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GUIDELINES FOR

RECOVERY PLANS AND TEAMS

(For Endangered and Threatened Species  
Found in United States)

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 makes the Secretary of the Interior the primary National coordinator of endangered and threatened species conservation programs. The Secretary delegated these responsibilities to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Sections 2(c) and 7 of the Act direct all Federal agencies to utilize their authorities to protect and restore endangered and threatened species and their habitats. The importance of State participation and cooperation in restoration programs is noted in Sections 4(b) and 6.

Presently, many organizations including the Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Soil Conservation Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Department of Defense, the States, foreign governments and a host of national and international conservation organizations conduct their own endangered and threatened species programs. Many of these programs are not adequately coordinated and are needlessly duplicative. Recovery plans and teams provide a means to combine the varied programs of such organizations into single, effective, efficient concentrated efforts for each species which will eventually lead to qualifying many for removal from lists of endangered or threatened species or relisting from endangered to threatened status. This is always the ultimate goal, although for many, the immediate goal will be to prevent extinction which would otherwise occur very soon. When plan objectives have been met, the recovery team can be abolished and the plan considered terminated. Plans and teams are a "vehicle" to accomplish objectives and are not an end but a beginning to this overall effort.

A recovery plan is a guide containing essential actions which will secure or restore an endangered or threatened species as a viable self-sustaining member of its ecosystem. It is suggested that a typical plan be built around a step-by-step outline of problems or limiting factors contributing to animals' endangered or threatened status which must be overcome. Actions necessary for meeting these factors should be identified, divided into specific assignments, and placed in suggested time frames and priority sequences for handling by those organizations

