

**National Marine Fisheries Service's Suggested Steps for Reinitiating ESA Section 7  
Consultation for Ongoing Actions to Consider Critical Habitat for Pacific Salmonids  
February 17, 2006**

Previous consultation documents (e.g., biological assessments, biological opinions and letters of concurrence) may contain much of the information needed to reinitiate section 7 consultations for ongoing action effects to critical habitat. However, these existing documents will need to be evaluated and updated as necessary, to make them current. The level of detail needed to supplement or supplant the previously-submitted biological assessment will depend on a variety of factors, such as: the complexity of the action, the amount of time lapsed since the initial consultation, the degree of change in the remaining actions from what was originally proposed (i.e., what work remains to be completed in the ongoing action), the degree of change in the environmental baseline, and the availability of new information regarding the effects of the proposed action on the primary constituent elements (PCEs) of designated critical habitats that may have not been previously considered.

Action agencies must exercise judgment about what new information is significant enough to warrant inclusion with the reinitiation request. For example, consider whether the information could materially alter the analysis of effects or other factors affecting the conclusion of the consultation. When in doubt about the significance of the new information, it is best to include it to document that it was considered.

Below is a summary of the general steps describing the new information and analysis that NMFS expects will be required to reinitiate consultation to address critical habitat:

1. Describe the action areas for the remaining ongoing actions (name and number of the hydrologic unit code) and the physical location of Pacific salmon critical habitat within the action areas. Check the final rule for critical habitat (70 FR 523690 9/2/05) [Critical Habitat FR Notices](#) to determine whether occupied habitat was designated as critical habitat.
2. Review the environmental baseline sections of previous consultation documents. Determine if there have been changes to the environmental baseline in the action area that are significant enough to describe (see note above regarding level of significance). Examples include completion of other section 7 consultations or natural events such as wildfire or flood. Provide details or indicate that there have not been significant changes to the environmental baseline.
3. Identify what parts of the ongoing actions remain to be completed. This is important both to update the baseline and to ensure the effects analysis is properly focused on the remaining ongoing actions. Analysis of a subset of the original proposed action's components may result in reduced effects to the PCEs of critical habitat and result in a different determination of effect for critical habitat than for the entire original action. Explain where in the previous consultation documents the specific description of the proposed action can be found and describe in adequate detail what changes have occurred or what work remains to be completed.

4. Identify the PCEs of critical habitat and where they occur relative to the action areas.
5. Evaluate the analysis of effects for species and critical habitat, if any, contained in relevant previous consultation documents. Identify any designated critical habitat or PCEs that were not represented by those analyses, including PCEs related to forage and any non-forage PCEs that require further analysis because of significant new information that has become available since the initial consultations were completed. Analyze the effects of the ongoing actions to these PCEs. Make a determination regarding the effect of the remaining actions on critical habitat based upon effects to each PCE.
6. Prepare a supplemental biological assessment that documents completion of the steps above and contact NMFS to reinitiate consultation.