The **Policy for evaluation of conservation efforts when making listing decisions** (PECE Policy) was finalized by the USFWS on March 28, 2003. In summary, the policy identifies criteria the USFWS will use in determining whether formalized conservation efforts yet to be implemented, or show effectiveness contribute to making listing a species as threatened or endangered unnecessary or make a determination to list a species as threatened rather than endangered, which than allows rules under 4(d) of the Act to be developed for the species conservation. The policy applies to conservation efforts identified in conservation agreements, conservation plans, management plans, or similar documents developed by Federal agencies, State and local governments, Tribal governments, businesses, organizations, and individuals.

In making their determination, the USFWS will apply two factors when evaluating a conservation effort. These 2 criteria are:

(1) For those efforts yet to be implemented, the certainty that the conservation effort will be implemented
(2) For those efforts that have not yet demonstrated effectiveness, the certainty that the conservation effort will be effective.

Because the certainty of implementation and effectiveness of formalized conservation efforts may vary, the USFWS will evaluate each effort individually and use the following criteria to direct their analysis:

**A. The certainty that the conservation effort will be implemented:**
1. The conservation effort, the parties to the agreement or plan that will implement the effort, and the staffing, funding level, funding source, and other resources necessary to implement the effort are identified.
2. The legal authority of the parties to the agreement or plan to implement the formalized conservation effort, and the commitment to proceed with the conservation effort are described.
3. The legal procedural requirements (e.g. environmental review) necessary to implement the effort are described, and information is provided indicating that fulfillment of these requirements does not preclude commitment to the effort.
4. Authorizations (e.g., permits, landowner permission) necessary to implement the conservation effort are identified, and a high level of certainty is provided that the parties to the agreement or plan that will implement the effort will obtain these authorizations.
5. The type and level of voluntary participation (e.g., number of landowners allowing entry to their land, or number of participants agreeing to change timber management practices and acreage involved) necessary to implement the conservation effort is identified, and a high level of certainty is provided that the parties to the agreement or plan that will implement the conservation effort will obtain that level of voluntary participation (e.g., an
explanation of how incentives to be provided will result in the necessary level of voluntary participation).
6. Regulatory mechanisms (e.g., laws, regulations, ordinances) necessary to implement the conservation effort are in place.
7. A high level of certainty is provided that the parties to the agreement or plan that will implement the conservation effort will obtain the necessary funding.
8. An implementation schedule (including incremental completion dates) for the conservation effort is provided.
9. The conservation agreement or plan that includes the conservation effort is approved by all parties to the agreement or plan.

B. The certainty that the conservation effort will be effective:
1. The nature and extent of threats being addressed by the conservation effort are described, and how the conservation effort reduces the threats is described.
2. Explicit incremental objectives for the conservation effort and dates for achieving them are stated.
3. The steps necessary to implement the conservation effort are identified in detail.
4. Quantifiable, scientifically valid parameters that will demonstrate achievement of objectives, and standards for these parameters by which progress will be measured, are identified.
5. Provisions for monitoring and reporting progress on implementation (based on compliance with the implementation schedule) and effectiveness (based on evaluation of quantifiable parameters) of the conservation effort are provided.
6. Principles of adaptive management are incorporated.