

Gierisch Mallow
(*Sphaeralcea gierischii*)

STATUS: Endangered with critical habitat (78 FR [49149](#) and [49165](#), August 13, 2013).

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: Gierisch mallow is a perennial, flowering plant of the mallow family. It produces few to many stems from a woody caudex (short, thickened, woody stem that is usually subterranean or at ground-level). The stems are 4.3-10.3 decimeters (dm) (1.4-3.4 feet (ft)) tall, and are often dark red-purple. The foliage is bright green and glabrous (not hairy); flowers have orange petals.

HABITAT: *S. gierischii* is only found on gypsum outcrops associated with the Harrisburg Member of the Kaibab Formation in northern Mohave County, Arizona and closely adjacent Washington County, Utah. The surrounding plant community is that of warm Mohave desertscrub. *S. gierischii* occurs at elevations from 821 to 1,148 meters (2,694 to 3,766 ft).

RANGE: Current: Northern Mohave County, Arizona and southern Washington County, Utah. The majority of the populations are located on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands ; one population is found on lands managed by the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD).

REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY: *S. gierischii* is a narrow endemic with an affinity for gypsum outcrops. As such, many of the populations are located within active gypsum mining operations on BLM and ASLD lands. Past and current mining operations have eliminated or modified habitat. BLM lands in Utah that support the populations show evidence of habitat degradation from unauthorized off-highway vehicle use, unauthorized trash dumping, and impacts associated with illegal target shooting. Livestock grazing is a threat mainly when flowering plants are consumed, preventing reproduction. Wildfires associated with nonnative, invasive grasses such as red brome (*Bromus rubens*) and cheatgrass (*B. tectorum*) is also considered a threat to the species.

LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP: BLM, Utah State Land Department, and ASLD.

NOTES: Western Mining and Mineral, Inc. has been cooperating in studies to determine the feasibility of producing mallow seed for restoration efforts on the spoils associated with mining operations. *S. gierischii* seedlings and adults have been observed on some reclaimed areas.

S. gierischii has been added to the BLM's sensitive species list, and the Arizona Department of Agriculture protects it under the Arizona Native Plant Law.

