

Checklist of information to include when initiating consultations with the South Carolina Ecological Services Field Office

- **The type of Federal action involved (e.g., Federal permit, authorization, funding, etc.) and letter of designation if you are acting as the Federal agency's non-Federal representative.**
- **A Biological Assessment (BA) if one is required** (i.e., a BA is required for major construction activities considered to be Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as referred to in the National Environmental Policy Act). Recommended contents for a BA are described in 50 CFR 402.12(f) and are similar to that described below.
- **Description of the proposed action.** Include project location including county, nearby town or city, latitude and longitude, and maps indicating precise (e.g., topographic map, soil survey map, National Wetlands Inventory map, aerial photo, etc.) and general location (e.g., state or county highway map, etc.). Indicate the limits of the project on the location map. Include acreage, miles, feet, or other measure of the area to be impacted by the proposed action. Include description of the specific habitat that may be affected by the proposed action; typical descriptions include, but are not limited to, habitat types (e.g., agricultural field, pine forest, bottomland hardwoods, scrub-shrub wetlands, upland hardwoods, open water, etc.), present condition of the habitat type (e.g., cutover, early successional, mature, old growth, etc.), soil classification, and a photograph (if available) of each habitat type where impacts will occur.
- **Description of species and/or critical habitat(s) that may occur in the project area.** General, county-wide species lists can be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 176 Croghan Spur Road, Suite 200, Charleston, South Carolina 29407. Habitat information can be found online at: [fws.gov](https://www.fws.gov).
- **Has the proposed project area been surveyed for endangered and threatened species or for potential habitat for these species?** Include a clear description of your survey methods. When were surveys conducted? Who conducted the surveys?
- **Provide background information on the threatened or endangered species and/or critical habitat in the project area.**
- **Include an analysis of the effects of the action, as defined by 50 CFR 402.02, on any listed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat including consideration of direct, indirect, and cumulative effects.** Indirect effects are those that are caused by the

proposed action and are later in time, but still are reasonably certain to occur. Cumulative effects are those effects of future State or private activities (not involving Federal activities) that are reasonably certain to occur within the action area of the proposed project. How will the proposed project affect Federally protected species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat that occurs in the project area? If you believe the project will not affect the species, *explain why*. If you believe the project will not likely adversely affect the species, *explain why*. If you believe the project may adversely affect the species, *explain what the effects might be* (contact the South Carolina Ecological Services Field Office for assistance). Give a similar justification for any potential impacts to designated or proposed critical habitat.

- **What is your decision?** The Federal action agency must make a determination of effect. The assessment should lead the reviewer (i.e., the Service) through a discussion of effects to a logical, well-supported conclusion. Decisions must be justified biologically. The responsibility for making the determination of effects lies with the Federal agency. See above for possible determinations and their definitions.

References:

Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531-1543)
Interagency Cooperation - Endangered Species Act (50 CFR 402)
Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants (50 CFR 17)