

News Release



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Endangered Species Act Protection Not Warranted for Two Species of Buckwheat in Nevada

RENO, Nev. — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has determined that two species of buckwheat in Nevada do not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The two species are Churchill Narrows buckwheat (*Eriogonum diatomaceum*) and Las Vegas buckwheat (*Eriogonum corymbosum* var. *nilesii*). The decision will be published in the *Federal Register* on Wednesday, September 24, 2014.

In making this determination, the Service completed a comprehensive status review, known as a 12-month finding, and found that the best scientific and commercial data available indicates that listing either species of buckwheat as threatened or endangered is not warranted. The Service performed threat analyses on both species based on five factors: (A) The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (B) Overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; (C) Disease or predation; (D) The inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; or (E) Other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

The Service found that these factors currently may have minor impacts on individual plants in some locations, but they are not impacting either species as a whole currently or into the future. However, the Service asks the public to submit any new information that becomes available concerning the threats to the plants or their habitats at any time.

Churchill Narrows buckwheat is a low, matted perennial forb with dense wooly leaves and head-like clusters of creamy-white flowers. The Service recognizes four populations of this species that are restricted to approximately three square miles in the Churchill Narrows area of the Pine Nut Mountains in Lyon County, Nevada. These four populations occupy approximately 18 acres on lands managed entirely by Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Churchill Narrows buckwheat was added to the Nevada State list of fully protected species of native flora in 2004, and is recognized by BLM as a sensitive species. BLM has affirmed its intent to continue managing the species as a BLM sensitive species, and avoid impacts to the species or its habitat, particularly in the context of mining.

Las Vegas buckwheat (*Eriogonum corymbosum* var. *nilesii*) is an open to somewhat spreading perennial shrub that can be up to four feet tall and has numerous yellow to pale yellow flowers. In addition to these features, the subspecies is distinguished from closely related plants by silvery, long, soft hairs on its flowering stalk and upper leaf surfaces. The Service recognizes 12 populations of the species, three of which have been extirpated, and nine that remain extant. These populations are restricted to southern Nevada, northwest of the Virgin River (in Lincoln County) and west of Lake Mead (in Clark County). Las Vegas buckwheat occupies approximately 795 acres, of which 80 percent are federally owned. Las Vegas buckwheat is not listed by the state of Nevada, but it is recognized as a sensitive species by BLM. BLM and the Department of Defense have entered into conservation agreements for some of the lands on which this species occurs.

The ESA provides a critical safety net for America's native fish, wildlife and plants. This landmark conservation law has prevented the extinction of hundreds of imperiled species across the nation and promoted the recovery of many others.

The health of threatened and endangered species is strongly linked to the health and well-being of people and communities. Millions of Americans depend on habitat that sustains imperiled species — for clean air and water, recreational opportunities and for their livelihoods.

Copies of this 12-month finding may be downloaded from the Internet at www.regulations.gov or www.fws.gov/nevada, Docket Number FWS-R8-ES-2014-0039. Copies are also available by calling the Service's Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office in Reno at 775-861-6300.

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 <http://www.fws.gov/cno>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#), and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).

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