

California Pilot Program on Endangered Species Act Consultation

August 2008 - December 2009

Location: Arcata, CA

Background

An interagency pilot program launched in California is working to create timely and effective protected species consultations for new transportation projects. This interagency effort, coordinated by the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, involves the Federal Highway Administration, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the California Department of Transportation, and the California Department of Fish and Game.

The pilot is designed to achieve the following:

- Greater predictability of the project review process and of mitigation requirements
- Improved rapport between agencies and individuals.
- A more efficient consultation process (i.e., meeting attendance, deliberation, technical assistance, site visits, etc.).
- Enhanced communication among the agencies.
- Early design in the process of species protection features.



Highlights

Participants said that two of the most important things they took away from the workshop are:

- a better understanding of each agency's mission
- the basic skills of interest-based negotiation

They also emphasized that the interactions with each other, and with U.S. Institute staff, set the stage for productive interagency consultations that can:

- "help avoid permitting road blocks"
- "get past conflict to collaboration"
- "achieve positive outcomes in challenging circumstances"

Results and Accomplishments

Interagency teams of field staff and managers have been formed to work together to develop biological assessments and biological opinions needed to ensure the timely progression of new transportation projects.

Participants in the Pilot developed an interagency Memorandum of Agreement and participated in a two-day implementation workshop and training.

The Institute continues to provide facilitation for the interagency team meetings and support for developing performance measures for the pilot.

Credits

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