

To whom it may concern,

As requested, I have read the Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for the Mount Charleston Blue Butterfly. As far as I can discern, this is a straightforward designation of critical habitat that is justified by the narrow geographic range and status of the focal taxon. The designation is based on commonsensical and scientifically-justified habitat requirements (e.g. availability of larval hosts and nectar sources) that are readily apparent in areas where extant populations of the butterfly are found. In an ideal world, habitat would be designated outside of the current range of the butterfly (after all, it was once seen at lower elevations, so there's no reason to think that it might not get back there in some years pending climatic fluctuations), but I understand the impracticality of that. In summary, I have no objections to the Proposed Designation, noting that I have experience with the biology of related butterflies but no particular experience with the landscape or populations being discussed.

Feel free to contact me with any questions,
Matt Forister

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