

**Peer Review Plan for the
Draft Species Status Assessment Report
for Gierisch Mallow (*Sphaeralcea gierischii*)**

About the Document

Title: Draft Species Status Assessment Report for Gierisch mallow (*Sphaeralcea gierischii*)

Purpose: The purpose of the Species Status Assessment is to provide support to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) for recovery planning and implementation for Gierisch mallow, in accordance with section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). The Species Status Assessment provides information on the species' life history, resource requirements, current population conditions, stressors, conservation actions, and projected future status. Information in the Gierisch mallow Species Status Assessment Report will serve as the foundation for a recovery strategy and inform the development of a draft recovery plan.

About the Peer Review Process

Approximate Dates of Peer Review: November – December, 2018

Reviewers: The Service will solicit external peer review of the scientific background information used in the draft Species Status Assessment Report from at least three independent scientific reviewers with expertise in ecology, management, and conservation of the Gierisch mallow or its habitat.

Criteria for Reviewer Selection: Peer reviewers will be selected based on the following criteria:

- **Expertise:** Reviewers should have knowledge in one or more of the following areas: biology, ecology, demography, management, and/or conservation of plants associated with the Mojave Desert.
- **Independence:** Reviewers should not be employed by the Service. Academic and consulting scientists should have sufficient independence from the Service if the government supports their work.
- **Objectivity:** Reviewers should be recognized by their peers as being objective, open-minded, and thoughtful. Reviewers should be comfortable sharing their knowledge and identifying their knowledge gaps.
- **Advocacy:** Reviewers should not be known or recognized for an affiliation with an advocacy position regarding the protection of this species under the Endangered Species Act.

- Conflict of Interest: Reviewers should not have any financial or other interest that conflicts with or that could impair their objectivity.

About Public Participation:

The final Species Status Assessment Report will be made available to the public concurrent with the follow-on draft recovery plan for Gierisch mallow. A 60-day public comment period for the draft recovery plan will be announced in the Federal Register, and solicitations for public comment on the draft recovery plan will be made through news releases. Both the final Species Status Assessment Report and the draft recovery plan will be available at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/>.

This peer review plan for the Species Status Assessment is made available on this website to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review.

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