

Petition Process (Module 3)

Slide 1: Title

Hello, I'm Steve Spangle of the Fish and Wildlife Service. I'm the field supervisor for the Arizona Ecological Services field office in Phoenix, and formerly was the regional listing coordinator for Region 2 in Albuquerque. It's my pleasure today to accompany you through the endangered species petition process.

I've worked with a number of Endangered Species Act listing actions in my career – northern and Mexican spotted owls, the northern goshawk, the black-tailed prairie dog, and the piping plover, to name just a few. Many such species come to us for possible protection through the petition process. Petitions drive much of our work.

The important thing to remember about the petition process is that it's one of the most democratic features of the Endangered Species Act. It allows anyone to come to the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service with a request for protection of an animal or plant, or a reduction in those protections. Provided there is sufficient scientific evidence, the requested action follows.

Think of the petition process as similar to a high-jump contest at a track meet. Through the duration of the event, the "biological bar" is raised at each step of the process. We always strive to conclude with a decision that is well-reasoned and scientifically credible.

Let's take a closer look at how the petition process works.

Slide 2: Objective

In the previous topic (Factors and Basis for Listing Determinations), we learned that our two agencies may review a species' status to determine the need for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

Now we're going to learn how other organizations and individuals can trigger the same process through the right of petition under the Act.

Specifically, the objective of this lesson is so you can, given a scenario involving a petition, determine what action is being requested and whether the action is warranted in accordance with the requirements listed in section 4 of the ESA.

Now that you know what the objective is, let's take a look at what we will be covering.

Slide 3: Topics

I will be covering the following topics during this presentation.

I will first go over some general petition information. Next, I will go over the petition process. And finally, we will have some exercises for you to complete that will allow you to apply the knowledge that was presented in this topic.

Now that you know what I'm covering, let's begin by going over some general petition information.