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Note: A photo of the Gentian pinkroot can be obtained by contacting Elsie_Davis@fws.gov, or by calling 404/679-7107. Photo Credit: USFWS Photo.

Draft Recovery Plan for Gentian Pinkroot Available for Review

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeks public comment on the draft recovery plan for Gentian Pinkroot, a federally listed, endangered herb. Public comments will be accepted until May 23, 2011.

Gentian pinkroot has two varieties: The variety *gentianoides* occurs in only five locations within three counties in the Florida panhandle and southern Alabama, and the variety *alabamensis* is found only in glades (open, almost treeless areas within woodlands) in Bibb County, Alabama.

Habitat loss and alteration are the primary reasons for the species' decline. The existing plants of the variety *gentianoides* are located in fire-dependent, longleaf pine-wiregrass and pine-oak-hickory ecosystems. Much of this habitat has been lost, converted to pine plantations, and managed without fire. Some of the glades where the variety *alabamensis* is located are owned and protected by The Nature Conservancy; however, this variety is threatened by the potential development of other glades in Bibb County.

The objective of this draft recovery plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of gentian pinkroot, so that protection under the Endangered Species Act is no longer necessary. Defining reasonable delisting criteria is not possible at this time given the current low number of populations and individuals, the lack of information about the species' biology, and the magnitude of current threats from development. Therefore, this draft recovery plan establishes downlisting criteria for the gentian pinkroot so that it may be reclassified to threatened status.

Please send written comments about the Technical/Agency Draft Recovery Plan for the Gentian Pinkroot to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Panama City Ecological Services Field Office, 1601 Balboa Ave, Panama City, Florida 32405. Please note that your entire comment, including personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. Please do not include any information you wish to remain private.

To view the draft recovery plan on the Internet, please visit either the Service's recovery plan website at <http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=Q21W#recovery>

A written copy of the draft plan can be obtained by calling (850) 769-0552, ext. 231, or by sending a request for a paper copy to the Panama City Ecological Services Field Office.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. Please see <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/> or <http://www.fws.gov/>