

Guidelines to Avoid Incidental Take of Northern Spotted Owls from Timber Operations:

Update to Attachments A & B

CLFA Annual Workshop
March 7, 2020
Anderson CA



Overview

- Early coordination is encouraged
- These are guidelines
- One size does not fit all
 - These guidelines do not cover every scenario
 - Work with the agencies to customize for your situation
- These revisions are responsive to input received from stakeholders over the years.
- We plan on future revisions more frequently.



What we heard...

- NSO Stakeholder Forums,
 - Surveys are costly and constrain forest management
 - The more we survey, the more constrained we are
 - ACs stay in the database even when no NSO are being detected
 - Circles are deficit because NSO habitat definitions do not fit on interior



How we responded

- Habitat definitions are unchanged and “old” no take is still an option but...
 - **Data driven analysis is a much better way to go.**
1. Survey area
 2. Number of visits
 3. Use spot checks
 4. ACs can be combined in to non-circular polygons that avoid areas of non-habitat that lead to deficit home ranges



Summary of Attachment B

The Service recognizes that NSO surveys have been conducted in some areas for many years.

Survey data may be used to effectively avoid take of spotted owls and provide certainty to project proponents.

To avoid take of NSO, the best habitat should be maintained, closest to ACs that are frequently occupied by successfully reproducing NSO.



Examples

Project footprint surveys can be used when

Site has a long survey history and status on NSO on or near the area is known.

Habitat will not be downgraded.

Methods and justification

Areas of habitat out to 0.25 to 0.5 miles (survey the interior but make sure to cover edges).

Assumes NSO within 0.25-0.5 are detected, none are nesting/roosting in harvest units, and areas will remain functional immediately after harvest.

Dramatically reduces number of survey stations (relative to 1.3 mile or 0.7 mile buffer).

Project footprint surveys

NR

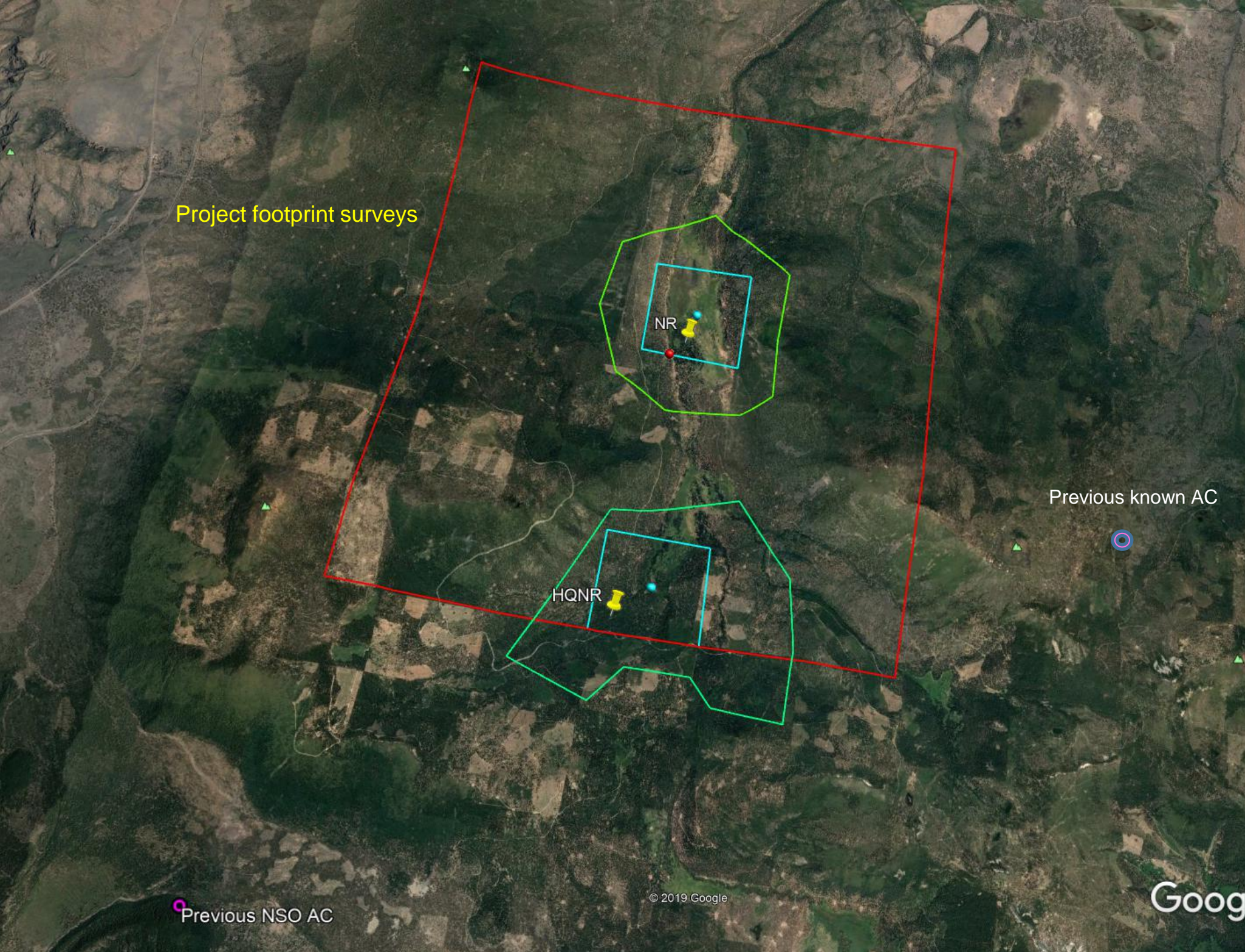
HQNR

Previous known AC

Previous NSO AC

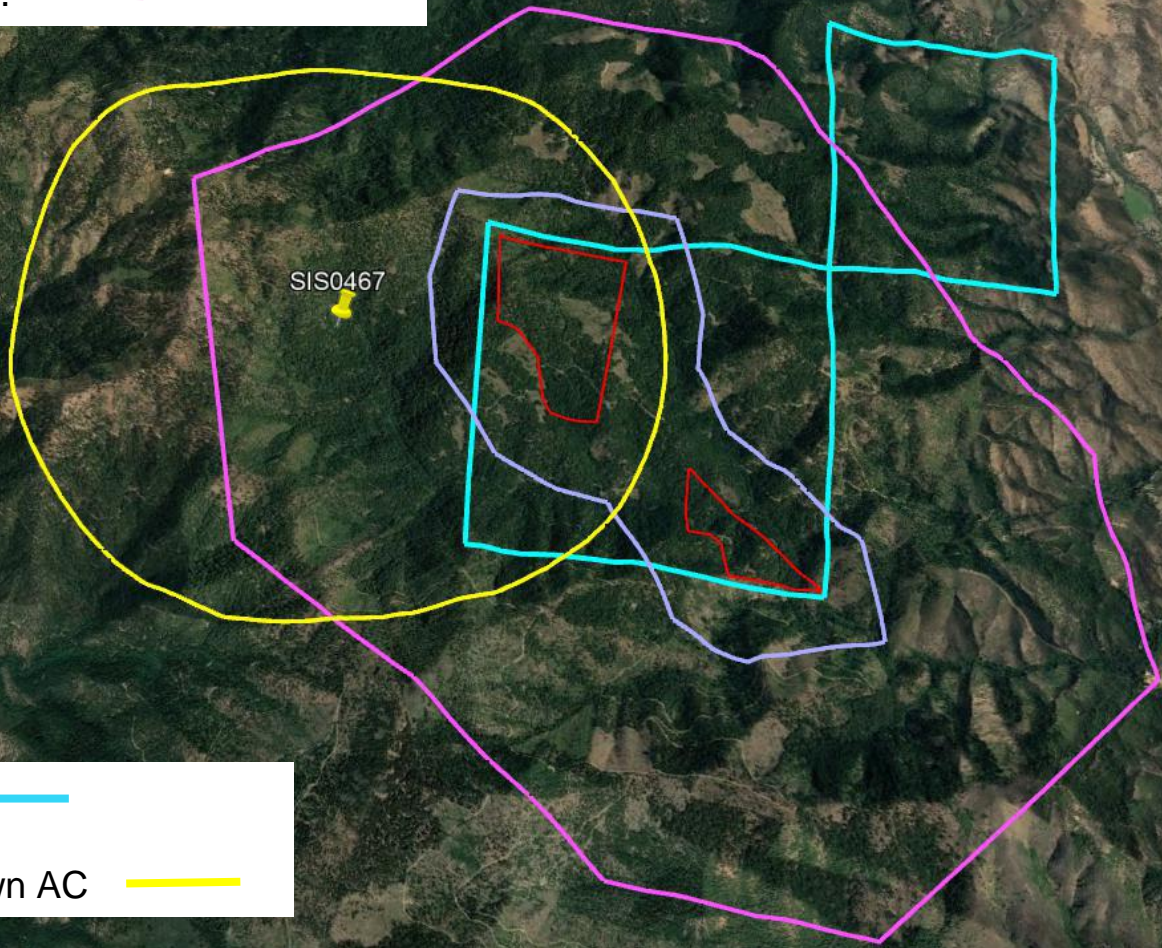
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Foraging stays foraging, Nesting Roosting stays nesting roosting (no downgrade)

Project footprint (0.25 mi) surveys area, 1,150 ac — purple —
1.3 mi. survey areas, 6,500 ac. — pink —

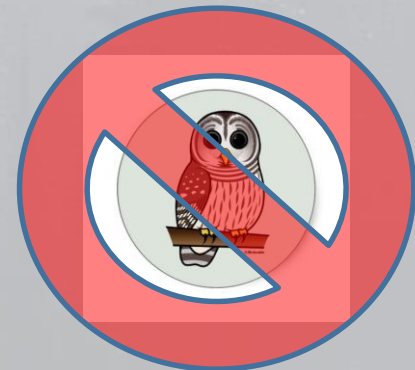


Private ownership 1250 ac. — cyan —
Harvest units — red —
1.3 mi. home range around known AC — yellow —

Examples

Number of survey visits

- Survey history negative for barred owls (BDOW)
- Check CDFW BDOW database and neighbors.
- May need to begin with 6 visits in year one
- If previous surveys have not detected BDOW, use 3 visits until a BDOW is detected, then switch to 6. If after 3 years, no further BDOW are detected, may be possible to revert back to 3 visits



Examples – Keep surveys current?

Spot checks

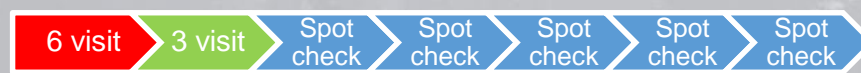
- Has area been previously well surveyed? Are there owls nearby that might move in?



- Timber operations continuing in to year 5 or 6? Survey only areas left to be operated or entire project?



Harvest window



Harvest window

Summary of Attachment B

- Revised Attachment B emphasizes the use of high quality, site-specific information to make no-take determinations.
- Data presented in THPs must be clear, complete, and biologically accurate.
- Areas where there is flexibility in the Survey Protocol are identified and may be used when justified.





Summary of Attachment B

What has changed, what has not changed.

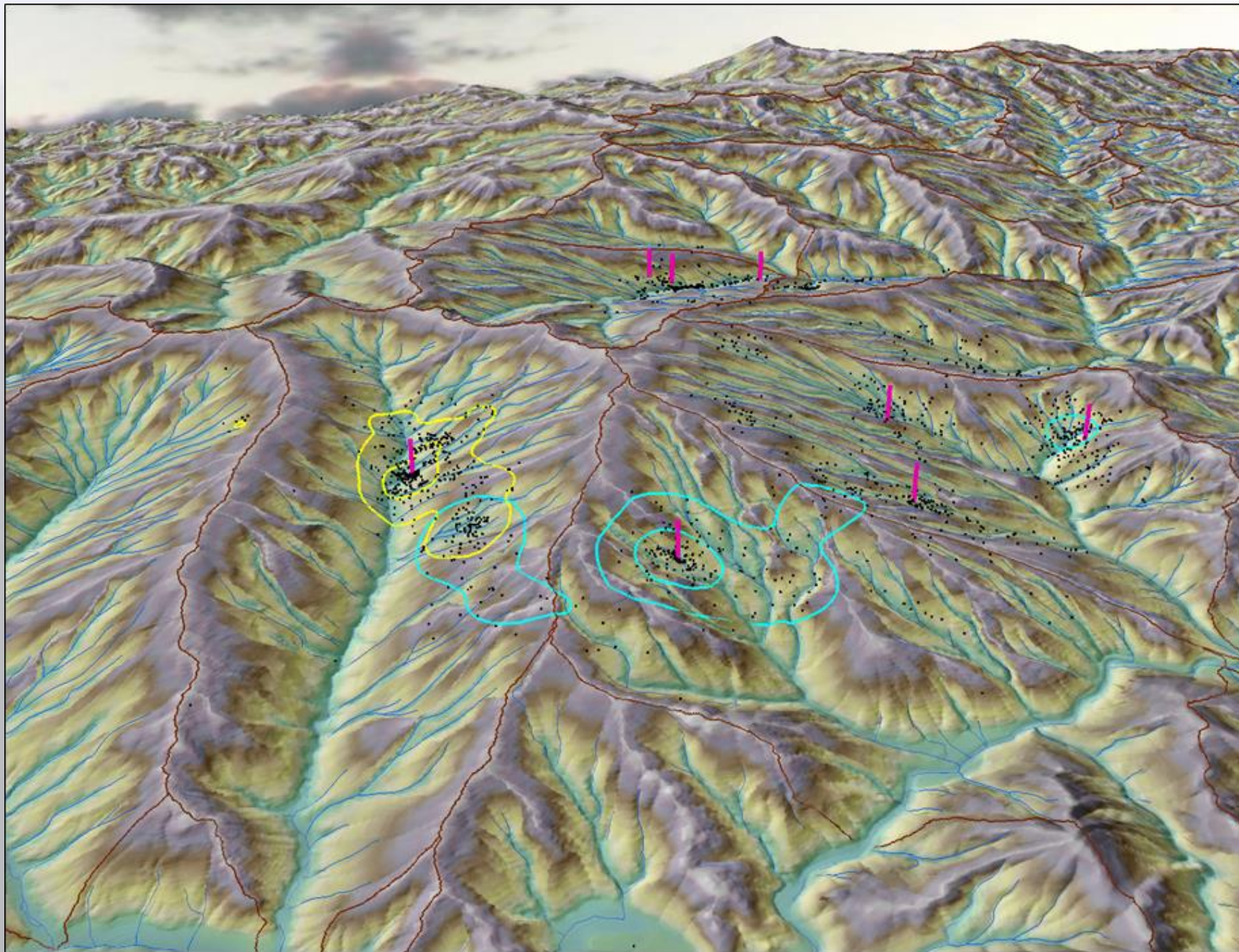
- Examples of using site-specific data are presented.
- This includes the delineation of non-circular home ranges
however,
- The previous version of Attachment B may still be used if data is lacking.
- Habitat definitions have not changed.
- Home ranges and core use areas represented by 1.3 mile and 0.5 mile radius circles may still be the best method to ensure adequate amounts of NSO habitat are retained and take is avoided.



Summary of Attachment B

This is a data driven process

- Information-based Take Avoidance
- Information-based AC location
- Information-based Core Use Area delineation
- Information-based Home Range delineation
- Non-circular home ranges based on logical owl use areas may be used when robust survey data is available
- Abiotic variables may be important
- Working with all affected forest managers is essential
- Circular home ranges may be more appropriate in some cases



From Woodbridge 2007- non-circular habitat use

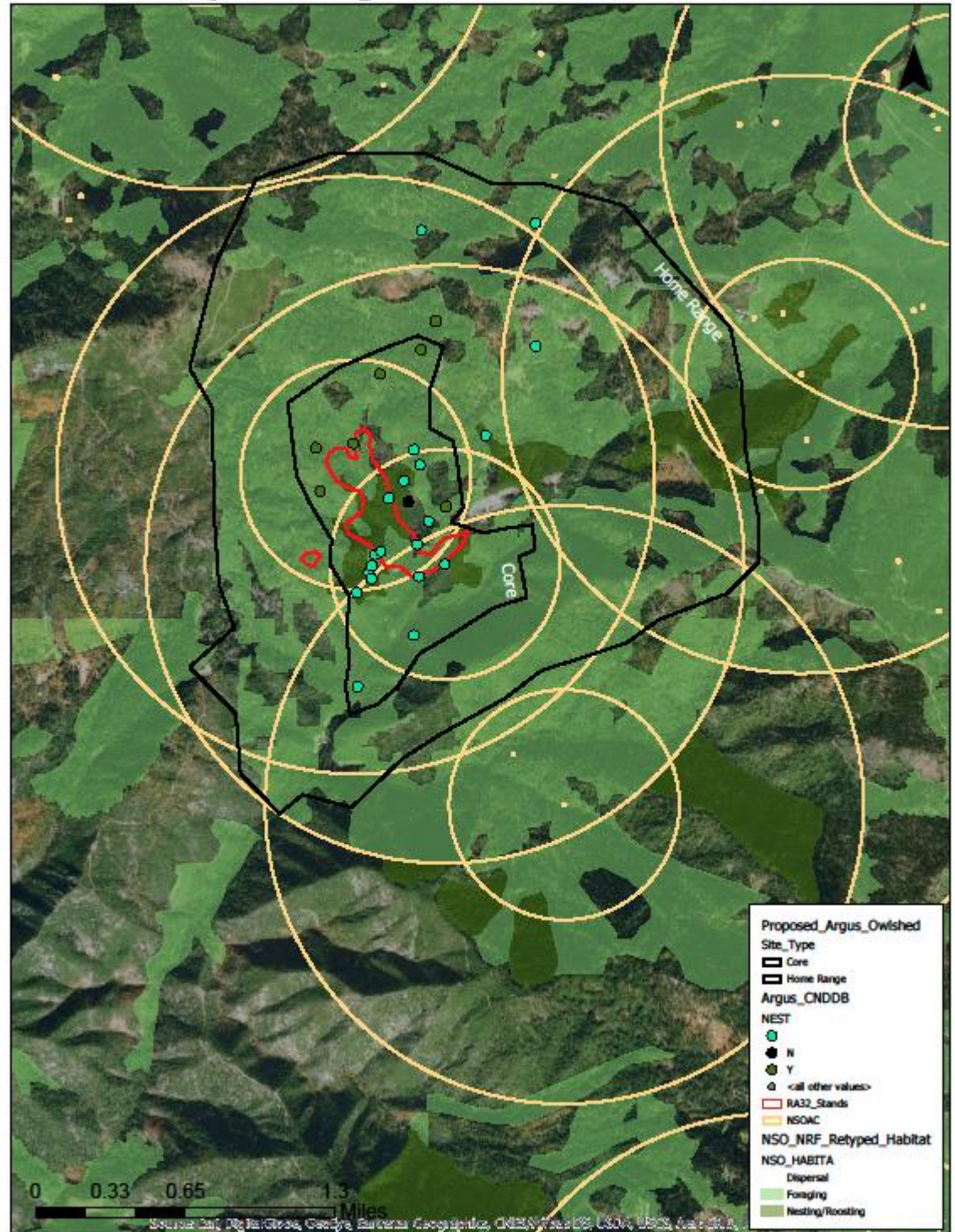
Proposed Argus Owlshed - 111419

Klamath National Forest had numerous years of data for this area. Were able to consolidate 3 separate Activity Centers into one non-circular home range and core use area.

Red polygon is RA32 stand (high quality habitat with “old growth” characteristics). Identified on-the-ground.

The non-circular core included all known nests except one. The one not included is potentially erroneous or was mapped inaccurately in 1997 (ground truthed and the location is in an open area).

Detections centered in drainage and non-circular home range follow ridge lines forming and “owlshed.”



Summary of Attachment B

Flexibility in the protocol

1. Use of spot check surveys beyond year 4 (based on previous or continuous surveys).
2. Number of survey visits: 3 vs 6 visits where no BDOW have been detected.
3. Project footprint surveys when habitat will be maintained (vs. 1.3 miles).



Questions?

