

Sample Outline for a Biological Assessment

Please include a cover letter with your BA. This letter should indicate that you are submitting a Biological Assessment for a particular project. It is helpful if you summarize your determinations and explicitly request an action from us, i.e., concur with your “may affect, but not likely to adversely affect” determination or initiate formal consultation.

Note: For projects that will adversely affect proposed or listed species or proposed or designated critical habitat, we strongly recommend that you contact our office for technical assistance before preparing or submitting a final Biological Assessment.

I. Introduction

A. State the purpose of document, e.g., to assess the effects of the proposed action on federally protected resources.

B. Briefly specify the proposed action. If applicable, include both the Federal action (e.g., issue 404 permit) and the applicant’s action (e.g., build residential complex).

II. Project description

A. Subdivide proposed action into project elements (e.g., construction, operation, and maintenance), if applicable.

B. Describe the where, when, and how for each project element

C. Include a map delineating the location of each project element

D. Identify any conservation measures that will be incorporated into the project design

III. Action Area

A. Delineate the geographic area that will be affected, i.e., the area where the physical, chemical, and biotic effects will occur.

B. Delineate the specific areas that will be affected by each of the project elements

C. Identify any ongoing activities that may be affecting the species or habitat

IV. Species/Critical Habitat Considered

A. Identify the species or critical habitat that “may be present.”

B. Document how you identify these listed resources.

C. Describe the current population and habitat conditions (status and trend, if known) in the action area for each protected resource that “may be present”

V. Effects Analysis

A. For each species or critical habitat parcel, explain how it will or will not be exposed to the project elements; be sure to consider effects to all life stage.

B. Describe the anticipated response (e.g., none, abandoned the area, decrease foraging success, reduced fecundity, injury, death, etc.) from any likely exposure

C. Cumulative Effects Analysis (for actions that are likely to adversely affect listed resources). Identify any future state or private activities, not involving Federal activities, that are reasonably certain to occur within the action area. Describe how such activities will affect listed resources within the action area

VI. Conclusion and Determination of Effects for each protected resource

A. For each protected resource, make a Section 7 determination and include your rationale.

B. For a "may affect, but not likely to adversely affect" finding, request our concurrence. For a "may affect, likely to adversely affect" finding, request initiation of Formal Consultation.

VII. Literature Cited

VIII. List of Contacts Made and Preparers