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News Release



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Draft Recovery Plan for Five Prairie Species Available for Public Review and Comment

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today released a draft recovery plan for four rare plant species and one butterfly species, natives of Oregon's Willamette and Umpqua river valleys and southwestern Washington. The species are Fender's blue butterfly, Kincaid's lupine, Willamette daisy, Bradshaw's lomatium and Nelson's checker-mallow. The Service is seeking public comments on the plan through December 22, 2008.

All five species inhabit wet and upland prairies and oak-savanna habitats, which are considered to be among the rarest in western Oregon and are among the most endangered ecosystems in the United States. All five of the species are listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act.

"We believe that an ecosystem approach to the restoration of prairie habitats will contribute to the recovery of these species, and the protection of other plant and animal species associated with our native prairie communities," said Paul Henson, state supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Portland.

The recovery strategy is to protect remaining fragments of upland and wet prairie habitats and restore them to functioning prairie ecosystems. The recovery plan calls for establishing networks of restored prairie habitats and interconnected butterfly and plant populations. The networks would extend across a series of recovery zones that span the historical ranges of the species. Habitat isolation, fragmentation and invasion by non-native plant species are the primary threats to be addressed.

Fender's blue butterfly and Willamette daisy are found only in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Beyond the Willamette Valley, Kincaid's lupine also occurs in Douglas County, Oregon, and in Lewis County, Washington. Bradshaw's lomatium occurs in wet prairie habitats from Clark County, Washington, to the southern end of the Willamette Valley. Nelson's checker-mallow is also found at a few sites in Oregon's coast range and in Lewis and Cowlitz counties in Washington.

In addition to recovery strategies for the listed species mentioned above, the recovery plan recommends conservation strategies for one candidate species – Taylor's checkerspot butterfly – and six other plant species that are not federally protected but are considered species of concern: pale larkspur, Willamette Valley larkspur, peacock larkspur, shaggy horkelia, white-topped aster and Hitchcock's blue-eyed grass.

Also addressed in this recovery plan is the golden paintbrush, a threatened species that has not been found in Oregon since 1938. Though the golden paintbrush has an existing recovery plan, recommendations for reintroducing it into its historical range in the Willamette Valley are part of this new draft recovery plan.

Recovery plans provide a blueprint for actions by federal, state, local agencies and others who have an interest in the conservation of listed species and their ecosystems. Restoring an endangered or threatened species to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is the primary goal of the Endangered Species Act. Recovery plans do not oblige the expenditure of funds or require that actions be implemented.

A 90-day comment period opened on September 22, 2008. Written comments and materials regarding this plan can be sent to: Field Supervisor, USFWS- Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office, 2600 SE 98th Avenue, Suite 100, Portland, Oregon, 97266 or via e-mail to: FW1PrairieRecoveryPlan@fws.gov. All comments must be received by close of business on December 22, 2008.

A copy of the draft recovery plan and other information on these species are available at <http://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/Species/>, or by contacting Paul Henson, Field Supervisor at 503-231-6179.

The species' scientific names are: Fender's blue butterfly (*Icaricia icarioides fenderi*), Kincaid's lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus* ssp. *kincaidii*), Willamette daisy (*Erigeron decumbens* var. *decumbens*), Bradshaw's lomatium (*Lomatium bradshawii*), Nelson's checker-mallow (*Sidalcea nelsoniana*), golden paintbrush (*Castilleja levisecta*), Taylor's checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha taylori*), pale larkspur (*Delphinium leucophaeum*), Willamette Valley larkspur (*Delphinium oreganum*), peacock larkspur (*Delphinium pavonaceum*), shaggy horkelia (*Horkelia congesta* ssp. *congesta*), white-topped aster (*Sericocarpus rigidus*) and Hitchcock's blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium hitchcockii*).

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