

# **Guidelines to Avoid Incidental Take of Northern Spotted Owls from Timber Operations:**

## Update to Attachments A & B

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October 2019





# Updates to Attachments A & B

- Overview
- History
- Summary of Attachment A
- Summary of Attachment B
- Next steps



# Overview- why create A/B?

- A/B were produced to help landowners, foresters, and others navigate the ESA
- These are guidelines; they are not required
  - A/B represent a 'standardized' approach that can be relatively quickly navigated through the THP process
  - These guidelines are likely not the only way take can be avoided, but may be the quickest
- If take cannot be avoided, we have other tools to help you (e.g. habitat conservation plans)

# Overview

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- Early coordination is encouraged
- These are guidelines
- One size does not fit all
  - These guidelines do not cover every scenario
  - Work with the agencies to customize your situation
- These revisions to attachments A&B are responsive to input received from stakeholders over the years
- We plan on future revisions to attachments A&B to be more frequent based on input we receive



# Overview- where?

- Attachment A covers the range of the coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) in California
- Attachment B covers inland from the occurrence of coast redwood in California

Both attachments are used in the CALFIRE Coast Forest District depending on the presence of redwood



# History

- February 1, 2008, the Service provided attachments A/B to CALFIRE to help private landowners avoid unauthorized take of NSO. This guidance was general and could be applied when site-specific data was not available.
- May 22, 2008, the Service provided clarification that finer scale, site-specific evaluation for projects is more effective than coarse scale evaluations.
- February 7, 2011, the Service released the revised 2011 NSO Survey Protocol. The updated protocol accounted for barred owls.
- January 9, 2012 the Service revised of the 2011 Protocol (minor technical edits and clarifications).
- October 2019, the Service will soon release updated versions of A/B. The updates will provide more flexibility and options based on what we have learned about managing NSO.



# Summary of Attachment A

Many aspects of Attachment A are unchanged.

- basic habitat definitions

Or with minor clarifications.

- minimum polygon size of 20 acres
- listing of some of the factors that can be considered when evaluating noise disturbance

Spot Checks can now be utilized through years 5 and 6 for project areas with good survey history.



# Summary of Attachment A

Number of survey visits may be relaxed if barred owls are absent

General Core Area Guidelines are mostly unchanged, and are suited for even-age management.

- 100 acre no-cut core, additional 100 acres maintained as nesting/roosting
- maintain 300 acres of foraging or better within 0.7 miles of activity center



# Summary of Attachment A

Alternative Core Guidelines are an attempt to encourage better NSO habitat management while providing relief to landowners

- suited for uneven age management
- all harvest within 0.7 miles of an activity center maintains high-quality nesting/roosting
- 40 acre no-cut core area
- Review agencies will evaluate the success of this option and adjust as needed



# Summary of Attachment A

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Noise Disturbance buffer of 0.25 miles or use of Estimating the Effects of Auditory and Visual Disturbance to NSO and MAMU document

We hope to be more nimble in the future with respect to edits to Attachment A, email John Hunter with comments/edits for next version



# Summary of Attachment B

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The Service recognizes that NSO surveys have been conducted in some areas for many years

In such cases, the information gathered may be used to more effectively conserve spotted owls and provide certainty to project proponents

To conserve NSO, the best habitat should be maintained, closest to ACs that are frequently occupied by successfully reproducing NSO



# Summary of Attachment B

- Revised Attachment B emphasizes the use of high quality, site-specific information to make no-take determinations
- Data presented in THPs must be clear, complete, and biologically accurate
- Areas where there is flexibility in the Survey Protocol are identified and may be used when justified





# Summary of Attachment B

## What has changed, what has not changed.

- Examples of using site-specific data are presented
- This includes the delineation of non-circular home ranges

*however,*

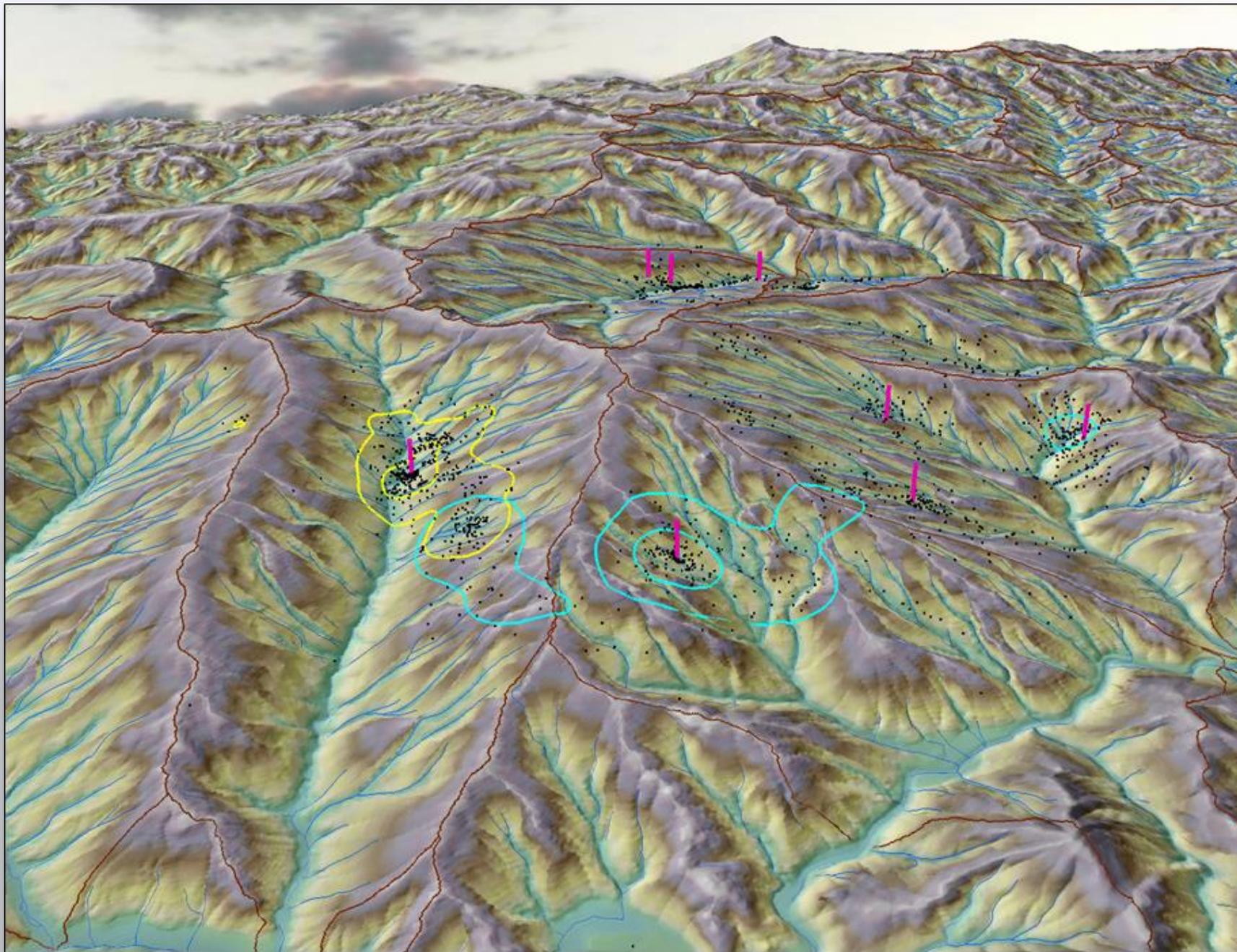
- The approach from previous version of Attachment B may still be used if data is lacking
- Habitat definitions have not changed
- Home ranges and core use areas represented by 1.3 mile and 0.5 mile radius circles may still be the best method to ensure adequate amounts of NSO habitat are retained and take is avoided



# Summary of Attachment B

## This is a data driven process

- Information-based Take Avoidance
- Information-based AC location
- Information-based Core Use Area delineation
- Information-based Home Range delineation
- Non-circular home ranges based on logical owl use areas may be used when robust survey data is available
- Abiotic variables may be important
- Working with all affected forest managers is essential
- Circular home ranges may be more appropriate in some cases



From Woodbridge 2007- non-circular habitat use

# Summary of Attachment B

## Flexibility in the protocol

1. Use of spot check surveys beyond year 4 (based on previous or continuous surveys)
2. Number of survey visits: 3 vs 6 visits where no BDOW have been detected
3. Project footprint surveys when habitat will be maintained (vs. 1.3 miles)





# Next steps

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- Attachments A & B will be sent to CALFIRE next week
- Workshops to explain attachments A & B
  - December 2019
- The updated Attachments A & B will be in effect immediately
  - If you have an approved THP or one that is nearly approved, you can continue to use the old guidance

# Thank you!

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