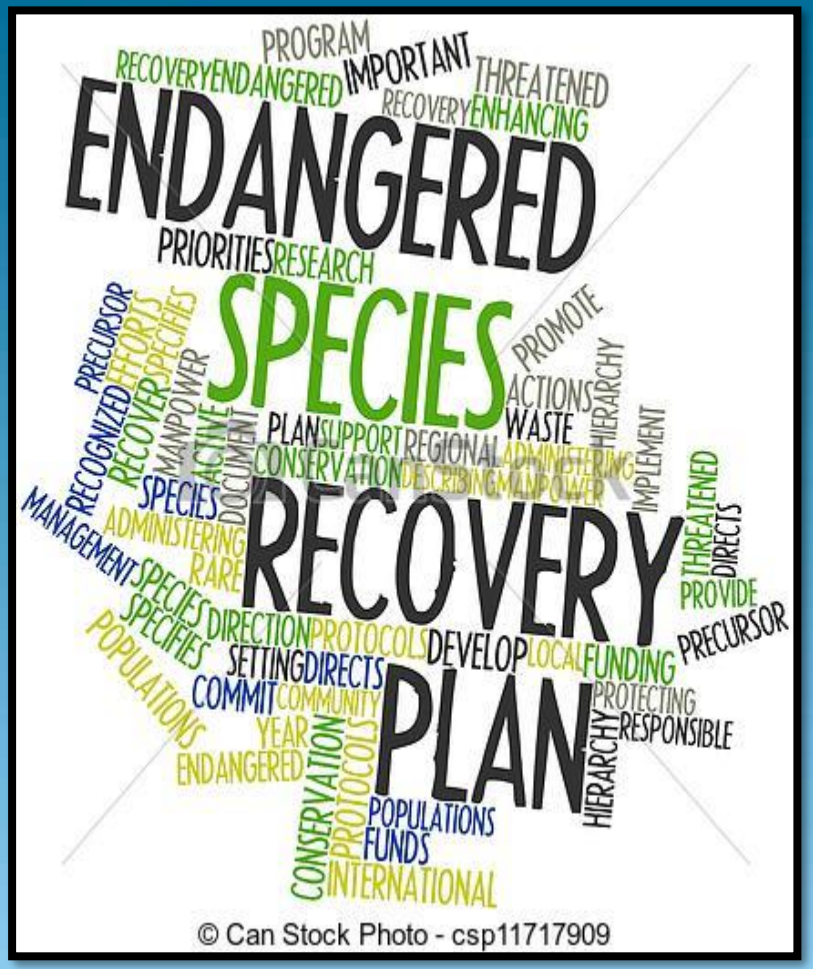
The Recovery Planning and Implementation Process and the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake



Recovery Planning and Implementation (RPI)*

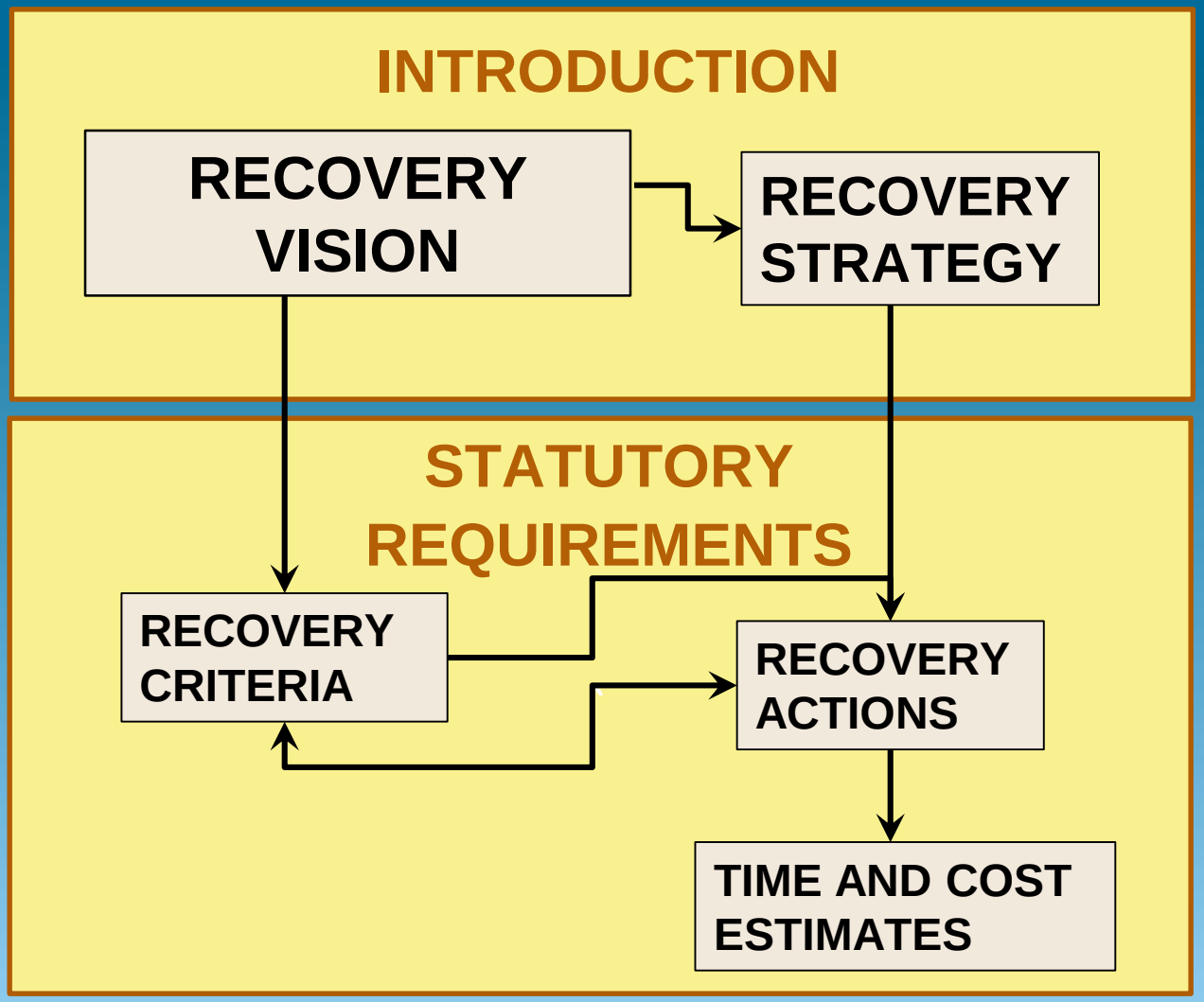
Recovery Implementation Strategy

*RPI Process relatively new for FWS.

Species Status Assessment

- The SSA Framework is a way of thinking about biological status assessments under the ESA.
- Its purpose is to describe the viability of species in a way that supports our ESA decisions.

RPI Recovery Plan



Recovery Implementation Strategy (RIS)

Recovery Plan:

- Overall strategy for recovery of species through actions.

RIS:

- Strategy for implementation of the recovery plan through specific activities in a flexible, adjustable format.

Recovery Implementation Strategy (RIS)

Actions (Recovery Plan) ⟶ Activities (RIS)

RP Action:

Establish additional populations in Y drainage.

RIS Example Activities:

- Identify # populations necessary for this particular drainage
- Survey habitat to identify suitable sites
- Restore habitat where necessary
- Introduce/translocate
- Monitor
- Revise approach if monitoring indicates need

Recovery Implementation Strategy (RIS): Benefits

RIS outside of the Recovery Plan allows for:

- Ability to adjust in response to new information, completion of activities, initiation of activities.
- Opportunity for adaptive management (depending on design of activities).
- Reduction of number of plan revisions.
- Savings of time and $ currently spent on plan revisions.
- Avoiding current situation of plans quickly becoming outdated.

Recovery Implementation Strategy for Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake

- "EMR" is a wide-ranging pit viper, historically found in 10 states and Ontario.
- Listed as Federally Threatened in October 2016.
- One of the first wide-ranging vertebrates to be listed following adoption of RPI process, thus one of the first to go entirely through the process.

Recovery Implementation Strategy for Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake

Timeline:

-EMR SSA completed by FWS June 2016.

-EMR RPI Recovery Plan collaboratively drafted by FWS and state agency partners, Jan 2017-July 2018.

-Draft Recovery Plan currently under review by DOI/FWS Headquarters.

-RIS process started October 23, 2018, in Ohio.

Recovery Implementation Strategy for Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake

- Series of meeting with all states within EMR range.
- States determined agenda and invited key stakeholders.
- Most states opted for a “brainstorming” session to identify unique priorities.
- FWS and states currently working closely to distil brainstorms to FWS Recovery Tables (mandatory formats),
- States are providing narratives.
- State recovery plans or strategies may be appended to eventual RIS.

Recovery Implementation Strategy for Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake

DRAFT Ohio RIS

Action #	Description
1	Using appropriate habitat management techniques, **maintain** the currently occupied fields in a suitable vegetative and structural state to sustain Massasaugas. This includes controlling succession and treating invasive plant species.
2	**Rescue** small, declining SW OH populations through augmentation.
3	Develop sustainable **system for management** to maintain suitable habitat in perpetuum.
4	**Restore** - using appropriate habitat management techniques - areas that are currently unsuitable (i.e., later successional state, monoculture of invasives, row crops) to a suitable vegetative and structural state to increase the total area of suitable Massasauga habitat.
5	**Acquire** additional habitat surrounding occupied sites
6	Conduct **research** to identify and abate threats, measure effectiveness of actions, and guide conservation efforts.
7	Establish new sites through **repatriation**
8	Further **education** and outreach/inreach to support conservation efforts

Recovery Implementation Strategy for Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake

DRAFT Ohio RIS

Action #	Activity	Description
1		Using appropriate habitat management techniques, **maintain** the currently occupied fields in a suitable vegetative and structural state to sustain Massasaugas. This includes controlling succession and treating invasive plant species.
	1.1	Develop appropriate metrics and implement regular **assessments** of fields to track habitat suitability and management needs as well as a system for reporting and tracking management.
	1.2	Maintain habitat in 110 occupied fields totaling 2,792 acres at 8 management units in Ohio.
		Task 1.2.7. Maintain 4 fields totaling 10.1 ac at Rome State Nature Preserve
		Task 1.2.8. Maintain 9 fields totaling 63 ac within Grand River Lowlands (outside of Rome SNP)
		Task 1.2.9. Develop additional access (e.g., creek/ditch crossings) to allow equipment access at Rome and Prairie Rd. Fen SNPs.

Recovery Implementation Strategy for Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake

- Thank you to the Ohio EMR Team for all their efforts and input into the Recovery Planning and Implementation Process!

Photo Credit: K.Lott, USFWS