

## Setting Disturbance Caps in areas of differing population vulnerability

Q: How do we apply a disturbance cap (DC), or regulate or prevent anthropogenic disturbance threats, in populations of differing size and vulnerability?

A: We need to set up a simple, repeatable process for evaluating what, if any, additional disturbance restrictions beyond the 3% base cap is necessary to maintain or increase the probability of persistence for areas of differing vulnerability.

Steps:

1. Review Table 2 from the COT report (and other appropriate supplemental information).
2. Use area/species experts (FWS/State?) to evaluate each of the vulnerability to extirpation for each of the 35 populations based on the threats in Table 2. (This can be done relatively quickly, and it can refer back to information from earlier drafts of the COT?)
3. Put each population or landscapes into “bins”
  - 3a. From Table 2 put each population into one of three “vulnerability categories” (bins):
    - High Vulnerability (HV)
    - Medium Vulnerability (MV)
    - Low Vulnerability (LV)
  - 3b. From State plans or other sources, put discrete mapped landscapes into relative categories of conservation priority (e.g., “core,” “large unfragmented blocks,” “connectivity,” etc.). Give each of these landscapes a relative conservation score or priority rank (e.g., Priority 1, 2, or 3)
4. Determine generalized levels of disturbance caps (or range) for the respective populations (3a) or landscapes (3b) in each of these vulnerability categories, based on current conditions and desired (or necessary) future condition if appropriate to meet COT objectives. For example:
  - High Vulnerability Population or Priority 1 Landscape gets a 0 – 0.5 % disturbance cap
  - Medium Vulnerability Population or Priority 2 Landscape gets = < 1.5% disturbance cap
  - Low Vulnerability Population or Priority 3 Landscape gets < 3% disturbance cap
5. Include Adaptive Management, where issues such as non-anthropogenic disturbance (e.g., wildfire) and other unanticipated impacts might affect a population’s “vulnerability category” and must be factored into subsequent decisions.

Notes:

A. Some threats in Table 2 may be more important than others in “scoring” vulnerability, such as “Isolated/small size” or “fire,” while other threats influence vulnerability less or are more manageable (e.g., “conifers”).

B. The approach is grounded in the COT report objectives and goals (e.g., pgs. 31-32, 34).

C. Areas outside of the PACs can be evaluated for targeted goals which are context-specific (e.g., connectivity, population expansion, etc.) as described in the COT (pgs. 36-37), but any impact in these areas are subject to no more than the 3% cap, and less is necessary based on site specifics and as denoted in steps 3b and 4, above.

Creed's comments:

Baseline not addressed. More defensible if no baseline is used and just for development. Keeping it simple would argue for a state-wide 3%--hesitate to add complexity to %, 1/640, lek buffers. ACECs for BOBs could have a reduced %. I have no idea why Pat D. said we are skeptical of BOBs. A BOB management zone would be NP & 2 in NW CO (4&5). NTT talks about capping PPH, not PGH.