



**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM**

TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW Time (4:30)

SCRUB LUPINE (HOST – SARAH LEON WITH MIKE JENNINGS)

This transcript was produced from audio provided by FWS Endangered Species Program

P R O C E E D I N G S

(Music plays.)

MS. LEON: Hello, there. This is Sarah Leon for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and I'm on the phone today with Mike Jennings, Fish and Wildlife Biologist from the Jacksonville, Florida field office. Hi, Mike. How are you today?

MR. JENNINGS: I'm fine. How are you?

MS. LEON: I'm good, thanks. I was just hoping you wouldn't mind talking to us a little about Scrub Lupine today.

MR. JENNINGS: Sure. Scrub Lupine's a bushy perennial, which means that it lives for several years. It's in the pea family. The plant has light green leaves. They're covered with silky hairs. Its flowers are pink. If you saw Lupine in the wild, a large Lupine plant would be about three feet across and three feet high, kind of in a dome shape.

MS. LEON: And what work has been undertaken to help restore this plant?

MR. JENNINGS: Well, we've been working with a number of partners over the past couple of years to grow seedlings in greenhouse situations and transplant those seedlings into the wild on some properties that are protected by our partners. We have Florida Game and Freshwater Fish Commission, Orange County government, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection are helping us identify locations where we can transplant these seedlings.

MS. LEON: Great. And, Mike, it often appears that there is more public attention surrounding endangered animal species than there is for plant species. This is actually pretty interesting because there is more plants protected by the Endangered Species Act than there are animals. Why do you think this is?

MR. JENNINGS: Well, I think people have an affinity for furry things that they can look at and say that that looks like my cat or my dog or it's a large animal with big brown eyes, but plants are kind of difficult to wrap yourself around and to have a feeling for. So I think, generally, plants don't tend to get as much attention as animals do.

MS. LEON: But why should the public care about a plants recovery?

MR. JENNINGS: Well, in this particular case, Scrub Lupine, and that of a lot of other listed plants in Florida is that they have specific habitat requirements. One of the most important factors is fire. These plants evolved in a fire maintained community and they require fire to survive long term. One of the problems in Florida, and a lot of other places, we see in the news from time to time is we have these catastrophic wildfires and a lot of times those result because fire has been excluded from areas for long periods of time. The exclusion of fire is bad for plants because they need fires to open up habitat and release seed and rejuvenate their habitat.

Also, we see that when wildfires occur they destroy houses and businesses and infrastructure, so it's important to manage habitat for endangered species, but, at the same time, those kinds of management activities also benefit people by protecting them from wildfires.

MS. LEON: And thanks to some conservation partners, it looks like there are now ten populations of Scrub Lupine, which is actually up from only eight in the year 2008.

MR. JENNINGS: Right.

MS. LEON: Can you tell us about some of these principle conservation partners involved?

MR. JENNINGS: Yeah. We – our initial affair was with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. They had a parcel of land within historic range of Scrub Lupine where Scrub Lupine should have occurred, but didn't because the parcel was severely overgrown. So that agency spent money restoring the habitat on that piece of land and subsequently allowed us and agreed to manage a population of these transplanted Lupine's if we funded propagation of the plants. So we have about 800 seedlings that we put out on the commission's property and we have about 50 percent survival there. We also have a smaller population that we transplanted onto Orange County property. It's the Tibet-Butler Preserve and they've graciously agreed to maintain and look over about 80 seedlings that we out planted there two years ago.

MS. LEON: Great. Thanks, Mike, for giving us a little insight today on your work with Scrub Lupine. It was really great talking to you.

MR. JENNINGS: No problem. Glad I could help.

MS. LEON: This is MS. LEON for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Thanks for listening.