

§ 402.13

At the option of the Federal agency, formal consultation may be initiated under §402.14(c) concurrently with the submission of the assessment.

(k) *Use of the biological assessment.* (1) The Federal agency shall use the biological assessment in determining whether formal consultation or a conference is required under §402.14 or §402.10, respectively. If the biological assessment indicates that there are no listed species or critical habitat present that are likely to be adversely affected by the action and the Director concurs as specified in paragraph (j) of this section, then formal consultation is not required. If the biological assessment indicates that the action is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat, and the Director concurs, then a conference is not required.

(2) The Director may use the results of the biological assessment in (i) determining whether to request the Federal agency to initiate formal consultation or a conference, (ii) formulating a biological opinion, or (iii) formulating a preliminary biological opinion.

§ 402.13 Informal consultation.

(a) Informal consultation is an optional process that includes all discussions, correspondence, etc., between the Service and the Federal agency or the designated non-Federal representative, designed to assist the Federal agency in determining whether formal consultation or a conference is required.

(b) During informal consultation, the Service may suggest modifications to the action that the Federal agency and any applicant could implement to avoid the likelihood of adverse effects to listed species or critical habitat.

(c) If during informal consultation it is determined by the Federal agency, with the written concurrence of the Service, that the action is not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat, the consultation process is terminated, and no further action is necessary.

(1) A written request for concurrence with a Federal agency's not likely to

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adversely affect determination shall include information similar to the types of information described for formal consultation at §402.14(c)(1) sufficient for the Service to determine if it concurs.

(2) Upon receipt of a written request consistent with paragraph (c)(1) of this section, the Service shall provide written concurrence or non-concurrence with the Federal agency's determination within 60 days. The 60-day timeframe may be extended upon mutual consent of the Service, the Federal agency, and the applicant (if involved), but shall not exceed 120 days total from the date of receipt of the Federal agency's written request consistent with paragraph (c)(1) of this section.

[74 FR 20423, May 4, 2009, as amended at 84 FR 45016, Aug. 27, 2019]

§ 402.14 Formal consultation.

(a) *Requirement for formal consultation.* Each Federal agency shall review its actions at the earliest possible time to determine whether any action may affect listed species or critical habitat. If such a determination is made, formal consultation is required, except as noted in paragraph (b) of this section. The Director may request a Federal agency to enter into consultation if he identifies any action of that agency that may affect listed species or critical habitat and for which there has been no consultation. When such a request is made, the Director shall forward to the Federal agency a written explanation of the basis for the request.

(b) *Exceptions.* (1) A Federal agency need not initiate formal consultation if, as a result of the preparation of a biological assessment under §402.12 or as a result of informal consultation with the Service under §402.13, the Federal agency determines, with the written concurrence of the Director, that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any listed species or critical habitat.

(2) A Federal agency need not initiate formal consultation if a preliminary biological opinion, issued after early consultation under §402.11, is confirmed as the final biological opinion.