



File Code: 2670

Date: May 6, 2011

Dr. Paul Henson
Field Supervisor
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office
2600 SE 98th Avenue, Suite 100
Portland, OR 97266

Dear Dr. Henson:

As you know, the Forest Service (FS) and Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) have been actively working together to address the concerns we identified in the draft revised Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan (RP) as discussed in the comment letter we submitted to you on January 21, 2011. I wish to express my appreciation for the FWS's willingness to work jointly with the FS and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as you develop the final RP.

Our comments at that time focused on several key issues: the limited collaboration that occurred during development of the draft, the lack of clarity and specificity in the document language, the potential for misinterpreting the role of the RP vs. the continued implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan (NFP), and several specific concerns related to Recovery Action 10 and 32 and Recovery Criterion 3.

Recently, our agencies have worked to refine the language in Recovery Actions 10 and 32 and Recovery Criterion 3 and to clarify the role of the RP in relationship to the NFP. We also appreciate the improvements you have made to acknowledge the need for active forest management and the role of forest restoration in the recovery of the Northern Spotted Owl.

We believe that with the improvements anticipated in the final RP, the effect on the FS vegetation management program will be substantially smaller than we originally estimated. The exact program impacts however, will be difficult to accurately assess until the final RP is complete and we are able to fully evaluate its effects. We continue to be interested in the Habitat Block Network Modeling Process (outlined in Appendix C), which has the potential to be a powerful new tool for resource managers, and we look forward to working closely with the FWS in the future.

Thank you again for your willingness to consider our input and to develop a closer collaborative relationship that recognizes the important role that the FS will play in achieving recovery objectives. I believe it is critical that our agencies continue to work together to create a successful recovery effort. If you have further questions, please contact Anne Zimmermann, 202.205.1671, azimmermann@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

/s/ James M. Pena (for)
JOEL D. HOLTROP
Deputy Chief, National Forest System

Regional Foresters, R-5 and R-6
Director, FM, WO

