

# News Release



Idaho Fish and Wildlife Office  
1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368  
Boise, Idaho, 83709  
<http://www.fws.gov/idaho>

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Contact: Susan Burch, 208-378-5265, [susan\\_burch@fws.gov](mailto:susan_burch@fws.gov)

## **Fish and Wildlife Service Extends Comment Period for Slickspot Peppergrass Proposed Critical Habitat**

*Comments will be accepted until September 9, 2011*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today that it will extend the public comment period on the proposed designation of critical habitat for slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*), a rare Idaho plant protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

On June 1, 2011, the Service received a request from Idaho's Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter seeking a 60-day extension of the comment period so that the State of Idaho may coordinate comments between the state agencies that may be affected by critical habitat, and to allow adequate time for citizens to provide input on the proposed critical habitat designation.

On June 7, 2011, Idaho's Congressional Delegation supported the Governor's request, also seeking a 60-day extension.

As requested, the Service has extended the comment period and citizens will have an additional 60 days to submit comments regarding the proposal. All comments received or postmarked on or before September 9, 2011 will be considered by the Service. There is no need to re-submit comments that have already been submitted, as comments previously submitted have been incorporated into the public record. The Service will fully consider all comments in its final decision.

“We recognize an extended comment period will allow more time for input on the proposed critical habitat designation for slickspot peppergrass,” said Brian Kelly, Idaho State Supervisor for the Service. “We fully support an extension, and look forward to a thorough review of public and agency comment.”

Slickspot peppergrass was listed as a threatened species on October 8, 2009. It is unique to southwest Idaho, found only in parts of the Snake River Plain, the Boise Foothills and the Owyhee Plateau.

On May 10, 2011, the Service proposed to designate 57,756 acres as critical habitat for the plant’s protection in Idaho’s Ada, Elmore, Owyhee and Payette Counties. Approximately 95 percent of the proposed critical habitat designation is on public lands: federal (86 percent), state (8 percent), and county lands (1 percent). The remaining 5 percent is on private lands.

Military lands with approved conservation plans, known as Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans (INRMPs), that provide a benefit to the species are exempted from designated critical habitat under 4(a)(3) of the ESA and are not included in the critical habitat proposal.

Written comments and information concerning this proposal can be submitted by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the box that reads “Enter Keyword or ID,” enter the docket number for this proposed rule, which is FWS–R1–ES–2010–0071 and then click the Search button. You should then see an icon that reads “Submit a Comment.” Please ensure that you have found the correct rulemaking before submitting your comment.
- U.S. mail or hand-delivery: Public Comments Processing, Attn: [FWS-R1-ES-2010-0071]; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042–PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

Comments must be received within 60 days, on or before September 9, 2011. Please note that if you are using the Federal eRulemaking Portal, the deadline for submitting an electronic comment is 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on this date. The Service will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This generally means the agency will post any personal information provided through the process. The Service is not able to accept email or faxes.

For additional information, contact Susan Burch, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709; by telephone at 208-378-5265; or by fax at 208-378-5262. Comments and materials received, as well as supporting documentation used in the preparation of this rule, are available for public inspection by appointment during normal business hours.

A copy of the proposed rule, maps and other information about slickspot peppergrass is available online at <http://www.fws.gov/idaho>.

*America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. We're working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. To learn more about the Endangered Species Program, go to <http://www.fws.gov/endangered>.*

*The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, 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](http://www.fws.gov).*

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