

CANADA LYNX PROJECT PLAN TO COMPLETE A SPECIES STATUS ASSESSMENT, RECOVERY PLAN, AND FIVE-YEAR REVIEW

June 25, 2015

Action: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will conduct a species status assessment (SSA) as a first step to understand the current status of the contiguous United States distinct population segment (DPS) of the Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), currently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (Act). This SSA is intended to inform and streamline the court-ordered recovery plan (due January 15, 2018), assuming such a plan is deemed necessary¹. The SSA report will also serve as the basis for the five-year status review (initiated in 2007; 72 FR 19549) required under the Act and would also provide the scientific foundation to support future rulemaking in accordance with the Act should the five-year review indicate that a change in the DPS's listing status is warranted.

Goals of the Project Plan: (1) To facilitate application of the SSA framework to produce a scientifically defensible assessment of the status of the lynx DPS, a subsequent recovery plan, if needed, and future five-year review and listing rules as necessary; and (2) to ensure that expectations for these processes, including approach, roles and responsibilities, and schedule, are clear and that managers are aware of and have agreed to these expectations.

Project Approach: We intend to apply the SSA framework to the lynx DPS and use the SSA results to inform the recovery planning process, the five-year review, and future listing rules. The lead field office (FO) will work with other Service Regions and FOs in the DPS range to gather and evaluate all relevant information that has become available since our March 2000 listing rule (65 FR 16053) and our July 2003 Remanded Determination of Status (68 FR 40076) for the lynx DPS. We will avail ourselves of recent efforts to summarize the available scientific literature for lynx, including the September 2014 final revised critical habitat designation for the DPS (79 FR 54781) and the 2013 revised interagency Lynx Conservation Assessment and Strategy (LCAS; http://www.fs.fed.us/biology/resources/pubs/wildlife/LCAS_revisedAugust2013.pdf). The FOs will keep partner agencies informed about progress and request their participation and reviews as appropriate.

Species Status Assessment: The SSA framework is a new, standardized Service methodology for assessing the status of species, which can help inform species listing, status, and recovery determinations that the Service is required to make in accordance with section 4(c)(2) of the Act (<https://sites.google.com/a/fws.gov/ssa/about-SSA>). Using the SSA framework, we will evaluate the viability of the lynx DPS and potential threats to its viability using the principles of representation, resilience, and redundancy. The SSA also will provide

¹ The Act requires recovery plans for listed species unless a determination is made that such plan will not promote the conservation of the species. If the five-year status review concludes that the DPS warrants delisting, we would likely pursue a formal determination that the species is exempt from recovery planning as such a plan would be unnecessary (if the species is already recovered, a plan is not needed to move the species to the point of recovery and would therefore not promote the conservation of the species). Although the five-year review is not a final agency action, the memorandum exempting the species from recovery planning (should we reach that conclusion) would be.

critical information needed to guide the recovery planning process, including identification of the primary threats to the lynx DPS that remain to be resolved, if any. Completion of the SSA is the first step in the process of determining the current status of the lynx DPS. We anticipate that the SSA will be completed by December 2015.

Recovery Plan: If a recovery plan is necessary, it will be informed by the SSA. The recovery plan would include an introduction summarizing the recovery vision (what a recovered DPS would “look” like) and recovery strategy (the route selected to get the species to recovery). It also would include: (1) objective and measurable criteria that when met would allow delisting (including, as practicable, demographic and threats-based recovery criteria); (2) broad management actions needed to achieve the recovery vision; and (3) time and cost estimates to achieve delisting. Pursuant to the Service’s new recovery planning paradigm – the Recovery Enhancement Vision (REV; USFWS 2014, <https://sites.google.com/a/fws.gov/rev/>) – the SSA will facilitate development of a streamlined recovery plan that focuses on these three statutory requirements. A supplemental document, the Recovery Implementation Strategy (RIS), details short-term but detailed (site-specific) step down activities needed to achieve the recovery vision. If planning is needed, we intend to complete the draft recovery plan by January 2017. The recovery planning process will include peer review and opportunities for public review and comment on the draft recovery plan prior to completion of a final recovery plan. If undertaken, the recovery plan will be finalized prior to the January 15, 2018, court deadline.

Five-year Review: We anticipate that the five-year review will be a streamlined document relying heavily on and referring to the SSA. The five-year review will consider the SSA’s scientific determinations and make recommendations regarding the status of the DPS in accordance with the Act. The three possible recommendations of the five-year review are that the lynx DPS should: (1) remain listed as threatened; (2) be uplisted to endangered; or (3) be delisted. Recommendation (1) would indicate the need to next complete a recovery plan by the court-ordered deadline; recommendation (2) would indicate that both a recovery plan and a future listing rule are needed; and recommendation (3) would require both a formal determination via memorandum that the DPS is exempt from recovery planning and a future listing rule.

Project Lead: This project will be led by the Montana Ecological Services Field Office (MTFO). Within this office, Jim Zelenak is the species lead and will serve as the project and team lead. This role includes cross-regional intra-Service organizing, coordinating with outside partners and experts as appropriate, and developing a project schedule and ensuring adherence to associated deadlines. It also includes primary authorship of the SSA report, recovery plan, five-year review, and, if necessary, future listing rules.

Project Team: The Mountain-Prairie Region (6) is the lead Service Region for lynx. However, within the DPS range, lynx subpopulations currently occur in parts of 9 states (CO, ID, ME, MN, MT, NH, VT, WA, and WY). Lynx associated with these subpopulations or other lynx populations in southern Canada also may occur (usually rarely, intermittently, and temporarily) in other states (MI, ND, NE, NM, NY, OR, SD, UT, and WI), and dispersing lynx also have occurred very rarely in CT, IA, IL, IN, MA, PA, and NV. Because the DPS spans parts of four other Service Regions (1, 2, 3, and 5), it is especially important that field biologists

most familiar with the status of each of the lynx subpopulations within the DPS assist with (1) collection and interpretation of information relating to the status of and potential threats to those subpopulations; (2) contacting and arranging participation by lynx experts most familiar with the status, ecology, population dynamics, and habitat needs of those subpopulations; (3) coordinating with our local state, federal and tribal stakeholders, and (4) writing, editing, and reviewing relevant parts of the SSA report, recovery plan, and five-year review, as needed.

- Identified biologists from the **Maine, Twin Cities, Northern Idaho, and Western Colorado FOs** will participate consistently on the Project Team and contribute meaningfully to the development, review, and completion of the SSA report, recovery plan, and five-year review.
- Further, biologists from the **New England, New York, Michigan, Wisconsin, Idaho, Eastern Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Wyoming, and New Mexico FOs** will participate as needed in the development, review and completion of these documents.
- SSA practitioners from the Service and USGS will provide guidance on implementing the SSA framework, conceptual modeling, and expert elicitation, and Service ECOS staff will provide GIS support including spatial analysis and mapmaking.

Management Team: In addition to field biologists and SSA and GIS support:

- Field Supervisors from the Maine, Twin Cities, Northern Idaho, Washington, Wyoming, Colorado, and Western Colorado FOs will assist with coordination with State and Tribal and other federal stakeholders, participate in document review, and obtain Regional Office (RO) concurrence with status determinations and final decisions/documents.
- RO representation from affected Service Regions is essential to this process, as is headquarters (HQ) participation and guidance.
- Regional ESA Branch Chiefs and/or Regional Recovery Coordinators from Regions 1, 2, 3, and 5, and HQ Listing and/or Recovery staff will participate in document review and concurrence processes.
- Legal staff will engage or be consulted at various points throughout this process.

Focus on Science First – We intend to conduct a thorough scientific review of the lynx DPS and to work with our partners to make sure we have and use the best available information to develop the SSA report and to guide subsequent recovery planning, five-year review, and/or rulemaking. During the SSA, we will conduct a structured threats assessment using outlines, webinars, expert elicitation, and other intermediate products, and we will brief the Management Team as necessary throughout the process. During the recovery planning process, we will also bring together experts from the lynx research and management arenas.

SSA, Recovery Planning, and Five-year Review Collaborative Process: We have broken the SSA, recovery planning, and five-year review /listing processes down into the following five phases:

- **Phase 1 – Information Collection.** The lynx’s current distribution in the contiguous U.S. and some aspects of its habitat requirements are fairly well-understood; however, we will seek to better understand and analyze its historic and current distributions, subpopulation sizes and status, and the degree to which DPS subpopulations rely on immigration from populations in Canada. Additionally, to the extent possible, we will focus on the numbers and productivity of lynx in each of the DPS subpopulations, how these vary over time, the causes of the variation, and the quality and conservation status of lynx and hare habitats within the DPS range. In addition to the information upon which the 2000 Final Rule listing the DPS as threatened was based, we will collect and evaluate all relevant information that has become available since then. We expect available information to be primarily in the form of published, peer-reviewed literature and academic dissertations and theses obtainable through academic search engines. We will also gather government reports (e.g., the recently-revised LCAS and survey and monitoring reports from federal, State and Tribal partners) and review legal and policy considerations.
- **Phase 2 – Assessment of the DPS’s Current and Future Conservation Status and Relevant Threats, and Completion of the SSA Report.** With the information gathered in Phase 1, we will identify and evaluate historical, current, and future threats to lynx and their magnitude and relative impact on the viability of the subpopulations that constitute the DPS. As part of the SSA process, we will conduct a structured threats assessment, using outlines, webinars and other intermediate products, and we will brief the Project and Management teams at appropriate junctions. We will produce a draft report outlining SSA methods and results; the draft SSA report will undergo peer review. We will revise the draft report as needed based on peer review and review/edits/comments provided by the Management Team and appropriate partners. We expect Project Team members to participate actively in the collection and interpretation of information specific to DPS subpopulations and potential threats to them in their geographic areas and to coordinate locally with state and federal agencies, Tribes, conservation organizations, the media and the public. We expect Management Team members from each region to review, edit, and approve materials provided by their Project Team members in a timely manner.
- **Phase 3 – Decision Making.** In coordination with the Project Team, the MTFO will make a preliminary recommendation about the DPS’s legal status (threatened, endangered, or recovered), brief R6 leadership, and then provide the recommendation for review, comment, and concurrence by the rest of the Management Team. A final decision on the status of the DPS will be made by R6 Regional Director.
- **Phase 4 –** Unless the SSA report strongly suggests that the DPS no longer needs the protection of the Act, the Service will initiate the recovery planning process so that we can meet the court’s deadline for finalizing a recovery plan.

- **Phase 5 – Drafting and Disseminating the Five-year Review.** Based on the SSA report and the R6RD decision on the DPS’s status, the Project Lead will draft the five-year review with input from and review by the Project and Management teams, and concurrence from cooperating Regions. We will work with R6 EA staff, who will work with their counterparts in the other Regions, to draft a news release announcing results and availability of the five-year review and supporting SSA report. We will post both documents at the ECOS Species Profile web page (<http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile?spcode=A073>).
- **Phase 6 – Next Steps.** As mentioned above, there are three possible recommendations of the five-year review, each with different listing and recovery requirements and time lines.
 - Recommendation 1: The lynx DPS continues to warrant listing as threatened under the Act (i.e., the threat for which the DPS was listed has not been adequately addressed and/or a new threat[s] has been identified such that the DPS remains likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range). In this case, a recovery plan would be necessary, so we would convene a Recovery Team and implement the REV process to develop draft and final recovery plans consistent with the court-ordered time line for completing the final plan by January 2018. We expect that a streamlined recovery plan would be completed that relies heavily on and references the SSA report and the five-year review;
 - Recommendation 2: The DPS warrants uplisting to endangered status (i.e., the threat for which the DPS was listed remains unresolved or has increased and/or a new threat[s] has been identified such that the DPS is now determined to be in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range). In this case, both a recovery plan and a future listing rule would be necessary. As above, we would develop draft and final recovery plans that would rely heavily on and reference the SSA report and the five-year review, and complete the final recovery plan by the court-ordered deadline. Work on the uplisting rule would commence after the final recovery plan, though a date has not been specified;
 - Recommendation 3: The DPS is deemed recovered and warrants delisting (i.e., the threat for which the DPS was listed is found to have been adequately addressed and no new threat[s] has been identified that is expected to endanger the DPS throughout all or a significant portion of its range now or in the reasonably foreseeable future). In this case, we would recommend a formal determination that the species is exempt from recovery planning and we would draft a memorandum to that effect. This outcome would also indicate the need for a future delisting rule, with work on the delisting rule commencing after the memorandum has been finalized and submitted to the court, though a date for the rule has not been specified.

Document Review, Concurrence, Surnaming, and *Federal Register* Publication. Jim Zelenak is the lead author for these actions. All members of the Project Team are expected to

provide appropriate scientific review of draft documents. Management Team members are expected to review final documents and provide Regional concurrence with them as needed. Seth Willey is expected to provide appropriate policy review for the drafts. Dana Jacobsen will provide an assessment of legal risk. Mike Thabault will provide an abbreviated review for “big picture” issues. For *Federal Register* documents, we anticipate surnaming by R6RD, RSOL, and HQ prior to publication.

Outreach. We will work with R6 EA staff and their counterparts in the other Service Regions to develop communications plans for the SSA, five-year review, and/or recovery plan as needed. We will communicate to all affected stakeholders and the public about the action we are taking and what it means for them, as laid out in the communications plan.

Roles and Responsibilities: Staff from FOs, ROs, and HQ offices are expected to work together collaboratively to collect information, conduct analyses, and assist in developing products necessary to complete the actions identified in this project plan. Management of the process and completion of these actions, though led by the MTFO, will be the shared responsibility of the ROs and FOs within the DPS range. Further, individuals responsible for these products will communicate and share work products as needed to facilitate an efficient process. However, all team members will keep their supervisors apprised of progress and any issues that arise. If necessary to resolve significant issues of disagreement, we will follow the elevation process outlined in the August 13, 2009 “Section 4 Process Memo” (available on the R6 Listing Sharepoint site) until an updated process is developed. Other specific roles and responsibilities are described above in “Project Lead,” “Project Team,” “Management Team,” and “SSA, five-year Review, and Recovery Planning Collaborative Process.”

Schedule: The Service announced initiation of the lynx DPS five-year review in April 2007 (72 FR 19549) but was unable to complete a review then because of court deadlines requiring that we revise the 2006 (and, subsequently, the 2009) critical habitat designation. The initial notice requested information by June 18, 2007, but it was not a formal comment period and noted that we accept new information about all listed species at any time. At that time, we received comments or information from seven respondents; two State agencies and five environmental/conservation Non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The status review portion of the current project was re-initiated in October 2014, when a biologist was assigned by the MTFO to begin gathering information to evaluate threats to the lynx DPS and update its status accordingly. In December 2014, the MTFO drafted a “Dear Interested Party” letter announcing the renewed five-year review effort, which was sent to federal, State, and Tribal partners in Montana, as well as to other Service Regions and FOs within the DPS range as a template for use in notifying their partners of the effort. In January 2015, the Service prepared and distributed a news release announcing the five-year review and proposed completion date of June 2015, and soliciting information for consideration in the review. To date, we have received responsive information from several federal, State and Tribal agencies, industry organizations, and environmental/conservation NGOs. In March 2015, it was determined that application the SSA Framework to the lynx DPS should precede (and facilitate streamlining of) the five-year review and subsequent recovery plan, if needed, although it was recognized that in the near term this would push back the completion date for the five-year review.

Ultimately, the above goals are intended to inform the need for and content within a recovery plan. We have a court order to complete a recovery plan by January 2018 unless the Service determines that the DPS warrants delisting and, therefore, that a recovery plan is not necessary. To meet this goal, we anticipate having a draft recovery plan written and beginning the formal review process by July 2016. Appendix A illustrates the proposed time line for this process and Appendix B provides a list and timing of larger milestones associated with these actions.

Coordination: A range-wide kick-off call was held on May 28, 2015 to seek commitments from relevant ROs and FOs, to familiarize team members with the process and timeline, and respond to any issues relevant to the SSA, five-year review, and future recovery planning. The MTFO will schedule and conduct subsequent biweekly calls with the Project Team and monthly coordination calls with the Project and Management Teams. More frequent calls may be organized around particularly challenging issues or during particularly challenging points (such as when a deadline is approaching). These calls will include other Service offices and Regions as necessary. Additional calls or meetings with affected State, Tribal, and other federal agencies will be scheduled as needed. Meeting internal and court-ordered deadlines for the SSA, five-year review, and recovery plan is dependent on all parties fulfilling their roles according to the timeline herein. This project plan may also inform partner and stakeholder expectations.

Other FWS Regions and Programs: The lynx DPS occurs (or lynx “may occur”) within parts of Service Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6, and this effort will require participation by the ROs and Ecological Services FOs in those regions, along with potential participation by other programs such as Refuges and Partners for Fish and Wildlife. FO participation will be needed from the following states: R1 (ID, OR, WA); R2 (NM), R3 (MI, MN, WI), R5 (ME, NH, VT), and R6 (CO, MT, UT, WY).

Affected State Agencies: It will be necessary and helpful to coordinate with the wildlife and natural resources management agencies of each of the states listed above. Coordination will be especially important with the following state agencies: Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; Idaho Fish and Game; Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife; Washington State Department of Natural Resources; Wyoming Game and Fish Department; Colorado Division of Wildlife; and New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. State agencies within the DPS range were notified of the renewed five-year review effort in December 2014 and January 2015, and they will be contacted as appropriate by FOs and/or ROs during development of the SSA, five-year review, and recovery planning efforts. We anticipate at least one meeting with affected states during development of the SSA and at least one during recovery planning. To keep State partners informed of progress on the SSA and subsequent recovery planning efforts, we intend to hold monthly update calls with State wildlife management agencies. We may also solicit participation by State biologists and/or wildlife managers on a recovery team if one is convened.

Other Federal Agencies: Federal agency coordination will follow the July 3, 2013 *Interagency Coordination for Rule Development* memo and will include the USDA Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and Department of Homeland Security - Customs and

Border Protection. Federal agencies within the DPS range were notified of the renewed five-year review effort in December 2014 and January 2015, and they will be contacted as appropriate by FOs and/or ROs during development of the SSA, five-year review, and recovery planning efforts.

Affected Tribes: Tribal lands within the DPS range include those of the Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians, the Houlton Band of Maliseets, the Passamaquoddy Tribe, and the Penobscot Indian Nation in Maine; the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, Grand Portage Chippewa, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, Red Lake Band of Chippewa, and White Earth Nation in Minnesota; the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation and the Blackfeet Tribe of the Blackfeet Reservation in Montana; the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, Nez Perce Tribe, and Shoshone-Bannock Tribes in Idaho; the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, and the Spokane Tribe of Indians in Washington; the Wind River Indian Reservation in Wyoming; the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation in Utah; and the Ute Mountain and Southern Ute Indian Reservations in Colorado. Tribes within the DPS range were notified of the renewed five-year review effort in December 2014 and January 2015, and they will be contacted as appropriate by Regional Tribal Liaisons during development of the SSA, five-year review, and recovery planning efforts.

International Coordination: Because of the suspected importance of connectivity between DPS subpopulations and lynx populations in southern Canada in the persistence of the DPS subpopulations, it will be important that we coordinate with and seek information from our counterparts in the Canadian conservation, management, and lynx research communities. We will seek information on the status of and threats, if any, to lynx populations in Canada that are adjacent to and known or believed to interact with DPS subpopulations.

Budget: *No additional funding is available to assist in this effort.* Participating offices should fund their participation through existing base funding. We anticipate that Service ECOS staff will provide GIS support for these actions, including spatial analysis and high-quality digital and hard copy maps.

Project Plan Revisions: In light of the court deadline for the final recovery plan, we expect that we will meet deadlines for all products and any quality benchmarks associated with those products. However, this project plan and the Project Overview can be revised at any time with the agreement of the ARD and Project Leader. If there are unexpected changed circumstances due to competing workloads, budgets, resources, etc., we expect early communication about the delay and discussion with the Project Lead, Project Team, and Management Team about resolution. Lead time on potential delays should be commensurate with expected delay. For example, a request for two additional months should not be made the week before a project is due. Further, whatever the results of the five-year review, we expect this project plan will need to be revisited soon after the five-year review is signed.

Post-Project Debriefing: The Project Team and Management Team commit to having a conversation after the completion of the project to discuss how this process was implemented, what went well, and what can be done better in the future. This feedback on the process is

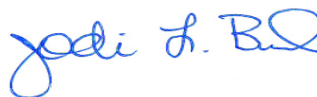
necessary to ensure we are always using the best available practices and working towards greater efficiencies.

Project Overview:

Guidance, policy, and template documents can be found at:
<https://fishnet.fws.doi.net/regions/6/es/endangeredspecies/>

Personnel involved in the completion of the Canada lynx SSA, Five-Year Review, and Recovery Plan				
Roles	Field Office	Regional Office	HQ	RSOL
Project Leads	Jim Zelenak	Seth Willey	Heather Bell Tara Nicolaysen	Dana Jacobsen
Project Team	Biologists from the Maine, Twin Cities, Northern Idaho, and Western Colorado FOs			
Management Team	Jodi Bush, MTFO; Field Supervisors from the Maine, Twin Cities, Northern Idaho, Washington, Wyoming, Colorado, and Western Colorado FOs	R6 TE Chief; Nicole Alt, R6 Geographic Supervisor; Mike Thabault, R6 ARD-ES; Matt Hogan, R6 Deputy RD; Noreen Walsh, R6 RD; Recovery Coordinators, TE Chiefs, and ARDs-ES - R1, R2, R3, and R5;		
Others Involved	Biologists and Managers from the New England, Michigan, Wisconsin, Idaho, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico FOs as needed	Ext Affairs Specialists, ARDs-Ext Affairs, and Tribal Liaisons - R6, R1, R2, R3, and R5 SSA Framework Implementation Team: Mary Parkin (R5), Jennifer Szymanski (R3), David Smith (USGS), Jonathan Cummings (USGS)	ECOS GIS/Spatial Analysis/Mapmaking Support	

Signed:



Assistant Regional Director,
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Appendix A

Schedule for Canada Lynx SSA, Five-Year Review and Recovery Plan (if necessary)

Project Plan - DRAFT Canada lynx DPS - SSA/ 5-Year Review/ Recovery Plan Conceptual Schedule*																	
(Calendar Years)		2015				2016				2017				2018			
Activities/Products	(Quarters**)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SPECIES STATUS ASSESSMENT (SSA)																	
Form SSA Team																	
Complete Species Needs																	
Identify Model Scenarios***																	
Model development																	
Identify model framework & scientific validity																	
Build model (e.g., BBN - Bayesian Belief Network)																	
Prototype model structure																	
Expert elicitation for "current conditions into future" scenario****																	
Run "current conditions into future" scenario																	
Evaluate 3Rs for first scenario/determine need for additional scenarios																	
SSA Peer review																	
If needed, run additional management scenarios, including EE, for REV																	
5-YEAR REVIEW																	
5-year review recommendation																	
REV, IF NEEDED																	
Draft RP																	
Comments/peer review																	
Final RP																	
Develop RIS																	
Summary																	
SSA Analysis and Documentation																	
5-year Review (to final recommendation)																	
Recovery Planning (to Final Plan)																	
<p>* Schedules and scope of work may be adjusted as the expectations for application of the model are refined through discussions with experts and FWS.</p> <p>** Q1 = Jan-Mar, Q2 = Apr-June, Q3 = July-Sept, Q4 = Oct-Dec.</p> <p>*** Scenarios include projecting current conditions into the foreseeable future without further intervention, to be completed in order to make 5-year review recommendation, and, if needed, future conditions based on alternative management scenarios.</p> <p>**** Includes planning and actual elicitation.</p>																	

Appendix B
Milestones for Canada Lynx SSA, Five-Year Review and Recovery Plan (if necessary)

Date	Milestone
Apr. 18, 2007	FWS announced initiation of five-year review of lynx DPS (72 FR 19549).
Dec. 8, 2014	“Dear Interested Party” letter sent to Montana State, Federal, Tribal partners and to other FWS ROs and FOS announcing the re-initiation of the five-year review for lynx.
Jan. 13, 2015	FWS news release announcing five-year review and soliciting information to consider in the review.
Ongoing beginning Jan. 2015	Work with partners to collect and evaluate available data and information and assess threat factors (USFS, BLM, NPS, BIA, State wildlife/natural resources agencies, and Tribes).
Apr. 29 – 30, 2015	SSA workshop to include lynx discussion/case study (R6 RO).
May 28, 2015	Kick-off call with Project and Management team members. Additional Project “Core” Team calls will be held biweekly, and general coordination calls monthly, beginning June 2015. The MTFO lead will coordinate both calls. These calls will include other FWS offices and may be opened to other parties/stakeholders as necessary/appropriate.
June – Oct. 2015	Set up meetings, develop and conduct a structured threats assessment, using outlines, webinars and other intermediate products, and brief the Management Team as necessary through the process. Draft SSA report with assistance from other Service Regions and FOs.
July 2015	Initiate monthly update calls with affected State wildlife management agencies.
Aug. – Sept. 2015	Expert elicitation meeting(s) on distribution, status, and threats (including climate change). Workshop(s) with State agencies to discuss SSA process and DPS status and threats.
Dec. 2015	Brief ROs and HQ on findings; submit SSA report for RO/HQ review. Complete peer review of SSA report.
Jan. 2016	Begin recovery planning processes if necessary; select and invite Recovery Team members.
Jan. – June 2016	Develop DRAFT recovery plan including goals and objectives, implementation plan.
July – Sept. 2016	RO/HQ/RSOL review/surname of DRAFT recovery plan. Review and concurrence from R1, R2, R3, and R5 as needed.
Oct. 2016	Release DRAFT recovery plan to public and commence peer review and/or publish proposed listing rule.
Dec. 2016	60-day comment period closes on DRAFT recovery plan; peer review also complete.
Jan. – June 2017	Revise DRAFT recovery plan; draft the FINAL recovery plan.
July – Sept. 2017	RO/HQ/RSOL review/surname of FINAL recovery. Review and concurrence from R1, R2, R3, and R5.
Dec. 2017	Finalize recovery plan, publish in FR, and post on webpage; conduct appropriate outreach. Communicate with court as necessary regarding completion and submission of FINAL recovery plan in accordance with court-ordered deadline.

Signed:

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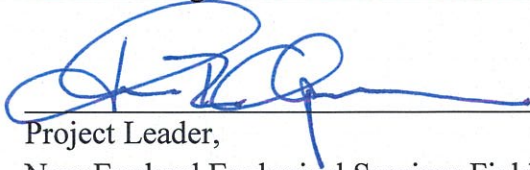
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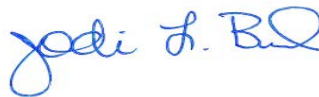
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Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office

Assistant Regional Director,
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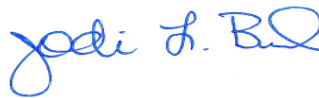
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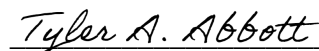
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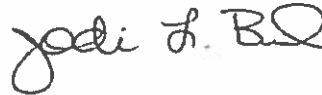
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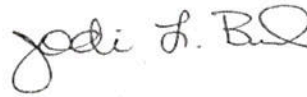
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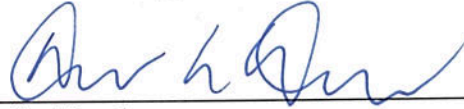
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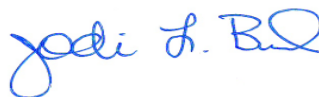
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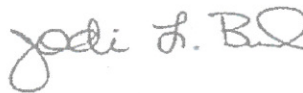
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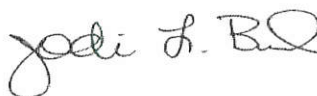
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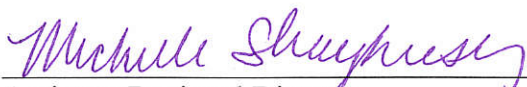
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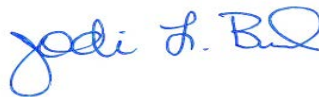
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/s/ Paul Phifer
Assistant Regional Director,
Ecological Services, R5

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Maine Ecological Services Field Office

Project Leader,
New England Ecological Services Field Office

