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## Draft Texas Coastal Bend Shortgrass Prairie Multi-Species Recovery Plan Available

*Shortgrass Prairie Restoration in South Texas Key to Recovery of two endangered plants*

The draft Texas Coastal Bend Shortgrass Prairie Multi-species Recovery Plan, released today, focuses on the recovery of the slender rush-pea and the South Texas ambrosia, two endangered plants found in the Texas Coastal Bend area. Both species were listed due to the significant reduction and degradation of native shortgrass prairie by nonnative invasive grasses within the South Texas coastal area. The draft recovery plan outlines restoration and management actions needed to restore and maintain the shortgrass prairie habitat and recover these two species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) encourages the public to comment on the draft recovery plan. In particular, we are interested in additional information regarding previously unknown populations, the current threats to the species, ongoing beneficial management efforts, and the costs associated with implementing the recommended recovery actions. The public will have 60 days to review and comment on the proposed recovery plan. Comments must be provided by August 1, 2017, and may be submitted in writing by:

- **U.S. Mail:** Charles Ardizzone, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 17629 El Camino Real Suite 211, Houston, TX 77058; or
- **Hand Delivery:** Texas Coastal Ecological Services Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 17629 El Camino Real Suite 211, Houston, TX 77058; or
- **Fax:** (281) 488-5882; or
- **Email:** [amber\\_miller@fws.gov](mailto:amber_miller@fws.gov); and
- **Electronically:** [www.fws.gov/southwest/es/ElectronicLibrary\\_Main.cfm](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/ElectronicLibrary_Main.cfm)

Slender rush-pea and South Texas ambrosia are perennial flowering plant species found in the historically fire-dependent prairie habitat of South Texas' Coastal Bend. Both species are geographically restricted to open grasslands in Nueces and Kleberg Counties, Texas. The loss of habitat as a result of the conversion of native prairie to row crops, improved pastures, residential and commercial development, in addition to the presence of nonnative invasive grasses represent the primary threats to both species.

Recovery plans are guidance and do not obligate the Service or potential partners to undertake the work described in them. However, partnerships are critical for timely implementation of actions vital for recovery. The objective of an agency recovery plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of a species so that protection under the Endangered Species Act is no longer necessary. A recovery plan considers scientific information about the species and provides criteria and actions necessary to be able to reclassify the species to a threatened status (i.e. downlist) or remove it from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. Recovery plans help guide our recovery efforts by describing actions considered necessary for the species' conservation and by estimating time and costs for implementing needed recovery measures.

America's fish, wildlife and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. The Service is working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov), or connect with us through any of these social media channels:*



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