

Pre-Operations Report

Operation Name: Windy Gust

County (%): Douglas (100%)

Elevation: 2,349 - 3,187 ft

Legal Description: T31S R5W, Section(s) 31

Tax Code(s):

BOF%: 100 **CSL%:** 0

Sale Quarter: ALT

Unit: Southwest Oregon - SWFMP

I. VOLUME AND VALUE SUMMARY

Table 1. Types, Acres, and Value

Unit	Harvest Type	Anticipated Product ^c	Gross Acres	Net Acres	MBF/ Acre ^a	MBF/ Unit ^a	\$/MBF ^b	\$/Unit
1	CC	DF-S, SP-L	128	114	20	2,280	\$400	\$912,000
Total		Regeneration	128	114		2,280		
		Partial Cut						
						Gross Value		\$912,000
a. Estimated harvest volume per acre for Unit.						Project Costs		\$190,600
b. Estimated ‘price’ (excluding Project Costs)						Net Value		\$721,400
c. Anticipated Product (AA-B-C) – AA) SLI species code of the bid species, B) Size Class (S – small [average DBH < 15], M – medium [average DBH 15 to 23], L – large (average DBH > 23]), C) Special Product (P – Premium, H – Hardwood)								

II. CURRENT STAND CONDITION:

Table 2. Stand Inventory Information

Unit	Stand ID	Measured/Imputed ^a	Species	Age ¹	TPA	DBH	BA	SDI	Net Acres ^b
1	5038	M	DF,IC	43	431	10	248	75%	64
1	5043	M	DF,SP	43	140	16	205	52%	50

- a. Identify the source of stand inventory information. Use the following codes: M = Measured SLI data, I = Imputed SLI data, P = Pre-Cruise Plots, O = other (if other, describe below).
- b. Net Acres have been rounded to the nearest whole acre in this table. Stand that comprise less than one acre of a harvest unit are not reported in this table, so the total "Net Acres" per unit in this table may not equal the total "Net Acres" per unit in table 1.

¹The age for these stands may be too low. Looking on photos and LiDAR, it seems the age should be more around 60 years. This information will be adjusted as field reconnaissance is completed.

This sale was thinned in 1981 for possible pole removal.

Table 3. Additional Stand Information

Unit	Stand ID	Snags/Acre ^a	Down Wood/Acre ^b	Forest Health		
				SNC	Phellinus	Other ^c
1	5038	2	111			
1	5043	2	131			

- a. Identify the number of hard snags per acre (decay classes 1 and 2)
- b. Identify the cubic feet per acre of hard down wood (decay classes 1 and 2)
- c. Describe "Other" forest health issue.

III. WILDLIFE AND T&E SPECIES CONSIDERATIONS:

Foresters need to request the Biological Survey Tracking Form (BSTF) from the ODF Wildlife Biologist prior to sale layout in order to ensure all T&E related information is complete and understood.

1. A portion of the operation is within (Check all that apply):

- ☐ TAS ☒ NSO Circle or Home Range, or Baseline or Elevated Baseline Thiessen (BA required)
☐ MMMA (BA required) ☐ None

- Notes: Portions of the sale are located within the Bear Windy home range circle for which a biological assessment was reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service where they concurred that the sale has low risk of incidental take of spotted owls.

2. Are Surveys for NSO being conducted for any portion of this operation?

- ☐ No ☐ Density Surveys ☒ Operational Surveys ☐ Combination (Density/Operational)

Notes:

3. Are Surveys for MM being conducted for any portion of this operation?

- ☐ Yes (in progress/completed) ☐ No (Not habitat) ☒ N/A (outside of MM survey zone)

Notes:

4. Are there any additional considerations (FPA Resource Sites, Species of Concern sites/Plant [from ORBIC¹])?

- ☒ No ☐ Yes, please describe:

IV. DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION AND PRESCRIPTION:

Table 4. Stand Structure Information

Unit	Stand ID	Current	Desired Future ^b	Inside of HCA	Net Acres ^a
1	5038	CSC	GEN	No	64
1	5043	UDS	GEN	No	50

- a. Net Acres have been rounded to the nearest whole acre in this table. Stand that comprise less than one acre of a harvest unit are not reported in this table, so the total "Net Acres" per unit in this table may not equal the total "Net Acres" per unit in table 1.
- b. While desired future condition complex (Layered -LYR and Older Forest Structure – OFS) is mapped, targets for Regeneration (REG), Closed Single Canopy (CSC) and Understory (UDS) stands are not. These stand types are typically referred to as General (GEN) when discussing desired future condition.

Table 5. Partial Cut & HCA Prescriptions (Complete only for Partial Cut and HCA Harvests)

Unit	Harvest Type	Harvest Species	Residual			
			Species	TPA	BA	% SDI
1	CC					

- **Leave Tree Considerations:** Foresters will work with wildlife biologist during sale layout. The following should be considered when determining final leave tree arrangements.
 - Stand Characteristics: Focus on retaining larger trees with structural characteristics to support wildlife habitat.
- **Reforestation Considerations:** Following the completion of harvest, the unit will be planted with a mixture of species native to the geographic area.

V. HARVESTING AND ACCESS CONSIDERATIONS:

Table 6. Harvest System and Access Summary

Unit	Harvest System		Slope (%)	Unit Access	Seasonal Access
	% Cable	% Ground			
1	100	0	35-65	Established	All Weather

1. Haul Route: Windy Creek Road
2. Haul Route Condition: Maintained gravel road
3. Are easements required for the haul route? ☒ No ☐ Yes

Table 7. Transportation Management Summary (Miles)

Activity	Mainline	Collector	Rocked Spur	Dirt Spur
Construct	0	0	0.20	0
Improve, Rock, and/or Maintain	1.86	4.10	1.14	0
Vacate	0	0	0	0
Stream Crossings: install on existing road (IE)/replace on existing road (R)/install on new construction road (NC)				
Type F - SSBT ^a	0	0	0	0
Type F – Non-SSBT	0	0	0	0
Type N	0	2 (R)	0	0

a. Salmon Steelhead and Bull Trout (SSBT)

4. Rock Sources for this operation: Commercial Rock Source
5. Are property line surveys required for this operation? ☒ No ☐ Yes
6. Is there planned new road construction planned within RCAs/HCA's? ☒ No ☐ Yes

VI. AQUATIC RESOURCES:

1. Do any streams require additional review for the following?
 - Fish presence: ☒ No ☐ Yes
 - Perennial/Seasonal: ☐ No ☒ Yes
 - H.E.R.: ☐ No ☒ Yes
 - There are streams within the sale that require additional review. Buffers shown on the map indicate where it is believed streams are located. These streams will be located, verified for permanence, and/or type of seasonal stream during sale layout and Geotech review and buffered as required.
2. Is a portion of the operation within an Aquatic Anchor? ☒ No ☐ Yes, name:
3. Are any domestic points of diversion identified in the Oregon Water Resource Department's water rights information search GIS database located downstream within 3,000 feet of the harvest operation?
☒ No ☐ Yes, describe protection measures:
4. Are there any unregistered or unknown status domestic points of diversion that have been identified within the harvest operation? ☒ No ☐ Yes, please describe:

5. Is there a Stream Enhancement Project planned? ☒ No ☐ Yes, please describe:

VII. SLOPE STABILITY ISSUES:

Table 8. Summary of Slope Stability Assessment

Unit	Harvest Review Complete	Public Safety Review Complete	Additional Comment
1	Yes	Yes	

- **Geotech Review:** Geotechnical reviews have been completed, and it was determined that no slope protections are needed. Additional consultation with Geotechnical Specialists will be done during sale layout as needed.

VIII. RECREATION RESOURCES:

1. Recreation issues/coordination: ☒ No ☐ Yes, please describe:

IX. HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES:

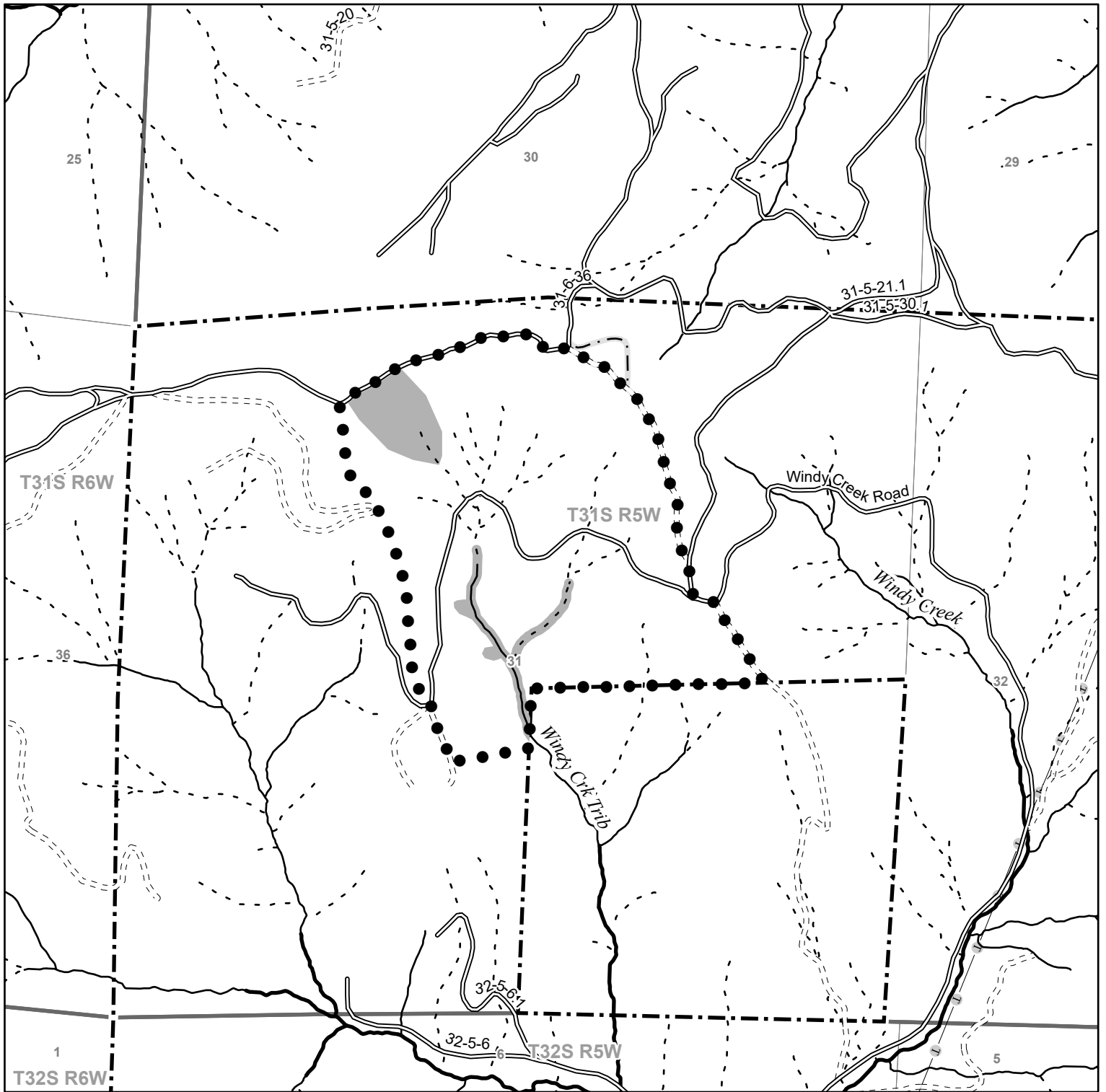
1. Has the sale been reviewed by a qualified archaeologist for potential historic or cultural resource presence? ☐ No ☒ Yes

X. SCENIC RESOURCES:

1. Are there scenic resources in the vicinity of this operation that need additional consideration? ☒ No ☐ Yes, please describe:

XI. OTHER RESOURCE CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Has a review of the FLMCS layer determined that any resources not mentioned in the report above need additional planning? ☒ No ☐ Yes, please describe:
2. Are there any other resources present that need additional consideration? ☐ No ☒ Yes, please describe:
- **Adjacent Landowner:**
 - **Federal**
 - **Adjacent sale:** Windy Gust is an alternate sale located immediately adjacent to the primary Wind Chime sale. Their combined acreage is over 120 acres. Windy Gust will only be made a primary sale in fiscal year 2026 if Wind Chime is dropped from the sale plan. If Windy Gust is not needed for the fiscal year 2026 sale, it will not be used as a primary sale until the Wind Chime sale has achieved green up as per the Forest Practices Act.



Legend

- Sale Boundary
- Surfaced Road
- Unsurfaced Road
- - - New Road Construction
- Fish Stream
- Non-Fish, Perennial Stream
- Non-Fish Stream, Unverified Permanence
- No Harvest Area
- Transmission Lines
- Ownership Boundary

FY 2026 - Western Lane District Windy Gust Portions of Section(s) 31, T31S, R5W, WM. Douglas County

State Forest Division
12/02/2024

This product is for informational use and may not be
suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes.

Unit 1 114 Acres (CC)

1:12,000

1,000 500 0 1,000 Feet





Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Forestry

Western Lane District

Coos Unit

63612 Fifth Road

Coos Bay, Oregon 97420

541.267.4136

FAX 541.269.2027

<http://www.odf.state.or.us>



"STEWARDSHIP IN FORESTRY"

TO: Ole Buch, Western Lane Assistant District Forester

FROM: Randy Smith, Southern Oregon Area Biologist

SUBJECT: Preliminary Biological Assessment for the **Windy Gust** Timber Sale

DATE: March 10, 2025

Executive Summary

Windy Gust is a proposed alternate timber sale in the 2026 Annual Operations Plan (AOP) of the Western Lane District, Southwest Unit and is located within the home range of the Bear Windy northern spotted owl site.

No spotted owls have been observed within the sale area during protocol surveys in 2023 and 2024.

After harvest of the Windy Gust timber sale, approximately 53% and 49% suitable habitat will remain post-harvest within the Bear Windy 0.7 and 1.3 mile circles, respectively, exceeding ODF policy standards.

As currently proposed, the Windy Gust timber sale is expected to have a **Low** risk of negatively affecting the occupancy and productivity of the Bear Windy northern spotted owl site.

Introduction

Purpose

The Western Lane District, Southwest Unit, is proposing the Windy Gust timber sale as an alternate sale in their 2026 Annual Operations Plan. This sale contains suitable habitat for northern spotted owls. Portions of the sale are within the 1.3 mile circle for the Bear Windy northern spotted owl activity center (AC). This assessment presents the relevant biological information needed to assess the potential effects of the Windy Gust timber sale on northern spotted owls.

Policy Direction

Northern Spotted Owls

In the Southwest Unit, the current standard for protection of northern spotted owls is to apply the standards identified in the ODF Northern Spotted Owl Policy (ODF 2017) which are adapted from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rescinded Incidental Take Guidelines (USFWS 1990). According to the Policy, the best available habitat is identified for a 70 acre core area; at least 500 acres of suitable habitat should be maintained within a 0.7 mile radius, and approximately 40% suitable habitat (1,336 acres) should be maintained within the home range circle (in this case 1.3 miles). Additional factors to be considered and documented in this biological assessment include proximity of the operation to a site, the proposed prescription, the size of the operation, the history of activity near the site, and other relevant factors.

Background

Survey History and Site Information

Potential spotted owl habitat within and surrounding the timber sale was surveyed according to protocol endorsed by the USFWS (USFWS 2012).

Bear Windy.

This site established pair status in 1998. The pair successfully nested and fledged young in 1998, 2000-2004, and 2006-2008. In 2009, a new pair was found to the south. The male was banded (yellow w/ black vertical stripes-left). The female was from JBL site in 2005 (green w/ pink pyramids-right). No young were detected. In 2010, this pair nested in the same area, but this nest site was designated a new site named Windy Fortune. There was no response at the Bear Windy AC in 2010. In 2010, a single male was detected three times in an area to the northeast. He was banded (green w/ a white stripe-left). This area was thought to be a new site at the time and was called Buckhorn Mountain. In 2011, the male that occupied this site in 2010 was twice found paired with the female (white w/ a sky blue stripe-left) banded at this site in 2008. They were determined to be non-nesting. The Buckhorn Mountain area is now considered an alternate for Bear Windy. In 2012, a daytime AC search was conducted at this site with no spotted owl responses. The 2011 pair was found non-nesting in the Buckhorn Mountain area. In 2012, the Windy Fortune pair was confirmed once at the Bear Windy AC, and they were also found at the Windy Fortune site. In 2013, the Windy fortune pair nested in the 2006 nest tree and fledged two young. The pair was found non-nesting in 2014. In 2015, the historic pair nested in a new tree but failed. In 2016, the historic male was found paired but non-nesting with a new female that was re-banded (magenta w/ light green dots-right). She was originally banded as a juvenile at the Roseburg BLM Cookhouse Creek site in 2015. In 2017, the historic male (green w/ a white stripe-left) was confirmed several times at this site with no sign of young present. A female spotted owl was twice heard at night, but she was never found during the day. In 2018, the historic male at this site was identified near the Buckhorn Mountain AC and the Windy Fortune AC, but those responses were attributed to this site. There were no responses in 2019. This site only received 5 visits due to the milepost 97 fire in late July 2019. In 2020 through 2021, there were no spotted owl responses. In 2022 through 2024, a daytime AC search was conducted at this site with no spotted owl responses, and there were no responses during night surveys. Barred owls were detected in the area in 2022 and 2024. The AC remains at the 2004 nest tree location (Turnstone 2024).

Sale Area Information

The Windy Gust timber sale consists of 114 net acres in 1 sale area. The sale is primarily comprised of approximately 70-year-old stands of Douglas-fir and sugar pine in the overstory along with scattered incense cedar and madrone. The average DBH within the sale area is 16 inches and averages 300 trees per acre (TPA). Cruise information shows the stands to have approximately 2 snags/acre present and many are composed of smaller hardwoods in early decay classes. Larger down wood within the sale is very sparse and primarily in older decay classes. With these stand conditions, I would consider the entire sale area to be suitable habitat for spotted owls.

Prescription

The commercial prescription will be a clear cut of 114 net acres. The modified clearcut prescription will be removing merchantable Douglas-fir and conifer species as well as most of the hardwood species. Some of the largest conifer and hardwoods will be retained averaging 5 trees per acre scattered throughout the unit. Existing snags will be retained where feasible. Stands within the sale are currently classified as understory (UDS) or closed single canopy (CSC) and the desired future condition of ODF ownership in this area is general (GEN). Snags and down wood will be left in the sale areas consistent or exceeding the guidance in the Southwest Oregon Forest Management Plan and draft Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan.

Assumptions

Defining the Home Range

According to "Procedures leading to Endangered Species Act compliance for the northern spotted owl" (USFWS 1990), the median home range size (based on 95% minimum convex polygon) for spotted owl pairs in the Klamath Province is 3,340 acres, or the approximate equivalent of the area encompassed by a circle with a radius of 1.3 miles. Further clarification and interpretation of these procedures was provided in a 2010 ODF Decision Paper (ODF 2010). This paper stated that a GIS analysis of a 1.3 mile radius circle yields 3,398 acres, which ODF uses for analysis of home range circles in the Klamath Province. Although spotted owls generally do not have circular home ranges, in the absence of more specific information about the home ranges of this site, I assumed that a 1.3 mile radius circle around the nest or activity center approximates the home range for this site. All stands for this analysis were digitized and circle radii/acreages were calculated using ArcPro 3.3.2 software.

Defining Suitable Habitat

Although spotted owl habitat has generally been described as old growth, spotted owls are known to use a variety of forest types in this part of the Oregon Klamath province. The home ranges of spotted owls in this region contain large percentages of stands in intermediate stages of stand development (Anthony and Wagner 1999). Spotted owls are known to nest in stands as young as 60-80 years old that have suitable structures on state forest lands in the Southern Oregon Area (approximately 40% of known nests on ODF lands in the Southwest Unit are in this age class) and forage in even younger stands.

For the purposes of this discussion, suitable spotted owl habitat is considered to be stands at least 60 years old from inventory data, younger stands that have known owl use, stands that appear to be suitable habitat from structural inventory data or an assessment of Lidar with aerial photograph series and/or ground verification in 2025.

Impact Assessment and Discussion

Landscape Analysis

The following discussion assesses the habitat condition within the 0.7 and 1.3 mile circles of the Bear Windy spotted owl activity center, as recommended by the Incidental Take Guidelines and as required by ODF policy (Table 1, Figure 1).

Bear Windy

The Windy Gust timber sale does not impact the 0.7 mile circle; however, a habitat analysis of the Bear Windy spotted owl site indicates that there are approximately 520 acres (53%) of state, federal and privately managed suitable habitat within 0.7 miles of the activity center.

The Windy Gust timber sale will clearcut 6 net acres within the 1.3 mile circle for the Bear Windy spotted owl site. Additionally, the 2026 AOP Wind Chime planned primary sale will clear cut 76 net acres within the 1.3 mile circle for the Bear Windy spotted owl site. A current habitat analysis of the Bear Windy spotted owl site indicates that there are approximately 1756 acres of state, federal and private suitable habitat within 1.3 miles of the activity center. If the 6 net sale acres in the Windy Gust sale and the 76 acres of the Wind Chime planned sale are removed, 1674 acres (49%) of suitable habitat on state, federal, and private lands will remain within 1.3 miles of the activity center. Based on this preliminary habitat analysis, this site will maintain sufficient unmodified suitable habitat within both the 0.7 and 1.3 mile circles after harvest to be consistent with ODF policy and in compliance with Federal ESA requirements to avoid take.

Effects of the Prescription

Following completion of the clearcut operation, the sale area will not be suitable northern spotted owl habitat for many years. The green trees, snags and down wood retained post-harvest within the sale will provide valuable habitat components during the development of the next stand.

Discussion and Assessment of Other Relevant Factors

The Bear Windy spotted owl site is 1.2 miles from the proposed Windy Gust timber sale. Approximately 6 of the 114 net sale acres are within the outer portion of the 1.3 mile circle. The Bear Windy spotted owl activity center is on federal ownership. State managed land makes up 38% of the area within 1.3 miles of the spotted owl activity center, 41% is managed by BLM and 21% is managed by other landowners.

There is a block of contiguous habitat around the activity center primarily to the north and west on federal and state lands which likely serves as a core use area. There is adequate connectivity to larger habitat blocks elsewhere in the circle.

Conclusions and Risk Assessment

Biological Risk

As currently proposed, the Windy Gust sale is expected to have a **Low** risk of negatively affecting the occupancy and productivity of the Bear Windy spotted owl site. This assessment is based on the following factors:

Bear Windy

- ♦ The sale is along the outer edge of the 1.3 mile, circle only impacting 6 acres, and does not impact the 0.7 mile circle;
- ♦ Post-harvest habitat quality and quantity immediately surrounding the activity center will remain suitable with adequate connectivity to habitat throughout the activity center;
- ♦ Approximately 53% and 49% of the 0.7 and 1.3 mile circles, respectively, will remain as unmodified suitable habitat after harvest of the sale, exceeding ODF policy.

I would add a word of caution that additional sales in the near term within the Bear Windy home range circles, particularly within the 0.7 mile circle, could have negative impacts to this site. Suitable habitat within the 0.7 mile circle is nearing the lower threshold of USFWS guidelines and ODF Policy standards. I believe that short term and cumulative impacts from additional sales could elevate the risk assessment for this site depending on location, prescription, and amount of additional sale acres.

Compliance with Policy

After completion of harvest operations associated with the Windy Gust timber sale, the remaining suitable habitat within the Bear Windy owl circles will exceed the standards identified in ODF's northern spotted owl policy. Assessment of other relevant factors indicates this sale should pose a low risk of negatively impacting this owl site.

Literature Cited

Anthony, R.G., F.F. Wagner 1999. Reanalysis of northern spotted owl habitat use on the Miller Mountain study area. Report to the Bureau of Land Management, Medford District, October 1999. 71 pp.

Oregon Department of Forestry. 2010. Northern Spotted Owl Management Decision Paper. September 24, 2010. 4pp.

Oregon Department of Forestry. 2017. Northern Spotted Owl State Forest Program Operational Policies. November 2017. 11 pp.

Turnstone Environmental Consultants, Inc. 2024. Northern Spotted Owl Surveys on Oregon State Lands 2024 for Oregon Department of Forestry. 219 pp.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 1990. Procedures leading to endangered species compliance for the northern spotted owl. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1, July 1990. 15 pp.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. 2012 Protocol for surveying proposed management activities that may impact northern spotted owls. Revised January 9, 2012. 43 pp.

cc: Ole Buch
Vanessa Petro

Table 1. Acres of suitable habitat on state, federal and private ownership within the 0.7 and 1.3 mile circles of the Bear Windy northern spotted owl activity center. Suitable habitat determined through field reviews, Lidar assessment, air-photo analysis (2022-earlier), and 2024 FERNS and Vantage harvest tracking system check of forest operations in the area.

Suitable Habitat	Net Acres	Bear Windy	
		0.7 mile	1.3 mile
State		229	961
Federal		204	660
Private		97	135
Total		520	1756
Windy Gust net sale area	114	0	6
Planned 2026 AOP Wind Chime Timber Sale	77	0	76
Unmodified habitat remaining		520	1674
Proportion (%) remaining post-harvest		53%	49%