



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office
2105 Osuna NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113
Phone: (505) 346-2525 Fax: (505) 346-2542

August 31, 2004

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed is the Federal Register notice announcing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's final designation of critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*) (owl) under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. On November 12, 2003, the United States District Court for the District of Arizona, (Center for Biological Diversity v. Norton, Civ. No. 01-409 TUC DCB), ordered the Service to submit a new final rule for designation of critical habitat for the owl to the Federal Register by August 20, 2004. We have prepared a final designation pursuant to that Court order.

We designate approximately 3.5 million hectares (ha) (8.6 million acres (ac)) of critical habitat in Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah, on Federal lands. Section 7 of the Act requires Federal agencies to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. As required by section 4 of the Act, we considered economic and other relevant impacts prior to making a final decision on what areas to designate as critical habitat.

The Final Environmental Assessment, Finding of No Significant Impact, Final Economic Analysis, Final Rule, and critical habitat maps can be downloaded from our New Mexico Ecological Services website (<http://ifw2es.fws.gov/NewMexico/>). If you prefer a hard copy or a compact disk of the documents please call or write: Santiago Gonzales or Eric Hein at (505) 346-2525 or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, 2105 Osuna NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87113. You can also direct information, questions, or comments to Santiago Gonzales or Eric Hein at the address and telephone numbers listed above. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Susan MacMullin
Field Supervisor

Enclosure