

# **ESA Section 7 Consultation Streamlining**

# Section 7 Streamlining



## Goals

- Institutionalize a more effective and efficient (streamlined) Section 7 process in Region 2 through a collaborative process with the USFWS, BLM, and NPS
- Capture regulatory efficiencies, while concurrently advancing species conservation and recovery in more consistent and beneficial ways over broader scales and longer time frames

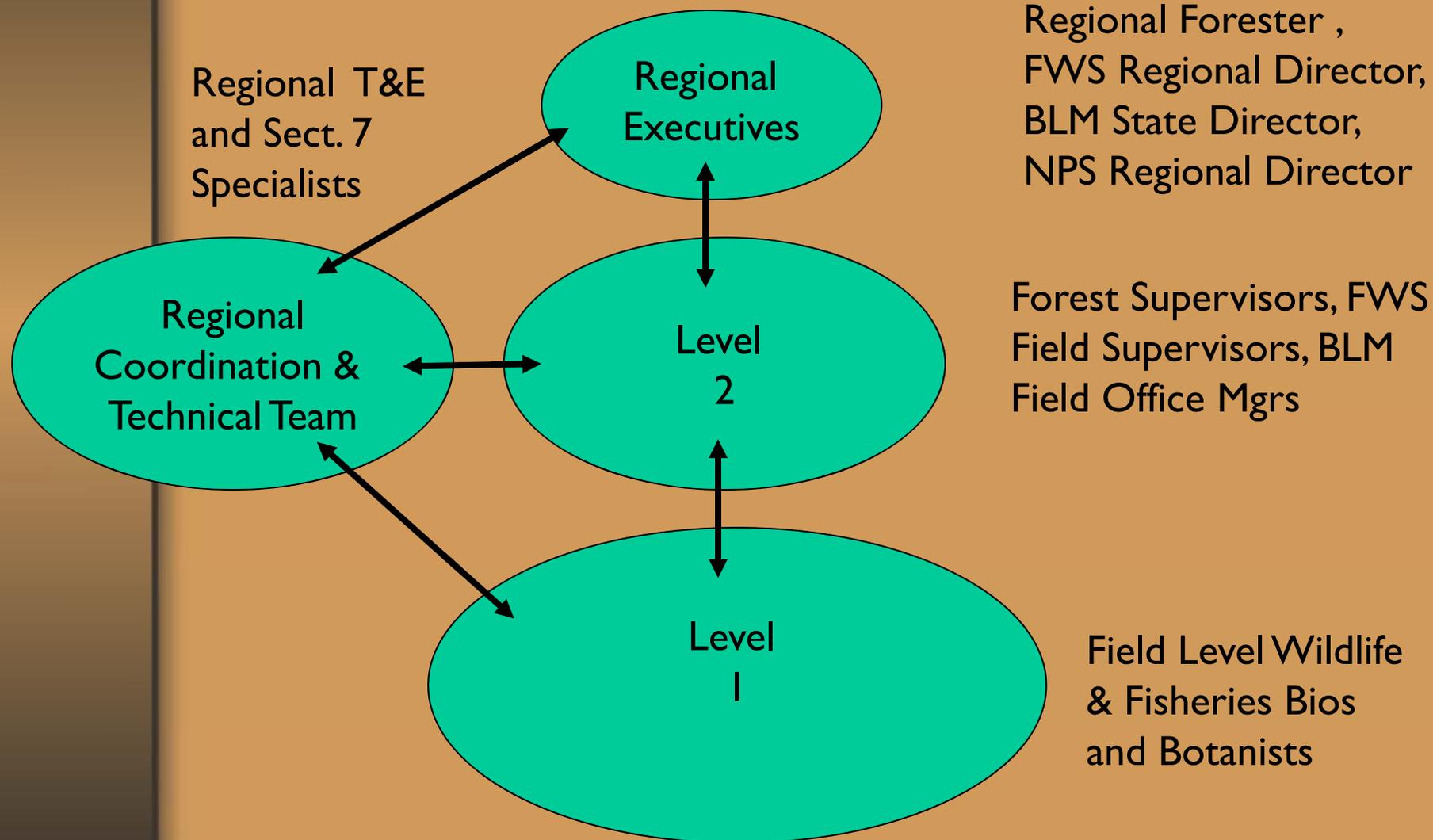
# Section 7 Streamlining



## Purpose:

- Reduce the likelihood of conflicts between proposed Forest Service actions and candidate, proposed and listed and critical habitats
- Develop activity evaluation tools and design criteria for consistent management of common species
- Use interagency teams to review the adequacy of Biological Assessments (BAs) and effects determinations for integration into BOs
- Establish a process for timely resolution of disputes.

# Section 7 Streamlining (CO and WY)



# Level I Team Role



- Review design criteria and preliminary effects determinations
- Identify information needed for consultation & opportunities for batching
- Identify ways to improve BAs and provide review of BAs, as desired, to expedite concluding consultation
- Lead or assist development of streamlining tools (e.g. screens)
- Track agreements on activity-specific effects, design criteria, and 'streamlining' accomplishments

# Level 2 Team Role



- Approve membership of teams
- Resolve issues that cannot be resolved at Level 1
- Provide direction for workload priorities and timeframes

# Regional Executive Role



- Resolve issues that cannot be resolved by the Level 2 Team
- Ensure priorities and funding are in alignment

# Regional Coordination & Technical Team Role



- Develop initial framework for streamlining
- Procedural and technical oversight and assistance
- Facilitate consistency and communication among teams within and across States
- Lead or assist development of streamlining tools
- Assist Level 1 teams in elevating issues to Level 2 team
- Report progress and accomplishments

# Advantages



- Improves coordination and builds relationships & trust
- Front-loads the planning process and potentially significant issues are identified and resolved early
- Identifies a process for appropriate timing to engage management to resolve issues, establish priorities, and secure resources
- Provides a forum for biologists across the agencies to be innovative in working toward common issues over broader scales and longer time periods
- Better information flow & working from common information
- Improved BAs & BOs and more consistent determinations

# Disadvantages



- Requires a greater commitment by all agencies to work cohesively throughout the planning and consultation process
- Requires more up front planning and preparation
- Increased workload for already full plates, esp. early on
- Qualitative benefits can be difficult to track or tie directly to improvements in conducting and closing section 7 process

# The Future?



- Level I teams continue building and tracking agreements on activity effects and design criteria/conservation measures/mitigation
- Movement toward Level I assistance with programmatic consultations, e.g. land management plans
- Revision of existing and creation of new streamlining tools (e.g. unit-level spp. lists, effects criteria, activity screens)
- Anticipating and strategizing for major issues & initiatives on the horizon, e.g. role in counterpart regs, HFRA, etc.
- Quantitative database for tracking improvements to section 7 process, e.g. consultation timelines
- Anticipating listing decisions and strategizing