



For Immediate Release  
September 8, 2010

Contact: Tom Partin  
503-222-9505

### **Draft Spotted Owl Recovery Plan: Another Obama Administration Plan Devoid of Reality**

Portland, OR - Today, the Obama Administration released a revised Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan. The new plan, prepared by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), would replace a Recovery Plan adopted in 2008. The Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, announced his intention to redraft the 2008 plan last summer as he withdrew the Bureau of Land Management's Western Oregon Plan Revisions (WOPR) for Oregon's O&C forests. Eighteen months later, the Service has made available for public comment a replacement Recovery Plan.

"We had hoped Secretary Salazar would consider the unanimous criticism of the recently released Western Oregon Task Force Report and offer real solutions to the threats facing spotted owls and rural communities," commented American Forest Resource Council President Tom Partin. "Unfortunately, this is yet another example of an Administration completely out of touch with reality."

"Rather than addressing some of the most pressing threats facing the spotted owl, including displacement by the invasive barred owl, the draft plan indicates that the USFWS is modeling a number of options for owl recovery which are not expected to be available until a later date," continued Partin. "Instead, the plan doubles down on an approach that has failed us and the owl for the last 20 years -- lock up habitat, leave it and hope for the best."

The draft plan proposes maintaining over 8 million acres in spotted owl habitat reserves on federal lands while also relying on computer modeling to potentially set aside millions more acres of state, private and federal forests. The USFWS has no clue if spotted owls are actually living in the existing reserves or in the millions of additional acres it wants to "protect."

"I guess we shouldn't be surprised that an Administration completely devoid of reality would outline a strategy of protecting imaginary, virtual spotted owls at the cost of real rural communities, real jobs and real on-the-ground forest health projects," Partin commented. "This 30-year plan to have a plan will only compound the uncertainty and gridlock facing the BLM and Forest Service as they seek to plan forest management projects in Oregon, Washington and California."

The real problem, according to many scientific studies, is not a lack of habitat, but the fact that the barred owl is moving into the spotted owl's habitat and displacing the smaller, less aggressive spotted owl. The situation is similar to the displacement of the Western gray squirrel, an Oregon native, by the Eastern gray squirrels introduced into parks by the Olmstead brothers in

the early 1900's. The USFWS' own rating system indicates that the spotted owl has a "low potential for recovery" due to the "uncertainty regarding our ability to alleviate the barred owl impacts to spotted owls."

"The problem isn't too little habitat. The problem is the spotted owl is being pushed out by another species that doesn't care if some bureaucrat in Washington, D.C. has reserved these forests for the exclusive use of the spotted owl," stated Partin. "If the feds want to save the spotted owl, they need to deal realistically and aggressively with the barred owl and do it now, not over the next 30 years."

*The American Forest Resource Council represents forest product manufacturers and landowners throughout the west and is based in Portland, Oregon.*