

News Release

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Service Proposes to Protect Webber's Ivesia Under the Endangered Species Act

Soldier Meadow Cinquefoil Protection No Longer Warranted

RENO--The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today, a proposal to protect Webber's ivesia (*Ivesia webberi*) as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service is proposing to designate 2,011 acres of critical habitat for Webber's ivesia in Washoe and Douglas Counties in Nevada, and in Lassen, Plumas, and Sierra Counties in California. The Service also determined the threat of extinction no longer exists for the Soldier Meadow cinquefoil (*Potentilla basaltica*) and it will be removed from the list of candidate species.

"All of the threats identified to the Webber's ivesia when it was elevated to candidate status still exist and that is why we are proposing to protect the species under the ESA," said Ted Koch, U. S. Fish and Wildlife's Nevada state supervisor.

"That is not the case however, for the Soldier Meadow cinquefoil," said Koch. "Threats to the species that were identified when it was elevated to candidate status have been addressed, and the species is no longer threatened with extinction. The purpose of the ESA is to protect and recover imperiled species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Even though Soldier Meadow cinquefoil is rare, it appears to be stable. There are conservation measures in place that will adequately conserve the species."

Soldier Meadow cinquefoil occurs on approximately 23 acres in Lassen County, California and Humboldt County, Nevada. It is a low-growing, perennial forb in the rose family, with clusters of leaves that lie nearly flat on the ground, and extend approximately 20 inches in diameter. It has bright yellow flowers that are typically observed throughout the summer months, beginning in May.

Webber's ivesia is also a member of the rose family. Similar in overall appearance to Soldier Meadow cinquefoil, Webber's ivesia is also a low-growing, perennial forb with clusters of leaves that lie nearly flat on the ground, and are approximately ten inches in diameter. Webber's ivesia has greenish-gray leaves, dark red, wiry stems, and headlike clusters of small bright yellow flowers. Flowering typically begins in May and extends through June and the whole plant becomes reddish-tinged late in the season.

The Service first identified Webber's ivesia as a candidate for ESA protection in 2002, due to the threat posed by urban development, authorized and unauthorized road use, OHVs and recreation use, livestock grazing and trampling, wildfire and suppression activities, displacement by nonnative, invasive plant species, and inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms. The species continues to experience habitat loss due to these same threats.

The Service has identified 2,011 acres critical habitat in Washoe and Douglas Counties in Nevada, and in Lassen, Plumas, and Sierra Counties in California, that contains habitat essential to the conservation of Webber's ivesia. Of the total acreage identified, 11 percent is located on state lands, 68 percent on federal lands, and 21 percent on private lands.

The ESA requires the Service to identify the location of habitat essential for the conservation of the species, which the ESA terms "critical habitat." This identification helps federal agencies identify actions that may affect listed species or their habitat, and to work with the Service to avoid or minimize those impacts. The designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge, wilderness, reserve, preserve or other conservation area. It does not allow government control of or public access to private lands. Identifying this habitat helps raise awareness of the habitat needs of imperiled species and focus the conservation efforts of other partners such as state and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and individual landowners.

Although non-federal lands have initially been included in these areas, activities on these lands are not affected now, and will not necessarily be affected if the species is protected under the ESA in the future. Only if an activity is authorized, funded or carried out by a federal agency will the agency need to work with the Service to help landowners avoid, reduce or mitigate potential impacts to listed species or their designated critical habitat.

The Service will open a 60-day comment period to allow the public and stakeholders an opportunity to comment on the Webber's ivesia proposed listing and proposed critical habitat. During that time, the agency will also seek peer review from qualified members of the scientific community to ensure that the final decision is based on solid science. A copy of the finding and other information about plants is available at <http://www.fws.gov/nevada> or by contacting the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office at 775-861-6300.

A public meeting has been scheduled on September 10, 2013, from 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm at the Department of Interior Building, Great Basin Conference Room, 1340 Financial Boulevard, Reno, Nevada. The meeting will be an open house format, so individuals may drop in during that time to learn more about the Webber's ivesia proposed listing and proposed critical habitat.

The Service is preparing an analysis of the economic impacts of the proposed critical habitat designations and related factors and will announce the availability of the draft economic analysis as soon as it is completed. At that time, the Service will seek additional public review and comment.

The Service will make a final determination a year from now on whether to add Webber's ivesia to the federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and on its critical habitat based on the best available science.

Scientific information regarding the Webber's ivesia proposals will be accepted October 1, 2013 and may be submitted by one of the following methods:

(1) *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal:

<http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS-R8-ES-2013-0079 for the proposed listing or FWS-R8-ES-2013-0080 for the proposed critical habitat, which are the docket numbers for this rulemaking. Then, in the Search panel on the left side of the screen, under the Document Type heading, click on the Proposed Rules link to locate this document. You may submit a comment by clicking on "Comment Now!"

(2) *By hard copy:* Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R8-ES-2013-0079 for the proposed listing or FWS-R8-ES-2013-0080; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

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