



News Release

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Service Determines Petition to List *Cirsium wrightii* (Wright's Marsh Thistle) as Endangered or Threatened is Warranted but Precluded

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announced a 12-month finding on a petition to list *Cirsium wrightii* (Wright's marsh thistle) as endangered or threatened, and to designate critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. After review of all available scientific and commercial information, the Service finds that listing Wright's marsh thistle as endangered or threatened throughout its range is warranted, however, listing at this time is precluded by higher priority actions.

Wright's marsh thistle currently occurs in New Mexico; Guadalupe County, Chaves County, Eddy County, Otero County, and Socorro County. It has been extirpated from all previously known locations in Arizona, and was misidentified and likely not ever present in Texas.

Wright's marsh thistle will be added to the list of candidate species eligible for Endangered Species Act protection. While candidate species receive no statutory protection under the ESA, inclusion on the candidate list promotes cooperative conservation efforts for these species. The Service's ultimate goal, which is shared by many state wildlife agencies, private organizations and individuals, is to intervene and successfully address the needs of candidate species so that listing is no longer needed.

For example, the Service provides technical assistance and competitive matching grants to private landowners, states and territories undertaking conservation efforts on behalf of candidate species. The Service also works with interested landowners to develop Candidate Conservation Agreements. These voluntary agreements allow citizens to manage their property in ways that benefit candidate species, in some cases precluding the need to list the species. These agreements can also be developed to provide regulatory certainty for landowners should the species become listed under the ESA.

Addressing the needs of candidate species before the regulatory requirements of the Endangered Species Act come into play often allows greater management flexibility to stabilize or restore these species and their habitats. In addition, as threats are reduced and populations are increased or stabilized, attention can be shifted to those candidate species in greatest need of the ESA's protective measures.

This finding is available on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> at Docket Number FWS-R2-ES-2009-0060. Supporting documentation used in preparing this finding is available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours by contacting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New Mexico Ecological Services Office, 2105 Osuna NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113. Please submit any new information, materials, comments, or questions concerning this finding to the above address.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

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