned strongly against such overbroad --  
6 why has Dr. Gale, Jay Ensley on the House Committee of  
7 National Resources say they strongly believe both  
8 Options 1 and 2 is, quote, "at least a misinterpretation  
9 of my research results and at worst deliberate misuse.  
10 The team has deliberately ignored my warnings," she  
11 charges. We await your answers.

12 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Greacen.

13 Lynn Ryan, you're our next speaker.

14 MS. RYAN: My name is Lynn Ryan, L-y-n-n  
15 R-y-a-n. I'm conservation co-chair for the Sierra Club,  
16 with over 1300 members in northwestern California. My  
17 north group is over in the Eureka area on the coast.

18 On May 9th, a member of a Northern Spotted Owl  
19 Recovery Team testified before the House Committee on  
20 Natural Resources. Dr. Della Salla made three main  
21 points: One, that what was supposed to be a  
22 science-based recovery plan has been derailed by  
23 political interference.

24 Two, that recommended habitat reserves are  
25 considerably less than under the existing Northwest

1 Forest Plan.

2 And, three, the Forest Service and BLM were  
3 allowed an inappropriate amount of influence resulting  
4 in a plan that's not based on the best available  
5 science.

6 Dr. Della Salla's testimony detailed a pattern  
7 of actions by the Bush Administration to open more  
8 federal land to logging by reducing the acreage of owl  
9 conservation areas. The team assembled to prepare an  
10 updated recovery plan did not include any  
11 well-recognized, independent owl biologists.

12 When the team submitted a consensus draft plan  
13 anchored in the current network of fixed habitat  
14 reserves, it was rejected by an Oversight Committee of  
15 high-ranking Agricultural and Interior officials for not  
16 being flexible enough.

17 The Oversight Committee included the now  
18 infamous Julie McDonald, who recently resigned as Deputy  
19 Assistant Secretary for Parks, Fish and Wildlife.

20 The recovery team and agency staff were  
21 directed to devise an Option 2, which did not rely on  
22 fixed habitat reserves, but instead would let the  
23 federal land management use their discretion in locating  
24 habitat blocks.

25 Dr. Della Salla emphasized that Option 2 is

1 neither a product of the recovery team nor the result of  
2 consensus.

3           While Option 1 could cut protected owl habitat  
4 by one-fourth, Option 2 could result in even greater  
5 reductions. The recovery team estimated that over  
6 800,000 acres of old-growth habitat could be left out of  
7 the network of habitat blocks, compared to Option 1.

8           The recovery team was directed to minimize the  
9 importance of habitat loss in Spotted Owl declines and  
10 emphasize competition from Barred Owls. The team was  
11 told to base habitat recommendations not on the vast  
12 body of research linking Spotted Owls to old-growth  
13 forests, but rather on a few studies in the southern  
14 part of the owl's range that found the birds using a  
15 mixture of forest age classes. This was despite those  
16 studies' authors cautioning using their data for forest  
17 management actions.

18           The Spotted Owl is declining more rapidly than  
19 anticipated when it was listed as threatened in 1990.  
20 Therefore, it requires more protection of old-growth  
21 forest, not less.

22           Option 2 should be rejected outright. Fish and  
23 Wildlife recently agreed to peer review the draft plan,  
24 as the recovery team requested last September. This  
25 review must be scientifically rigorous and performed by

1 Spotted Owl experts from academia and government. Their  
2 recommendations should be used to rewrite the recovery  
3 plan without further political interference. Thank you.

4 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Ms. Ryan.

5 Diane Beck.

6 MS. BECK: Good evening. My name is Diane  
7 Beck, B-e-c-k. I live in Niland, California, on the  
8 coast. I'm conservation chair of the Redwood Chapter  
9 Sierra Club, and my words tonight are on its behalf.

10 The Redwood Chapter, with over 11,000 members  
11 in northwestern California, has been concerned with the  
12 protection of old-growth forest, including your species  
13 and ecosystems, for a great many years.

14 This so-called recovery plan appears to weaken  
15 protection for the Northern Spotted Owl while pretending  
16 the opposite. While the NSO is declining more rapidly  
17 than originally expected, both options in the recovery  
18 plan envision further loss of habitat on public lands.

19 In last Sunday's Contra Costa Times, we find  
20 the following quote: "Julie McDonald resigned April 30  
21 as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Department of  
22 Interior a month after the Department's Office of  
23 Inspector General issued a scathing report that accused  
24 her of altering scientific reports in the U.S. Fish and  
25 Wildlife Service Endangered Species Programs and

1 improperly leaking internal reports to industry groups  
2 and friends."

3 The March 23 Inspector General's report  
4 concluded that McDonald, an engineer with no background  
5 in biology, quote, "has been heavily involved with the  
6 editing, commenting on, and reshaping the endangered  
7 species programs scientific reports from the field,"  
8 close quote.

9 Furthermore, quote, "The Wildlife agency's  
10 Deputy Director Marshall Jones described McDonald to the  
11 Inspector General's inspector as a Bush Administration  
12 attack dog.

13 We're demanding that the science be taken  
14 seriously by the Fish and Wildlife Service and the  
15 Department of Interior go back to the drawing board and  
16 involve good academic and government biologists and keep  
17 special interests out of it. Biology and the Endangered  
18 Species Act should drive Northern Spotted Owl policy  
19 rather than special interest policy dragging the science  
20 and the law around by the neck. Thank you.

21 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

22 Gregg Hein.

23 MR. HEIN: My name is Gregg Hein, G-r-e-g-g  
24 H-e-i-n. The recovery plan is trying to roll back and  
25 put logging before conservation. Both recovery options

1 in the draft plan are a step back from the protections  
2 afforded in the Northwest Forest Plan. The recovery  
3 plan should expand the reserves, not shrink them. And I  
4 believe the recovery plan should prohibit the logging  
5 and suitable habitat.

6 There's no scientific evidence that logging and  
7 suitable habitat is beneficial to Spotted Owls. The  
8 owls prefer old-growth forest and complex structure,  
9 including lots of snags and deadwood. Logging always  
10 simplifies the forest and makes it less suitable for  
11 owls.

12 Guidelines for land managers could be  
13 discretionary, I feel, unacceptable. Both recovery  
14 plans are not adequate enough to recover the Northern  
15 Spotted Owl. And finally, I think the plan should be  
16 started over and develop a recovery plan that protects  
17 all suitable habitat and restores what has been lost.  
18 Thank you.

19 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Hein.

20 Ryan Henson.

21 MR. HENSON: Good evening. Ryan Henson,  
22 R-y-a-n H-e-n-s-o-n. I live in Redding.

23 Some other folks have shared their -- well,  
24 first of all, let me say that I left my remarks at home,  
25 where they do me the most good. I'll have to wing it a

1 little.

2           Some people shared they're from timber  
3 families. I'm from one, too, from Mendocino County.  
4 Despite that, or in large part of that, I'm concerned  
5 that both of the recovery options will, if implemented,  
6 could result in once again an increase in blight on  
7 public lands.

8           I feel the right kind of activities we should  
9 be pursuing, the thing of young stands to decrease fire  
10 danger and trying to get fire back into the ecosystem;  
11 instead, I see these plans basically reducing  
12 protections for late serial stands. And I think, if  
13 anything, we need to protect all of the remaining  
14 old-growth forest.

15           I was fairly shocked, actually, despite the  
16 e-mails I've been seeing -- I often reserve judgment  
17 until I actually see documents myself. I was fairly  
18 shocked when I read the two options. They really do  
19 decrease the protections provided by the Northwest  
20 Forest Plan. And I think it's disingenuous to call that  
21 recovery, as it was for the Bush Administration to call  
22 their pollution initiative the -- what is it? -- the  
23 "Clear Skies Initiative." I urge you to go back to the  
24 drawing board and redo it. Thank you.

25           MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Henson.

1 Suann Prigmore.

2 MS. PRIGMORE: S-u-a-n-n P-r-i-g-m-o-r-e.

3 Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. And I  
4 want to thank Daryl Chase and the gentleman that  
5 followed him. They presented a very clear and educated  
6 view of the habitat that the Spotted Owl and the Barred  
7 Owl both can share.

8 Now, I work with Daryl Chase in a certain  
9 capacity. He rehabilitates the wildlife and I fly them  
10 to places to be relocated. I've flown owls down to  
11 Southern California to be put into education facilities  
12 and the like. But as far as prepared remarks, I found  
13 it difficult to get beyond the fact that I think  
14 shooting the Barred Owls to protect the Spotted Owl is  
15 one of the most ridiculous, silly proposals I have ever  
16 heard.

17 I have to ask you why the Spotted Owl is more  
18 important than the Barred Owl? And I sort of think I  
19 have an answer of why you all are doing this. Not you  
20 three, but the agency. I think it's an effort to  
21 protect your position of many years ago when you used  
22 the Spotted Owl, the spurious argument of the Spotted  
23 Owl to destroy a timber industry and to take livelihoods  
24 from men and also take away their pensions. So I hope  
25 you don't continue with this, and I really hope that you

1 don't go shooting the Barred Owls to protect a Spotted  
2 Owl. Thank you.

3 MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comments.

4 Bill Oliver.

5 MR. OLIVER: My name is Bill Oliver,  
6 O-l-i-v-e-r. I'm president of the Wintu Chapter of the  
7 National Audubon Societies, serving over 300 people in  
8 Shasta County. I want to reiterate my good friend Daryl  
9 Chase and Suann Prigmore, they've stolen my thunder  
10 quite a bit.

11 When our chapter looked at the draft proposal,  
12 the immediate concern we had was concerning -- was the  
13 Barred Owl question which was treated rather vaguely in  
14 the plan. We weren't sure what you've mystically --  
15 what they call removal would be. However, we had a  
16 problem with it both philosophically and practically.

17 As Daryl Chase said, there's much to be said  
18 for the speculation that the Barred Owl and Spotted Owl  
19 were once the same species and separated when the middle  
20 of the country became dry and inhospitable, and they've  
21 gone their separate evolutionary ways, and now they've  
22 come back.

23 And there's something to be said, and I think  
24 there's evidence, that the two species are interbreeding  
25 on occasion. And if so, as Daryl would say, the chances

1 of ethnic cleansing, that would seem to be rather  
2 impossible.

3 And so as a practical matter, I don't think it  
4 would work. And as a public relations fiasco, I would  
5 certainly urge you to rethink this. We don't want to  
6 spend public money on something that would have no  
7 chance of success. And even if it had success in a  
8 small area, what good, what practical value would be  
9 this because the Barred Owl is here to stay, I'm sure,  
10 and there's no way to prevent that. Thank you.

11 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Oliver.

12 Our next speaker is Michelle Berditshevsky.

13 MS. BERDITSHEVSKY: I'm Michelle  
14 Berditshevsky, M-i-c-h-e-l-l-e  
15 B-e-r-d-i-t-s-c-h-e-v-s-k-y, 14 letters. And I  
16 represent the Mt. Shasta Bio Regional Ecology Center.  
17 It's hard being 16 on the list because what I want to  
18 say has all been said, but I will add my two cents  
19 worth.

20 The Northwest Forest Plan has been a key tool  
21 for protecting the ancient forests in our region  
22 throughout the northwest. And we love the Northwest  
23 Forest Plan. We really don't want to see it being  
24 messed with. We don't want to see the protections be  
25 reduced. I think it's a good process. It went through

1 many, many years of public and scientific agency input,  
2 and this was a culmination really as far as forest  
3 protection.

4           The Bush recovery plan is an impoverishment of  
5 these protections. It gives too much discretion to  
6 local managers to be influenced by special interests.  
7 It's artificial to separate the Spotted Owl from other  
8 species because we're talking about protecting a whole  
9 ecosystem, and we should allow large enough areas so  
10 that all the species can coexist.

11           We're in favor of fixed habitat reserves, not  
12 reducing the areas, using best available science. And  
13 something I haven't heard mentioned -- maybe this is one  
14 original point I have -- is that I think there would be  
15 other impacts of the recovery plan besides just on the  
16 owl. I mean impacts in terms of reducing, you know,  
17 trees that help global warming, and I think actually  
18 that was mentioned.

19           I think there would be increased logging, and I  
20 think these are not good outcomes that should be  
21 analyzed in terms of this recovery plan. So that's  
22 about it for now. We really encourage you to maintain  
23 the protections that we have. Thank you.

24           MR. RUESINK: Thank you for your comment.  
25 Robert Carey.

1 MR. CAREY: Good evening. My name is Robert  
2 Carey, C-a-r-e-y. I'm a certified wildlife biologist.  
3 We manage about 300,000 acres of private timber land in  
4 northeastern California.

5 I want to start by saying that one question  
6 specific to the recovery plan is written, and it's  
7 recovery criteria No. 2. And it addresses a stable or  
8 increasing population over a ten-year period, but then  
9 it says "except for several provinces, including the  
10 California Cascades province." And I'm unclear as to  
11 whether or not that criteria is to be increased or  
12 reduced based on those exclusions.

13 I know for a fact after surveying for Spotted  
14 Owls over about the last 13 years, we run into Spotted  
15 Owls on the Cascade province on the east side. We have  
16 roughly one response for every probably 600 to 700  
17 survey calling events that we undergo. And whether or  
18 not that province is actually functioning as  
19 contributing to the population of viability is unclear  
20 to me.

21 As a biologist, I think that criteria needs to  
22 be clarified in the recovery plan as to whether or not  
23 that conclusion -- something about a ten-year  
24 stabilizing population, or something less, or whether or  
25 not that segment of the population is actually

1 contributing to the overall population of viability.

2           Along those lines, there's still uncertainty  
3 between the federal regulations and the state  
4 regulations with respect to where the actual range of  
5 the Northern Spotted Owl is.

6           Forest practices rules, California forest  
7 practice rules currently indicate the range line  
8 continues eastward to Highway 139 in Modoc County. When  
9 you look at all the Federal Register documents and all  
10 the descriptions and depictions of the Cascade province,  
11 that line stops just immediately inside Modoc County.

12           So I would hope the service can provide  
13 guidance to the state and their regulatory frameworks  
14 that clearly define where Spotted Owl regulations apply.  
15 Because as a private land manager currently, it's not  
16 clear to me. And we have had in the past discrepancies  
17 over whether or not the regulatory requirements aimed  
18 towards Spotted Owl conservation apply to private lands.

19           In some of those regions where there is that  
20 inconsistency within the regulation, I'm hoping the  
21 service can provide clear guidance to the state as to  
22 where those things need to be addressed. I was very  
23 glad to see the Spotted Owl recovery plan has addressed  
24 standard -- replacing wildfires as a critical impact on  
25 the Spotted Owl components.

1           Clearly within the last hundred years or so the  
2 natural disturbance regimes within this part of the  
3 world have been clearly disrupted and ecological  
4 processes were no longer functioning properly prior to.

5           One of the problems is fuel loading, fire  
6 suppression. And I was very encouraged to see that  
7 recovery plan reduction of wildfire into the ecosystem  
8 as part of maintaining the systems that have clearly  
9 dominated this part of the world for several millenium.

10           Anyway, thanks very much.

11           MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Mr. Carey.

12           Yvonne Keefauver.

13           MS. KEEFAUVER: My name is Y-v-o-n-n-e  
14 K-e-e-f-a-u-v-e-r. First thing I'd like to do is say  
15 Fish and Wildlife are unique. You're awesome that your  
16 job is to protect wildlife, and I think you're doing a  
17 good job, but somehow I think something went astray  
18 here.

19           I am a certified raptor handler from Davis  
20 Raptor Center, for the California Raptor Center, IWRC  
21 certified. And so what I do is -- I have to read my  
22 notes. So my commitment is to facilitate these birds;  
23 to rescue, rehabilitate, and release injured or orphaned  
24 raptors. My specialty are owls.

25           So my fear is that what your people are trying

1 to do by killing these Barred Owls will set a precedent  
2 to kill predators. Besides humans, which are the worst,  
3 some of their predators are Great Horned Owls. What are  
4 you going to do with them? What are you going to do  
5 with the ravens, the Cooper's Hawks, the Red-tailed  
6 Hawks that prey on the Spotted Owlettes?

7 So this sets a precedent to kill whatever else  
8 gets in their way that goes after them. I protect these  
9 raptors. I don't want nothing to happen to my raptors.  
10 And by the way, we heard this before, the male Spotted  
11 Owl is mating with this dreaded Amazon Barred female and  
12 they're having hybrids, so must not be that dangerous  
13 between the two.

14 What will happen next? Will we kill -- not we.  
15 Would the hybrids be in danger being knocked off, too?  
16 Why don't we just let nature do its course with these  
17 animals. She's been doing it for millions of years.  
18 Facilitate them, let them be. Just keep the loggers  
19 out. Sorry about that, but keep the loggers out, keep  
20 it a no hunting zone. And your little bubble is good  
21 but leave the animals alone.

22 Like Mr. Chase said, this is the same thing as  
23 that people cleansing. Both of these, they came to  
24 Canada, went to the east. They don't migrate but they  
25 follow the food. You look at a hay field. The coyotes,

1 let them eat the mice. They follow the food. Those  
2 Spotted Owls and Barred Owls both went where they're at  
3 because of humankind interference, and they're going to  
4 keep moving. Though if they deplete the supply there,  
5 they'll move. That's what they do.

6 We have the little Mexican owl. They don't  
7 know what these little lines are around their little  
8 areas like you're trying to do. That's messing with  
9 nature. You know, that's a natural ecosystem they're  
10 in, so please leave them alone because I cannot stand to  
11 see anybody kill an owl. For one thing, the Barred Owl  
12 is protected wildlife, sir. That's your job, is to  
13 protect them.

14 They're protected. How can we shoot them? I  
15 know you can't catch them. I've been trying to catch  
16 one recently. They're really hard to catch. The best  
17 thing to do -- I've been up trees trying to catch them.  
18 The best thing to do is leave them alone. They're doing  
19 their thing. They're mating. They're breeding. Okay.

20 And I do really respect you guys. I like Fish  
21 and Wildlife. You do wonderful services. This is a  
22 little like -- I almost think this Spotted Owl is a  
23 little bit of a political tool. Why don't we just leave  
24 them alone. Thank you.

25 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

1           Earlier, Lawrence Whitfield filled out a  
2 registration card. When I called on Mr. Whitfield, he  
3 said he did not wish to speak at this time.

4           Is Mr. Whitfield in the audience now? I  
5 thought I did see him leave.

6           And also Lynn Ryan had filled out another  
7 request card to speak. Lynn Ryan, do you want to make  
8 another comment here this evening?

9           MS. RYAN: Yes, I would.

10          MR. RUESINK: Go ahead.

11          MS. RYAN: I did speak earlier. I was speaking  
12 for the Sierra Club.

13          MR. RUESINK: Would you introduce yourself.

14          MS. RYAN: My name is Lynn Ryan, L-y-n-n  
15 R-y-a-n. This time I'm speaking for myself. I'm a  
16 Registered Nurse in Arcata, California. I'm one of  
17 those citizen volunteer environmental advocates you hear  
18 about. Someone who has chosen to take time off work,  
19 spend her own money and drive seven hours round trip to  
20 help defend a bird and its habitat from human-caused  
21 depredation.

22           I was similarly involved in the '90s during the  
23 Northwest Forest Plan during the listing process for the  
24 Northern Spotted Owl and for the Northwest Forest Plan.  
25 I believe I came here to Redding and did something very

1 similar in the late '80s and early '90s.

2 The consensus decisions reached during that  
3 Northwest Forest Plan process were fair, scientific, and  
4 equitable. Protect river corridors, don't log on steep  
5 slopes, leave areas of old growth forest alone. Still  
6 human settlement, forest clearing, home building, and  
7 logging on private land helped decrease Spotted Owls by  
8 whatever percent; 7 percent is what I read when I was  
9 reading the literature.

10 As the Northwest Forest Plan was systematically  
11 dismantled over the past ten years, and I watched the  
12 decisions being announced quietly by the current  
13 administration in Washington, D.C., usually on Fridays  
14 at 5:00 p.m. with little or no fanfare, threats to the  
15 health of our public lands increased.

16 Now this plan with its hard-fisted,  
17 bureaucratic, nonscientific oversight committee is  
18 attempting to further shape policy with destruction of  
19 habitat and a shifty pattern of shifting mosaics. It's  
20 flexibility and adaptive management allowing for quicker  
21 changes to deal with fire, disease, and invasion of  
22 intruder species is driving this recovery plan, then all  
23 options must allow for and give guidance to managers in  
24 order to increase managed owl conservation area network  
25 in response to threats.

1 Both option 1 and option 2 allow managers to  
2 shrink protections for owl habitat relative to the  
3 Northwest Forest Plan. Where is the advice to managers  
4 to increase habitat as needed for recovery? I'm a  
5 nurse. I read and understand scientific literature. I  
6 care for patients based on science and what is good for  
7 their recovery. I recognize when hospital business,  
8 bureaucracy, or insurance company interests are  
9 obstructing the long-term recovery of my patients.

10 I see this draft plan as being good for  
11 business overshadowed by administrative management and  
12 bad for owl habitat. In my nurse life, I advocate for  
13 the health of my patients, just as today I'm advocating  
14 for these Spotted Owls that are not hear to speak for  
15 themselves.

16 The recovery team should strongly oppose  
17 political interference from Bush appointees and work  
18 toward a general recovery plan that builds toward the  
19 protection in the Northwest Forest Plan.

20 Take a stand to oppose BLM Western Oregon plan  
21 revision. Preventing that plan revision should be a top  
22 priority on par with addressing the Barred Owl. The  
23 recovery plan should prohibit logging in suitable  
24 habitat. Thank you.

25 MR. RUESINK: Thank you, Ms. Ryan.

1           At this time, I've called the names of all  
2 those who wish to speak and filled out a registration  
3 card. If anyone else would like to make comments, I  
4 would ask that you go to the registration desk and sign  
5 in, fill out a registration card, and we'll be happy to  
6 give you an opportunity to do so.

7           If we do not have additional speakers right  
8 now, or when we do have additional speakers, we can open  
9 the meeting back up. If we do not have any additional  
10 right now, I would encourage you take advantage of the  
11 display materials outside this room and to talk to the  
12 staff, the biological experts that are there, and maybe  
13 they can answer questions and give you information that  
14 you're after. A question, I guess.

15           MR. BENNETT: Doug Bennett. I have a question  
16 about will we be able to get a transcript of all the  
17 written and public comments you're going to be  
18 accumulating through this process.

19           MR. RUESINK: Can we go off the record and we  
20 can talk to you about that and how best to get a copy of  
21 a transcript.

22           We have someone else that's registered to  
23 speak.

24           MR. BENNETT: Do I need to register again to  
25 supplement my remarks? Is that necessary?

1 MR. RUESINK: If we don't have a lot of  
2 additional speakers and you would like to speak again, I  
3 will allow that. I just want to make sure that everyone  
4 has an opportunity before we come back to repeat  
5 speakers.

6 Forgive me on the pronunciation of the first  
7 name, Moira Goodwin.

8 MS. GOODWIN: Thank you. My name is Moira  
9 Goodwin. I'm just a citizen of Redding. My husband and  
10 I walk every evening on the west side trail with our  
11 dog, and we marvel every evening at the beauty of nature  
12 and what God has created. When I read you were going to  
13 be shooting the Barred Owl, fingering it as the culprit,  
14 I knew I had to come and say something. All I can say  
15 is don't play God. Leave the Barred Owl alone. Thank  
16 you.

17 MR. RUESINK: Thank you. Jim Havens.

18 MR. HAVENS: Jim Havens, H-a-v-e-n-s. I come  
19 before you tonight; I've listened to all these fine  
20 people that know a lot about the Species Act. Well, I  
21 know a little bit about the Species Act as far as  
22 affecting people in our area and on the Pacific  
23 Northwest. You know, I came from Southern California to  
24 Northern California in 1966. I was in the lumber and  
25 paper industry, and it was a good 30 years, but I was

1 one of the fortunate ones that retired in 1996,  
2 somewhere in that area.

3 But anyhow, what I wanted to tell you was when  
4 the Species Act came in in 1990, I believe, all of the  
5 sudden the Spotted Owl issue came to Northern  
6 California. And it affected the lumber industry, the  
7 paper industry. And as time went on, jobs were cut,  
8 lumber mills were shut down, people lost their homes,  
9 lost their pensions, and it was a downward spiral.

10 And now I see another group coming before us to  
11 tell us about saving this owl or that owl. What about  
12 saving the people? What are your consequences that come  
13 about from initiating anything that affects people?  
14 Sure, it affects the wildlife, but let Mother Nature  
15 take her course. And I believe that's about all I have  
16 to say. Thank you.

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

18 Again, I have no more cards or registrations of  
19 individuals wishing to make a comment. If you would  
20 like to make a second comment or supplement some  
21 additional ones, we can give you an opportunity to do  
22 that.

23 Would you please introduce yourself again.

24 MR. GREACEN: Thank you, sir. Scott Greacen,  
25 G-r-e-a-c-e-n, from the Environmental Protection

1 Information Center, Humboldt County.

2 I just want to touch briefly on the Barred Owl  
3 control issue. I think this is probably one of the most  
4 difficult aspects of this plan. My organization is one  
5 of a relatively few environmental groups that has  
6 actually endorsed control experiments targeted at the  
7 Barred Owl. I know that this is a very difficult issue  
8 for a lot of folks who handle owls.

9 We've heard from a lot of those folks here, and  
10 I don't think we should disregard those feelings, but I  
11 think it's really important to note that the scientific  
12 consensus on the need to at least look at the potential  
13 for how we can manage the encroachments of the Barred  
14 Owl is pretty clear. And I think we need to follow the  
15 scientists' lead even when it goes in places where we're  
16 not comfortable. I think that's about it. Thank you.

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

18 Does anyone else wish to speak at this time?  
19 We are scheduled to keep the meeting open until 9:30  
20 this evening, and we will be here if someone else comes  
21 in who wishes to speak or if one of you decides you do  
22 want to make a statement. But seeing no additional  
23 speakers -- maybe we do have an additional speaker.

24 Have you signed in, sir? Go ahead and speak,  
25 but I would like you to fill out a registration card so,

1 again, we have that information.

2 MR. DUVAL: Thank you. My name is Bill Duval,  
3 D-u-v-a-l. And after listening to Jim Havens and a lot  
4 of the other speakers here, I just have a comment to  
5 make relative to this, of course. And that is you're  
6 considering shooting the Barred Owl to save the Spotted  
7 Owl. I think, go along the same thing Jim was talking  
8 about, why consideration wasn't given to shooting the  
9 Spotted Owl to save the loggers. That's my reasoning.  
10 Thank you.

11 MR. RUESINK: Thank you.

12 Do we have any other comments or individuals  
13 that wish to speak at this time? If not, I would like  
14 to recess this meeting, again encourage you to take  
15 advantage of the information and the staff that is  
16 available outside this room. And if we do have  
17 additional speakers, we'll open the meeting back up and  
18 take those comments. So we're in recess. We're off the  
19 record.

20 (The hearing was in recess from 8:09 p.m. to  
21 9:15 p.m.)

22 MR. RUESINK: We're on the record. It is now  
23 approximately 9:15. The public meeting for the Northern  
24 Spotted Owl Recovery Plan in Redding has been in  
25 recess. We have not had any additional speakers since

1 we went in recess about an hour ago and everyone that  
2 was here for the meeting has left.

3 I see no additional speakers, so I would like  
4 to thank the speakers that did come out this evening,  
5 and I appreciate the time and the effort that they took  
6 in coming to the meeting and reviewing the material and  
7 in presenting comments on the Draft Recovery Plan for  
8 the Northern Spotted Owl. Those comments have been very  
9 informative. They will be fully considered in coming to  
10 a final decision, and this session is now closed. We're  
11 off the record.

12 (The proceedings were concluded at 9:17 p.m.)  
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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

STATE OF CALIFORNIA )  
COUNTY OF SHASTA )

I, DEBBIE J. BENSON, do hereby certify:

That said Public Meeting was taken down in stenographic shorthand by me, a Certified Shorthand Reporter, at the time and place therein stated, and was thereafter reduced to typewritten form using computer-aided transcription, and that the Public Meeting is a true record of testimony given.

I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for any of the parties hereto, or in any way interested in the event of this cause, and that I am not related to any of the parties hereto.

WITNESS MY HAND this 1st day of July, 2007.

  
DEBBIE J. BENSON  
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