

GREAT GRAY OWL

Another plan maintenance action relating to the Northwest Forest Plan involves adjustments in the Great Gray Owl (GGO) Survey Protocol. These adjustments were recommended by the Research and Monitoring Committee subsequent to findings and recommendations of a science panel. The six recommendations for the 1997 survey season are being incorporated into the May 12, 1995 version of the protocol. In addition, habitat occupancy are to be located in habitat with the highest likelihood of supporting nesting Great Gray Owls. Methods, locations, and timing of habitat occupancy surveys are at the discretion of the resource area.

Among the recommendations is one acknowledging that, using the onset of snowmelt to determine the start of the survey season, may not allow completion of all four visits prior to May 15. However, there should still be a good faith effort put forth to complete the four visits between March 15 and May 15, even if they go past the specified time period. A total of six visits is still required.

In southwestern Oregon, some Great Gray Owls have been found below 3,000 feet elevation. Although not a requirement at this time, surveys below 3,000 feet (but otherwise according to protocol) will both assist in maintaining species viability and provide important data for evaluation of the GGO Record of Decision requirements. Field offices should assess which, if any, lower elevation locations would be priority areas to survey given the existing work load, staffing, and funding.

16-25 LEAVE TREES PER ACRE

Another plan maintenance relates to retaining 16-25 large green trees per acre in harvest units. The Klamath Falls Resource Area will implement the following:

For each prescription unit, stand exams will be conducted to determine existing stand structure. Unit reports will show, by species; basal area, crown closure, and the average number of trees per acre by diameter class. The number of snags and amount of coarse woody debris will also be determined.

A prescription unit average of at least 16 green trees from the larger size classes present within the unit will be retained. Criteria for retention will be:

Species: Tree species naturally adapted to the site, especially those species presently under-represented (usually ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, and sugar pine).

Condition: Vigorous trees and other trees in any condition having special habitat characteristics. This mix will ideally supply overstory structure, as well as a variety of snags and logs in various decay classes over an extended time period.

Size: Trees from the larger size classes of a given unit. (The size and density of trees vary tremendously, however. The largest trees in some units do not exceed 14 inches dbh; others have many trees over 30 inches dbh.)