

# **FINAL CHARTER SOUTHWEST ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT TEAM**

Version: May 17, 2005

## **BACKGROUND**

The Southwest Strategy (SWS) emerged from the need for Federal agencies to work in greater collaboration and cooperation to restore and maintain the cultural, economic and environmental quality of Arizona and New Mexico, including improving the conservation and recovery of Federally listed species while meeting agency missions. A long-term strategy for streamlining section 7 consultations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 was completed in November 1999, and specified that a Threatened and Endangered Species Program Managers (TEPM) Team be formed to implement the strategy. Beginning in 2003 and continuing through 2004, the SWS focused its efforts on water, ecosystem health and fire management, and US/Mexico border concerns. In early 2004, the TEPM Team was designated as an affiliated team of the SWS, recognized by the SWS Regional Executive Committee (REC) to be an independently functioning group tasked with providing guidance and assistance concerning the ESA and section 7 consultation process in Arizona and New Mexico. The primary focus of the TEPM Team is to continue to work on tasks identified in the Long-Term Strategy for Streamlining Consultations under the Endangered Species Act in Arizona and New Mexico [LTS](SWS, November 1999) that was previously approved by the REC. On November 4, 2004, the TEPM changed the Team name to the Southwest Endangered Species Act (SWESA) Team to reflect the broader focus of the Team.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The SWESA Team provides regional leadership and develops actions to improve implementation of the ESA with a focus on the section 7 consultation process, including implementation of the LTS. As a self-directed team, the SWESA also works collaboratively to support the mission of the SWS and is also available for specific assignments from the SWS Regional Executive forum.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

1. The SWESA Team will strive to improve interagency cooperation for streamlining ESA section 7 consultations. Objectives to meet this goal include:
  - a. Improve information sharing and understanding of section 7 among agencies and other interested parties (Tribes, consultants, etc.).
  - b. Monitor streamlining implementation.

- c. Provide guidance for programmatic consultations and agreements.
  - d. Monitor interagency section 7 consultations to improve timeliness.
  - e. Identify opportunities for ESA training needs.
2. The SWESA Team will serve as the regional focal point for sharing information relevant to streamlining section 7 consultations. Objectives to meet this goal include:
- a. Maintain a roster of section 7 consultation Issue Resolution Team members.
  - b. Serve as section 7 consultation liaisons, as needed.
  - c. Coordinate consultation issues with other SWESA Team members.
  - d. Maintain a roster of SWESA Team members and alternates (Attachment A).
3. The SWESA Team will identify ESA issues and develop actions to resolve them. Objectives to meet this goal include:
- a. For section 7 of the ESA, develop streamlining tools as indicated in the LTS, such as:
    - i. Guidance criteria.
    - ii. Programmatic consultations.
    - iii. Consultation agreements.
    - iv. Biological Assessment templates by species and/or project type.
    - v. Web posted templates, examples, etc.
    - vi. Training.
    - vii. Batching of consultations.
  - b. Identify other actions to improve implementation of the ESA as identified by the SWESA Team.
4. The SWESA Team may advise the SWS Regional Executives on the ESA as necessary for focus issues.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

SWESA Team members will represent their agencies or Tribes on the Team. Members of the Team may include one or two representatives from each agency or Tribe. Names of active Team members will be maintained, and SWS representatives may participate in SWESA Team meetings or other Team projects and communications.

## **OPERATING PROCEDURES**

Attachment B provides further details on operating procedures. The SWESA Team will approve the Team charter and any future amendments. The SWESA Team will inform the SWS regarding its mission, goals, objectives, and work products. The SWESA Team will strive to reach consensus among members on decisions regarding Team operating procedures,

responsibilities, and actions. If consensus cannot be reached on an important issue, the unresolved issue may be elevated to the Team Sponsor for recommendations.

## **TEAM PRODUCTS**

Specific products will be developed to implement the long-term strategy. SWESA Team priorities, workload, and progress reports toward strategy implementation will be documented annually.

**ATTACHMENT A: MEMBERSHIP ROSTER** – The membership roster is updated periodically.

## **ATTACHMENT B: OPERATING PROCEDURES (Version: May 17, 2005)**

**Decisions.** The SWESA Team will strive to reach consensus on decisions relating to operating procedures, work products, and recommendations. Team members should remain engaged in deliberations in order to hear the full discussions and make informed recommendations based on Team consensus when final decisions are to be made. Consensus is interpreted to mean that there is no ardent dissent by any member of the Team. If members disagree with the approach or solution selected by the rest of the group, they should make every effort to offer an alternative satisfactory to all stakeholders. Members should not withhold their consent and block consensus unless they have serious reservations. However, if consensus cannot be reached on an important issue and an impasse occurs, the issue may be elevated to the Team Sponsor for recommendations.

### **Meetings**

- a. Active participation is expected from each SWESA Team member or their alternate.
- b. The meeting host will be notified in advance of non-members interested in attending/participating in Team meetings.
- c. Decision-making will be the responsibility of SWESA Team members. Non-members may participate in Team discussions.
- d. The SWESA Team will meet regularly, 2-3 times per year and will be scheduled one year in advance.
- e. To the extent possible, meeting locations will be balanced between Arizona and New Mexico. Occasionally, other locations may be chosen depending on the location of some Team members.
- f. Meetings will be hosted or co-hosted by Team members on a volunteer basis and will be rotated between agencies/offices.
- g. The meeting host agency representative(s) will be responsible for the following:
  - i. Distributing the meeting agenda to the Team one month in advance of the meeting.
  - ii. Distributing the meeting facility location and parking, travel or accommodation information in advance.
  - iii. Coordination of meeting facilities and audio/visual equipment needed by the Team.
  - iv. Sign-in sheet for participants.
  - v. Facilitation of the meeting, as appropriate.
  - vi. As feasible, share overview of the host agency section 7 issues and/or case studies for discussion with the SWESA Team. (e.g. presentations, guest speakers, handouts, or field trips)
  - vii. Coordinate any planned inter-agency field trips or site visits in conjunction with the SWESA Team meeting.
  - viii. Facilitate SWESA Team selection of the host agency representative for the next meeting.

- ix. Facilitate development of draft agenda items for the next meeting to be captured by the next meeting host.

## **Record Keeping**

### a. Meeting Notes.

- i. At each meeting a note taker will be identified for the next meeting.
- ii. Meeting notes will be captured as summary information only.
- iii. Participant input will not be specifically attributed to any one individual.
- iv. Action items will document the committed individual(s) and timeframes.
- v. Team commitments and action items will be duplicated at the beginning or end of the meeting notes.
- vi. The recorder (and/or host agency representative) will electronically mail (or FAX to BIA) draft meeting notes for comments within two weeks following the meeting.
- vii. Meeting notes (or work products) will not be finalized until the following meeting, although the note keeper may accept comments and make preliminary revisions prior to the next meeting
- viii. Meeting notes should not be shared outside of the SWESA Team agencies until finalized.
- ix. The note-taker will follow-through with appropriate distribution of the finalized meeting notes to the SWESA Team and Team Sponsor.

## **Communications**

- a. Electronic mail is the preferred method of distribution of meeting notes and materials to SWESA Team members. Documents may be sent by FAX, when necessary.
- b. Working documents will be distributed in MS Word and/or .rtf files.

## **Additional Roles and Responsibilities**

The SWESA Team will identify individual Team members or sub-groups to work on specific action items or develop work products as needed.