

Charter

Utah Northern Goshawk Project

October 29, 1998

Goal and Scope

The goal of this project is to provide any needed interim direction for National Forest System lands in the State of Utah on the Ashley, Dixie, Fishlake, Manti-LaSal, Uinta, and Wasatch-Cache National Forests to address new scientific information found in the *Conservation Strategy and Agreement for the Management of Northern Goshawk in Utah (1998)*.

This direction will be designed to retain options for management of habitat for northern goshawks in Utah until Land and Resource Management Plans (forest plans) for the aforementioned National Forests are revised or suitably amended. This direction may take the form of amendments to the Regional Guide and/or Forest Plans. Revised Land and Resource Management Plans for these National Forests are projected to be in place by the year 2002 or earlier.

It is recognized that goshawks range throughout much of the western United States, however, this project will only address National Forest System lands for the six National Forests in Utah stated above. The scope of this project is limited to this area because the Conservation Strategy and Agreement, and the scientific assessment supporting this strategy (Graham et al. 1998, in press), only addressed goshawk habitat within the state of Utah.

Benefits of viewing habitat at larger scales were recognized. The biologists involved in the development of the assessment and strategy state "It is our belief that the use of the state scale (i.e., its aggregation of landscapes) to conduct a habitat based analysis for PVA" [population viability analysis] "will provide us with the information needed to understand the different ecological processes that influence the life histories of this far ranging, broadly distributed species."

Products

A NFMA and NEPA sufficient Environmental Assessment, Decision Notice, Decision Record, and Finding of No Significant Impact*.

The Decision Notice, and supporting EA, will amend the Regional Guide and/or Land and Resource Management Plans for the Ashley, Dixie, Fishlake, Manti-LaSal, Uinta, and Wasatch-Cache National Forests to provide interim direction for goshawk, vegetative and/or diversity management objectives, standards and guidelines, and monitoring requirements.

Based on the preliminary findings in supplemental information reports (SIRs) being developed for these National Forests, the resulting Decision Notice, and supporting EA, should not amend the land allocation or the mix of goods and services for the interim period for these forests.

The project initiation memo is attached. It includes the full purpose and need, how to proceed with development of the Proposed Action, needs for public involvement strategy, team and support member designation and responsibilities. A detailed internal and public involvement strategy will be developed prior to issuance of the scoping notice.

*Note: Based on preliminary findings in Forest Plan Supplemental Information Reports, the anticipated disclosure document will be an Environmental Assessment. However, an Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared if the analysis shows that the quality of the human environment may be significantly effected by the proposed changes in direction.

Timeline

1. Conservation Strategy for the Northern Goshawk completed; signed by biologists.	September 30, 1998
2. Team Intros/Information needs assessment	October 22 and 23, 1998
3. Charter and Initiation Memo signed	October 23, 1998
4. Conservation Agreement signed by all parties	October 26, 1998
5. Forest Plan SIRs signed	November 10, 1998
6. Development of Proposed action (interim direction for Regional Guide and/or Forest Plans). Completion of a detailed internal and public involvement strategy.	November 2-12, 1998
7. Regional Forester, Staff Directors and Forest Supervisor briefing and concurrence on PA and Public involvement strategy. Internal strategy reviewed and agreed upon, including WO involvement.	November 19 and/or 20, 1998
8. Scoping letter and FR notice mailed.	November 21, 1998
9. Notice published in papers of record/FR	November 27, 1998
10. Alternatives drafted, analysis work	December 1-12, 1998
11. Finalize alternatives, environmental consequences, and alternative recommended for review	January 4-22, 1999
12. Preferred Alternative and Draft FONSI agreement	February 3, 1999
13. WO Informed	February 8-10, 1999
14. EA and Draft FONSI to printer	February 12, 1999
15. Complete and indexed Administrative Record	February 12, 1999
16. Decision and EA back from printer	February 18, 1999
17. EA and Draft FONSI Issued/mailed*	February 22, 1999
18. Notice filed in papers of record and FR	February 26, 1999
19. End of EA comment period	March 29, 1999
20. Review of comments and adjustments to EA completed.	April 5-12, 1999
21. RO and FS Review of DN/FONSI	April 14, 1999
22. DN/FONSI mailed	April 19, 1999
23. Notice filed in papers of record and FR	April 23, 1999
24. Appeal period ends**	June 7, 1999

* Predecisional Comment Period: Release of an EA for 30 day comment period prior to final decision is not required under 36 CFR 217 rules, however, modification of this requirement may be recommended depending on the number of issues and concerns generated during the development period of the EA. The timeline above is built on the assumption that the EA *will* be released for a 30-day comment period. If it is elected *not* to release the EA for a 30-day comment period, then the DN/FONSI could be released in late February or early March.

** Appeals: Appeals timeline for the Forest Service is covered under 36 CFR 217 rules