

Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service and other Federal agencies will also take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

This Technical/Agency Draft is for *Gesneria pauciflora* (no common name), a small gregarious shrub which is currently known from only three populations in the western mountains of Puerto Rico. These occur in the municipalities of Maricao and Sabana Grande. Population estimates are difficult due to the plant's habit of growing in dense mats. At all known localities the species is found growing in rocky stream beds on wet serpentine rock, where water is constantly seeping. The species is threatened by the occurrence of natural disasters and the modification of its highly restricted habitat. The largest population is located in an area of steep unstable slopes and may be threatened by landslides and flood damage. Forest management practices such as trail maintenance may also adversely affect the species. This plan will describe measures necessary to recover the species, including studies of its reproductive biology and propagation.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the plan.

Authority

The authority for this action is Section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531.

Dated: September 17, 1997.

Susan R. Silander,

Acting Field Supervisor.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Availability of a Technical/Agency Draft Recovery Plan for *Mitracarpus Maxwelliae*, *Mitracarpus Polycladus*, and *Eugenia Woodburyana* for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announces availability for public review of a technical/agency draft recovery plan for *Mitracarpus maxwelliae*, *Mitracarpus polycladus*, and *Eugenia woodburyana*. *M. maxwelliae*, a small shrub, and *E. woodburyana*, a small tree, are endemic to southwestern Puerto Rico. *M. polycladus*, a small shrub, is found in southwestern Puerto Rico as well, but is also known from the island of Saba, in the Lesser Antilles. These species are threatened by road construction, recreational activities, wildfires, and land clearing associated with development for agriculture and other purposes. The Service solicits review and comments from the public on this draft plan.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan must be received on or before November 24, 1997 to receive consideration by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the draft recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting Ms. Susan Silander, Boquerón Field Office, P.O. Box 491, Boquerón, Puerto Rico 00622. Comments and materials received are available upon request for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Susan Silander, Boquerón Field Office, P.O. Box 491, Boquerón, Puerto Rico 00622, Telephone: 809/851-7297.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring an endangered or threatened species or plant to the point where it is again a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish them, and estimate

time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service and other Federal agencies will also take these comments into account in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

This Technical/Agency Draft is for *Mitracarpus maxwelliae*, *Mitracarpus polycladus*, and *Eugenia woodburyana* (no common names), three species that are known from the southwestern portion of Puerto Rico. *Mitracarpus maxwelliae* is a low densely-branching, mound-like shrub known only from one locality in the Guánica Commonwealth Forest of arid southwestern Puerto Rico. *M. polycladus*, also a small perennial shrub, is known in Puerto Rico from only two locations in the Guánica Commonwealth Forest, where it grows in crevices and soil pockets of coastal rocks. It is also known from the island of Saba in the Lesser Antilles. *Eugenia woodburyana*, a small evergreen tree reaching 6 feet in height, is endemic to Puerto Rico and is known only from the municipalities of Lajas, Cabo Rojo, and Guánica in southwestern Puerto Rico. It is known from the Guánica Commonwealth Forest and the Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge, publicly owned land, as well as privately-owned land. These three species are threatened by road construction, recreational activities, wildfires, and land clearing associated with urban, rural, tourist and agricultural development. This plan will describe measures necessary to recover the species, including studies of its reproductive biology and propagation.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of the plan.

Authority

The authority for this action is Section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531.

Dated: September 17, 1997.

Susan R. Silander,

Acting Field Supervisor.

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