

**Occupied Mapped Lynx Habitat
Amendment to the
Canada Lynx Conservation Agreement**

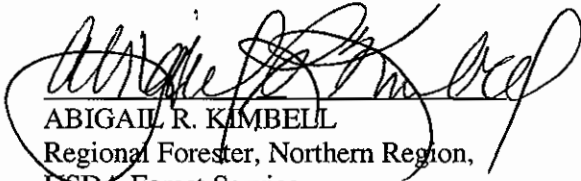
Background: The Canada Lynx Conservation Agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and U.S. Forest Service (FS) was revised in May 2005. A component of the Agreement was "... the FWS and FS will jointly identify 'occupied lynx habitat' as a subset of mapped lynx habitat." Pursuant to Section VII Amendments, Exceptions, and Duration of Agreement, we therefore amend the Canada Lynx Conservation Agreement with the following definition of Occupied Mapped Lynx Habitat.

The principal contacts for this agreement are:

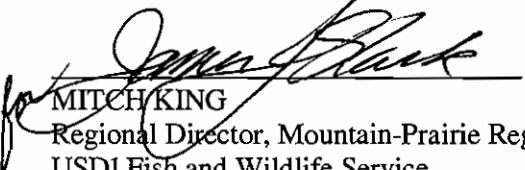
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IX. SIGNATURES


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Definition: Occupied mapped lynx habitat

The FWS and FS jointly developed this definition of occupied mapped lynx habitat. Information in the FWS Lynx Recovery Outline was considered during development of the “occupied habitat” definition for mapped lynx habitat on national forests in the northern and southern Rocky Mountains and the Cascade Range (Forest Service Regions 1, 2, 4, and 6).

All mapped lynx habitat on an entire national forest is considered “occupied” by lynx when:

- 1- There are at least 2 verified lynx observations or records since 1999 on the national forest unless they are verified to be transient individuals; or
- 2- There is evidence of lynx reproduction on the national forest.

Forests that meet these occupied criteria were then examined to evaluate whether portions of the forest had isolated regions, disjunct mountain ranges, or peripheral areas that did not meet the “occupied” criteria stated above. Portions of some forests were removed from occupied status. Examples of this are small isolated mountain ranges on the Lewis and Clark NF and southern peripheral portions of the Okanogan-Wenatchee NF. The eastern portion Okanogan-Wenatchee NF would be retained as potential linkage between the two populations, and due to proximity to Canada and likely recolonization by lynx (see Table 1 and Figure 1).

For the purposes of this definition, once an area is considered “occupied” it remains occupied. Lynx are wide ranging and their distribution expands and contracts in the northern United States when populations in Canada expand and contract. Areas that had been historically used by lynx (pre-1999) but are currently unoccupied, are not considered “occupied” based on the definition above. At some point in the future when lynx populations increase during years of high snowshoe hare densities, these areas may be used by lynx. While the Conservation Agreement applies primarily to occupied lynx habitat, the LCAS may provide useful information for Forest Service managers to consider when making decisions regarding unoccupied mapped lynx habitat until a final Lynx Recovery Plan is adopted.

Definitions

Verified Observation or Record: Verified lynx observations or records are those that scientifically document a lynx by identifying physical remains, live-captured animals, or DNA samples. Verified records may come from the National Lynx Survey, mortality records, photographs, research, or surveys. Verified records must be associated with generally reliable sources, such as formal research and survey efforts carried out by agencies, tribal governments, or universities with appropriate quality control (L.F. Ruggiero et al. 1999, Ecology and Conservation of Lynx in the United States, 480 pp).

LCAS: The Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy, August, 2000.

Mapped Lynx Habitat: Mapped lynx habitat consists primarily of mesic coniferous forests that have cold, snowy winters and provide a prey base of snowshoe hare. The vegetation types and elevations that provide lynx habitat vary somewhat across the U.S. The specific descriptions are listed on pages 4 and 5 of the Glossary in the LCAS, by geographic area (i.e. Northeastern U.S., Great Lakes states and Western U.S.).

Table 1: National Forests With Occupied or Unoccupied Mapped Lynx Habitat Based Upon Verified Records From 1999 to May, 2005.

CASCADE MOUNTAINS GEOGRAPHIC AREA

<u>Administrative Unit</u>	<u>Occupied</u>	<u>Basis</u>
Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF	Yes	Research. The southern end of the forest is currently unoccupied
Okanogan-Wenatchee NF	Yes	National Lynx Survey, Research The southern extent of the forest is currently unoccupied

NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS GEOGRAPHIC AREA

<u>Administrative Unit</u>	<u>Occupied</u>	<u>Basis</u>
Malheur NF	No	National Lynx Survey
Wallowa-Whitman NF	No	National Lynx Survey
Umatilla NF	No	National Lynx Survey
Bighorn NF	No	National Lynx Survey
Ashley NF	No	National Lynx Survey
Salmon-Challis NF	No	National Lynx Survey
Nez Perce NF	No	Unsurveyed
Bitterroot NF	No	National Lynx Survey
Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF	No	National Lynx Survey
Colville NF	Yes**	No National Lynx Survey Occupied status based on one FWS refuge record
Idaho Panhandle NFs	Yes	Research locations on Kaniksu NF; National Lynx Survey protocol for 1-year was unsuccessful on St. Joe NF
Clearwater NF	Yes	Camera and DNA records
Lolo NF	Yes	National Lynx Survey, Research on Seeley Lake RD
Kootenai NF	Yes	Research
Flathead NF	Yes	Research
Lewis and Clark NF	Yes	Research; the disjunct mountain ranges are currently unoccupied.
Helena NF	Yes	Mortality on MacDonald Pass and research lynx on the Lincoln RD Disjunct mountain ranges currently unoccupied
Gallatin NF	Yes	National Lynx Survey and DNA
Custer NF	Yes**	Considered the Beartooth RD occupied since there are verified observations on both sides of the RD and we have not surveyed this RD
Targhee NF	Yes	National Lynx Survey and documented use by research animals.
Bridger-Teton NF	Yes	Research and DNA records
Shoshone NF	Yes**	National Lynx Survey- One documentation by DNA and followup snowmobile protocol was

unsuccessful, but motorized survey area has limited access. Large areas unsurveyed. There are recent records in the eastern portion of Yellowstone NP, adjacent to the NF

**Available data do not fully meet the occupied habitat criteria, but based upon the strength of existing evidence and limited survey effort, the presence of resident lynx is highly probable.

SOUTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAINS GEOGRAPHIC AREA

<u>Administrative Unit</u>	<u>Occupied</u>	<u>Basis</u>
Arapaho-Roosevelt NF	Yes	Research
San Juan NF	Yes	Research
Rio Grande NF	Yes	Research
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison NFs	Yes	Research
Pike-San Isabel NF	Yes	Research

Amended or Revised Forest Plans

Section IV, Part 1 states that "This conservation agreement applies until forest plans have been amended or revised to provide guidance necessary to conserve lynx and applies only to NFS lands mapped as occupied lynx habitat". The following forest plans have been revised with lynx guidance and are no longer subject to the Conservation Agreement:

- White River NF
- Medicine Bow NF
- Boise NF
- Payette NF
- Sawtooth NF
- Wasatch-Cache NF
- Uinta NF
- Chippewa NF
- Superior NF
- Hiawatha NF
- Ottawa NF
- White Mountain NF

Figure 1. Occupied/Unoccupied Canada Lynx Habitat – Northwestern Forests