

## ESA Decision Making

**Award Year:**

2015

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**Associated Program:**

[Ventures](#) [1]

**Collaborative Site:**

[Group Collaboration](#) [2]

**Email List:**

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Protection of species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is a challenging and often controversial task that requires input from a variety of environmental, economic, social, and political interests. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), responsible for recovery of most listed species, is faced with an increasing workload and decreasing resources. Additionally, the FWS lacks a means to prioritize conservation across recovery plans, species, and regions. In light of an increasing list of imperiled species requiring evaluation and protection, the FWS is exploring new ways to address this significant management challenge. In collaboration with agency scientists and managers, we propose to co-develop a general decision framework to facilitate recovery and spending decisions. Our proposed Venture will synthesize theory and models from multiple disciplines with FWS data to address two fundamental aspects of recovery: setting recovery priorities and allocating recovery funds. We will draw on successful models of formal decision making in recovery planning from Australia and New Zealand to optimize resource allocation and maximize the benefits of recovery action. We will actively engage agency scientists in developing the techniques, and will also establish a consumer group of agency staff with whom we will work for field testing. Close interaction with the FWS will ensure the Venture has immediate practical relevance in that the analytical techniques we develop will be embraced by field and regional offices nationwide.

**Participants:**

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