

Conservation Planning Tools

Safe Harbor Agreements



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February 2021



Purpose of the Safe Harbor Program

To encourage landowners to take conservation actions that contribute to the recovery of a listed species





What is a Safe Harbor Agreement?

- A voluntary agreement between non-federal property owners and the USFWS
- Designed to contribute to the recovery of a particular species listed under the Endangered Species Act for a specific number of years
- A tool to address property owner's concerns about having a listed species listed on their land





What is a Safe Harbor Agreement?

Why would the USFWS want to enter into a SHA?

- Most of the habitat for listed species occurs on private land
- Participation of non-federal property owners is critical to recovering listed species
- Public sector/private sector partnerships are critical
- To encourage landowners to help conserve listed species





What is a Safe Harbor Agreement?

Why would a landowner want to enter into a SHA?

- Landowners receive assurances that additional land use restrictions will not be required if
 - identified listed species move onto enrolled properties or
 - increase the numbers of distribution of those listed species already present on those properties





What is a Safe Harbor Agreement?

Why would a landowner want to enter into a SHA?

- Participating landowners receive a permit that authorizes incidental take of species that may result from actions undertaken by the landowner under the SHA
- Ability to return the property to baseline conditions at the end of the agreement





Required Elements

- Net conservation benefit = as a result of implementing the agreement's terms, the species will benefit—i. e., species populations will increase and/or their habitats will be improved
- Baseline = agreed upon population and/or habitat characteristics or levels that exist when a safe harbor agreement is signed





Who is Eligible?

- Only non-Federal property owners can receive the assurances that a SHA provides
- Federal and State agencies may help to implement or monitor the SHA or may provide management funds





SHAs work well for what types of species?

- Life history is well understood
- Reasons for listing are understood and can be addressed through conservation actions
- There is an up-to-date recovery plan or local conservation strategy to guide conservation efforts
- Habitat ownership is known or can be easily determined - majority of
 - habitat is non Federal





How long do they last?

- Long enough to allow the status to improve which depends on the life cycle of enrolled species and the anticipated habitat response to conservation actions

Duration of SHAs can vary from 5 to 100 Years.





Species Benefit

- Population numbers maintained or increased
- Unique habitats maintained, restored or enhanced
- Habitat connectivity increased
- Habitat fragmentation rates reduced
- Buffers established for protected areas
- New conservation practices can be tested





Typical actions taken

- If habitat is already in good shape, no actions may be required other than to continue good management
- If suitable habitat is in place, reintroduce species
- Help monitor actions and habitat and species response
- If habitat needs improvement, take specific actions to address problems such as fences,
 - grazing schedules or timber harvest





Property Owner Actions

- Habitat restoration
- Altering grazing or haying schedules
- Resting habitat from grazing
- Removing fences or marking fences
- Prescribed burning
- Removing invasive species





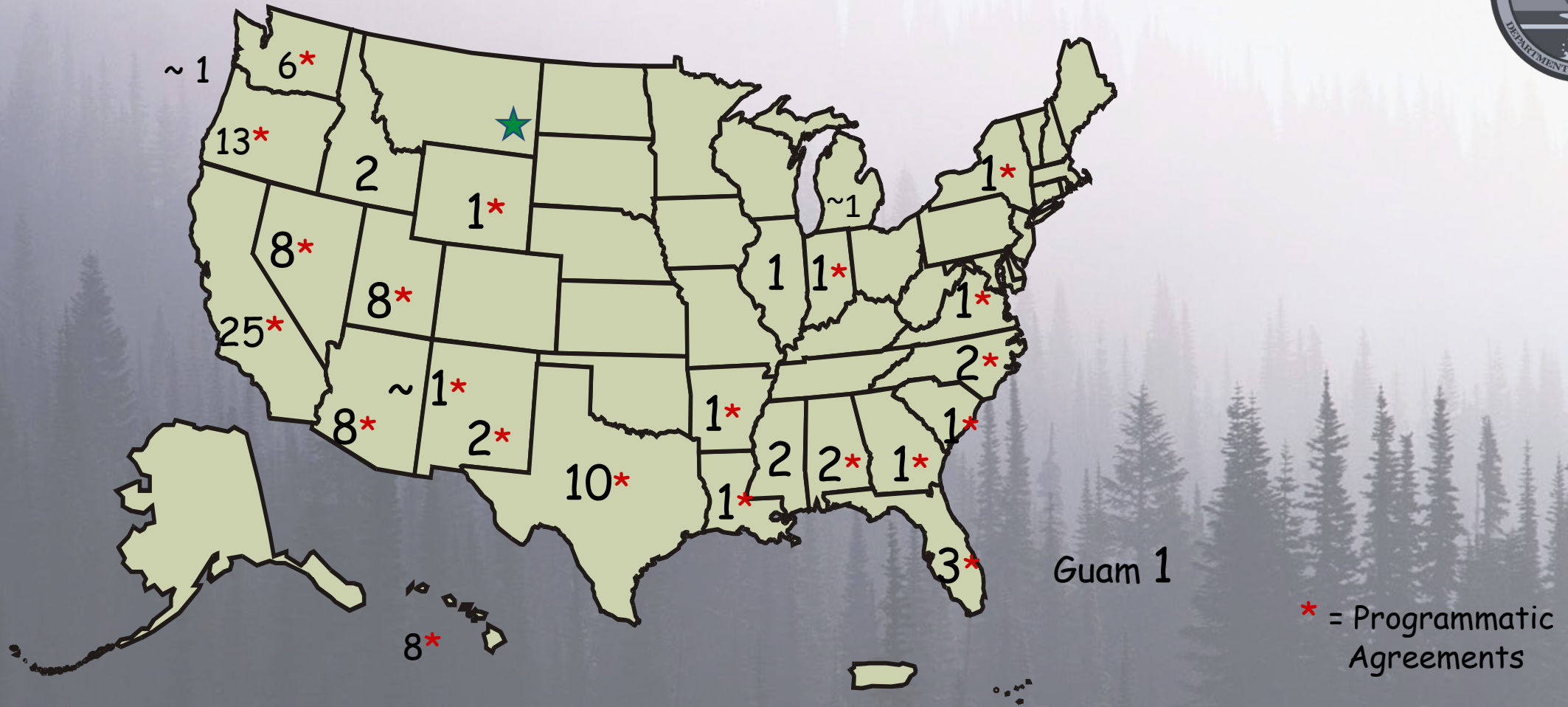
Programmatic Safe Harbor Agreements

- Involves multiple property owners enrolling under one regional or state-wide agreement
- Is overseen by one permit holder
- Each property owner receives assurances through a Certificate of Inclusion (CI)
- Each CI is tailored to an individual property
- Conservation actions are selected from a list contained in the overall agreement





115 Active Safe Harbor Agreements



735+ landowners have enrolled over 5.8+ million acres in 25 states and 1 Territory in Safe Harbor Agreements since 1999 (as of May 2020) ~ = 2 State SHA; ★ 12-State Programmatic SHA



For More Information

- Contact your local Fish & Wildlife Service field office (see <http://www.fws.gov/offices/index.html> for an index of offices)
- Also see our website for general SHA information: <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/landowners/safe-harbor-agreements.html>





Other Conservation Planning Tools

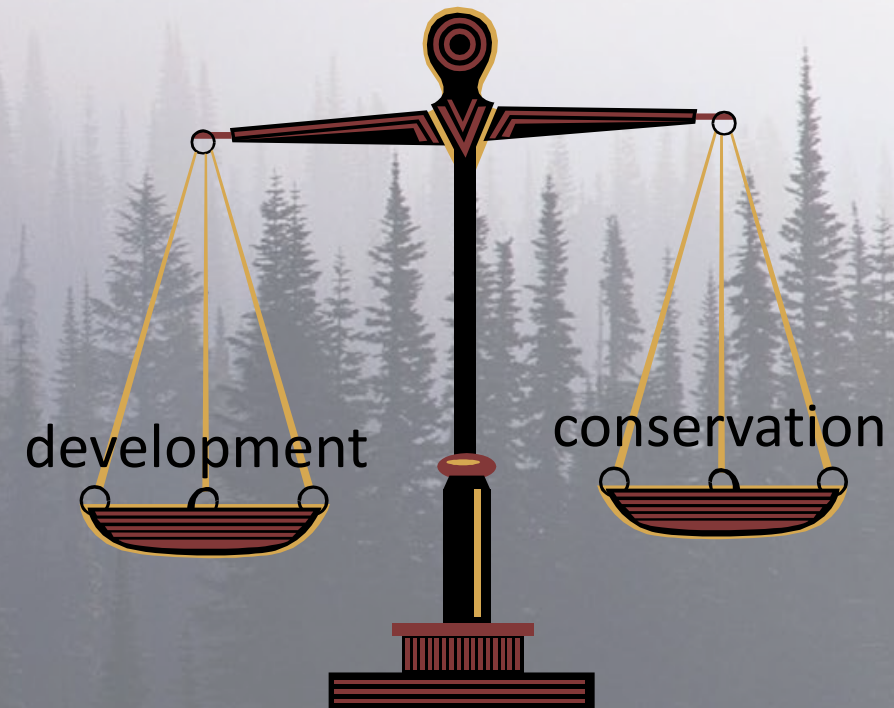
- Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs)
- Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCAs)
- Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs)

**All of these are voluntary agreements, HCP's and CCAA's include issuance of a permit



Habitat Conservation Plans

- Permit issued based on the plan
- Permit provides certainty and streamlining
- Caters to non-federal landowners focused on obtaining take
- Conservation standard is to offset impacts (vs net conservation benefit)
- Can include both listed and non-listed species





Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances

- Permit is issued based on the plan
- If the species is subsequently listed and no other changes have occurred, the FWS will not require the permittee to conduct any additional conservation measures without consent.
- The permit authorizes a specific level of incidental take of the covered species, should listing occur
- Agreement between FWS and non-federal landowners





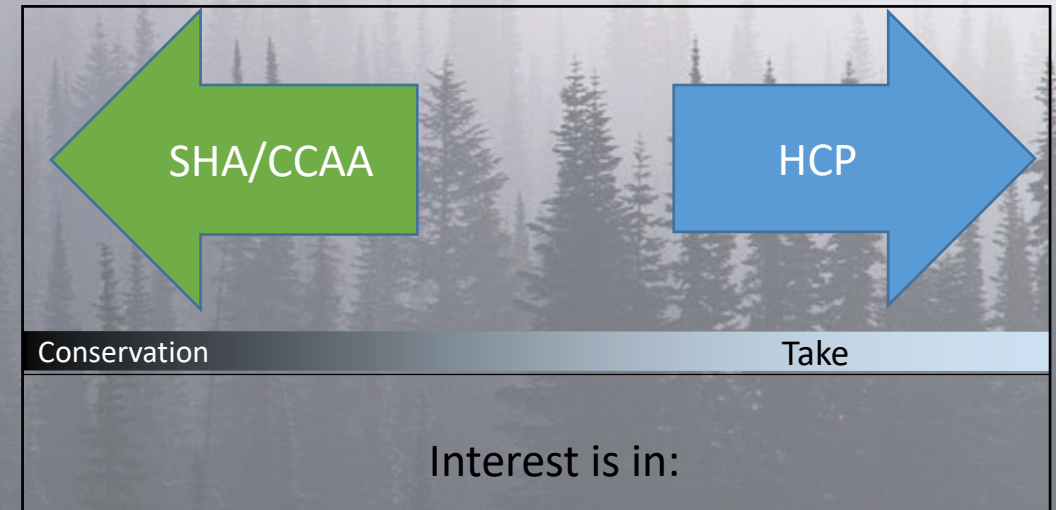
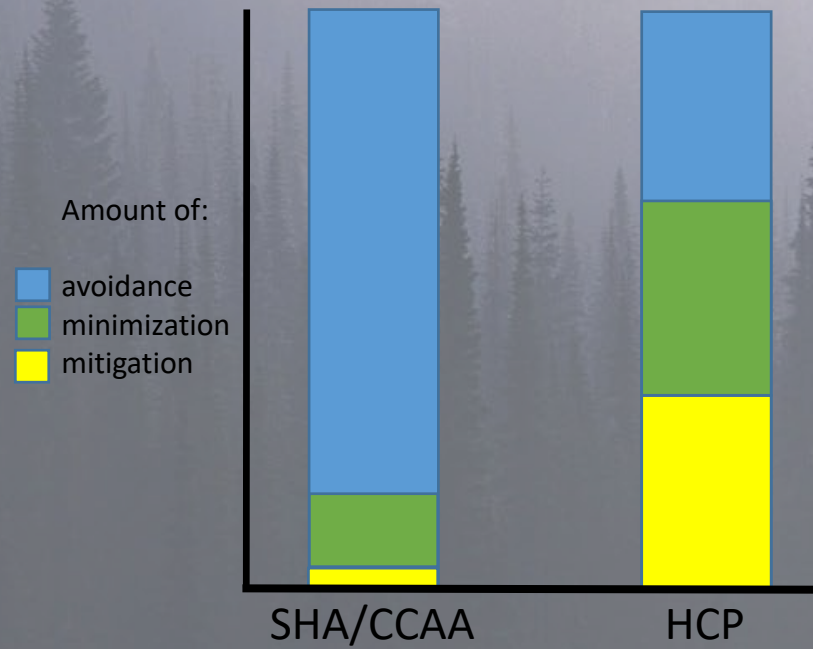
Candidate Conservation Agreements

- No permit associated with a candidate conservation agreement
- Voluntary agreement to conserve non-ESA listed species
- No permit issuance criteria, but the point is to help conserve species
- Candidate conservation agreements can be with federal and pretty much any combination of state/local/private partners





Comparing Planning Tools



The End



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