

## California Pilot Workshop on ESA Consultation

August 2008

**Location:** Arcata, CA

**Background:** An interagency pilot program launched in California set the stage to create timely and effective consultations related to protected species issues and new transportation projects. The long-term program goal is to streamline and improve the effectiveness of consultations under the federal Endangered Species Act Section 7 and Essential Fish Habitat regulations, and related California species protection laws. The interagency effort, coordinated by the U.S. Institute, involved the Federal Highway Administration, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California Department of Fish and Game, and the National Marine Fisheries Service.

With guidance from the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, the pilot program participants developed operating guidelines for interagency consultations. The guidelines created call for the formation of interagency teams involving field staff and managers who work together to develop biological assessments and biological opinions needed to ensure the timely progression of new transportation projects. The model builds on the successes of interagency consultation teams used by land management agencies in the Pacific Northwest.

The U.S. Institute helped launch the pilot program by convening and facilitating a two-day collaborative workshop that guided the development of the interagency operating guidelines, provided skills training in negotiation and collaborative problem-solving, and provided an opportunity for the participants to learn firsthand from those involved in the Pacific Northwest Streamlining Program.



### Results and Accomplishments

The two-day collaborative workshop:

- Guided the development of a Memorandum of Agreement among participating agencies;
- Provided skills training in negotiation and collaborative problem-solving; and

The pilot is currently being implemented in Northern California and the U.S. Institute continues to provide facilitation and support for interagency team meetings.

### Highlights

In the words of the participants, the interactions with each other and with U.S. Institute staff set the stage for productive interagency consultations that can “help avoid permitting road blocks,” “get past conflict to collaboration,” and “achieve positive outcomes in challenging circumstances.”

### Credits

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