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**Contacts:** Ken Warren, 772-469-4323, ken\_warren@fws.gov  
Tom MacKenzie, 404/679-7291, tom\_mackenzie@fws.gov

**Service Considers Economic Impact of Proposed Critical Habitat Designations for Florida leafwing and Bartram's scrub-hairstreak butterflies**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is announcing the availability of the draft economic analysis for the proposed critical habitat designation for the Florida leafwing and Bartram's scrub-hairstreak butterflies. The Service also is re-opening the comment period for the proposed listing and associated proposed critical habitat designation for 30 days through June 9, 2014. The public is invited to submit comments on both proposals, as well as the draft analysis.

The two butterflies are proposed for listing as endangered under the Endangered Species Act and are only found in South Florida and the Florida Keys in Monroe and Miami-Dade Counties, Florida. Both butterflies have been candidates for federal listing since 2006.

At the same time, the Service is considering a revision to its original proposed critical habitat designations for both butterflies within Everglades National Park. Based on information provided by Everglades National Park about the butterflies' distribution and habitat there, the Service is considering expanding its original proposed critical habitat designations within the park.

The changes would expand the total critical habitat proposal for the Florida leafwing from 8,283 acres to about 10,561 acres. The total proposed critical habitat designation for Bartram's scrub-hairstreak would increase from 9,261 acres to about 11,539 acres. The total proposed critical habitat designations for both butterflies are within Monroe and Miami-Dade Counties. Included within the designation are other areas in Miami-Dade County, and Big Pine Key, No Name Key, and Little Pine Key, which are part National Key Deer Refuge in Monroe County. Most of the designated lands are protected as federal, state, and local government conservation areas.

Although Florida leafwing and Bartram's scrub-hairstreak populations are found almost entirely within public conservation lands, both remain affected by a wide array of natural and human-caused threats. As with other rare butterflies, the leafwing and hairstreak are highly sought by collectors; therefore poaching may pose a threat to these butterflies. Many aspects of these butterflies' natural histories, such as parasitism, predation, and disease, have a substantial influence on existing populations from year-to-year, contributing to their vulnerability. Other threats to these butterflies include habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation resulting from a lack of adequate fire management. In the future, environmental effects from climatic change are expected to become severe within the butterflies' habitats, especially sea level rise. The limited size and distribution of both butterflies in hurricane-prone South Florida makes them more susceptible to elimination by a single catastrophic event. While exposure to mosquito control

pesticides has been reduced through establishment of no-spray and buffer zones, these applications continue to pose a threat.

The proposed designation of critical habitat for these two butterflies and the associated draft economic analysis are part of the Service's efforts to implement a court-approved work plan under a Multi-District Listing Agreement aimed at addressing a series of lawsuits concerning the agency's ESA listing program. The intent of the agreement is to significantly reduce a litigation-driven workload. For more information, please see <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/candidateconservation/>

The Service anticipates no more than eight to nine consultations per year in the critical habitat units. The analysis concluded the economic impacts of the proposed designation are likely to range from \$400 to \$9,000 per consultation resulting in approximately \$72,000 (2013 dollars) in a given year. Critical habitat is not likely to generate additional consultations and in circumstances where consultation does occur, additional project modifications are unlikely.

Designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge, reserve, preserve, or other conservation area. Although most of the areas within the proposed critical habitat designation are located on federal lands, a small number of private landowner activities could be affected if any activities on the private lands are authorized, funded, or carried out by a federal agency. If federal funds are involved in a project in the area, the government agency involved will need to work with (consult) the Service to help landowners avoid, reduce, or mitigate potential impacts to the butterflies or to ensure actions do not negatively affect or modify their critical habitat.

Designating critical habitat informs landowners and the public of the specific areas that are important to the conservation of the species and is required under the law. Identifying this habitat also helps focus the conservation efforts of other conservation partners, such as State and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals. The Service's identification of critical habitat areas is based on the best scientific information available, and considered all relevant information provided by the public, government agencies, the scientific community, industry and other interested parties during the public comment period.

The Service first proposed listing the two butterflies as endangered with critical habitat on August 15, 2013. Comments on these proposals and the draft economic analysis may be e-mailed by June 9, 2014. Comments can be filed electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov>, ATTN: FWS-R4-ES-2013-0084 (for comments on the listing proposal) and FWS-R4-ES-2013-0031 (for comments on the critical habitat designation proposal). For more information, please visit <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/> and/or <http://www.fws.gov/verobeach/>.

Landowners interested in helping the Service recover the two butterflies, or seeking more information about the potential implications of the listing and critical habitat designation, may contact the Service's South Florida Ecological Services Office at South Florida Ecological Services Office, 1339 20th Street, Vero Beach, FL 32960, by telephone at 772-562-3909 or contact Mark Salvato at 772-562-3903, or via e-mail at [mark\\_salvato@fws.gov](mailto:mark_salvato@fws.gov).

For more information on both butterflies visit:

<http://www.fws.gov/southeast/news/2013/027.html>; or for Florida leafwing visit:

<http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?sPCODE=I087> and for [Bartram's scrub-hairstreak](#) visit:

<http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?sPCODE=I07G>.

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