

## Appendix F

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### Snowy Plover Recreation Management Area Descriptions



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## Bayocean Spit – Unoccupied (Tillamook County)

This Recreation Management Area (RMA) is adjacent to land owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Figure F-1). The RMA encompasses 1.73 miles of the ocean shore. The beach is closed to vehicle driving (street and OHV/ATVs). The habitat at the northern end of the RMA is suitable for snowy plover nesting with a wide flat upper beach area extending south. Further south the foredunes increase in height (to 20+ feet). The interior area is tree-covered. Snowy plover have not been seen at this site since 2000, when one bird was observed during the winter months. Nesting at this site has not occurred since 1995. This site used to have high numbers of snowy plovers. In 1989, 39 adults were observed during the winter at Bayocean Spit. During the breeding season, there have been as many as 17 birds (1976) spotted during a breeding survey.

The U.S. Air Force conducts military maneuvers (survival training) within the last 0.25 miles (southern portion) of this RMA and to the south, under a permit from OPRD. This permit is effective through 2010. These operations generally take place during a two-week period in April and September. The U.S. Air Force has obtained a biological opinion from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for its activities. While recreation use here is low, this is a popular area for horse back riding. There are currently five access points to the beach, and a paved parking lot that holds approximately 20+ vehicles. Hunting is allowed. There are a number of private landowners to the south of the RMA; however, these sites have been developed.

## South Sand Lake Spit – Unoccupied (Tillamook County)

This RMA is privately owned. The entire RMA is approximately 1.44 miles in length (Figure F-2). Snowy plover have not been observed at Sand Lake since 1984, when four snowy plover were observed. Habitat restoration would be required at this

RMA. The mouth of the river changes periodically. The spit is open, low, and relatively flat. However, further south the dunes become stabilized.

The beach is closed to driving from May 1 to September 30 and from sunrise to sunset weekends and holidays from October 1 through April 30th. Recreation use on this beach is primarily by residents of or visitors to Tierra Del Mar and Pacific City.

## Sutton/Baker Beach – Occupied (Lane County)

This is the most northern occupied RMA (Figure F-3). The U.S. Forest Service owns land adjacent to this RMA, which encompasses 4.00 miles of the ocean shore. Snowy plovers have nested here as recently as 2007, but nesting has been inconsistent in recent years. This is a very linear beach, and one of the most challenging sites for snowy plover management due to the winds and sand movement. Many times the sand buries the ropes and signs.

European beachgrass has stabilized the foredune and allowed it to build to its present height of 25 –30 feet. The spread and colonization of European beachgrass, and associated invasion of Scotch broom, gorse and shore pine in the foredune-deflation plain, has transformed vast areas of open sand into dense grass-shrub habitat. In addition, the beach has narrowed due to beachgrass invasion and the high tide occasionally reaches the foredune during the breeding season, effectively precluding the potential for successful nesting.

The U.S. Forest Service is undertaking habitat restoration efforts on lands adjacent to this RMA, which includes lowering the foredune and European beachgrass removal on up to 140 acres over a ten-year period. Approximately 30 acres of habitat have been restored since 1993.

The beach is closed to vehicle driving (street and OHV/ATVs). Recreation use here is low, but higher than other RMAs due to its proximity to Florence, Oregon. This is also a popular beach for equestrians. Seasonal dry sand restrictions have been imposed at this RMA since 1995. Since 1996, five chicks have fledged from this site. This RMA is an important wintering area for snowy plover.



Snowy Plover HCP EIS 06537.06 (02/10)

**Figure F-1**  
**Bay Ocean Spit**  
**RMA Boundary**





Snowy Plover HCP EIS 06537.06 (02/10)

**Figure F-2**  
**South Sand Lake Spit**  
**RMA Boundary**







## Siltcoos Estuary/Dunes Overlook/Tahkenitch Estuary– Occupied (Lane and Douglas Counties)

This RMA is adjacent to part of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (Figure F-4). The U.S. Forest Service owns and manages the adjacent land. This RMA encompasses 6.87 miles of the ocean shore and includes land adjacent to three sites where birds have nested in the past: Siltcoos Estuary, Dunes Overlook, and Tahkenitch Estuary.

The U.S. Forest Service offers camping at various locations within the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. This RMA is closed year-round to vehicle driving (both street legal and ATV/OHV's).

### Siltcoos Estuary

Birds have nested here as recently as 2009. The area is wide, open, and flat with the Siltcoos River meandering through the area. No habitat restoration is needed at this site at this time. Between 1994 and 2007, 74 chicks have fledged from Siltcoos Estuary. The Siltcoos Estuary is an important wintering and breeding site for snowy plovers.

The upper beach area has been modified by the coast-wide introduction and spread of European beachgrass (*Ammophila arenaria*) that began in the 1930s (Weidemann 1969). The beachgrass has vegetated and stabilized dunes to the north and south of this site, restricting snowy plover habitat to the area immediately west of the foredune and to the north and south spits of the river. The foredune is moderately developed, but still has a gradually sloping west face and small patches of unstabilized dunes. Mean high tides generally do not cut into the foredune, restricting snowy plover nesting habitat to a swath of beach between the foredune and the high tide line. The spit is unvegetated near the mouth of the river, and gradually becomes more vegetated to the north and south. Approximately 35 acres of habitat have been restored since 1995, all of which will likely need to be maintained in the future.

Seasonal dry sand restrictions, including a prohibition of dogs, have been imposed at this RMA and on adjacent federally owned land since 1995. The biggest human disturbance problem comes from people who cut through the restricted area to get to the beach, followed by kayakers and canoers who disembark within the restricted area. There is a lot of vandalism and theft of ropes and signs at this location. Predator management (lethal) activities began here in 2004.

## Dunes Overlook

Snowy plovers have nested here as recently as 2009. The U.S. Forest Service has restored approximately 40 acres of habitat at this site. Initiated in 1998, the overriding objective of the Overlook Dunes Restoration Project was to restore natural dune processes on approximately 516 acres. Secondary objectives were to enhance the unique scenic and recreational qualities of this popular visitor access site and to restore snowy plover and open dune habitat. Since 1998, European beachgrass has been removed and foredune height lowered on approximately 40 acres of foredune. The treated area is divided into two areas, approximately 20 acres north of the Overlook trail and 20 acres to the south. This project is ongoing until 2008. Area of treatment will expand as funding allows. There are approximately 108 acres of foredune within the project area.

Incidental take has been issued to the U.S. Forest Service for this site. Predator management (lethal) activities began here in 2004. Between 1999 and 2007, 49 chicks have fledged from this site.

Seasonal dry sand restrictions have been imposed at this RMA and on adjacent federally owned land since 2000. Recreation use is primarily beach walkers with or without dogs. Access to this site is from the Dunes Overlook day-use area, just off Highway 101. Driving is prohibited year-round.

## Tahkenitch North

Birds have nested here as recently as 2009. Predator management (lethal) activities began here in 2004. Between 2000 and 2007, 31 chicks have fledged from this site. Seasonal dry sand restrictions have been imposed at this RMA since 1995. Driving is prohibited year-round.

In 2004 Tahkenitch creek moved southward to the base of the high foredune. All snowy plover nesting habitat was on the north side of the creek. The north spit is mostly open sand, although European beachgrass is encroaching. Beachgrass has built up a moderate (10-15') foredune on the north side and 5'-10' on the south side. Open areas behind the foredune are also being filled in by encroaching beachgrass and control measures should be taken to prevent these openings from being totally overgrown. Approximately 40 acres of habitat have been restored or maintained since 1995.



Snowy Plover HCP EIS 06537.06 (02/10)

**Figure F-4  
Siltcoos Estuary / Dunes Overlook / Tahkenitch  
RMA Boundary**



## Tahkenitch South – Unoccupied (Douglas County)

This RMA is adjacent to part of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (Figure F-5). The U.S. Forest Service owns the adjacent land. The area is approximately 2.00 miles in length. The beach is closed to driving.

European beachgrass has stabilized the foredune area preventing wave-wash from sweeping through and clearing vegetation from areas that were previously open sand. The foredune is low in height ranging from 5'-10'. The spread and colonization of European beachgrass and associated invasion of Scotch broom and shore pine in the foredune deflation plain has transformed vast areas of open sand into dense grass-shrub habitat. Snowy plovers were last observed nesting at this site in 2003. The site has produced 44 fledglings (Lauten et al. 2007).

The U.S. Forest Service does not anticipate implementing management actions adjacent to this RMA until around 2011 to 2015. This beach is closed year-round to vehicle driving (both ATV/OHV and street legal vehicles).

## North Jetty, Umpqua River – Unoccupied (Douglas County)

The southern portion of the RMA is adjacent to part of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service (Figure F-6). This RMA encompasses 3.00 miles of the ocean shore.

This area is characterized by moderately high foredune (12' -15') that has been stabilized by European beachgrass, Sitka spruce and shore pine. The foredune area ranges from narrow (several hundred feet) at the northern boundary of the emphasis area, widening to the south, to just over one-third mile at its widest point. European beachgrass dominates the western most edge of the foredune. Just inland from the beach there are very dense stands of Sitka spruce and shore pine. Moving inland, the dense conifer stands give way to patches of conifer intermixed with open sand and European beachgrass. Habitat restoration work would be required at this site.

One small snowy plover habitat restoration project was initiated in this area in 1993. The project proposed to spread dredge material from the Umpqua River on a 6-10 acre area along the river approximately 1.25 miles north of the North Jetty. This project was one of the first attempts to create snowy plover habitat and was probably not large enough in scale to be viable. The U.S. Forest Service does not anticipate implementing management actions adjacent to this RMA until between 2016 and 2020.

The beach is open to street legal vehicle driving Recreation use is quite low, with use primarily by surf fisherman.

## Tenmile Estuary – Occupied (Coos County)

This RMA is adjacent to part of the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area (Figure F-7). The U.S. Forest Service owns and manages land adjacent to this RMA, encompassing 4.20 miles of the ocean shore. Snowy plover have nested here as recently as 2007.

European beachgrass is rapidly invading open areas on Tenmile spit resulting in a direct loss of nesting habitat. The stabilized foredune prevents wave-wash from sweeping through and clearing vegetation from some areas that were previously open sand. The spread and colonization of European beachgrass and associated invasion of Scotch broom and shore pine in the foredune-deflation plain has transformed vast areas of open sand into dense grass-shrub habitat. Approximately 25 acres of habitat have been restored since 1995.

Seasonal dry sand restrictions have been imposed at this RMA and on adjacent land since 1995. Predator management (lethal) activities began here in 2004. Between 1992 and 2007, 140 chicks have fledged from this RMA. This RMA and adjacent lands are important wintering areas for snowy plover.

Recreation use at this site is relatively low, although there are a number of illegal ATV and street legal vehicle use on the ocean shore. The beach is closed year-round to vehicle driving (street and ATV/OHVs).

## Coos Bay North Spit – Occupied (Coos County)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Land Management own land adjacent to this RMA, encompassing 3.37 miles of the ocean shore (Figure F-8).

Snowy plover have nested here as recently as 2007. This site is a very productive site with as many as 39 nests in one season (2007) (Lauten et al. 2007). A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 1135 project was completed on their property restoring 70 acres of habitat, with 50 acres of disking and 20 acres of herbicide application.

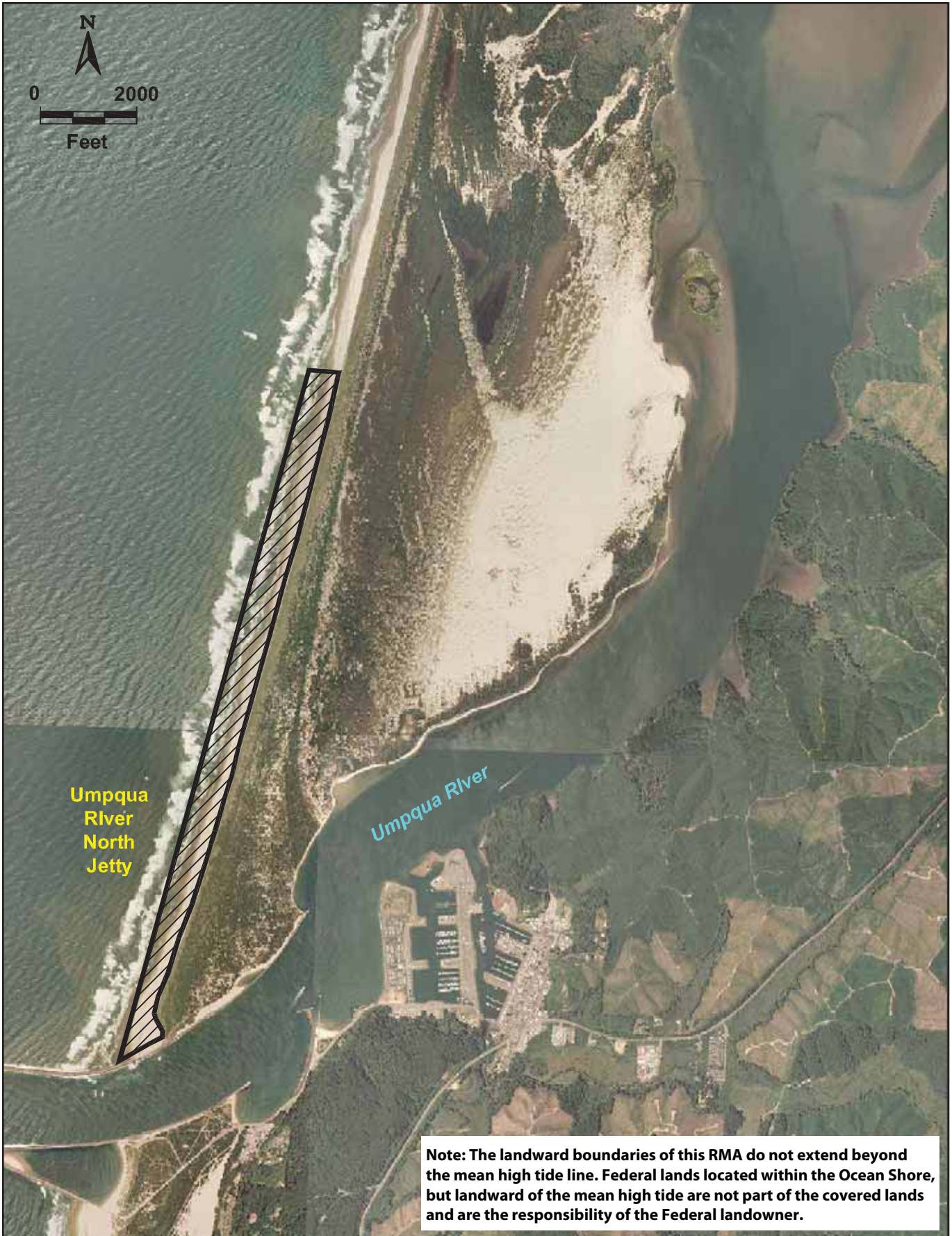
An incidental take statement has been issued to BLM for lands adjacent to this RMA. The BLM has done habitat restoration and maintenance work at lands adjacent to this RMA – on over 170 acres.



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**Figure F-5  
Tahkenitch South  
RMA Boundary**





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Predator management activities have been occurring since 2002. From 1990 through 2004, 263 snowy plover chicks have fledged from this site. This RMA and lands adjacent to it are important wintering and breeding areas for snowy plovers.

This beach is open to street legal vehicle driving only, but is closed during the breeding season. There is illegal ATV use on this beach. Recreation use here is low, but higher than other RMAs due to its close proximity to Coos Bay/North Bend/Charleston. The area is a popular surfing site.

## **New River – Occupied (Coos and Curry Counties)**

This RMA is owned by Curry County and private individuals and is adjacent to land owned by BLM. It encompasses 8.75 miles (Figure F-9).

This RMA and adjacent land is a significant snowy plover production area. Between 1990 and 2007, 166 chicks fledged here due, in part, to the habitat restoration work accomplished by the BLM. The BLM has restored approximately 160 acres of habitat since 1998.

In the past, snowy plovers nested at Floras Lake. However, recent strong winter storms have reshaped the beach, and snowy plovers have not successfully nested at this area since 2000. In 2003, the BLM, OPRD, and Curry County entered into a cooperative management agreement whereby BLM's property in front of Floras Lake will remain open to recreation. However, Curry County's property to the north (approximately 0.5 miles of ocean shore) will be subject to seasonal dry sand restrictions and symbolic fencing installation.

## **Elk River Spit – Unoccupied (Curry County)**

This RMA is in private ownership and encompasses 2.27 miles of the ocean shore. (Figure F-10) There is no formal record of snowy plover use at this RMA. The beach at Elk River is flat, but narrow, and backed by solid European beachgrass on tall foredunes (15+), which exist behind the river. Some habitat restoration work is needed at this RMA. The Elk River spit area has lots of driftwood, with some removal needed on an annual basis, as necessary.

Three of the private landowners and the USFWS are working on an agreement whereby the landowners will either sell fee title or allow a conservation easement to be placed on this RMA (dry sand portion). The USFWS has received a grant to purchase the conservation easement, which will be held by a land trust. Over a two year period, in 2006 and 2007, approximately 10 acres of coastal dune was restored on the Elk River Spit. European beach grass was removed and the foredune was lowered to 19 feet in elevation to allow for wave overwash during winter storm events. Overwash restores and maintains coastal dune processes by reshaping the

foredune and eliminating non-native vegetation. Restoration will continue in 2008, focusing on adjacent dune to the north of the restored area. A minimum of 10 more acres will be treated.

The area is open to driving (street vehicles) year round, with public access from Paradise Point to the south and Cape Blanco State Park to the north. There is illegal ATV/OHV use on this beach, generally south of the RMA. This area is used heavily in late fall for salmon fishing. Driftwood removal occurs frequently along this beach.

## Euchre Creek – Unoccupied (Curry County)

This RMA is privately owned, and encompasses 1.13 miles of the ocean shore (Figure F-11). Snowy plover have not been observed at this site since 1989, when one nest was observed. The habitat at this RMA is suitable for nesting populations of snowy plover, with a wide flat beach especially at the mouth of the Euchre Creek, which currently bisects the RMA.

The RMA is closed to driving (street and OHV/ATVs); however, further south the beach is open to driving (street vehicles only). Recreation use at this site is low. Access is fairly limited, and occurs primarily from highway pull-off areas.



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**Figure F-10**  
**Elk River Spit**  
**RMA Boundary**





Snowy Plover HCP EIS 06537.06 (02/10)

**Figure F-11**  
**Euchre Creek**  
**RMA Boundary**

