



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

TELEPHONIC INTERVIEW Time (5:39)

YREKA PHLOX (HOST – SARAH LEON WITH NADINE KANIM)

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 Nadine Kanim, the senior Fish and Wildlife Biologist at the Yreka Fish and Wildlife Office. Hi, Nadine, how are you today?

MS. KANIM: Hi, I'm very well.

MS. LEON: Great. Would you mind talking to us today a little about Yreka Phlox?

MS. KANIM: I'd be happy to do that.

MS. LEON: All right. Great. And what can you tell us about this species?

MS. KANIM: Yreka Phlox is a low-growing bright pink flowered perennial in the Phlox family. The scientific name is *Phlox hirsuta*. And the species is named for the dense hairs that cover the leaves and sepal.

It's found only on serpentine soil which are soils that have high concentrations of magnesium and iron and often other heavy metal like nickel, chromium and cobalt and low concentrations of calcium and necessary nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. So, these soils are too harsh for most plants to grow in but Yreka Phlox seems to be adapted to only these soil types. And this species is listed by the State of California and the Federal Government designees.

MS. LEON: Okay. And, Nadine, can you bring our listeners up to speed on this species current status and maybe explain why it's in trouble?

MS. KANIM: Yes. The current status is endangered by the State of California and the Federal Government. And the primary threats are alteration or destruction of its habitat, right now by residential development and off-road vehicles. But also competition with invasive weeds.

And the other thing about Yreka Phlox is the range is restricted to only five areas from up to 14 acres to 600 acres so the chance of extinction is high just due to random events.

MS. LEON: So, what recovery actions are currently underway?

MS. KANIM: The last two years we've been doing a pilot study at four locations to design our population size of threat monitoring program. So, we've already been out in the field and we're going to be fine-tuning that in the near future.

We're working with the California Department of Fish and Game to collect seeds for seed storage. We have been working with the Siskiyou County Department of Agriculture through partners for fish and wildlife grant from the Fish and Wildlife Service to remove competitive invasive weeds around many of the sought location.

The city of Yreka and the California Department of Fish and Game and the California Wildlife Conservation Board have acquired 75 percent of the suitable habitat on one of the locations called China Hill, so we're thrilled about that.

We have funded a research study by Southern Oregon University on the pollinators of the Phlox. We have created a geographic information system map of suitable habitat in areas that we have surveyed the Phlox and this office has funded surveys of more than 1,000 acres of potential habitat. So, our next thrust will be to contact land trusts and people who are interested in doing conservation and protecting Yreka Phlox land.

MS. LEON: Nadine, often it seems that there is much more public interest surrounding endangered animal species than there is for plant species. But I understand there's actually a high degree of positive local interest in Yreka Phlox, which is really exciting. Can you tell us a little about this?

MS. KANIM: Yes. I think that there are four reasons why we have positive local interest. And the first one is local vision and leadership really.

The recovery plan is dedicated to the memory of Larry Bacon who is a former Yreka city attorney and he was a recovery team member. And back in 1986 he was working with the Nature Conservancy on a vision to protect one of the original Phlox where Yreka Phlox was found. So, that was 15 years before we started working on the recovery program. So, I think local interest is really important.

And the next one I'm thinking is a network. We really have a good network of interested and active partners. There's a lot of goodwill surrounding this species.

And I think also I would credit the recovery planning process itself because we included representatives from every agency and organization that might be involved with Yreka Phlox in some way because we wanted a broad reach into the community so everybody would be aware of the recovery planning process.

And, finally, it is a lovely flowering plant that smells divine and it occurs nowhere else in the world which is named after our city, the city of Yreka.

MS. LEON: All right. Nadine, I don't want to make you blush, but I know that you've played a large part in actually building people's interest in this species and for that you were nominated or actually received the 2008 Recovery Champion. And, you know, it just looks like you're doing a really great job out there. So, I wish you all the best and keep up the good work.

MS. KANIM: I appreciate it. I really feel like the Recovery Champion Award was recognition of the work I've done over the years and I just really appreciate it. And I love my job. I'm having a great time. Just luck to be doing it.

MS. LEON: Well, we're glad that you're with us.

MS. KANIM: Thank you very much.

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