

Dated: September 3, 2004.

Michael L. Carpenter,

Senior Permit Biologist, Branch of Permits,
Division of Management Authority.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Re-opening of the Comment Period for the Draft Recovery Plan for the Pecos Sunflower

AGENCY: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of re-opening of public comment period.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce a re-opening of the comment period for public review of the draft Recovery Plan for the Pecos sunflower (*Helianthus paradoxus*) for an additional 30 days. The original comment period was open from July 2, 2004, to August 2, 2004. We are re-opening the comment period in response to specific requests from the Texas Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Land Management, and Laguna Pueblo to allow additional time for public review of this draft Recovery Plan. This draft Recovery Plan includes recovery criteria and measures for the conservation of Pecos sunflower.

DATES: Comments on the draft Recovery Plan must be received on or before October 14, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the draft Recovery Plan can obtain a copy from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, 2105 Osuna NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 87113. Requests for copies of the draft Recovery Plan and written comments and materials regarding the draft Recovery Plan should be addressed to the Field Supervisor at the above address. An electronic copy of this draft Recovery Plan is also available at: <http://www.fws.gov>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Rawles Williams, New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office, at the above address; telephone 505/346-2525, facsimile 505/346-2542.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's

endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare Recovery Plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery Plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of species, establish criteria for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires the development of Recovery Plans for listed species unless such a Plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during Recovery Plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised Recovery Plan. The Service and other Federal agencies will also take these comments into account in the course of implementing Recovery Plans.

On July 2, 2004, we published a Notice of Availability of the Draft Recovery Plan for the Pecos sunflower, opening a 30-day public comment period that ended on August 2, 2004. We received requests from the Texas Department of Transportation, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Laguna Pueblo to extend the comment period so that they might more thoroughly review the plan. Based on these requests, we have re-opened the comment period for 30 days for public review of this draft Recovery Plan.

The Pecos sunflower is a wetland annual plant that grows on wet, alkaline soils at spring seeps, wet meadows and pond margins in New Mexico and West Texas. The threats facing the survival and recovery of this species are the loss and alteration of its wetland habitat due to aquifer depletions, diversions of surface water, and filling wetlands for conversion to dry land; competition from non-native plant species, including Russian olive and saltcedar; excessive livestock grazing; and highway maintenance and mowing. The draft Recovery Plan includes scientific information about the species and provides objectives and actions needed to delist the species. Recovery activities designed to achieve these objectives include identifying and securing core conservation habitats essential for the long-term survival of this species, continuing life history, population, and habitat studies, ensuring compliance with existing regulations, and

promoting opportunities for voluntary conservation of the species.

The draft Recovery Plan is being submitted for technical and agency review. After consideration of comments received during the review period, the Recovery Plan will be submitted for final approval.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the draft Recovery Plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the final Recovery Plan.

Authority: The authority for this action is Section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: August 18, 2004.

Bryan Arroyo,

Acting Regional Director, Region 2,

[FR Doc. 04-20686 Filed 9-13-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of the Draft Sentry Milk-vetch Recovery Plan for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability for public review of a draft recovery plan for the sentry milk-vetch (*Astragalus cremnophylax* var. *cremnophylax*). All known populations of the species occur on land managed by the National Park Service, Grand Canyon National Park (Park) in Coconino County, Arizona. We solicit review and comment from the public on this Draft Sentry Milk-vetch Recovery Plan (Draft Plan).

DATES: Comments on the Draft Plan must be received on or before October 14, 2004, to receive consideration by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the Draft Plan may obtain a copy by accessing the Service's Arizona Ecological Services Field Office Internet Web page at <http://arizonaes.fws.gov> or by contacting the Field Supervisor, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2321 West Royal Palm Road, Suite 103, Phoenix, Arizona, 85021-4951 (602/242-0210) to obtain a copy via the mail or in person at the addresses above. Written comments and materials regarding the plan should be addressed to the Field Supervisor at the address

provided above. Comments and materials received are available on request for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mima Falk, Arizona Ecological Services Tucson Suboffice, 201 N Bonita Ave., Tucson, Arizona 85745 (520/670-6150 ext. 225).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant species to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*), requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. We will consider all information presented during the public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. We, along with other Federal agencies, will also take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

The Draft Plan describes the status, current management, recovery objectives and criteria, and specific actions needed to reclassify the sentry milk-vetch from endangered to threatened and for eventual consideration for delisting. An original draft of the recovery plan was developed by Dr. Joyce Maschinski, a botanist and species specialist from The Arboretum at Flagstaff. The document was reviewed and updated by a team of botanists, soil scientists, naturalists and National Park Service land managers that have a history of researching or managing the plant and its environs. In 1993, a draft recovery plan for the sentry milk-vetch underwent technical and public review. The draft was not finalized at that time due to other high priority work. The reviews received on

the 1993 draft are maintained in the Service's administrative record. Peer review of this Draft Plan is being conducted concurrent with public review.

Sentry milk-vetch is known from two, and up to three, locations on the South Rim and one location on the North Rim of the Park, where Kaibab limestone forms large flat platforms with shallow soils near pinyon-juniper woodlands. The primary cause of population decline prior to protection was trampling by Park visitors, although drought conditions may have worsened the situation. We carefully assessed the best scientific and commercial information available regarding the past, present, and future threats faced by sentry milk-vetch as part of our 1990 final determination to list this species as endangered (55 FR 50184). The four major threats identified in the rule listing the species were: (1) Destruction of habitat and damage to individuals through human disturbance (trampling); (2) overutilization due to collection; (3) inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms to provide protection of habitat; and (4) naturally low reproduction of the species. The Draft Plan contains action items to alleviate these factors.

Public Comments Solicited

We solicit written comments on the Draft Plan. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the plan.

Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: August 16, 2004.

Bryan Arroyo,

Acting Regional Director, Region 2, Fish and Wildlife Service.

[FR Doc. 04-20685 Filed 9-13-04; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[OR-958-1430-ET; HAG-04-0071; WAOR-57423]

Public Land Order No. 7614; Withdrawal of National Forest System Lands for the Halliday Fen Research Natural Area; Washington

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Public Land Order.

SUMMARY: This order withdraws 646.40 acres of National Forest System lands

from location and entry under the United States mining laws for a period of 20 years to protect a portion of the Halliday Fen Research Natural Area.

DATES: Effective September 10, 2004.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kathy Ahlenslager, Botanist, Colville National Forest, 509-684-7178, or Charles R. Roy, BLM Oregon/Washington State Office, 503-808-6189.

Order

By virtue of the authority vested in the Secretary of the Interior by Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43 U.S.C. 1714 (2000), it is ordered as follows:

1. Subject to valid existing rights, the following described National Forest System land is hereby withdrawn from location and entry under the United States mining laws 30 U.S.C. Ch. 2 (2000), to protect the unique characteristics, sensitive fauna, hydrology, and the research values within the Halliday Fen Research Natural Area:

Colville National Forest

Willamette Meridian

T. 40 N., R. 44 E.,

Sec. 31, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, and NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$.

Portions of the following lands as specifically identified and described by metes and bounds in the "Boundary Description for Halliday Fen Research Natural Area to be Withdrawn from Mineral Location" dated April 19, 2002, in the official records of the Bureau of Land Management, Oregon/Washington State Office and the Colville National Forest Office, Colville, Washington:

T. 39 N., R. 43 E.,

Sec. 1, lot 1.

T. 40 N., R. 43 E.,

Sec. 36, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$.

T. 39 N., R. 44 E.,

Sec. 6, lots 2 through 5, inclusive.

T. 40 N., R. 44 E.,

Sec. 30, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, and S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 31, lots 2, 3, 4, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, and S $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;

Sec. 32, W $\frac{1}{2}$ W $\frac{1}{2}$.

The areas described aggregate 646.40 acres in Pend Oreille County.

2. This withdrawal will expire 20 years from the effective date of this order unless, as a result of a review conducted before the expiration date pursuant to Section 204(f) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43 U.S.C. 1714(f) (2000), the Secretary determines that the withdrawal shall be extended.