



Sharing the Vision

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Purpose

- *New interagency handbook currently under development*
- *Working title: “The Right Work in the Right Place: implementing an Ecosystem Approach for Infrastructure Projects” (aka the Critter Book).*
- *Pilot application on U.S. 93 in Montana*





The journey.....

Setting the stage

December 1995 MOU

- Provide leadership in and cooperate with activities that foster the ecosystem approach to natural resource management, protection, and assistance.
- Utilize authorities in a way that facilitates, and does not pose barriers to the ecosystem approach.
- Emphasizes forming partnerships.

Environmental Stewardship & Streamlining

Objective: Demonstrate environmental stewardship by enhancing and protecting ecosystems.

Approach: Allow highway agencies to mitigate project impacts with flexible, regional approaches, rather than site-specific mitigation plans that are often more costly and less environmentally valuable.

Enlibra Principles

- Collaboration, not polarization
- National Standards, neighborhood solutions
- Reward results, not programs
- Solutions that transcend political boundaries
- Science for facts, process for priorities
- Markets before mandates
- Recognition of Benefits and Costs
- Change a heart, change a nation

Executive Order

September 18, 2002

- **Secretary of Transportation** shall advance environmental stewardship through cooperative actions with project sponsors to promote protection and enhancement of the natural and human environment
- In the planning, development, operation, and maintenance of transportation facilities and services.

Executive Task Force

Secretary of Agriculture

Secretary of Commerce

Secretary of Transportation (chair)

Secretary of the Interior

Secretary of Defense

Administrator of the Environmental Protection
Agency

Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic
Preservation

Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality.

What can transportation offer?

- Investment in mitigation in advance of or concurrent with projects.
- Predictability for both implementing conservation measures and transportation projects
- Focus mitigation dollars where they do the most good.
- Participate in off site mitigation
- Just in time mitigation given development trends, species status, condition of the ecosystem.
- Partnerships for large scale issues

What do Transportation agencies need?

- Multi-agency collaboration for mitigation through habitat preservation.
- Early coordination in the planning stage to develop mitigation options.
- Decisions /opinions/commitments based on “best available data.”
- Willing partners to seize vanishing opportunities
- Incentives for transportation agency to direct transportation funds to ecosystem objectives.
- *Quid pro quo* and reliability of agreements.

The Challenge:

Change the way we work

Now: Project by project approach

On site, instead of best location

Inefficient use of resources

Postage stamp mitigation

Vanishing Opportunities

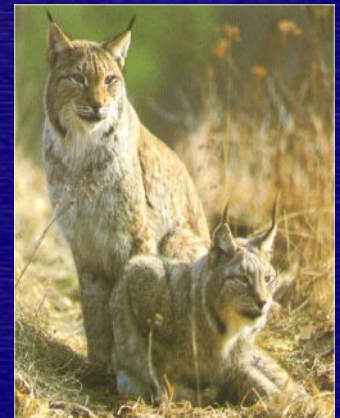
Future: Ecosystem Approach

The right work, in the right place, at the right time

Opportunity for collaborative partnerships

Reduced administrative burden

Streamlined project delivery



The Handbook

- ❖ A multi-agency partnering effort to develop a shared vision for maintaining the nations wildlife and aquatic resources while providing for the infrastructure needs of the public.
- ❖ Builds on existing banking approaches developed for multiple project mitigation: wetland banking and conservation banks.
- ❖ Introduces concept of ecosystem banking



Ecosystem Banking

- Non-traditional system for crediting mitigation that helps to get the right work done in the right place.
- An approach to long-term conservation that laws and regulations encourage. A multi project, multi species approach that can be on-site or off-site, in-kind or out-of-kind.
- Relies on collaborative process of integrated planning that identifies a hierarchy of important resources in a region and their locations and prioritizes investments.
- Facilitates partnerships for infrastructure developers, land management agencies, NGOs and resource agencies.

Goals

- **Connectivity:** Reduced habitat fragmentation.
- **Conservation:** Protection of larger scale, multi-resource ecosystems.
- **Predictability:** Commitments will be honored
- **Transparency:** Better public and stakeholder involvement.

Essential Ingredients

- Collaborative Partnership at the local level
- Baseline Assessment of the Ecosystem Area (use statewide conservation plans and other management tools)
- Develop ecosystem based mitigation plans
- Consistent with Integrated Planning Framework

Framework for Integrated Planning

- Build and strengthen collaborative partnerships
- Identify Management Plans
- Integrate Plans: Create a Regional Ecosystem Framework (REF).
- Assess Effects
- Establish and Prioritize Opportunities
- Document Agreements
- Design Projects Consistent with Regional Ecosystem Framework
- Balance Adaptive Management and Predictability

Mitigation Options

- Project Specific Mitigation
- Multiple-Project mitigation
 - Mitigation Banking
 - In-Lieu Fee
 - Conservation Banking
- Ecosystem Banking

We all Benefit

BLM – Improved resource conservation during land use plan development.



EPA - Greater flexibility to do environmental good



FHWA - Streamlined project development and cost-effective mitigation



NOAA - Early application of science for solutions



NPS - Using science to protect natural resources while providing visitor enjoyment



US Army Corps of Engineers

USACE – Finding the balance to keep waters clean and clear



USFS – Stewardship of natural resources and facilitated use of public lands.



USFWS – One conservation plan, one approach.

Application

- U.S. 93 Priority Project
- Interagency Review Team has established a collaborative partnership
- Working on the framework
- Goal: Credit and debit bank for ecosystem based mitigation

Next Steps

- Enlibra Principle #3: National Standards, Neighborhood solutions.
- Draft of the Wildlife Habitat Handbook: Interagency Legal/Policy Review
- Continue efforts to pilot the ecosystem approach on the US 93 Priority Project
- Learn from doing: case studies

The Handbook

Because Federal and State agencies are charged with the statutory requirements of specific areas that are at times in conflict it is clear that no single agency will be able to achieve sound stewardship of our natural resources working alone.





QUESTIONS?

