



## U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

### Ecological Services / Northern Spotted Owl Recovery



#### Habitat Retention Agreement

Steven B. Kahn / landowner

Swain's Flat/Fish Creek Property, Humboldt County

The 1,980 acre Swain's Flat / Fish Creek parcel is located along the Van Duzen River in Humboldt County. Managed as non-industrial timberland, this parcel is fully stocked with Redwood and Douglas-fir second growth timber that has been logged twice (1990-03 and 2000-03) in a manner that retained the largest, fastest growing trees. The result is a timber stand that happens to be outstanding habitat for the federally listed northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*). Anticipating that this type of timber management would be likely to attract northern spotted owls to the property, the landowner has entered into a Habitat Retention Agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Habitat

Retention Agreement documents the landowner's voluntary commitment to create and maintain high quality northern spotted owl habitat through management that over time increases average tree diameters and develops the multi-aged, complex canopied forest preferred by northern spotted owls in the Redwood Region.

In return, if the species is found on the property prior to the next harvest entry, the Agreement proposes that the usual 500 foot radius no-cut buffer (18 acres) around the activity center be reduced to 300 feet (~6.5 acres). If the owls are found to be nesting in the year of harvest, a seasonal restriction of 0.25 mile protects the reproductive effort. Habitat Retention Agreements facilitate the landowner's preferred style of management and establish regulatory protections for the northern spotted owl that are more appropriate for the existing conditions. Partnerships with private timberland owners created through Habitat Retention Agreements provide mutually beneficial results that enhance the efforts of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to recover northern spotted owls.

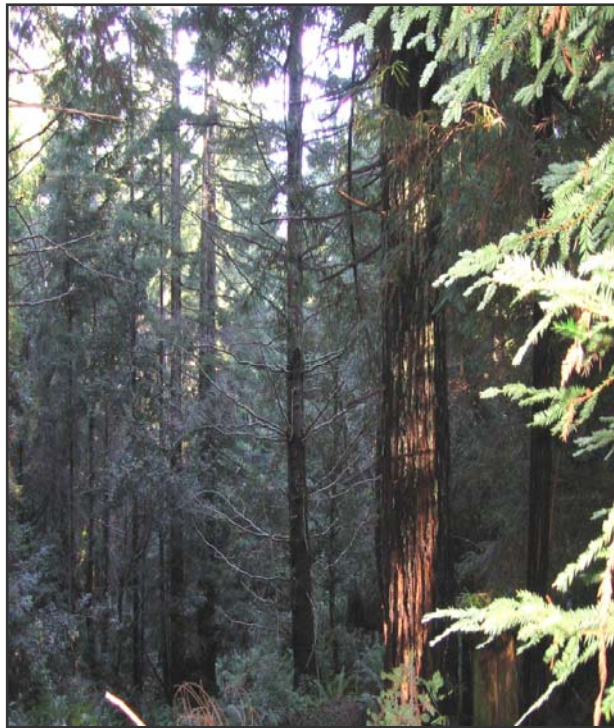


Photo Credit: Mark Collins / Able Forestry, Inc.