

NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region
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Recovery Plan for Shivwits and Holmgren Milk-vetches Completed

The Fish and Wildlife Service has completed a final recovery plan for the Shivwits and Holmgren Milk-vetches, two native plants found in portions of Mohave County, Arizona and Washington County, Utah.

Both plants were listed as endangered in October 2001 due their rarity and declining population trends. The primary threats to the two species are urban development, off-road vehicle use, grazing (for Shivwits), displacement by non-native invasive plants, and mineral development. Individually, these threats affect the two plants to varying degrees, but in combination they pose an extinction risk for both.

“A recovery plan is not a binding document,” said Mitch King, the Service’s Director of the Mountain-Prairie Region, “but rather a blueprint to direct voluntary conservation efforts. Recovery of these plants will require a coordinated effort between our federal and state partners as well as local landowners.”

The Recovery plan identifies specific actions that will help recover the plants so that they may be downlisted to threatened and eventually removed from the list of threatened and endangered species. Objectives and criteria for delisting are spelled out. Recommended actions necessary for recovery of the plants include:

- Protecting and enhancing current habitat;
- Ensuring the habitat base for each recovery population is large enough to allow for natural population dynamics, population expansion where needed, and the continued presence of pollinators, with sufficient connectivity to allow for gene flow within and among populations;
- Achieving permanent land protection for at least four recovery populations;
- Developing site-specific conservation agreements for all recovery populations and their habitat to protect the milk-vetches within existing State laws;
- Prohibiting the use of pesticides or herbicides detrimental to either of the milk-vetches or their pollinators with the vicinity of all recovery populations; and
- Collecting and storing seeds for all extant populations.

Because of biological and historical uncertainties regarding the status and recovery potential of these plants, the recovery strategy will be contingent on a growing understanding of the plants and their ecological requirements. Consequently, a dynamic and adaptive approach will be key to making effective progress and full recovery.

Copies of the plan can be obtained by visiting our web site at <http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/species/plants/milkvetche/index.htm> or may be requested by contacting the Utah Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2369 West Orton Circle, Suite 50, West Valley City, UT 84119, or by calling 801.975.3330.

Both the Shivwits milk-vetch and the Holmgren milk-vetch are members of the pea family. The Shivwits milk-vetch, often associated with purple hued patch of soft clay soil, is found only in southern Washington County, Utah. The Holmgren milk-vetch is most frequently found on the skirt edges of hill and plateau formations, slightly above or on the edge of drainage areas in both Washington County, Utah, and Mohave County, Arizona. Both species grow on state and private land, as well as land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Additionally, the Shivwits milk-vetch is found at Zion National Park and on Tribal lands belonging to the Shivwits band of the Paiutes.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.