

GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING AND REPORTING BOTANICAL INVENTORIES FOR FEDERALLY LISTED, PROPOSED, AND CANDIDATE PLANTS

These guidelines describe protocols for conducting botanical inventories for federally listed, proposed, and candidate plants, and describes minimum standards for reporting results. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will use, in part, the information outlined below in determining whether the project under consideration may affect any listed, proposed, or candidate plants, and in determining the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects.

Field inventories should be conducted in a manner that will locate listed, proposed, or candidate species (target species) that may be present. The entire project area requires a botanical inventory, except developed agricultural lands. The field investigators should:

1. Conduct inventories at the appropriate times of year when target species are present and identifiable. Inventories will include all potential habitats. Multiple site visits during a field season may be necessary to make observations during the appropriate phenological stage of all target species.
2. If available, use a regional or local reference population to obtain a visual image of the target species and associated habitats. If access to reference populations is not available, investigators should study specimens from local herbaria.
3. List every species observed and compile a comprehensive list of vascular plants for the entire project site. Vascular plants need to be identified to a taxonomic level which allows rarity to be determined.
4. Report results of botanical field inventories that include the following:
 - a. A description of the biological setting, including plant community, topography, soils, potential habitat of target species, and an evaluation of environmental conditions, such as timing or quantity of rainfall, which may influence the performance and expression of target species.
 - b. A map or aerial photographs of project locations showing scale, orientation, project boundaries, parcel size, and map quadrangle name.
 - c. Survey dates and survey methodologies.
 - d. If a reference population is available, provide a written narrative describing the target species reference populations used, and dates when observations were made.
 - e. A representative list of all vascular plants occurring on the project site for each habitat type.
 - f. Current and historic land uses of the habitats and degree of site alteration.
 - g. Presence of target species off site on adjacent parcels, if known.

