

NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228**

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For Immediate Release

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Draft Recovery Plan for Two Rare Plants Available for Public Comment

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today that it is seeking public review and comment on a draft recovery plan for the Shivwits milk-vetch (*Astragalus ampullarioides*) and the Holmgren milk-vetch (*Astragalus holmgreniorum*), two federally endangered plants found in portions of Mohave County in Arizona and Washington County in Utah.

Notice of Availability of the draft recovery plan was published in today's Federal Register and opens a 30-day public comment period that will end on August 31, 2006.

The draft recovery plan describes specific criteria and actions to reduce threats and stabilize and increase the size of the known populations. Recovery of these plants is in an early stage; and it should be anticipated that the recovery program will change over time as informed by new information and the outcomes of implementing recovery actions. The recovery plan will be revised when needed to reflect changes in information, strategies, and/or actions.

"A recovery plan is not a binding document," said Mitch King, the Service's Director of the Mountain-Prairie Region, "but rather a blueprint to direct voluntary recovery efforts. Recovery and removal of these plants from the list of endangered species is our goal, but it will take a coordinated effort. Some of the crucial recovery tasks will require assistance from our state and federal partners as well as private landowners."

Both plants were listed as endangered in October 2001 due to their rarity and declining population trends. The primary threats to the two species are urban development, off-road vehicle use, grazing (for Shivwits), displacement by non-native invasive plants, and mineral development. Individually, these threats affect the two plants to varying degrees, but in combination they pose an extinction risk for both.

Both the Shivwits milk-vetch and the Holmgren milk-vetch are members of the pea family. The Shivwits milk-vetch, often associated with purple hued patch of soft clay soil, is found only in southern Washington County, Utah. The Holmgren milk-vetch is most frequently found on the skirt edges of hill and plateau formations, slightly above or on the edge of drainage areas in both Washington County, Utah, and Mohave County, Arizona. Both species grow on state and private land, as well as land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. Additionally, the

Shivwits milk-vetch is found at Zion National Park and on Tribal lands belonging to the Shivwits band of the Paiutes.

Information regarding these plants including the draft recovery plan can be obtained at the Service's web site at:

<http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/species/plants/milkvetche/index.htm>

Comments on the Service's proposal should be sent to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2369 West Orton Circle, Suite 50, West Valley City, UT 84119 or electronically mailed to hsmilkvetch@fws.gov using "Attn: Shivwits or Holmgren milk-vetch" in the subject line of your email by close of business on August 31, 2006. Comments may also be faxed to 801-975-3331.

Native plants are important for their ecological, economic and aesthetic values. Plants play an important role in development of crops that resist disease, insects and drought. At least 25 percent of prescription drugs contain ingredients derived from plant compounds, including medicine to treat cancer, heart disease, juvenile leukemia and malaria, as well as those used to assist in organ transplants. Plants are also used to develop natural pesticides.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.