

Regional Vegetation Management Project Review for Compliance with Mexican spotted owl Requirements

Project Name: Hart Prairie
Which Recovery Plan is the project implementing: 1995 or 2012 Recovery Plan
Reviewed by Forest Biologist (Name): Mark Bellis
Date Project Reviewed: 5/19/21
Project lead and Forest Biologist will provide this completed document to the Forest NEPA Coordinator to post under the associated project in the Planning, Appeals and Litigation System.

Project Type:					
Timber Sale	Service Contract with tree cutting	Grant or Agreement with Tree Cutting	Force Account Thinning / tree cutting	Grant or Agreement with Prescribe Burning	Force Account Prescribe Burning
Purchaser:	Contractor: Good Earth Power AZ LLC (Hochderffer TO)	Partner: AZ Dept of Fire and Forest Management (Little Spring TS); Alamo Navajo (meadow restoration project);	Project Contact	Partner	Project Contacts: Preston Mercer & Jesse Causer

NEPA Decision Project Name Hart Prairie Fuels Reduction and Forest Health Restoration Project	NEPA Decision Document Type (DM, DN, ROD): DN	Responsible Line Officers: Earl Stewart	Decision Date: 05/05/2010
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Review – Habitat and Management Areas If, the project is located within MSO habitat refer to and follow the Regional MSO Habitat Treatment Implementation Guidance	Yes/No			
Is project within MSO PAC Core?	Yes			
Is project within MSO PACs outside of Core?	Yes			
Is project within MSO Critical Habitat?	Yes			
Is project within MSO Recovery, Protected (Outside of PACs) , or Restricted Habitat ?	Yes			
Is project within MSO Recovery Nest/Roost or Target/Threshold Habitat?	No			

MC is Mixed Conifer and PPGO is ponderosa pine gambel oak

Is the project within MSO Recovery Foraging/Nonbreeding habitat?	N/A			
<p>Remarks on Habitat Determination (Example 1 – if no to MSO restricted yet Gambel oak or incidental Douglas fir is present may document not enough component as defined by recovery plan for restricted habitat designation but may become MSO habitat following treatment. Example 2 – if critical habitat on GIS map layer but stand is non-MSO Habitat document reason for this)</p> <p>Identification of mixed conifer restricted habitat in the project footprint was identified through stand data collected as part of the project analysis and field visits with the District silviculturist and District and FWS biologists.</p>				
<p>If the answer is No for all questions above, then the project can proceed? If the answer is Yes for any questions above, then refer to the Regional MSO Habitat Treatment Implementation Guidance on how to proceed.</p>		<p>If no, why? (e.g. pure ponderosa pine stand, the EMU does include pine/oak as Restricted Habitat, pure PJ)</p>		

Review Survey/monitoring	Yes/No	Completed or Scheduled Survey Dates
Were there 2 years of MSO survey prior to project implementation	Yes	All recovery habitat has current surveys as of 2021.
If the survey information for the project/treatment area is more than 5 years old, have follow up surveys been conducted or have they been planned prior to implementation of treatment?	Yes	Survey plan created that will result in owl habitat in the project footprint to surveyed every 5 years.
If approaching the 5 year mark do we have plans during the current Fiscal Year to complete the additional year survey prior to implementation?	Yes	Survey plan created that will result in owl habitat in the project footprint to surveyed every 5 years.
If answer to all is Yes can project proceed?	Yes	If no, why?
If any is No, then what remedy is needed?		
Estimated Timeframe?		

MSO 1995 Recovery Plan

- Protected Habitats:
 - Protected Activity Centers (PAC): a minimum of 600 acre buffer that is developed around Mexican spotted owl nest/roost sites that incorporates the best nest/roost habitat. Within the PAC, an established 100 acre buffer (core area) is developed around nest or primary roost areas.

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- All areas in mixed conifer and pine-oak types with slope >40% where timber harvest has not occurred in the past 20 years outside of PAC's.
- Restricted Habitats: Currently unoccupied Mexican spotted owl habitat occurring in pine-oak (depending on EMU), mixed conifer, and riparian forests. These habitats may be or have the potential to be used by owls for nesting, roosting, foraging, dispersal, and/or other life history needs.
 - Restricted Target/Threshold Habitat: Habitat outside of PAC's where nesting structure currently exists or can be managed to be met in the future (Table III.B.).
 - Restricted Non Target/Threshold Habitat: Habitat outside of PAC's that is currently not in nesting structure or less likely to be met in the foreseeable future. Forested stands managed to provide foraging, dispersal, wintering, or other habitat needs.

MSO 2012 Recovery Plan

- Protected Habitats: Protected habitat encompasses the area that is found within a Protected Activity Center (PAC). A PAC is a 600 acre buffer that is developed around Mexican spotted owl nest/roost sites. Within the PAC, an established 100 acre buffer (core area) is developed around nest or primary roost areas.
- Recovery Habitats: Currently unoccupied Mexican spotted owl habitat occurring in pine-oak (depending on EMU), mixed conifer, and riparian forests and/or rocky canyons. These habitats may be or have the potential to be used by owls for nesting, roosting, foraging, dispersal, and/or other life history needs.
 - Forested Recovery Habitat: Forested habitat occurring in mixed-conifer and pine-oak (depending on EMU) forests outside of PAC's.
 - ❖ Recovery Nest/Roost Habitat: Forested stands identified as meeting or exceeding owl nest/roost conditions (See Tables C.2 & C.3 of MSO Recovery Plan).
 - ❖ Recovery Foraging/Non-breeding Habitat: Forested stands managed to provide foraging, dispersal, wintering, or other habitat needs.
 - Riparian Recovery Habitat: Riparian forests are plant communities affected by surface and subsurface hydrologic features of perennial or intermittent water bodies. Riparian forests are: 1) distinctively different tree and shrub species than the adjacent areas; and/or, 2) tree species similar to adjacent areas but exhibiting more vigorous or robust growth forms.
- Critical Habitats: Critical Habitat is specific geographic areas that are essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management considerations. Designated critical habitat only exists in areas defined as MSO habitat in the 1995 Recovery plan and its 2012 revision.
 - Primary constituent elements (PCE's): PCE's are essential to the conservation of the owl and include those physical and biological features that support nesting, roosting, and foraging. Primary constituent elements (PCE's) are only found within designated specific geographic areas of critical habitat.
 - ❖ Primary constituent elements related to forest structure.
 1. a range of tree species, including mixed conifer, pine-oak, and riparian forest types, composed of different tree sizes reflecting different ages of trees, 30 percent to 45 percent of which are large trees with a trunk diameter of 12 inches (0.3 meters) or more when measured at 4.5 feet (1.4 meters) from the ground;
 2. a shade canopy created by the tree branches covering 40 percent or more of the ground; and

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3. large dead trees (snags) with a trunk diameter of at least 12 inches (0.3 meters) when measured at 4.5 feet (1.4 meters) from the ground.
- ❖ Primary constituent elements related to prey base.
 1. High volumes of fallen trees and other woody debris;
 2. A wide range of tree and plant species, including hardwoods; and
 3. Adequate levels of residual plant cover to maintain fruits, seeds, and allow plant regeneration.

 - ❖ Primary constituent elements related to canyon habitat (one or more of the following).
 1. presence of water (often providing cooler and often higher humidity than the surrounding areas.
 2. clumps or stringers of mixed conifer, pine-oak, pinyon-juniper, and/or riparian vegetation.
 3. canyon wall containing crevices, ledges, or caves.
 4.) high percent of ground litter and woody debris.