

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

For Release: December 26, 2007

## **CRITICAL HABITAT DESIGNATED FOR THREE SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS PLANTS**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published today a final rule designating 1,769 acres of land in portions of the San Bernardino Mountains as critical habitat for three federally threatened plants – Bear Valley sandwort, ash-gray paintbrush, and southern mountain buckwheat. The final designation will become effective on January 28, 2008.

Almost all of the land designated as critical habitat is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Approximately 4 acres of land is owned by California Department of Fish and Game within the North Baldwin Ecological Preserve and 108 acres is privately owned, of which 71 acres are managed by the Wildlands Conservancy.

Areas designated as critical habitat for the three plants are identified in 11 units and include parts of Big Bear Lake, Union Flat, Broom Flat, Fawnskin, Gold Mountain, Holcomb Valley, Baldwin Lakes, Sawmill, Snow Valley, and Sugarloaf.

Future costs associated with conservation activities for the pebble plains plants in the areas designated as critical habitat are estimated to be \$1.80 million over the next 20 years using undiscounted dollars. These costs were quantified from the economic impacts associated with implementing conservation measures to address the following activities: (1) vehicle use off of designated routes; (2) the presence of nonnative plant species; and (3) dispersed recreation activities.

The three plants grow at elevations between 5,900 to 9,800 feet in treeless openings surrounded by woodlands that are the remnants of a Pleistocene lake bed. Over time, alternating wet and dry cycles and frost heaving forced quartzite pebbles to the surface. The pebble plains are unique to the San Bernardino Mountains.

A copy of the final rule and other information about the pebble plains plants 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 resource 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.

- FWS -

*For more information about the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, visit our home page at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov)*