



NORTHERN SPOTTED OWL HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

When the northern spotted owl was listed as a threatened species under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 1990, it brought into sharp focus the potential conflict between timber operations and wildlife protection in the Northwest.

It was originally believed that the spotted owls could survive only in old growth preserves in which there was little or no forest management activity.

Research conducted on Green Diamond Company's timberland in coastal northern California indicated that this theory was untrue. The species not only survived, but also often flourished on commercial timberlands in this region. In fact, Green Diamond's timberland proved to be one of the most populous spotted owl areas in the Northwest. Since our owl research began in 1990, we have identified more than 1,700 adult and juvenile spotted owls on our property alone.

This pioneering research, as well as subsequent studies, led the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to award our timber operations the first ever Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for the spotted owl. It was signed in a public ceremony on Green Diamond lands in Northern California in September of 1992 by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and covers over 330,000 acres of the company's timberlands in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

The plan allows Green Diamond to demonstrate how the company will maintain suitable habitat for spotted owls on its property over time and avoid, minimize and mitigate potential effects of harvesting on the resident owl population.

Taking almost three years to develop, the plan's intensive research program and adaptive management techniques have resulted in the maintenance of an owl population (75-100 pairs) which, even under the most conservative projections, exceeds that prescribed by the Federal Interagency Scientific Committee for five optimal Conservation Areas (15-20 pairs each). In addition, the company plans an aggressive ongoing research program which will yield potentially significant scientific knowledge of the species.

The company's scientists continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the HCP in sustaining populations of spotted owls. Every five years, long-term population trends including survival and reproductive rates are examined. In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviews the HCP annually.