

National Council for Air and Stream Improvement's

Western Wildlife Program

A Status Report

July 27, 2015

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Forest Industry's Western Wildlife Program (WWP) is documenting wildlife habitat support and biodiversity in managed forests of the Pacific Northwest. WWP research results provide a scientific foundation for industry efforts to advance cost-effective approaches to conserving wildlife and biodiversity in managed forests.

The WWP is managed by the National Council for Air and Stream Improvement (NCASI) on behalf of four industry associations that provide core funding support (American Forest Resources Council, Oregon Forest Industries Council, Washington Forest Protection Association, and NCASI). Program oversight and guidance are provided by industry representatives serving on the technical Western Wildlife Task Group and the strategic Program Steering Committee.

Activities of the WWP are managed by Dr. Jake Verschuyl (NCASI) and directed by sponsoring organizations (AFRC, OFIC, WFPA and NCASI) working through a Program Steering Committee (PSC) and Western Wildlife Task Group (WWTG). The PSC comprises representatives of AFRC, OFIC and WFPA. Important functions of the PSC include (a) ensuring that WWP activities are properly aligned with strategic priorities of AFRC, OFIC and WFPA; and (b) coordinating efforts to obtain core regional funding support for the WWP. The WWTG comprises industry wildlife biologists and other technical experts who (a) provide detailed technical guidance and oversight to NCASI staff, and (b) provide program / budget recommendations to the PSC and NCASI's Forest Environment and Sustainability Task Group

II. PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Background

The scientific basis for sustaining wildlife and biological diversity in managed forests is weak and must be significantly improved. Why? Several responses justify investing scarce research funding in biological diversity:

- Federal and state regulations designed to protect wildlife and biodiversity have major effects on forest management and wood supplies in the Pacific Northwest.
- The public increasingly expects biological diversity to be sustained in private as well as public forests.
- Viewing of wildlife remains the primary means through which the public judges whether forest practices rules are effective.
- The Sustainable Forestry Initiative and the Forest Stewardship Council-U.S. have incorporated standards for biodiversity conservation into their forest certification processes. Those standards must be supported by strong science and demonstrations.
- Congress and states likely will consider new regulations for biological diversity.

What We Do

The Western Wildlife Program (WWP) helps the forest products industry support cost-effective approaches to conserving wildlife and biological diversity in managed forests. Functions of the WWP include:

- Provide timely technical input for near-term topics such as petitions to list T&E species or new agency regulatory initiatives.
- Organize short-term scientific research that informs impending forest management decisions and forest policy discussions.
- Develop long-range research and demonstration projects that support industry environmental goals for managed forests.

Technical goals of the WWP include:

- Generate demonstrably reliable scientific and technical information to support cost-effective management alternatives for sustaining wildlife populations and biological diversity within managed forest landscapes of the western U.S.
- Improve the scientific basis for predicting wildlife population responses to forest management alternatives at multiple scales from stands to landscapes.
- Support wildlife and biodiversity assessments that place private forestry in proper context of complementing state and federal habitat contributions and contributions from other land uses.
- Integrate research results with decision-support tools that can forecast likely consequences of forest management alternatives.

III. CURRENT RESEARCH TOPICS:

- **Marbled Murrelet Nest Site Selection at Three Spatial Scales**
- **The Influence of Forest Herbicides on the Nutritional Ecology of Black-tailed Deer in Western Washington**
- **Black-backed woodpecker Ecology in Green (unburned) Forests of the Southern Cascades, Oregon**
 - Black-backed Woodpecker Occupancy and Density in Green Forests
 - Black-backed Woodpecker Nest Density and Site Characteristics in Green Forests
- **Effects of Intensive Forest Management on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services**
 - Ungulate Browse and Vegetation Community Composition
 - Avian Abundance
 - Nest box Period Survival
 - White Crowned Sparrow Demography
 - Moth Abundance/Diversity
 - Arthropod Biomass and Exclosure Sampling
- **Variation in Structural Retention Pattern and Aggregation**
 - Small Mammal Response

- Plant Community Characteristics
 - Avian Use of Patches and Created Snags
- **Forestry Effects on Wildlife in Cool Moist Eastside Forests**
- **Meta-analysis of Cavity-nesting Bird use of Post-disturbance Environments**
- **Northern Spotted Owl and Barred Owl Meta-Analysis**
 - Barred Owl Habitat Relationships/Home Ranges
 - Spotted Owl Response to Thinning
 - Northern Spotted Owl Habitat Relationships, Three Study Areas in Douglas Fir Forests
 - Test Survey Protocol for Spotted Owls in Areas with Barred Owls
- **Northern Spotted Owl Micro-Habitat Characteristics Assessed with Telemetry and LiDAR**
- **Comparing Detection Methods for the Pacific Fisher**
- **Bat Hibernacula, Roosts and Winter use of Managed Forests**
- **Coastal Marten Occupancy and Distribution in the Coast Range, Oregon**
- **Black-bear Damage of Planted Douglas Fir: Risk Modelling**
- **Monitoring Elk Habitat and Population Responses to Early-Seral Landscape Restoration Practices in the Clearwater Basin of Idaho**
- **Elk Habitat Model Development for Coastal and Cascade ecoregions in Western Washington/Oregon and for the Blues Mountains ecoregion in northeastern Oregon**

WESTERN WILDLIFE PROGRAM

Selected Presentations and Publications by NCASI Staff and Cooperators

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- Linden, D. W., G. J. Roloff, and A. J. Kroll. 2012. Conserving avian richness through structure retention in managed forests of the Pacific Northwest, USA. *Forest Ecology and Management* 284:174–184.
- Linden, D. W. 2012. Retained structures and bird communities in clearcut forests of the Pacific Northwest, USA Dissertation, Michigan State University.
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