

Environmental Assessment Errata Sheet

The Errata Sheet contains revisions and corrections that respond to comments received during the official notice and comment period. When placed with the EA, the Errata Sheet serves as the Final EA.

1. The following paragraphs add to the effects analysis discussion for bald eagles on pages 47-49.

Lining trees and snags does not ensure their survival. Fire may cause a tree to die by damaging too much of its cambium layer, by scorching too much of its crown, or by overheating too many of its fine root hairs. Lining trees only reduces the chance of excessive cambium layer damage. Snags may be ignited and lost from flame contact, flying firebrands, or radiant heat. Lining snags only reduces the chance of direct flame contact. Snags of habitable size are lined prior to prescribed burning according to forest plan direction. The Coconino N.F. LRMP requires that prescribed burn crews minimize the loss of snags, logs and roost trees during broadcast burning activities.

Individually lining all large trees is not feasible given budget limitations. Lining clumps or the entire roost area actually maintains a higher risk of fire-induced mortality to those clumps and roost trees from wildfire. By not burning off the fuel load underneath those trees and allowing further accumulation, the risk of wildfire-induced mortality (crown scorch and root damage) remains and increases over time.

Prescribed burning under controlled conditions has a small probability of causing tree mortality. However, a wildfire that occurs prior to or without prescribed burning under the desired trees has a greater risk of mortality. Prescribed burning under these trees actually increases their chance of survival. That said, the burn boss preparing any given burn block often elects to line certain old-growth trees after balancing a matrix of threats to its survival. Groups and clumps of trees may require lining.

Probability of Ponderosa Pine Mortality from Fire Occurrence (percent)					
Diameter Breast Height	8"	10"	12"	14"	16+"
Wildfire under Current Condition	99%	95%	93%	13%	4 – 18%
Wildfire after Thinning W/O Rx Burn	94%	91%	90%	12%	4 – 16%
Wildfire W/O Thin After Rx Burn	36%	26%	19%	8%	4– 10%
Wildfire after Thinning & Rx Burn	29%	20%	15%	6%	3 – 8%
Initial Rx Burn	10%	8%	6%	4%	2 – 4%
Maintenance Rx Burn	3%	2%	1%	1%	1 – 2%

This project proposes broadcast burning every 5 to 10 years. Burning will not occur within 1/4 mile of known bald eagle winter roost areas between October 15 and April 15. Burning may result in smoke lingering for approximately two days after ignition activities have ended. Eagles are unlikely to be roosting in this area after April 15 and before October 15. When any are present there may be short-term, low intensity effects to roosting bald eagles, which may result in eagles flushing from roosts during periods of heavy smoke. Foraging eagles may avoid areas of heavy smoke. 4.9 acres within eagle roosts are proposed for burn only treatments. There is a low probability of roost trees being burned during prescribed fires. Fire managers will take appropriate actions to minimize damage to roost trees, snags and large trees during broadcast burning.

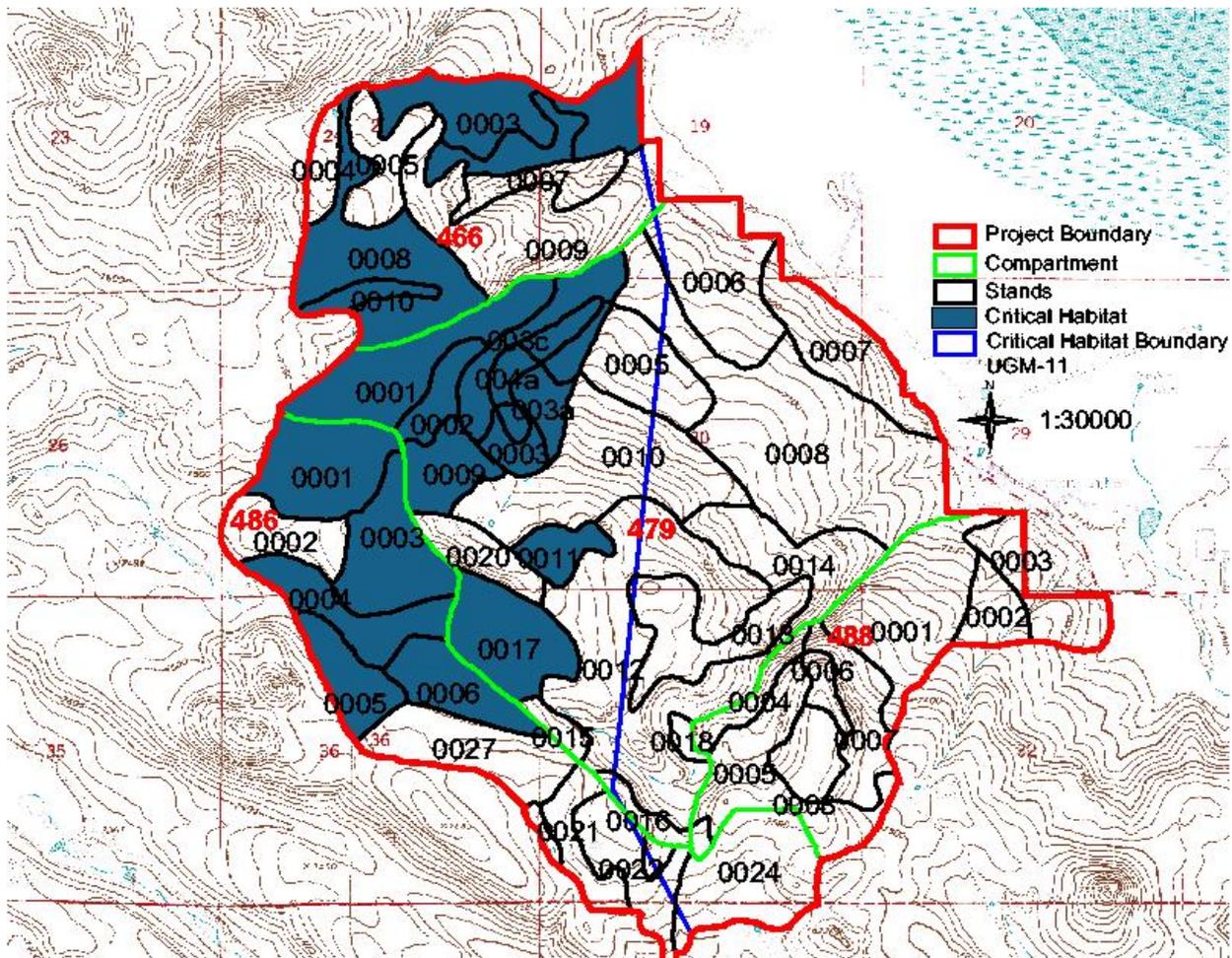
2. The following paragraphs and map adds to the discussion of MSO critical habitat on pages 53-54.

Critical habitat refers to specific geographic areas that are essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management considerations. Critical habitat is made up of the physical and biological features necessary for the species' survival; these features are found in restricted and protected habitats. The final rule for MSO

critical habitat was published in the Federal Register on August 20, 2004. This project is partially within Critical Habitat Unit UGM-11. Not all the areas within the mapped critical habitat unit boundaries contain habitat elements important to the owl. The Service requires consultations only on the activities that affect those areas that contain the primary constituent elements. The primary constituent elements for critical habitat found in the project area are related to forest structure and prey rather than canyon habitat and are synonymous with the protected and part of the restricted habitats of the project.

There are 885 acres of critical habitat within the project area that contain the primary constituent elements, see above Map Critical Habitat. Critical habitat within the project area is made up of protected and restricted habitat. The treatments proposed in these habitats are prescribed burning and thinning from below. As stated above in the discussion of protected and restricted habitats, none of the habitats will be treated so intensely that they will no longer meet the designations of protected or restricted habitats.

Figure A. Mexican Spotted Owl Critical Habitat



3. The following paragraph clarifies consultation requirements with US Fish and Wildlife Service, as discussed on page 4 (Public Involvement) and page 87 (Consultation and Coordination).

The Forest Service withdrew this project from the April 10, 2001 Wildland Urban Interface Batch Programmatic Biological Opinion on September 29, 2004. We then consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the Mormon Lake Basin Fuel Reduction proposed action as a discrete project not covered by the Programmatic Opinion. The USFWS concurred with the Forest Service's determination that Alternative C is ***not likely to adversely affect*** Mexican spotted owl or bald eagle or their habitat [PRD 126]. There is no critical habitat within the project area.