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News Release



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FINAL RECOVERY PLAN FOR FIVE MONTEREY COUNTY PLANTS NOW AVAILABLE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today published a final recovery plan for five federally threatened or endangered plants that occur along the central and northern California coasts.

The plants are the threatened Gowan cypress (*Cupressus goveniana ssp. goveniana*), and the endangered coastal dunes milk-vetch (*Astragalus tener var titi*), Yadon's piperia (*Piperia yadonii*), Hickman's potentilla (*Potentilla hickmanii*) and Monterey clover (*Trifolium trichocalyx*). Four of the plants occur exclusively in Monterey County. Hickman's potentilla is found both in Monterey and San Mateo counties.

"We'll continue to work with our partners to increase the populations of these plants and move closer to their recovery," said Diane Noda, field supervisor for the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office.

The recovery plan describes the plants' status and current management, recovery objectives and criteria, and specific actions needed to remove the plants from the federal list of threatened and endangered species. Recommended actions necessary for recovery of these rare plants include:

- Working with willing landowners to secure and protect existing populations and habitat on private or unprotected lands;
- Managing lands to control or eliminate threats to the plant and its habitat;
- Conducting research to document the plant's life history and the plant's responses to management actions;
- Surveying for additional plant populations and suitable habitat for reintroduction or reestablishment of new populations; and,
- Developing management strategies and monitoring populations to determine the effectiveness of management.

The coastal dunes milk-vetch occurs in one population in sandy patches close to the ocean in an area near 17-Mile Drive on the Monterey Peninsula. It is a small annual herb in the legume family that grows to about five inches in height and has lavender and purple flowers. Coastal dunes milk-vetch was historically found in Los Angeles and San Diego counties, although it is believed the plant no longer exists in these counties.

Yadon's piperia occurs in large undeveloped areas of Monterey pine forest or maritime chaparral habitat from the Los Lomos area near the border of Santa Cruz County to about 15 miles south of the Monterey Peninsula near Palo Colorado Canyon. A slender perennial herb in the orchid family, Yadon's piperia has a single flowering stem that can grow up to 20 inches in height.

Hickman's potentilla occurs in meadow communities within Monterey pine forest on the Monterey Peninsula and at one site in San Mateo County. It also occurred historically in Sonoma County. It is a small perennial herb in the rose family that dies back to a woody taproot each year. Tiny yellow flowers bloom on stems ranging from two to 16 inches in height.

Monterey clover, an annual herb in the pea family, occurs in only one known location on about 40 acres known as the Huckleberry Hill property on the Monterey Peninsula. It has numerous branches that can grow up to 12 inches in length and produces many tiny blue or pale purple flowers.

Gowen cypress is a small cone-producing tree in the cypress family. It has smooth brown to gray bark and usually grows to a height of over 20 feet. The cypress is found in only two stands; the largest one is near Huckleberry Hill on the west side of the Monterey Peninsula. The second stand occurs on state-owned land at Point Lobos State Reserve near Gibson Creek.

The five plants are threatened by one or more of the following: alteration, destruction, and fragmentation of habitat resulting from urban and golf course development; recreational activities; competition with nonnative plants; grazing by native and nonnative species; and disruption of natural fire cycles.

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 provide a blueprint for actions by federal, state, and other public agencies and private interests in the conservation of a species and its ecosystems. Recovery plans do not oblige the expenditure of funds or require that actions be implemented.

Native plants are important for their ecological, economic, and aesthetic values. Plants play an important role in development of crops that resist disease, insects, and drought. At least 25 percent of prescription drugs contain ingredients derived from plant compounds, including medicine to treat cancer, heart disease, juvenile leukemia, and malaria, as well as those being used to assist in organ transplants. Plants are also used to develop natural pesticides.

Copies of the recovery plan can be downloaded from the Ventura Fish and Wildlife web site at: <http://ventura.fws.gov>, by calling 644-1766, or by writing to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 2493 Portola Road, Suite B; Ventura, CA 93003.