

Environmental Baseline

Establishing a Point of Reference

By regulation, the Environmental Baseline
includes:

the **past and present impacts** of all Federal, State, or private actions and other human activities in the action area

the **anticipated impacts** of all proposed Federal projects in the action area that have already undergone formal or early section 7 consultation

the **impact** of State or private actions which are contemporaneous with the consultation in progress



Establishing Baseline Conditions

The **Environmental baseline** establishes the base conditions to which the **effects** of the proposed action are added.

While the **Status of Species** establishes the base conditions from which we make our **Jeopardy and/or Adverse Modification** determinations.

Environmental Baseline

We need to understand:

the condition of the individuals or populations that are affected by the proposed action, and

the factors affecting those individuals or populations

The baseline depicts the status of the listed resource in the action area and describe the ability of the listed resource to withstand further perturbation

Establishing Baseline Conditions

For Species:

- ❖ Population numbers & trend
- ❖ Vital statistics
- ❖ Population spatial & temporal occurrence
- ❖ Habitat quality, quantity & spatial arrangement; and trend of these attributes
- ❖ Ecological relationships
- ❖ Importance to the overall survival and recovery of the species/DPS/RU

In the Action Area



Establishing Baseline Conditions

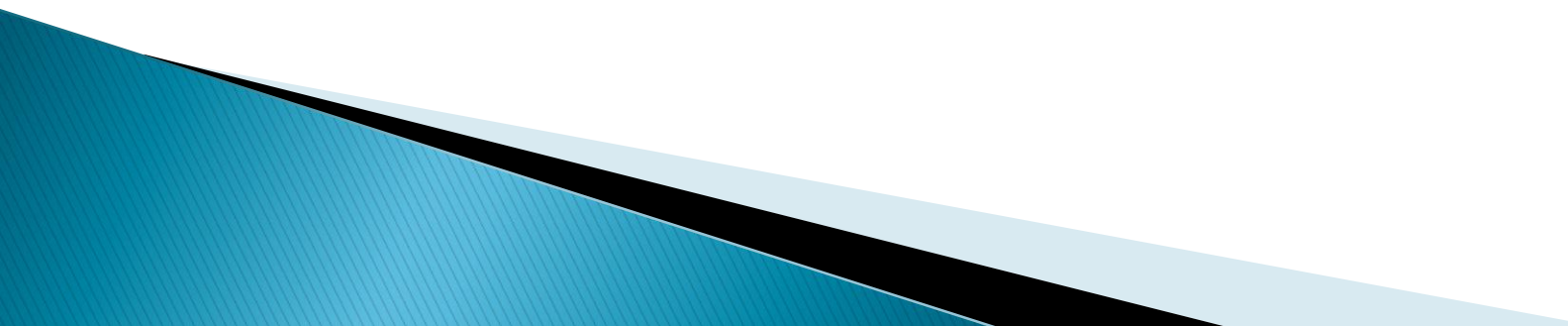
For Critical Habitat:

- ❖ Description of the primary constituent elements
- ❖ Quantity & quality of critical habitat
- ❖ Distribution & availability of critical habitat
- ❖ Trend of these attributes of the critical habitat
- ❖ Description of the ecological processes that maintain the q&q, availability & distribution of critical habitat
- ❖ Value to the overall critical habitat designation

In the Action Area



Cumulative Effects

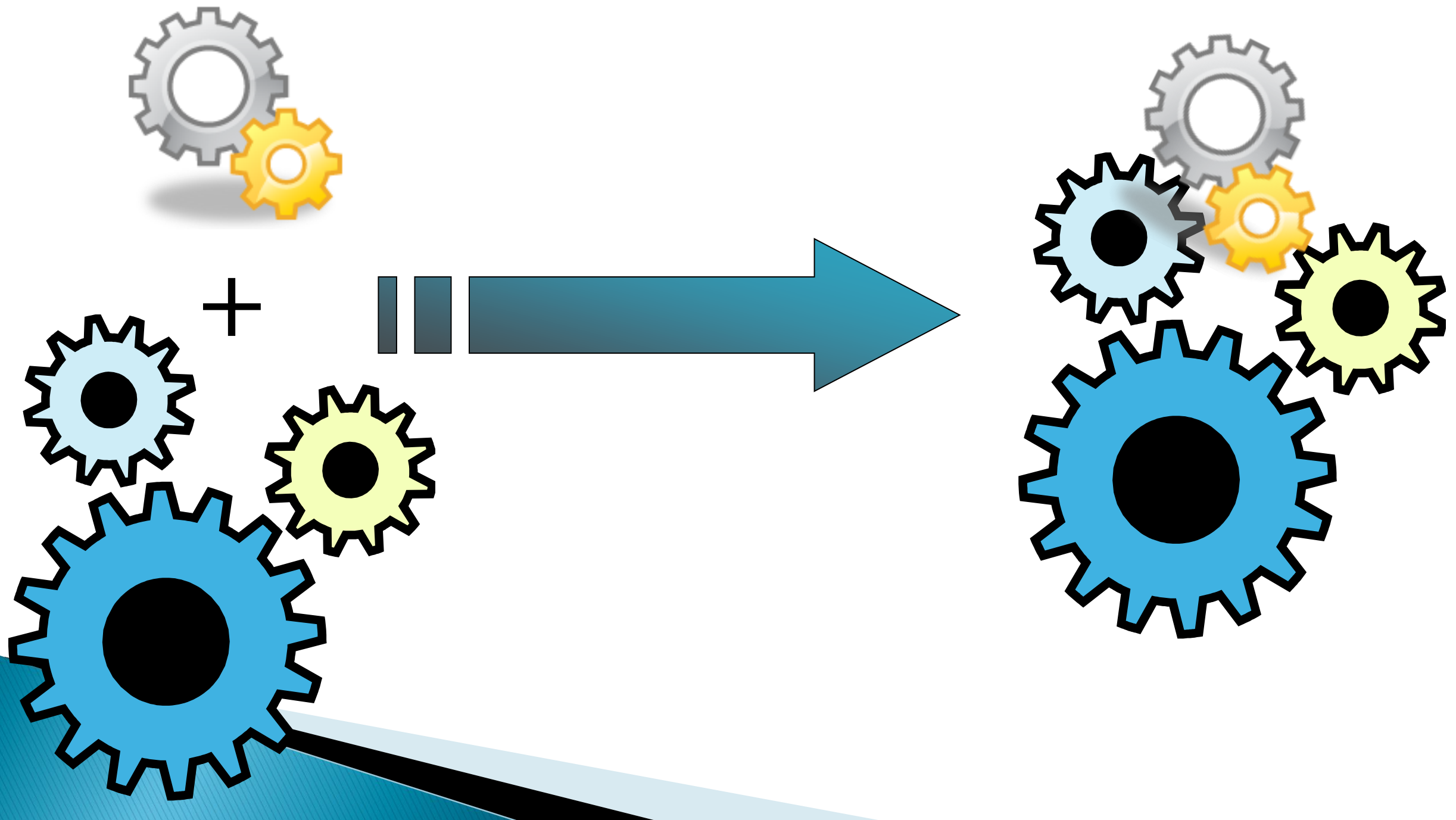
- ▶ Cumulative effects include the effects of **future** State, tribal, or private actions, not involving Federal activities, that are **reasonably certain to occur** within the action area of the Federal action subject to consultation.
 - ▶ Future Federal actions that are unrelated to the proposed action are not considered because they require separate consultation pursuant to section 7 of the ESA.
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Cumulative Effects

- ▶ NEPA: “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions (40 CFR 1508.7).”

Use Status and Baseline in the Effects Analysis

- ▶ A complete picture against which to measure the effects of the proposed action



Use Status and Baseline in the Effects Analysis

- ▶ This is not the sort of result anyone wants!

