

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) is directed under the New Mexico Wildlife Conservation Act (WCA) to develop recovery plans for species listed as threatened or endangered by the State [17-2-40.1 NMSA 1978]. Each recovery plan shall seek to achieve the following objectives:

- a strategy to restore and maintain viable populations of the listed species and its habitat, to the extent that the species may be downlisted
- a strategy that mitigates adverse social or economic impacts resulting from recovery actions
- a strategy to identify social or economic benefits and opportunities
- a strategy to use existing resources and funding to implement the overall Recovery Plan.

As noted in the WCA [17-2-39. D], "... because the management and recovery of threatened or endangered species are the responsibility of and a benefit to all of society..." the Department is committed to making this a fully open, transparent process, available to all interested parties. Therefore the Department will, with each recovery plan, strive to be as inclusive as possible to engage interested parties in the recovery planning process. The public process will include the following steps:

1. **Initiation:** The WCA [17-2-40.1 C-D] calls for the Director (or his designee) to, "schedule a public information meeting in each of the quadrants of the state determined by the director to be affected by the development of a recovery plan. These meetings shall be held in a manner calculated to provide a reasonable opportunity for individuals and private and public entities to participate and express their views about the development of a recovery plan for one or more species and the attendant adverse social or economic impacts, if any, that may result from implementation of a recovery plan. At these meetings the director shall present background information about the basis of the listing, an explanation of the process to develop a recovery plan and the probable content in general terms, if known, of the recovery plan and if needed, the process to develop a social and economic mitigation plan."

Reasonable efforts will be made to announce the planning process at its initiation, including the known, anticipated, or potential range of the target species. Announcements of the meetings will be made at least 20 overall days prior to such meeting[s] through:

- Legal advertisement in the Albuquerque Journal and local papers in affected areas
- Department Press Release
- Electronic and paper mailings to stakeholders whose contact address has been made known to the department, including agencies and organizations who have expressed interest and those who may be affected by recovery actions, including local, state, tribal, and federal government agencies, non-governmental organizations, resource advocates, and private individuals
- Department web site.

2. Plan Development: As provided in the WCA: “Upon completion of the public information meeting or meetings on a recovery plan, the director shall consult and cooperate with other states or countries when appropriate and shall solicit interest from representatives of affected local governments, tribal governments, landowners, state and federal agencies and other interested individuals and organizations to serve on an advisory committee. He shall appoint to the advisory committee all of those who are willing to participate in the development of the recovery plan. When necessary, he may appoint from the membership of the advisory committee a working group reflecting the diversity of the advisory committee.”

To make the process as inclusive as possible, a general invitation to participate on the advisory committee will be advertised along with the announcement of the public meetings, as described above. Communications during the development of the recovery plan will be focused on those parties who have expressed a willingness to participate as members and have been appointed to the advisory committee by the director.

3. Plan Completion: Upon completion of a draft of the Recovery Plan, interested parties will be given every opportunity to provide meaningful comment. The WCA [17-2-40.1 E] states, “The director shall mail the draft recovery plan to federal and state agencies, local and tribal governments that are or may be affected by the recovery plan and individuals and organizations that have requested notification of department actions regarding threatened or endangered species.” Announcement of availability of the draft Recovery Plan and request for comments will be made at least 30 overall days prior to submission of the draft plan to the State Game Commission, through the following:

- Department Press Releases
- Electronic and paper mailings to those parties initially notified and those who have since expressed interest in writing
- Department web site.

Additionally, the director shall mail the draft recovery plan to federal and state agencies, local and tribal governments that are or may be affected by the recovery plan and individuals and organizations that have requested notification of department actions regarding threatened or endangered species.

4. Final Approval: Upon completion of the above process, the recovery plan will be presented to the State Game Commission for review and formal public comment. Final approval is by the State Game Commission.

Please note that each recovery plan is different due to differences in the species’ distributions and biology and associated issues with the recovery of the animal. As such, time frames and notifications may be more (but not less) extensive than stated above.