



American Forest & Paper Association



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Joint Statement Announcing Settlement of Northern Spotted Owl Litigation

OLYMPIA – Today the State of Washington Commissioner of Public Lands, the Seattle and Kittitas Audubon Societies (Audubon), the Washington Forest Protection Association (WFPA) and Weyerhaeuser Company announce the settlement of ongoing litigation over Northern Spotted Owls.

Under the settlement, the parties propose a collaborative Policy Working Group on Northern Spotted Owl Conservation to be established by the Washington Forest Practices Board. The purpose of the Working Group would be to recommend measures that result in strategic contributions from non-federal lands in Washington to the broader goal of conservation of a viable population of the Northern Spotted Owl. Recommendations must be based on the best available science and should consider guidance in the federal Northern Spotted Owl Recovery Plan. The State Department of Natural Resources, Audubon, WFPA and Weyerhaeuser will participate in that collaborative process, along with representatives of the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and others. While the details of the settlement between Audubon and Weyerhaeuser are confidential, the settlement maintains habitat around the four owl site centers that were the focus of Audubon's claim against the company.

The parties to the litigation concluded that continuing this "take" litigation under the federal Endangered Species Act would not be productive and would prevent a truly collaborative process, which they are hopeful will lead to significant conservation benefits for the spotted owl on non-federal lands.

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