



Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances





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- Candidates are species that the FWS has determined qualify for listing but other priorities prevent the FWS from going forward with the listing
- Other species that are declining and could become candidates for listing can also be included in a CCAA



Goal of the Candidate Program

- To take actions that reduce or eliminate threats to an unlisted at-risk species and improve its status to the point at which listing under the ESA is not necessary



What are CCAAs?

- Voluntary agreements with non-Federal property owners
- Designed to address threats to a particular unlisted at-risk species for a specific number of years
- A tool to address concerns about providing conservation for a species that in the future may be listed
- Federal agencies can participate in CCAs



CCAA Standard

The CCAA must:

- provide a net conservation benefit to the covered species and
- address all *key* threats to the species on the property (under the property owners control)



Requirements of CCAA

- Population levels (if available or determinable) of the covered species;
- Existing habitat characteristics;
- Conservation measures for covered species;
- Expected conservation benefits;
- Assurances;
- Monitoring provision; and
- Notification requirement before authorized take occurs



Assurances

- FWS assures that no additional conservation measures or additional land, water, or resource use restrictions, beyond those voluntarily agreed to and described in the CCAA, will be required should the species become listed in the future



CCAA Process

- Development of Agreement with conservation measures, covered activities
- NEPA document
- Permit application
- Federal Register notice and public comment period
- Conference opinion
- Findings document



What is a programmatic CCAA?

- Involves multiple property owners enrolling under one regional or state-wide agreement
- Is overseen by one permit holder
- Each property owner receives assurances through a Certificate of Inclusion (CI)
- Each CI is tailored to an individual property
- Conservation actions are selected from a list contained in the overall agreement



What is an umbrella CCAA?

- Involves developing one over-arching agreement with multiple cooperators
- Each property owner receives individual CCAA and permit that is tiered off the umbrella agreement
- Each individual CCAA is tailored to an individual property but uses the list of conservation measures outlined in the umbrella agreement



What happens if a species is listed?

- CCAA remains in place
- Property owner continues to implement the agreed upon conservation measures
- The permit goes into effect and anticipated incidental take that occurs on the enrolled property is covered
- FWS will not require the property owner to take additional actions beyond what is included in the CCAA



Applying under Programmatic or Umbrella CCAA

- FWS will accept and process complete applications for a Certificate of Inclusion or permit under a programmatic or umbrella CCAA, respectively, if received before the effective date of the final listing of the covered species



Case Studies

- New England Cottontail
 - Programmatic CCAs with New Hampshire Fish & Game Dept. and Maine Dept. of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
- Greater Sage-Grouse
 - Umbrella CCA for Wyoming Ranch Management
 - State-wide Programmatic CCAs
 - Individual CCAs