

NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
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New Slickspot Peppergrass Information Available for Public Review and Comment

Comment Period Closes April 16, 2009

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced the reopening of a public comment period seeking review and comment about new information that has become available to the Service on slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*), a rare herbaceous plant found exclusively in southwestern Idaho.

On June 4, 2008, the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho reversed the Service's January 2007 decision to withdraw its proposal to list slickspot peppergrass as endangered. The Court's Remand Order directed the Service to reconsider its decision,

with a Court-ordered deadline to make a final listing determination no later than October 1, 2009.

On September 19, 2008, the Service reinstated the plant's 2002 status as "proposed endangered," and opened a 30-day public comment period. Since the close of that comment period, the Service has received new information that is relevant to the evaluation of the proposed listing of slickspot peppergrass.

"To ensure that our review of the species' status is complete and based on the best available scientific and commercial information, we are reopening a comment period," said Jeff Foss, State Supervisor of the Service's Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office. "This will allow us to accept new information into the record and will allow the public to comment on this new information as it relates to the status and proposed listing of slickspot peppergrass. We have also specifically requested peer review of this new information and its relevance to the status of slickspot from experts familiar with the species or its habitat."

The Service is seeking comments concerning biological, commercial trade or other relevant data concerning any threat (or lack thereof) to the species; information concerning the range, distribution, and population size of the species; and current or planned activities in the subject area and their possible impact on this species.

Comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the

instructions for submitting comments.

- U.S. Mail or Hand-Delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: RIN 1018-AI50 Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203.

E-mails or faxes cannot be accepted. All comments will be posted on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means that the Service will post any personal information provided.

In order to provide the Service with adequate time to consider all information, comments should be received by midnight (Eastern Standard Time) on April 16, 2009.

For further information, please contact Steve Duke, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office, 208-378-5243.

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The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.