

Peer Review Plan

Draft Amendment to the *Echinocactus horizonthalonius* var. *nicholii* Recovery Plan

About the Document(s)

Title: Recovery Plan for the Nichol's turk's head cactus (*Echinocactus horizonthalonius* var. *nicholii*), Draft Amendment 1

Estimated Dissemination Date for Peer Review:

May 2019

Purpose:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has identified best available information that indicates the need to amend recovery criteria for the *Echinocactus horizonthalonius* var. *nicholii* (Nichol's turk's head cactus). In this proposed modification, we synthesize the adequacy of the existing recovery criteria, show amended recovery criteria, and provide the rationale supporting the proposed recovery plan modification. Once finalized, the modification will be an addendum that supplements the recovery plan, superseding only the affected recovery criteria from the previous recovery plan version.

About the Peer Review Process

Type of Review:

Influential

Timeline for Peer Review:

May - June

Reviewers:

The Service will solicit reviews from at least three independent scientific reviewers with expertise in Arizona plant ecology or a related field. Reviewers will be selected based upon the following criteria:

- **Expertise:** Reviewers will be experts in the ecology of *Echinocactus horizonthalonius* species or a related field and should have knowledge in one or more of the following areas: biology, ecology, demography, management, and conservation of native Arizona plant species.
- **Independence:** Reviewers are not employed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Academic and consulting scientists have sufficient independence from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the Department of the Interior if the government supports their work.
- **Objectivity:** Reviewers are recognized by their peers as being objective, open-minded, and thoughtful. The reviewers should be comfortable sharing their knowledge and identifying their knowledge gaps.

- Advocacy: Reviewers are not 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

A 30-day public comment period for the draft amendment will begin when the Notice of Availability publishes in the Federal Register. During this period, the public will have the opportunity to review and provide input to the draft recovery plan amendment. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will also implement an outreach plan to provide ample opportunity for public involvement in the review process, and the draft amendment will be posted on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service websites with solicitations for public comment.

The draft recovery plan amendment will be available at:

<https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/speciesProfile?sld=5343>
<https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Nichol.htm>

This peer review plan 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.

Contact

For more information, contact Jeff Humphrey, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Office, at 602-242-0210.