

# **Draft Habitat Conservation Plan Strategy for Northern Spotted Owl<sup>1</sup> a.k.a NSO Cluster Management Strategies**

## **Establish northern spotted owl clusters in the North Coast Range.**

The North Coast Range is an area that has very limited populations of spotted owls, Federal ownership, and connectivity to owl populations in other areas, as well as poor habitat distribution. State forest lands, the largest single ownership within this area, are comprised of large blocks of land that provide the majority of habitat for the existing owl population. As a result, management of these lands will play a significant role in maintaining and recovering the owl population in this area over the next several decades.

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) has identified four spotted owl clusters in the North Coast Range (Astoria, Tillamook and Forest Grove Districts), totaling approximately 38,000 acres. In consultation with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), ODF identified cluster boundaries that would provide habitat sufficient to support important northern spotted owl activity centers and habitat until additional, actively used habitat can develop on the landscape over the next two to five decades. Information used to identify the location and distribution of the clusters included spotted owl survey information, spotted owl locations and estimated home ranges from telemetry monitoring 1995–1998, habitat conditions, and logical topographic boundaries. These clusters include spotted owl sites that have shown the best history of persistence and productivity in the North Coast Range.

Cluster management plans will be developed for each spotted owl cluster. No more than eight percent of a cluster area will be available for harvest activities in any decade, effectively deferring management in 60 percent of the cluster for the term of the Habitat Conservation Plan. The management deferred areas will include a core area around known nest sites. Harvest activities that are planned within the cluster will be designed to develop suitable habitat where it is lacking, and to maintain and enhance the characteristics of suitable habitat where it is present. All management activities will employ seasonal restrictions to protect nesting spotted owls.

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<sup>1</sup> Developed as a draft strategy for the attainment of a Federal Habitat Conservation Plan to cover both the Northwest and the Southwest Forest Management Plans. This document is called the Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan.