

Department of the Interior  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office  
6010 Hidden Valley Road  
Carlsbad, California 92011  
Phone: 760/431-9440  
Fax: 760/431-9624

# News Release



<http://www.fws.gov/carlsbad>

Contact: Jane Hendron, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office – 760/431-9440 ext. 205

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## **SERVICE REAFFIRMS DESIGNATING CRITICAL HABITAT FOR CALIFORNIA PLANT NOT PRUDENT**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published today a final rule determining that designating critical habitat for the federally threatened Hidden Lake bluecurls plant is not prudent.

This final rule was prepared in accordance with a 2005 settlement agreement stemming from a lawsuit filed against the Service by the Center for Biological Diversity and the California Native Plant Society. The lawsuit challenged the Service's initial 1998 not prudent finding.

Pursuant to the settlement agreement, the Service agreed to withdraw its previous not prudent determination to re-evaluate the possible benefits and drawbacks associated with designating critical habitat for Hidden Lake bluecurls.

On September 26, 2006, the Service published a proposed not prudent finding regarding critical habitat for the Hidden Lake bluecurls. After analyzing information and comments received, the Service determined that the designation of critical habitat may increase the degree of threat to the species and undermine the conservation actions undertaken by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) to conserve the plant.

Hidden Lake bluecurls is a member of the mint family and is known to only occur at Hidden Lake in Mount San Jacinto State Park in Riverside County, California.

The plant was listed under the Endangered Species Act based on threats from trampling by people and horses, and low numbers of individual plants. The CDPR has taken steps to reduce threats from trampling by installing an additional barrier to exclude equestrian use, removing plant locational information from trails and brochures, and designating the area where the plant occurs as a Natural Preserve.

A copy of the final not prudent finding and other information about Hidden Lake bluecurls is available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/carlsbad>, or by contacting the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office at 760/431-9440.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 97-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 548 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American Tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.

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