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Washington, D.C. 20250

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Route To:

Subject: Objection Response for the Inyo National Forest Land Management Plan Revision's Species of Conservation Concern

To: Regional Forester, Pacific Southwest Region

This is my response to the objections regarding the identification of Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) related to the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), draft Record of Decision (ROD), and the revised Land Management Plan (revised Plan) for the Inyo National Forest filed by Sierra Forest Legacy and the Center for Biological Diversity.

In addition to the two objections submitted and accepted, one of the Objectors requested Interested Person status related to the other objection filed. Each Objector and Interested Person will receive notification of my response. The final objection response is available on the Web site at http://www.fs.fed.us/objections and listed under Region 5 – Pacific Southwest Region, or hardcopy, upon request.

Background

The Inyo National Forest's 1988 Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) is being revised under the 2012 Planning Rule requirements. In coordination with the Inyo National Forest and pursuant to responsibilities and authorities under the 2012 Planning Rule (36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 219.(a)(3)), the Regional Forester determined the terrestrial wildlife, aquatic wildlife, and plant species meeting the criteria for SCC for the Inyo National Forest Plan and final EIS.

Building on the information provided by the Inyo National Forest, in a memo dated May 23, 2016, to the Forest Supervisors for the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests, the Pacific Southwest Regional Forester identified SCC for the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests' draft revised Forest Plans and draft EIS. The Pacific Southwest Regional staff and the interdisciplinary planning teams from the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests used the best available scientific information to develop the SCC list. Additionally, the Regional Forester noted the identification of SCC is a dynamic process. New scientific information and public input may prompt changes in the SCC list for the final EIS, final revised Forest Plan and any time in the future. The public had the opportunity to comment on the SCC list during the 90-day comment period for the Draft EIS.

On August 1, 2018, a memorandum was sent from the Regional Forester to the Inyo Forest Supervisor updating the SCC list for the Inyo National Forest's final revised Forest Plan.

The responsible official for the SCC list is Randy Moore, Regional Forester, Pacific Southwest Region. The Reviewing Officer for the SCC objection is the Chief of the Forest Service. I have been delegated the authority to represent Chief Victoria Christiansen.

Review and Consideration of Objection Issues

I convened a review team to look at the objection issues and the project record related to identification of SCC. On February 19, 2019, I took part, via conference call, in the Inyo National Forest revised Plan objection resolution meeting held in Bishop, California. The information and conversations occurring during the discussion of SCC objection issues were also used to inform my decision. I have enclosed the detailed review of the objection issues. The following is a summary of the issues raised in objection:

Issue 1: Identify black-backed woodpecker as SCC. Center for Biological Diversity and John Muir Project believe the rejection of the black-backed woodpecker (BBWO) as a SCC is arbitrary and capricious. They disagree with the rationale for not identifying BBWO as SCC. They believe: there are far fewer BBWO on the Inyo than the Forest Service suggests; the eBird.com reports identified as rationale for not identifying BBWO as SCC are not useful for understanding current populations numbers, population trajectory or for justification to reject the BBWO as SCC; and the Forest Service assertion the S2 status finding by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is not accurate because it is not based on all the available data, is in error. Objectors believe the Forest Service is in error suggesting the S2 status might change, as of 2018 it is still S2.

The review team examined the documentation and found it was sufficient in accordance with regulation and policy for identification of SCC. Each plant or animals species that was a Regional Forester's Sensitive Species (RFSS) was evaluated for inclusion as SCC. Those not identified as SCC were determined to not fit the definition for SCC. The documentation is contained within the record, including the criteria that defines what should be identified as SCC.

There was no violation of law, regulation, or policy. There is sufficient evidence to determine there is *not* a substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area. Therefore, the black-backed woodpecker is not an SCC.

The review team found the documentation supports the decision to not identify black-backed woodpecker as SCC. The review team suggests clarification in the record. See instructions.

Issue 2: Identify the Panamint alligator lizard as SCC. Center for Biological Diversity and John Muir Project believe the Panamint alligator lizard should be identified as a SCC. Specifically, they believe the Panamint alligator lizard is a Forest Service Sensitive Species for the Inyo National Forest and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently determined this species may qualify for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The CDFW recently included the Panamint alligator lizard in its updated list of California Amphibian and Reptile SCC. Despite these recent acknowledgements of threats to the species' persistence, no clear explanation is provided to explain why the Forest Service has determined the Panamint alligator lizard does not meet the qualifications to be included in the SCC list. In particular, Objectors believe the Forest Service has not sufficiently considered the threat of climate change, as the Panamint Alligator Lizard is considered to be at high risk of impacts due to climate change.

The review team found the documentation supports the decision to not identify Panamint alligator lizard as SCC.

Issue 3 Identify the northern goshawk as SCC. Sierra Forest Legacy believes the northern goshawk should be a SCC. They found the Rationales for Animal Species Considered for Designation as SCC (Animal Rationale) adequately defines the necessary ecological conditions

on which the northern goshawk depends. With the exception of failing to adequately analyze the effects of thinning on the key ecological conditions, the Animal Rationale found the threats of climate-related tree mortality and wildfire substantially threaten the species habitat and these threats are increasing in the plan area. The Objectors disagree with the conclusion there is not substantial concern for long-term persistence of the species in the plan area.

There was no violation of law, regulation, or policy. There is sufficient evidence to determine there is *not* a substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area. Therefore the northern goshawk is not an SCC.

The review team found the documentation supports the decision to not identify northern goshawk as SCC. The review team suggests clarification in the record. See instructions.

Reviewing Officer Instructions to Regional Forester
As a result of the Objection review, I am instructing you to do the following:

- Clarify in the record why historic post-fire harvest levels, and economical, legal, and technical harvest limitations indicate the potential for future post-fire logging of BBWO habitat would be under 33 percent per year.
- Clarify the record with specific information related to past average acres burned in northern goshawk habitat and projected future acres burned.

Conclusions
The black-backed woodpecker, Panamint alligator lizard and northern goshawk were analyzed for identification as SCC. The region utilized the criteria set forth in Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.12 § 12.52 c-d. These three species were determined not to meet the established criteria as SCC for one or more reasons as documented in the Animal Rationale. The Objectors argued the evidence indicates these species should be included as SCC. As the Forest Service implements the revised Inyo Forest Plan, you may need to review the identification of a species as SCC, particularly these three species. If that occurs, please follow the process described in FSH 1909.12 § 21.22b.

By copy of this letter and notification of availability on the internet, I am notifying all Objectors and Interested Persons of my decision. This response represents the final decision of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on these objections (36 CFR 219.57(b)(3)).

LESLIE A. C. WELDON
Reviewing Officer for the Chief

cc: Pacific Southwest Regional Forester; Augustine, Justine; Hanson, Chad; Britting, Susan

Inyo Species of Conservation Concern

REVIEW TEAM ANALYSIS

Introduction

The Inyo National Forest's *1988 Forest Land and Resource Management Plan* (Forest Plan) is being revised under the 2012 planning rule requirements. In coordination with the Inyo National Forest (NF), and pursuant to responsibilities and authorities under the 2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219(a)(3)), the Regional Forester determined the terrestrial wildlife, aquatic wildlife, and plant species meeting the criteria for species of conservation concern (SCC) for the Inyo NF revised Land and Resource Management Plan (revised Plan) and final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Building upon the information provided by the Inyo NF, the Pacific Southwest Regional Forester identified SCC for the Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra NF draft revised Plans and draft EIS (memorandum from Regional Forester to the Forest Supervisors for the Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra NFs, May 23, 2016). The list was developed by Pacific Southwest Regional staff and the interdisciplinary planning teams from all three forests (Inyo, Sequoia and Sierra NFs) using best available scientific information (BASI). In the memo, the Regional Forester noted the identification of SCC is a dynamic process. New scientific information and public input may prompt changes in the SCC list for the final EIS, final revised Plan and any time in the future. The public had a chance to comment on the SCC list during the 90-day comment period for the draft EIS.

On August 1, 2018, a memorandum was sent from the Regional Forester to the Inyo NF Supervisor updating the SCC list for the Inyo NF's final revised Plan.

Regional Guidance

The Pacific Southwest Region documented the process for identifying animal and plant species of conservation concern for the Inyo NF in two separate documents, *Rationales for Animal Species Considered for Designation as Species of Conservation Concern* (Animal Rationale) and *Rationales for Plant Species Considered for Designation as Species of Conservation Concern.* The objections received focused on animal species only. The region followed the direction for identifying SCC contained in the 2012 Planning Rule and Forest Service Handbook (FSH) at 1909.12 – Land Management Planning Handbook.

The specific process followed by the region is outlined in FSH 1909.12 § 12.52 c-d. Databases, scientific studies, local information and expert knowledge were all considered when evaluating species for identification as SCC.

The 2012 Planning Rule at 36 CFR 219.9(c) *species of conservation concern* states:

> For purposes of this subpart, a species of conservation concern is a species, other than federally recognized threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, that is known to occur in the plan area and for which the regional forester has determined that the best available scientific information indicates substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area.

Based on reviews of BASI for all species considered, twenty three animal species and 105 plant species were identified as SCC for the Inyo NF.

Objectors

There were two objections related to species identified as SCC. The first objection was filed by Sierra Forest Legacy, (lead Objector), Sierra Club, Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation, California Wilderness Coalition, Western Watersheds Project, Friends of the Inyo, Defenders of Wildlife, California Native Plant Society, Mono Lake Committee, The Wilderness Society, Forest Issues Group, and Lassen Forest Preservation Group. The second objection was filed by the Center for Biologic Diversity (lead Objector) and the John Muir Project.

Objectors disagree with the Pacific Southwest Region's decision to not identify black-backed woodpecker, Panamint alligator lizard, and northern goshawk as SCC. The process used to identify SCC on the Inyo NF is documented on the Pacific Southwest Regions website: https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/r5/landmanagement/planning/?cid=STELPRD3847418

Summary of Objection Issues

Issue 1: The black-backed woodpecker should be identified as a SCC:

Objector: Center for Biological Diversity, lead and John Muir Project (joint objection)

Objectors believe the rejection of the black-backed woodpecker (BBWO) as a SCC is arbitrary and capricious. They disagree with the rationale for not identifying BBWO as SCC. In particular:

- Objectors believe far fewer BBWO exist on the Inyo than the Forest Service suggests.
- Objectors believe the ebird.com reports identified as rationale for not identifying BBWO as SCC are not useful for understanding current population numbers and population trajectory, and they should not be used as justification for rejecting the BBWO as SCC.
- Objectors believe the Forest Service is in error asserting the S2 status finding by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) is not accurate because the status is not based on all available data. The Forest Service suggested the S2 status might change. Objectors point out as of 2018 it has not.
- Objectors believe the rejection of BBWO is incorrect asserting the BBWO may experience as much as 70% or greater contraction of its range due to climate change.
- Objectors believe the analysis did not appropriately incorporate the BASI.

Objector's Proposed resolution

- The regional forester must designate the BBWO as SCC.

Review Team Response:

The Animal Rationale document (p.169-177) provides the explanation for why the Forest Service has determined the BBWO does not meet the criteria to be included on the SCC list. The following summarizes the reason for not listing the BBWO as SCC on the Inyo NF:

- demonstrated wide distribution across the Sierra Nevada and Cascades
- no detectable decline in California
- no limiting habitat factors within the plan area, high potential for continued wildfires and burned habitat creation, and
- number of detections within the Inyo NF plan area

Objectors were concerned the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) listed BBWO as S2, and although the Forest Service believes this will change, as of 2018 CDFW still lists it as S2 (imperiled). The Animal Rationale discusses this issue:

> In January 2016, California Department of Fish and Wildlife released a Special Animals List (California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Special Animals List, January 2016: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=109406&inline) which ranked the black-backed woodpecker as S2 (imperiled). This imperiled ranking appears to be at odds with the May 2013 Fish and Game Commission finding in California that listing the black-backed woodpecker as Threatened or Endangered under CESA[1] was not warranted after a careful year-long review of the species (California Fish and Game Commission 2013). The ranking of the species by California Department of Fish and Wildlife as S2 was based on the records in the CNDDB[2] database. As part of the ranking process California Department of Fish and Wildlife did not consider other data sources when updating their rankings. There were 59 CNDDB records for black-backed woodpeckers which included approximately 24 records from eBird, 19 records from Institute for Bird Populations, 9 records from NRIS (Forest Service database), and 2 records from C. Hanson; however, these are only a fraction of the sightings or records from these sources. Additionally, CNDDB did not include any records that were identified as collected by Point Blue Conservation Science (PBCS). The Forest Service is working with California Department of Fish and Wildlife to update the records for the species to include all the records from Institute for Bird Populations and Point Blue Conservation Science, as well as any other sources. Prior to the CNDDB update, the state rank for the species was S3S4 (Vulnerable to Apparently Secure).

Objectors are concerned the Animal Rationale relied on the decision by CDFW and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to not list the BBWO under California Endangered Species Act (CESA) or Endangered Species Act (ESA) as a reason for not listing BBWO as SCC. Objectors point out the standard for identifying a species as SCC is much different than the standards for either listing under CESA or ESA. We agree there are different standards, but the information utilized by California Fish and Game Commission is considered BASI. The BASI was used in assessing whether BBWO should be identified as a SCC. We concluded there was not substantial concern for the BBWO's ability to persist in the plan area.

The Animal Rationale utilized the results of the BBWO monitoring project which included data from seven years (2009-2015) (Siegel et al. 2016). This study showed no significant evidence of a temporal trend in occupancy rates during the seven years. In addition, the Animal Rationale looked at the work of Roberts et al., 2015 which studied BBWO in unburned "green" forest transects. Roberts et al. found, "Although the occupancy estimates are largely similar to our previous analyses, the pattern among years implies a different interpretation of the trend over time which appears to be stable rather than strongly decreasing as we reported following the 2014 field season."

Climate change was identified as a potential threat to the persistence of the BBWO. The Animal Rationale looked at several studies. The Point Blue species distribution models for the projected future distribution of BBWO based on various future climate projections was specific to California. The Audubon study was done at a large scale (the US and Canada) using Breeding Bird Survey, which provided limited data regarding BBWO in the Sierra Nevada. The Point Blue modeling effort used a larger number of records (not just the Inyo NF) to model BBWO distribution. Although neither model was specific to the Inyo NF, the results can be used to determine potential climate change impacts on the

[1] CESA – California Endangered Species Act
[2] CNDDB – California Natural Diversity Database

BBWO in general. The Point Blue study concluded the BBWO was "presumed stable" under both climate scenarios.

The Animal Rationale does a thorough job of reviewing recent literature related to many aspects of BBWO persistence, and potential threats to their persistence. We agree with the conclusions reached in the Animal Rationale,

> Based on several factors, including the black-backed woodpecker's range across the Sierra Nevada and Cascades; no detectable decline in California; no limiting habitat factors within the plan area; high potential for continued wildfires and burned habitat creation; and the sheer number of detections within the Inyo National Forest plan area, the best available scientific information about the black-backed woodpecker does not indicate substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long term in the plan area. Based upon the lack of evidence and supporting best available science, the black-backed woodpecker doesn't meet the established criteria at CFR 1909.12 chp. 10, 12.52 (c-d) as a species of conservation concern in the plan area. (Animal Rationale, p. 174)

The Objectors contend the Forest Service relied too much on eBird.com reports to understand population numbers or population trajectory. The Animal Rationale for the BBWO states, "On the Inyo National Forest, there have been 322 reports of 552 individuals within the National Forest boundary, or 354 reports of 593 individuals including and within 5 miles of the National Forest boundary." The methods for getting these numbers are described in the Species Evaluation Form for the BBWO. These records of occurrence and number of individuals were gathered from the eBird citizen science project and only included records from 1970-2016 within California. It was noted if an eBird record indicated the bird species was present but did not have a count of individuals, that record was counted as one individual. The Objectors raise important points on data verification, particularly reports from the 1970s may not apply to living BBWO. We agree using eBird data and methods described above is not an accurate count of abundance. We did find other BBWO data, including Management Indicator Species surveys conducted between 2009 and 2015, described in the Animal Rationale document does, however, indicate a wide distribution, no evidence of changed distribution in many decades, and no trends of decline in abundance.

The Objector is also concerned about available habitat for BBWO. The Forest Service presents information suggesting there is and will be adequate habitat for BBWO:

- BBWO habitat tolerance may be broader than previously understood. Apparent use of green forests, despite uncertainties in science.
- Trend toward increases in fire frequency, size, and severity resulting in creation of more Early Seral Habitat areas.
- Historic low levels of salvage logging on Inyo.

The Objector points out Forest Service relies on generic assumptions about future habitat availability. The final EIS argues more fire equals more cavity nester habitat. The final EIS did not clearly show a total accounting of BBWO available habitat compared to potential habitat disturbance (salvage logging in post-fire areas).

Second, an Odin and Hanson (2013) article suggested post-fire logging of one third of suitable BBWO habitat per year over the next three decades will lead to a trend toward extinction for the species. The Forest Service refuted several assumptions of the article, but the Objector asserted a salvage harvest on 33% of high severity fire acreage is a realistic number, while Forest Service suggests "it could be lower." The Forest Service documentation never describes any limits on how much salvage harvest could occur,

except for one guideline stating the Forest Service "should retain at least 10 percent of the moderate and high vegetation burn severity area without harvest to provide areas of complex early seral habitat" (TERR-CES-GDL 05). This suggests 90% could be harvested.

Conclusions: There was no violation of law, regulation, or policy. There is sufficient evidence to determine there is *not* a substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area. Therefore the BBWO is not a SCC. However, the record could be clarified to more clearly describe the level of past harvest in moderate and high burn severity areas, and how economical, legal, and technical limitations influence the potential of post-fire harvest in the future.

The review team found the documentation supports the decision to not identify black-backed woodpecker as SCC.

Issue 2: The Panamint alligator lizard should be identified as a SCC:

Objector: Center for Biological Diversity, Lead and John Muir Project (joint objection)

The Panamint alligator lizard is a Forest Service Sensitive Species for the Inyo NF. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently determined this species may qualify for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife recently included the Panamint alligator lizard in its updated list of California Amphibian and Reptile Species of Special Concern. Objectors contend despite these recent acknowledgements of threats to the species' persistence, no clear explanation is provided as to why the Forest Service has determined the Panamint alligator lizard does not meet the qualifications to be identified as SCC. In particular, Objectors contend the Forest Service has not sufficiently considered the threat of climate change since the Panamint Alligator Lizard is considered to be at high risk of impacts due to climate change.

Objector's proposed resolution

- The Regional Forester must designate the Panamint alligator lizard as a SCC.

Review Team Response:

The Animal Rationale (p. 237-239) provides the explanation for why the Forest Service has determined the Panamint alligator lizard does not meet the criteria to be identified as SCC.

The Animal Rationale shows the lizard is well-documented as occurring on the Inyo NF with recent research identifying 11 of 28 occurrences on the Inyo NF. Based on early research the Panamint alligator lizard was thought to be strictly associated with riparian habitats. Currently, the BASI suggests there is a broader range of ecological tolerance, therefore, the population size is likely greater than what is currently known. Uncertainty with estimates of population size exists, but, the BASI indicates distribution and abundance have likely been stable with no extirpations of local known populations (Animal Rationale, p. 238).

Current threats to persistence for the Panamint alligator lizard are minimal. Threats likely to result in changes in water surface flow and riparian integrity on the Inyo NF are minimal. Habitat within the plan area is at low risk of loss or degradation from anthropogenic activities. Energy development could possibly (and very speculatively) occur in lizard habitat areas, but regulatory processes are in place to minimize effects to native species. There is no mining in Panamint alligator lizard habitat. Illegal OHV use can threaten the lizard, but legal OHV use is restricted in the habitat area. Known populations of the lizard do not occur within permitted grazing allotments. Recent studies in the area have not found any livestock related impacts nor any extensive occurrences of saltcedar, which can threaten riparian habitat by disproportionately using more water than native vegetation (Animal Rationale, p. 238-239).

The Animal Rationale acknowledges climate change is potentially the biggest threat to the Panamint alligator lizard; however, substantial uncertainty exists regarding climate outcomes. The Objector presented information on two publications (Wright et al (2013) and Evelyn and Sweet (2012)), which were both cited and discussed in the Animal Rationale.

Conclusions: *The review team found the documentation was sufficient and in accordance with regulation and policy for identification of SCC.* There is sufficient evidence to determine there is *not* a substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area. Therefore, the Panamint alligator lizard is not a SCC.

Issue 3: The Northern Goshawk should be identified as a SCC:

Objector: Sierra Forest Legacy, et.al. (pp 33-37)

Objectors believe the northern goshawk should be identified as a SCC. Objectors found the Animal Rationale adequately defines the necessary ecological conditions on which the northern goshawk depends. However, with ongoing and increasing threats to the species from high severity wildfire, climate-related tree mortality, and "restoration based" thinning on mature closed canopy cover forest habitat, the northern goshawk should be identified as SCC. With the exception of failing to adequately analyze the effects of thinning on the key ecological conditions, the Animal Rationale documented climate-related tree mortality and wildfire substantially threaten the species habitat and these threats are increasing in the plan area. The Objectors disagree with the conclusion there is not substantial concern for long-term persistence of the species in the plan area.

Objector's Proposed resolution

- The Regional Forester must designate the northern goshawk as SCC.

Review Team Response:

The Animal Rationale documents the analysis related to the northern goshawk (pp 200-212). The Regional Forester found there was sufficient scientific information available, and there was not a substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long term in the plan area.

The Animal Rationale stated the northern goshawk has a global ranking of G5, indicating the species is "secure: common, widespread and abundant" at the global scale. It has a rating of S3 in California, indicating it is "vulnerable" in California, and a rating of S2 in Nevada, indicating it is "imperiled" in Nevada (NatureServe 2015). The northern goshawk is a California bird species of special concern and a California bird species of greatest conservation need. It is also listed as a California BLM Sensitive species. It is a Regional Forester sensitive species for every national forest in the Region except for the Cleveland NF (Animal Rationale, pp 200).

The Animal Rationale discusses the ecological conditions for northern goshawk on the Inyo NF. Of the 2 million acres, there are approximately 98,560 acres (5% of the forest) of high potential nesting habitat and 156,880 acres of foraging habitat. Although, fire and insect and disease may result in short-term reductions in ecological conditions, studies found these ecological conditions will increase in the long-term.

The Animal Rationale summarized the projected status of ecological conditions relative to northern goshawk:

> As disturbance events (e.g., high-intensity fire, insects) increase in frequency and intensity there may be short term pulses of snags that benefit goshawk, however these events may also act to limit recruitment of trees into larger trees size classes over time. However, the habitat projections for old

> forest habitat (containing large trees greater than 50 inches in diameter and large snags) found in The Sierra Nevada Framework Environmental Impact Statement (2001) found those features to increase significantly over a 140-year time scale (Animal Rationale, p. 208).

The Animal Rationale discussed the key risk factors from non-ecosystem conditions and/or management activities. Fire suppression resulting in higher fuel loading, changing climate, increase insect and disease activity all could affect northern goshawk.

Studies have shown climate change-related drought effects on prey abundance coupled with the risk of habitat loss from stand replacing fire to be primary threats (Reynolds et al. 2017). (Animal Rationale, pp 208).

The Animal Rationale concludes:

> On the Inyo National Forest, goshawk territories remain well-distributed in the plan area despite the past widespread changes in the amount and distribution of mature forest habitat. There are 38 known northern goshawk nest sites on the Inyo National Forest; 30 territories were reported in 1998. The nests are distributed across the forest and goshawks use multiple vegetation types. Tree mortality associated with drought and bark beetle activity has increased but impacts to goshawk are unknown at this time and goshawk activity will be monitored. Climate change and potential drought related effects will likely exert pressure on the key ecological conditions that this species depends upon (as noted above), but it is unknown what long term role these stressors will have on the species' ability to persist in the planning unit over time. The best available scientific information about the northern goshawk does not indicate substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long term in the plan area. Based upon the lack of evidence and supporting best available science, the northern goshawk does not meet the established criteria at CFR 1909.12 chapter. 10, 12.52 (c-d) as a species of conservation concern in the plan area (Animal Rationale, p. 209).

Conclusions: *The review team found the documentation was sufficient and in accordance with regulation and policy for identification of SCC.* There is sufficient evidence to determine there is *not* a substantial concern about the species' capability to persist over the long-term in the plan area. However, the review team believes the record should be clarified with additional specific information related to past average acres burned in northern goshawk habitat and projected future acres burned.