

N1621

28 Oct 98

Bruce Halstead
Project Leader
Coastal California Fish and Wildlife Service Office
1125 16th Street
Arcata, California 95521

Dear Bruce:

We received your request for information regarding compliance with the terms and conditions of the biological opinions that your agency provided us (reference letter 1-14-98-112). While most of the actions described in our biological assessments have been implemented in some form, not all of them actually occurred during the marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl breeding seasons (Table 1).

In the biological opinion written for our assessment of the "Repair of the Mill Creek Road and Campground", your agency listed three terms and conditions for RNSP to comply with in order to be exempt from the prohibitions of Section 9 of the Endangered Species Act. Crews working on this project did an adequate job of storing their food and garbage. They maintained a clean work site in order to avoid attracting and indirectly feeding predators such as jays and crows. Complete protocol surveys in the project area were conducted for northern spotted owls. No spotted owls were detected by our surveys in 1997. Enclosed for your files is a copy of an annual project report summarizing the findings of our 1997 northern spotted owl monitoring project. RNSP began implementing this project on 11 May. The road repair was completed by 22 May, and the work in the campground was completed on 25 July (Table 1).

In the biological opinion written for our assessment of the "Repair of the Tall Trees Access Road", your agency listed only one term and condition. We require all contractors (in their contract specifications) to store food and garbage in containers that are animal-proofed. We feel the contractors used for this project did an adequate job of food storage including maintenance of a clean work site at the end of each day.

Each biological opinion requested notification of any conservation recommendations that were implemented. We would like to take this opportunity to provide notification of implementation actions. In 1997 we surveyed for abundance and distribution of bald eagles, peregrine falcons, and western snowy plover in addition to the northern spotted owl monitoring identified above. Enclosed are summary reports for surveys. We coordinated with the service in developing strategies for managing our annual maintenance operations. This coordination led to completion of a biological assessment and a subsequent biological opinion in 1998.

We agree that research is needed to evaluate possible effects of various types of human activities on listed species within our boundaries. We have taken a look at our monitoring data for

northern spotted owls and found that this species is most successful at producing offspring in the southern portion of the park. Our biologists are currently assessing whether the monitoring data show any correlation between intensity of human activities, presence of barred owls, amount of old-growth forest within an activity center and fledging success of northern spotted owls in RNSP.

We initiated surveys to quantify corvid abundance relative to various types of park developments. Enclosed is a summary of our findings. RNSP continued this corvid monitoring work in 1998.

This correspondence should clarify the dates our proposed actions were implemented in 1997. If you should have any further questions regarding this information, please contact Rick Wallen or Howard Sakai. They should be able to answer any questions or gather the necessary information from the appropriate staff.

Information regarding implementation of actions in 1998 is currently being summarized and the actual acres of disturbance will be calculated. We will be reporting on our 1998 actions in a separate letter. You should receive this information by mid-January.

Sincerely,

Andrew T. Ringgold
National Park Superintendent

Richard C. Sermon
State Parks Superintendent

CC: Chief of Resource Management and Science (w/o enc.)
Supervisory Ecologist (w/o enc.)
Chief of Maintenance (w/o enc.)

Table 1. Comparison of proposed vs. actual implementation of actions for which incidental take was authorized in 1997

Proposed action	Proposed implementation (From BA)	Acres of Incidental Take Authorized in BO	Actual implementation	Acres of Incidental Take Incurred
Perform repair work at the Mill Creek campground	ASAP	MAMU = 14 SPOW = 555	12 May to 25 Jul	MAMU = 14 SPOW = 555
Road Grading and Re-engineering of the Howland Hill road	Two weeks in late May or early June	MAMU = 727 SPOW = 727	Mid October	None
C-Line east side road repair	15 June to 15 August 1997	MAMU = 18	27 Jul 97 to 10 Oct 97	MAMU = 18
Repair of the A-9 road	15 June to 15 August	MAMU = 20	No action	None
Repair of the B-5 road	15 June to 15 August	MAMU = 16	15 Aug 97 to 1 Nov 97 ¹	None
Tall Trees trail	ASAP (and last for one month)	MAMU = 104	10 July 97 to 1 Sept 97	MAMU = 104
Horse Trail	ASAP (and last for one month)	MAMU = 7	10 July to 1 Aug	MAMU = 7
1997 total				MAMU = 143 SPOW = 555

1 Replacement of the one culvert located within ¼ mile of MAMU habitat occurred during summer 1998. This disturbance will be reported in the 1998 summary.