



Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

*Conserving the biological diversity of the Great Basin, eastern Sierra,
and Mojave Desert*

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

Frequently Asked Questions

September 23, 2014

What is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announcing today?

The Service is announcing the results of a 12-month review of the status of two species of buckwheat found in Nevada. The two species are Churchill Narrows buckwheat (*Eriogonum diatomaceum*) and Las Vegas buckwheat (*Eriogonum corymbosum* var. *nilesii*).

Why did the Service conduct the 12-month status review of the buckwheats?

The Service identified Churchill Narrows buckwheat as a candidate species for review in May 2004. Las Vegas buckwheat was identified as a candidate for review in December 2007. Subsequently, the Service received a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity to list the buckwheats and designate critical habitat for both species.

What do the two species of buckwheat look like and where do they occur?

Churchill Narrows buckwheat (*Eriogonum diatomaceum*) 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**

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

What is the Service’s determination regarding the status of the two plants?

After evaluating the best available scientific information regarding Churchill Narrows buckwheat and Las Vegas buckwheat, including an analysis of the threats to the species and their habitats, the Service has determined that protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is not warranted. Additionally, in light of this finding, the Service will not designate critical habitat for either species. 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.

What threat analysis did the Service complete in making this determination?

Under the ESA, the Service can determine that a species is endangered or threatened based on any of 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. The full analyses of these possible threats are documented in the Species Report and are summarized in the finding. Based on the analysis contained in the Species Report, the best available scientific and commercial information does not indicate that these threats are causing a decline in the species or their habitats, either now into the future.

What is being done to conserve the two species of buckwheat?

All four populations of Churchill Narrows buckwheat occur on BLM land, and BLM has monitored these populations over time. Churchill Narrows buckwheat is also identified as a BLM sensitive species and is listed as a “fully protected” species by the State of Nevada. 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 is also a BLM sensitive species. BLM and the Department of Defense have entered into conservation agreements for some of the lands on which this species occurs.

How can I find out more information about the determination?

This finding (Docket Number FWS–R8– ES–2014–0039), the Species Reports (including all references), and other materials relating to this finding are available on the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office website at www.fws.gov/nevada/ and at www.regulations.gov , or by calling the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at 775-861-6300.

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