

Peer Review Plan

Texas Snowbells Species Status Assessment Report and Draft Texas Snowbells Recovery Plan and Recovery Implementation Strategy

About the Documents

Title: Species Status Assessment for Texas snowbells (*Styrax platanifolius* Engelm. ex Torr. ssp. *texanus* (Cory) P.W. Fritsch); Draft Recovery Plan for Texas snowbells; and Draft Recovery Implementation Strategy for Texas snowbells

Dissemination Date: August 2017

Purpose: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has developed a Species Status Assessment (SSA) report to inform the recovery planning process for Texas snowbells. The SSA report is a comprehensive evaluation of the biological status of Texas snowbells and its viability as a species. The SSA report considers the ecological needs as well as current and forecasted future conditions for the species. The purpose of the recovery plan is to provide a strategy that when implemented will lead to the downlisting and recovery (delisting) of Texas snowbells in accordance with section 4(f)(1) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). The plan contains objective and measurable recovery criteria, a recovery strategy with recommended recovery actions, and the time and cost to achieve recovery.



About the Peer Review Process

Type of Review: Influential

Date of Peer Review: Peer review is expected to be completed by September 30, 2017.

Reviewers: The Service will solicit reviews from at least three independent scientific reviewers with expertise in biology, conservation, and ecology of plants and the ecosystems upon which they depend. Reviewers will be selected based upon the following criteria:

- **Expertise:** Reviewers should have knowledge in one or more of the following areas: botany, conservation biology, plant population ecology, habitat and landscape conditions in South Texas.
- **Independence:** Reviewers are not employed by the Service. Academic and consulting scientists have sufficient independence from the 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 60-day public comment period for the draft recovery plan 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. The Service will also implement an outreach plan to provide ample opportunity for public involvement in the review process, and the draft recovery plan will be posted on Service websites with solicitations for public comment. The final SSA report will also be made publically available at this time.

Both the draft and final recovery plans will be available at http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=Q224

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.

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