# Appendix E. Summary of logistical challenges

Many of these items were also areas of concern in the MSIM guide review comments.

1) Locating CVS plots.
   The CVS plots are difficult to locate. Directions are based on older GPS technology and old road systems, and are not consistently updated.

2) Terrain.
   Surveys completed on the south end of the forest (2003, 2005, 2006) had better completion rates because of the relatively less rugged terrain and more direct road travel.

3) Skilled labor
   We have been fortunate to have a local birder work each spring who had the skills for birding by ear, but ideally we would hire others to work in various locations. Recruiting such skilled workers for a summer job is challenging in more remote forests such as ours. Not only do we need someone who can identify local birds by ear, but also be comfortable navigating in the woods, and be willing to travel or live where the work is.

   The use of student temporary employment program is the easiest way to recruit and fill summer jobs, and generally provides the most flexible employees. Unfortunately many colleges run until mid June and seasonal workers cannot report to work until June 20 or so. Since bird surveys must be completed between May 15 and July 15, this is not a very good fit. After figuring in training and driving tests, the bird survey period is pretty much over.

   We were often unable to find a second crew person from May to mid June, and working alone was not an ideal situation. There were safety issues with hiking into remote areas, and difficulties with finding the plots. Pairing a birder with someone that has good navigational skills and who is proficient at recording data and tracking progress produced the best results.

4) Travel
   Costs increased when working away from the duty station (Walla Walla), both in travel mileage, field per diem, and salary costs per plot. As travel distance increased, survey time decreased. Ideally we would recruit seasonals that would live close to where the work is. In 2006 efforts were made to make Heppner or Tupper Guard Station the duty station, which would have meant a more efficient work schedule, less project vehicle mileage, and no travel per diem costs. To accomplish this would have required someone at Heppner to do the hiring and supervising. Since this was an ongoing program and we had a continuing employee, we chose not to do this.

   It was also more difficult to supervise employees camping out far from home. Someone has to be responsible for keeping tabs on the crew and making sure they make it in each night. Additionally, daily guidance is generally a good thing.

5) Daily timing
   Efforts were made to survey birds early in the morning, and set traps later in the day. Since this led to a very long day, some employees attempted to take time off mid-day. In reality this resulted in spending 11 hours in the woods, and unless the break was spent sleeping, this is compensable time.

   Surveys for owls created the most extreme scenario. Work began at 5:30 am and continued until 3:15 pm (8½ hours), and then a five hour break was taken. Owl surveys began at nightfall and continued as late as midnight, and then the next day work was again begun at 5:30 a.m. By the end of that week, both employees were exhausted, and that is not a safe way to drive the 2½ hours home.

   One year we tried sending the employee with the most birding skills to do the bird surveys, and then had a 2nd crew follow the next day to complete the small mammal trapping and general area search. This didn't increase our output by much. It still took 3 crew years to complete 88 plots. However, having two crews working independently did nearly double our accomplishment in 2005. One crew worked out of Ukiah and the other out of Walla Walla.

6) Quality of data.
Some plots were not found, yet surveyors collected data "close by" or observed down the hill with binoculars, etc. This does not fit well with the goal of eventually tying wildlife data to the CVS plot data (vegetation). Several plots were completed quite far from the correct location (over 1 mile), and many plots were inadvertently surveyed twice. Plot numbers were often transposed or completely off.

Ways to remedy these problems would include hiring more people, hiring more highly skilled people, having crews be stationed near the work, providing more supervisory oversight, and camping out more. While our crews were great, several of the employees were not willing to camp out because they had responsibilities at home. The most flexible employees were unable to work before June.

Points such as these were brought up in the review comments of the MSIM guide, but the authors disagreed. They felt that it was not an insurmountable task to hire responsible people that could work in the spring, navigate, camp out, know or learn all the birds, work well with others, etc! (Of course if they had admitted this problem it would have negated the entire project design, goals and objectives, many years of work and lots of money spent developing the guide.)

With a regional effort, this problem may be resolved. A wider net could be cast to recruit skilled people. Once these special people are hired, they might return year after year and perhaps work on several forests.

1970s Sasquatch Trap, Rogue River National Forest