

## **Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) Task Force: Call for Participation FAQ**

### **Q: Why pursue a CCAA? What would happen if a CCAA was not in place and the monarch became listed?**

A: If a CCAA was *not* pursued, and the monarch became a Federal-listed species in July 2020, ROW organizations might expect:

- Regulatory uncertainty – As with any new listing, ROW managers will need to adjust to a “new norm” of managing ROW to avoid and minimize incidental take. This adjustment process can take weeks or months of staff time to learn, adapt, and communicate with their teams.
- Project delays – Along with the uncertainty, projects and maintenance work being conducted at the time of listing may require “Stop Work” in certain locations as project managers adapt to conservation measures for the monarch.
- After-the-fact coverage – To avoid impacts to monarchs, ROW managers would then need to adapt their work to avoid incidental take on a project-by-project basis, or begin a process to secure an Incidental Take Permit, or a Habitat Conservation Plan for the monarch.
- Differing conservation measures – With a CCAA, the applicants understand and secure conservation measures upfront, and can expect these to be consistent range wide. Once a species is listed, ROW managers (without a CCAA) are required to adhere to whatever conservation measures are mandated for the species, and conservation measures may differ field office to field office.

### **Q: Why should I contribute to the CCAA development process?**

A: Contributing to development of an Umbrella CCAA has multiple benefits including:

- Regulatory certainty – A CCAA provides regulatory assurances that cannot be changed after the listing of a species. This helps projects and maintenance to continue with minimal disruption. By engaging in the CCAA development process you can shape the conservation measures that will be considered by the USFWS and will be most suitable to your organization’s operations.
- Good public outreach opportunities – A CCAA documents your organization’s voluntary and proactive contributions towards conservation of a declining species. Telling this story can generate good publicity and recognition amongst regulating agencies and the general public.
- Influencing listing decision – A CCAA may influence the USFWS listing decision, and preclude the need to list the monarch.
- Risk management – There is a low overall risk to participation, but a high potential reward if the monarch ends up being listed.
- Lower cost – Dollar for dollar, contributing to the development of an Umbrella CCAA can provide a cost savings, produce a high quality agreement, and help streamline USFWS authorization compared to pursuing an Individual CCAA.

### **Q: What is the cost of doing a CCAA individually versus as an Umbrella?**

A: The collaborative development of an Umbrella CCAA is expected to be less costly and more productive than pursuing an Individual CCAA. Partner contributions to an Umbrella CCAA effort go towards not only technical development of the CCAA and accompanying Environmental Assessment (EA), but also having dedicated staff to help facilitate its approval within the USFWS.

As an example, if a ROW organization was to fund development of their own CCAA and EA, costs could equate to \$100,000 or more. However, a contribution of \$10,000 to \$25,000 per year to the Umbrella CCAA (for up to 3 years) yields a lower cost, and leverages a greater investment in the CCAA process.

**Q: Should organizations continue to participate in the Umbrella CCAA process if USFWS determines listing is not warranted for the monarch in June 2019?**

A: Yes. If USFWS determines listing the monarch is not warranted and cites the Umbrella CCAA as one of multiple factors influencing that decision, it will be important to complete the process. If the CCAA is not implemented, and/or if participation drops below expectations, USFWS may need to reevaluate their listing decision in light of this new information.

In addition, it is probable that a USFWS listing decision to not list the monarch will be challenged in the courts. Having the CCAA in place will continue to reduce regulatory uncertainty in the event a court rules in favor of listing the butterfly despite the USFWS determination.

**Q: At what point in the process will ROW managers understand what conservation measures are expected?**

A: While the conservation measures will not be fully completed until the Final CCAA (June 2019), we expect that the Draft CCAA will likely include many of the conservation strategies to be proposed in the final draft. As part of the Advisory Team, ROW organizations will be able to review the draft conservation measures during CCAA development over the next year (February through November 2018).

**Q: As a joint funder, do we need to contribute to the entire 3 phases of the CCAA development?**

A: Contributions to the joint fund and Advisory / Core Teams are completely voluntary. Partners can contribute to whichever phase and timeframe at which they are able and willing to contribute. Due to the tight timeline for developing the Draft CCAA, we are asking for initial pledges of commitment by the January 15, 2018 deadline in order to gauge final feasibility and capacity to implement the planning timeline.

**Q: Could the CCAA process help contribute to either consideration of a 4(d) Rule or prevent listing of the monarch?**

A: If an Umbrella CCAA is in place before a final (or even proposed) listing decision, its role in addressing threats to monarchs would be considered in the decision. At this early stage, it is unclear whether the CCAA can contribute to the point where a Federal Threatened listing, or avoidance of listing altogether, is a possible result. However, the quantification and strategies developed during the Draft CCAA can help inform these types of decisions.

**Q: How much will these conservation measures cost me to implement?**

A: In many cases, we expect the conservation measures involved under a CCAA will likely present a minimal cost to ROW managers. At this time, we anticipate simple actions such as changing the timing of vegetation management practices, avoiding habitat areas, or other similar actions can have large contributions to monarch conservation. It will ultimately be the responsibility of each partner to determine which key threats they have control over and which strategies they can implement.

**Q: How can I apply for coverage under this CCAA?**

A: Once the Final CCAA is published in the Federal Register, the USFWS will begin accepting applications for regulatory permits with assurances under the CCAA. As part of Umbrella CCAA development, a template for individual applications will be developed to help facilitate partner applications.

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