

Recovery Planning Endangered Species Act

Edwards Aquifer Species Recovery Team
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What is “*RECOVERY?*”

The process by which the decline of an endangered or threatened species is arrested or reversed, and the threats to its survival are neutralized, so that its long-term survival *in nature* can be ensured.

(1990 FWS Recovery Planning Guidelines)



Goal of Recovery

The goal of the recovery program is to restore listed species to a point where they are secure, self-sustaining components of their ecosystem, so that the protections of the ESA are no longer required.

Context of Recovery



Extinct

E/T

Recovered Harvestable Historic

Number of Individuals/Populations/Habitat





Recovery Plans Structure the Recovery Effort

- Clarify species' biological needs
- Delineate biology, life history, and threats
- Provide a strategy for recovery
- Identify and prioritize research and management tasks necessary achieve recovery



Purposes of Recovery Plans

- Road map to recovery
- Provide context and guidance for implementation of other sections of the ESA (section 7, HCPs, etc.)
- Outreach tools
- Guide monitoring (species, threats, implementation)
- Helpful in obtaining funding

Recovery Plans are...

- Guidance documents (not regulatory)
- Required to include three components:
 - **Description of site-specific actions**
 - ***Objective, measurable* delisting criteria**
 - **Estimates of time/costs of implementation**
- to be completed 2 ½ years after listing
- to be evaluated for revision or updating at least every 5 years (recommended)



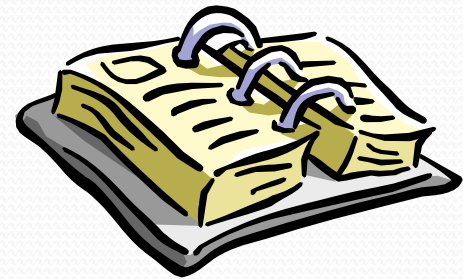
Updates, Revisions, Addenda

- Updates – Done when only minor changes needed; no public review required
- Revisions – Done when:
 - **substantial changes are required**
 - **changes are made to objectives or criteria**
 - **Requires public review**
- Addenda – New information sent under separate cover for inclusion in Plan; no public review required



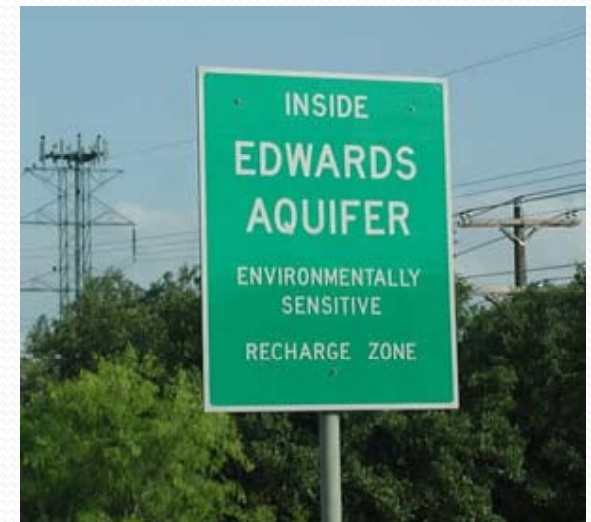
Recovery Plans can be developed by:

- Individual Service biologists
- Contractor to the Service
- Recovery Teams (appointed by Regional Director)



Format of a Recovery Plan

- Part 1. Background
- Part 2. Recovery
- Part 3. Implementation Schedule





Part 1. Background

- Status/Description /Taxonomy
- Distribution/Population Trends
- Life History/Ecology
- Habitat Characteristics
- Critical Habitat
- **Reasons for Listing / Threats**
- Ongoing Conservation Efforts
- Biological Constraints and Needs

Reasons for Listing / Threats Analysis

Five Listing Factors

- A) Habitat loss
- B) Over-utilization
- C) Disease or predation
- D) Inadequate regulatory protection
- E) Other manmade factors



Part 2. Recovery

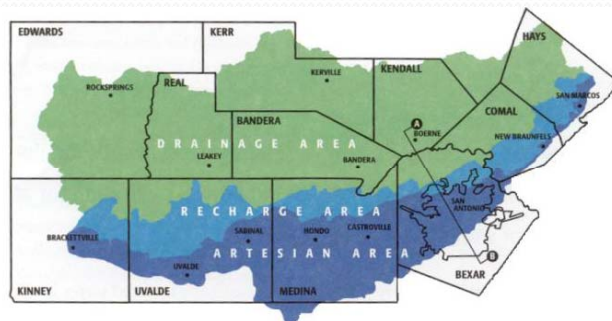
- Strategy for Recovery
- Goals, Objectives and Criteria
- Recovery Actions
 - Step-down Outline
 - Narrative Outline



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Recovery Strategy

- Links the biological and situational background information to the recovery program for the species
- Identifies primary focus of recovery effort
- Justifies the Recovery Plan's approach



Goals, Objectives and Criteria

- **Goal:** usually to reclassify or delist
- **Objectives:** broad statements about recovery needs for the species
- **Criteria:** *objective and measurable* measures to identify whether objectives are met.





Interim goals:

- Can be used in rare cases where delisting goals are not determinable.
- Are generally immediate objectives needed to prevent extinction of the species and/or achieve long term stability
- Should address how to obtain information necessary for developing a complete recovery program (delisting criteria).

Endangered species may include an intermediate goal to downlist to threatened.



Recovery Criteria

- *Criteria* are the specific measures that are used to determine when a species has met the objectives and can be downlisted or delisted.
- Criteria should be *objective* and *measurable* (see ESA, section 4(f)(1)(B)(ii)), but not necessarily simply numerical.
- Criteria, in the face of uncertainty, can include confidence intervals, etc.



Recovery Criteria

- Criteria must relate back to the 5 factors (threats) considered in the listing package & Part 1:
 - table/text that links listing factor to specific threat to recovery criteria to recovery actions
 - structure recovery criteria based on 5 factors

**ALWAYS SHOW RATIONAL CONNECTION BETWEEN
FACTS AND DECISION MADE!**



Recovery Actions

In general, recovery actions fall within certain familiar categories, such as:

- habitat conservation and restoration
- research
- surveys & **monitoring**
- population management (reintroduction / disease or predator control)
- regulatory compliance

Monitoring...a focal point

- Population: to meet recovery criteria
- Threats: intensity and level
- Tasks: implementation
- Post-delisting



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Step-down Outline & Narrative Outline of Recovery Actions

Generally arranged in “step-down” format, e.g.

- 1. Secure habitat and manage populations**
 - 1.1 Manage and monitor populations within X Watershed**
 - 1.1.1. Manage populations within X Watershed**
 - 1.1.1.1. Update X Watershed Fisheries Mgt. Plan**
 - 1.1.1.2. Develop habitat management plans with willing landowners**
 - 1.1.1.2.1. Contact landowners with potential habitat**
 - 1.1.1.2.2. Develop plans**
 - 1.1.1.2.3. Implement Plans**
 - 1.1.2 Monitor populations within X Watershed**
 - 1.2 Manage and monitor populations within Y watershed**



Part 3. Implementation Schedule

- Composed of “innermost” actions from step-down/narrative outlines
- Includes cost and time estimates for each action
- Identifies *potential* responsible parties, but does not *obligate* participation
- Provides the basis for tracking implementation
- Establishes management priorities
- Is used to seek funds

Implementation

Task Priorities

- **Priority 1** – actions that must be taken to prevent extinction or irreversible decline
- **Priority 2** – actions that must be taken to prevent significant decline/adverse impact short of extinction
- **Priority 3** –all other actions needed for full recovery





Public & Peer Review

- Draft plan will undergo public review
- *Per* 1994 policy, Services are directed to “actively solicit independent peer review during the development of draft recovery plans” in order to:
 - **obtain all pertinent available data**
 - **review data relating to the selection or implementation of specialized recovery tasks**
- Also directed to summarize reviewers’ opinions in the final plan



Edwards Aquifer Plan is a Revision

- Includes new species (three invertebrates)
- Builds on existing information
- Updates and expand sections to incorporate new research & management
- Reviews completion status of each task and add detail where necessary
- Amends criteria as appropriate to reflect new information

Recovery Teams

- Are science-based
- Involve stakeholders in planning and implementation
- May have both technical and implementation subgroups
- Are exempt from Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)
- Advise only the USFWS





Why a Recovery Team?

- Expertise is outside the Service
- Species have complex recovery needs
- Multi-species plan with broad-based recovery actions
- Recovery actions may stimulate public controversy



An Effective Recovery Team

- Common understanding of the recovery program under the ESA
- Ability and willingness to constructively contribute expertise to the process
- Well-defined role in the planning process



Fish and Wildlife Service Responsibility

- Administrative responsibility to assemble the recovery team and prepare the recovery plan
 - Teams are convened at the discretion of the Regional Director
 - Regional Director approves and signs the final recovery plan



Role of Team Members

- Attend team meetings
- Openly provide information on areas of expertise
- Participate in group recommendations for all recovery issues
- Complete assigned portions of the draft recovery plan on time



Role of Team Members – cont'd

- Be committed to developing a reasonable recovery plan for the conservation of the species
- Work positively together other members
- Communicate with the Team Leader any concerns or issues as early as possible



Role of Team Leader/Service Liaison

- Schedules and facilitates the team meetings
- Communicates with the team and the Service on issues, schedules, guidance, and overall process
- Ensures the work of the team is conducted in a timely and effective manner
- Is Knowledgeable, Purposeful, Motivational, & Fair



Role of Team Leader/Service Liaison

- cont'd

- Keeps administrative record of team communications, including meeting notes
- Manages the drafting of the recovery plan document
- Communicates with other interested parties on the progress of the team
- Maintains a cohesive, productive atmosphere for the team



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Costs for Recovery Team members

- At this time, the Service does not anticipate reimbursing travel expenses or other financial costs for recovery team members.





Team Decision-making

- We expect to reach consensus on team recommendations for the recovery plan.
- Alternately, “Can you live with it?”



Conflicts of Interest

- If a team member has a current or potential conflict of interest (real or perceived):
 - It should be made clear to all team members as early as possible
 - The involved party should be excused from decision-making when the conflict of interest pertains

Other Experts not on the Recovery Team

- Information can be gathered from others and input sought
- Non-team members should not influence the team decision-making process
- Do not share internal work products with others not on the Team



Tenure of Service

- It is the Services' decision whether a recovery team is disbanded following plan completion or asked to stay on to help facilitate implementation of the plan.



By the end of this meeting, we should be on the same page.

- Clear Expectations: Do team members understand why the team was created and what the team is going to do?
- Context: Do team members understand why they are participating on the team and what their role will be?
- Commitment: Are members committed to accomplishing the team mission and expected outcomes?

