



United States Department of Agriculture

Species of Conservation Concern



Pacific Southwest Region

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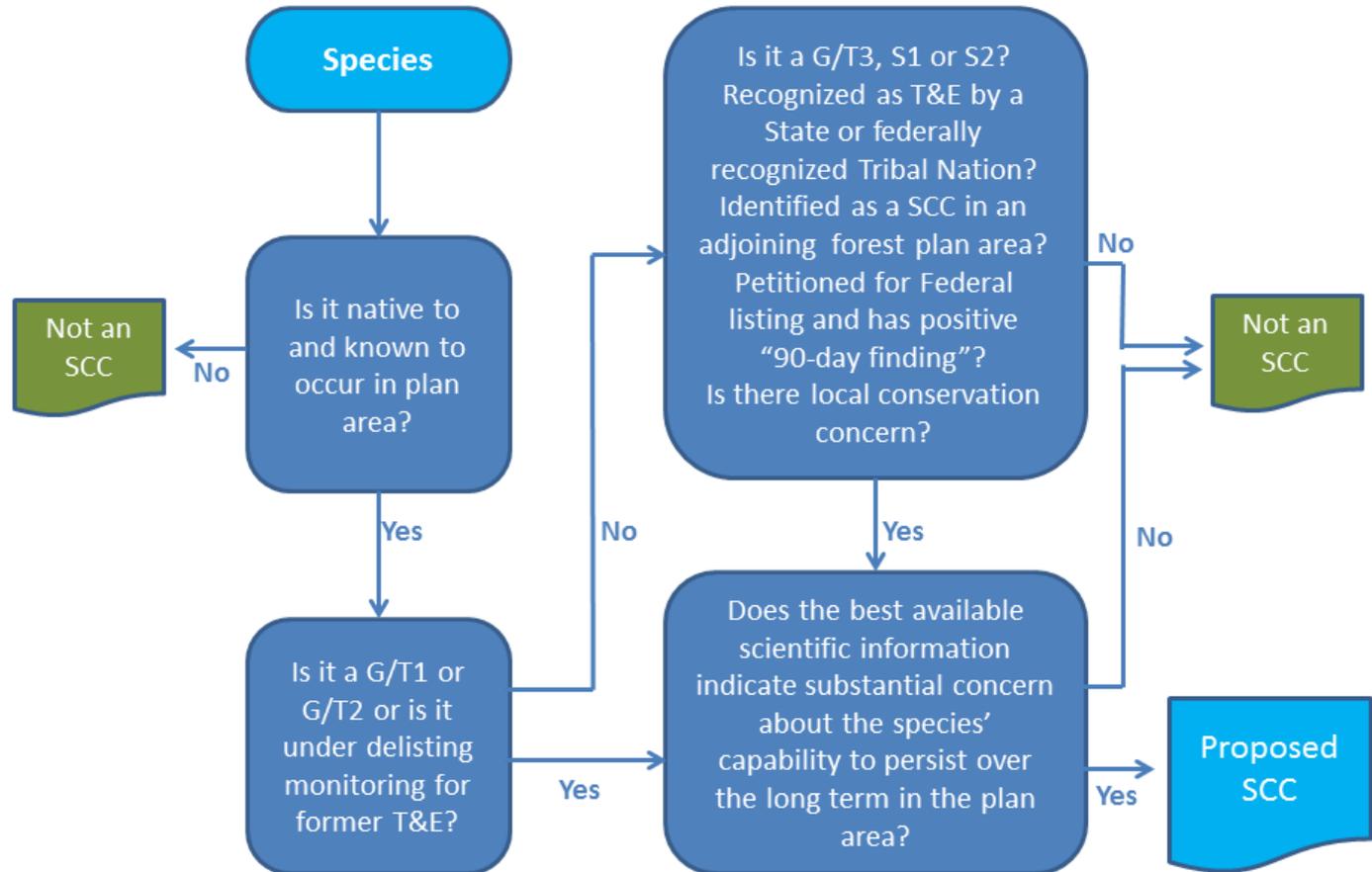
- Two categories of At-Risk Species
 - Species and critical habitat recognized under the Endangered Species Act
 - Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) as defined in Forest Service 2012 Planning Rule

Species of Conservation Concern



- What are SCCs?
 - Species where scientific information indicates substantial concern for their ability to remain on a landscape for a long time
 - Each forest plan has its own SCC list, approved by the Regional Forester
- Why SCCs?
 - To provide the ecological conditions to maintain the diversity of plant and animal communities and the persistence of native species

Evaluation Process for Potential Species of Conservation Concern



Examples from Early Adopters (draft proposed lists, 7/29/2015)



Category	Inyo NF	Sequoia NF	Sierra NF
Fed ESA species	3	10	6
SCC Mammals	3	4	3
SCC Birds	3	8	5
SCC Amphibians	3	8	5
SCC Fish	1	4	3
SCC Terrestrial Invertebrates	18	12	4
SCC Potential Terrestrial Invertebrates	3	6	3
SCC Aquatic Invertebrates	9	4	4
SCC Plants	102	69	36

Question 1: Considering Best Available Scientific Information



- Due to the complexities involved with determining “best available science” in the context of a large number of Species of Conservation Concern, how should the Forest Service consider discrepancies or conflicting findings?

What is Best Available Scientific Information?



- A body of science knowledge that supports a fact or findings
- Strongest, most supported science
- Interpreting Science Information
 - What is causing the effect?
 - What is the baseline of comparison?
 - What does it mean for the future?

Why use rankings to determine concern?



- Rely upon NatureServe rankings (2012 Rule)
 - Public and open to review and input
 - Standardized vetting, “common language”
 - Contributions and review by species experts
 - Eliminates bias
- Also looked at:
 - CA Native Plant Society Rare Plant Ranks
 - CA Natural Diversity Database
 - Forest Service records

What about discrepancies in information?



- Evaluate potential consequences
 - What quantity and quality of ecological conditions are affected?
- What is the proper scale for the discrepancy?
 - What is the relationship of the discrepancy and the substantial concern?
 - Plan vs. Project vs. Monitoring vs. Research

Question 2: Public Engagement on SCCs



- How can the Forest Service best engage the public in determining Species of Conservation Concern?

Importance of the adaptive planning process



- Adaptive planning under the 2012 Rule and Directives
 - Process to add or remove species as new information emerges
 - Process to identify the need to change plan components
- Biennial monitoring reports

Improve species and management information



- Help improve the NatureServe and CNPS Rare Plant Ranking
- Help clarify the substantial concern for species' capability to persist over the long term
- [NatureServe](#)
- [CA Native Plant Society](#)
- [CA Natural Diversity Database](#)

Discussion in Concurrent Sessions and Group Reports



- Considering the Best Available Scientific Information, how should the Forest Service consider discrepancies or conflicting findings?
- How can the Forest Service best engage the public in determining Species of Conservation Concern?