

# Kentucky Glade Cress

## *Leavenworthia exigua* var. *laciniata*



### Status

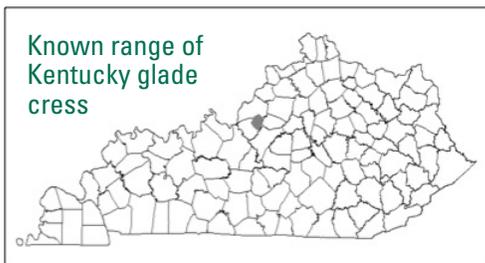
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to list Kentucky glade cress as a threatened species, and to designate critical habitat for the species in two Kentucky counties.

### Description

The Kentucky glade cress is a small (two to four inches in height), annual plant that grows on areas of flat, thin soil. It occurs only in extreme southeastern Jefferson County and the northeastern portion of Bullitt County, Kentucky. A member of the mustard family, it typically blooms in late February to early March and has a small white to lilac colored flower.

### Why is Kentucky glade cress being protected?

The abundance of Kentucky glade cress and the quality of its habitat has declined over the years due primarily to the modification and destruction of its natural habitat by human development. As an annual plant, the species is particularly vulnerable to temporary natural and man-made changes such as floods, droughts, off road vehicle disturbance and other non-permanent impacts to its habitat. The restricted range of Kentucky glade cress also contributes to proposed threatened status.



### What does it mean to me?

When a plant is listed as threatened or endangered, it becomes protected if it is on federal land, or if there is a federal action on private land that may impact the listed plant. When critical habitat is designated, the land is not a refuge or a sanctuary for the species. Most use of critical habitat by the public will not be affected by the critical habitat designation. Private land uses, such as landscaping, farming and silviculture, also will be unaffected. When a species is listed or critical habitat is designated,

federal agencies are required to ensure that their activities will not jeopardize the continued existence of the species or destroy or modify critical habitat. Federal activities, or actions permitted, licensed, or funded by federal agencies, will require consultation with the Service if they are likely to adversely affect the species or modify critical habitat. In such cases, the Service will work with the federal agency to identify alternatives where the project may proceed without causing jeopardy to the species or adverse modification to critical habitat.

### What is critical habitat?

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, (Act) requires the Service to identify critical habitat at the time we determine a species should be protected. Critical habitat is a specific term defined and used in the Act. It refers to specific geographic areas essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species. These areas may require special management consideration or protection; but they do not necessarily have to be occupied by the species at the time of designation. Areas must be identified which will allow for the protection of the current population, and any population increases that may be required to achieve recovery, which is the point at which the species can be removed from the endangered and threatened species list.

### What is critical habitat for the Kentucky glade cress?

We are proposing to designate approximately 2,053 acres within Jefferson and Bullitt County, as critical habitat for the Kentucky glade cress. All currently proposed critical habitat units are considered occupied.



*Kentucky glade cress in bloom in Jefferson County, Kentucky, credit James Gruhala/USFWS*

This proposed critical designation includes only a small portion of the species range. A large proportion of the habitat historically supporting Kentucky glade cress has been altered or destroyed by development, agriculture, or other modifications. Other areas were not considered for the designation because of limited habitat availability, isolation, the presence of significantly degraded habitat, and/or low management value or potential. We believe that the critical habitat units identified in this designation are essential for the conservation of the species. Other known occurrences of Kentucky glade cress that are located outside of the areas proposed as critical habitat, and all new populations that are discovered will be subject to the protections of the Endangered Species Act.

### Who should you contact for more information?

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