



SECTION 7 CONSERVATION Interagency Collaboration in the 21st Century

Perspectives on Ingredients for Success
and Lessons Learned when Pursuing
Section 7(a)(1) Activities

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What does a Section 7(a)(1) Plans Look Like?

- Ideally, a 7(a)(1) plan should create a flexible, proactive, strategic, landscape-level conservation planning and implementation framework
- 7(a)(1) can create the conservation blue print for agency activities and provide the context and framework for all 7(a)(2) consultations
- Should target multi-species ecosystems and where appropriate benefit other species (e.g., candidates, species of concern)
- Should extend to each listed species that it can affect within its authorities



What does a Section 7(a)(1) Plans Look Like?

- 7(a)(1) plans (activities) will be different for different species, agencies and programs (one size does not fit all)
- Implementation of conservation measures can occur at both the programmatic or project and at the multi species or single species levels

What are we going to do tonight, Brain?

the same thing we
do every night, Pinky....

What does it
take to
successfully
pursue 7(a)(1)?



**...TRY AND TAKE
OVER THE WORLD!**



Interagency Collaboration

Defined as a **mutually beneficial** and **well-defined relationship** entered into by two or more individuals or organizations to achieve common goals.

- **Levels of Collaboration:**

- Networking
- Cooperation
- Partnership
- Coalition
- Collaboration



Interagency Cooperation

- **Cooperation:**
 - Limit duplication of services
 - Match needs
 - Ensure tasks are done
 - Leverage resources
 - Share limited information

Interagency Cooperation is often only at a level necessary to meet the ESA requirements for Section 7(a)(2) consultation.



Interagency Collaboration

- **Collaborations:**
 - Are based on a shared vision
 - Establish clear goals
 - Practice consensus in decision making
 - Have written interagency agreements
 - Evaluate progress and outcomes

Interagency Collaboration enhances conservation planning at the landscape scale to meet shared goals and objectives.



Barriers to Effective Collaboration

- **Agency Mission and Objectives-** Agencies with pronounced differences in authorities and mandates seldom see each other as allies
- **Organizational Culture-** Shared values and beliefs that have a strong influence on the people in the organization and dictate how they dress, act, and perform their jobs
- **Organizational Language-** words can have similar yet different meanings and can be a significant barrier from the start
- **Interagency History-** people tend forget the positive and only remember the negative
- **Individuals-** (regardless of rank) can influence, dictate or derail organizational decisions



Ingredients for Success!

- **Establish a Shared Vision that is mutually beneficial**
- **Have Realistic Expectations:**
 - A clear understanding of each others organizational structure, priorities, and **limitations**
 - Utilize existing resources and authorities
 - Work in the ecosystem that you have
- **A willingness to trust each other:**
 - Simple and Clear Communication (translation of agency lingo)
 - Do what you say and only promise what you can achieve
 - **Keep an open mind... don't go in with the "win or lose" mentality.. it's a negotiation!**
- **Agree to Disagree to move forward!**



Ingredients for Success!

- **Operate at the Organizational Level**
 - Involve all key players (levels of involvement will vary)
 - Build ownership at all levels
 - *Institutionalize Change- include objectives into agency mandates, budgets, performance plans, etc*
- **Develop an Interagency Strategy:**
 - Define the problem
 - Proactive, adaptable and realistic
 - Sustainable (utilizes existing authorities and resources)
 - Defined benchmarks and measurable criteria
- **Publish your shared success and tell the Interagency Story!**



Lessons Learned

- Key Lessons (not all inclusive):
 - **The path to success requires a clear understanding of interagency history and organizational culture:**
 - Chain of Command (how and when to use it)
 - Operations Tempo (seasonal-training, construction, hunting)
 - Everyone needs to contribute and then a little bit more
 - **Scope and Size Matters:**
 - Operate at the appropriate organizational level- e.g. District vs. Division
 - Operate within the agency authorities
 - Don't fear complexity... respect it and know your limits



Lessons Learned

- Key Lessons (not all inclusive):
 - **Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield**
 - Do your homework! Don't get blind sided!
 - Stack the deck in your favor
 - Use every advantage that you have
 - There is a fundamental need for Section 7 training/education at all levels



LMR Interagency Strategy

- **Problem Statement-** How can we incorporate endangered species conservation into the USACE MVD primary mission of flood control and navigation?
- **Agencies: USACE-** Mississippi Valley Division, USACE Engineer Research and Development Center- Environmental Laboratory, **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** Southeast Region's Mississippi Field Office
- **Scope-** Confluence of the Ohio to New Orleans (960 river miles).

Why:

- Operational Control (Service)
- Minimize coordination requirements (multiple regions)
- Existing 2000 Jeopardy Biological Opinion- Middle Mississippi River, Pallid Sturgeon (initiated section 7(a)(1) discussions)



LMR Strategy Continued

- **Key Milestones and Benchmarks:**
 - Transfer of National Lead for ILT to MSFO FY11 (Service)
 - LMR SHC Plan (Service)-FY 12
 - ILT, PS, and FBM Section 7(a) (1) Conservation Plan (USACE)-FY 13 designed to provide species benefits within there program authorities and improve species status
 - Channel Improvement Programmatic Consultation (Service)-FY 14
 - ILT 5 Year Review (Service) FY14
 - Section 7(a)(1) Integrated Process Review (Service, USACE) FY14
 - SE Region Section 7(a)(1) Framework (Service) FY15
 - ILT Delisting Proposal FY17



Keep Your Eye on the Prize!





The Tool Kit

- **United States Fish and Wildlife Service Memorandum:** Working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to Improve the Effectiveness of the Endangered Species (ESA) by expanding the use of Section 7(a)(1), 9 January 2015
- **United States Army Corps of Engineers Memorandum:** Improving the Efficiency of Project Operations and Effectiveness of Endangered Species Act Compliance for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Projects, 30 June 2015
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service, **Southeast Region's, Endangered Species Act Section 7(a)(1) Implementation Framework** 27 August 2015



Last Word

- Conservation is every Federal Agencies responsibility!
- Section 7(a)(1) results in better conservation, more efficiently
- Section 7(a)(1) authorities belong to the action agency
- Not everyone will be an immediate believer and many doors will be closed. Its up to you to open them!
- Call it what it is- Section 7(a)(1) Conservation



Questions?

