



# News Release

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**Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas)** [www.fws.gov/southwest/](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/)

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## **SERVICE SEEKS COMMENTS ON PROPOSAL TO LIST TWO EAST TEXAS PLANTS**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to list the Texas golden gladeceess (*Leavenworthia texana*) as endangered and the Neches River rose-mallow (*Hibiscus dasycalyx*) as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (Act). In addition we are proposing to designate critical habitat for both plants. A 60-day public comment period will begin upon publication of this proposal in the *Federal Register*.

The Texas golden gladeceess is a winter annual plant that is known to occur naturally in San Augustine and Sabine Counties in east Texas. There are only eight documented Texas golden gladeceess occurrences, including four historic sites where the plants have been eliminated. The Texas golden gladeceess is a habitat specialist, occurring only on isolated outcrops of the Weches Geologic Formation (a specific type of soil). Populations are found on private land and, in two instances, extend onto State highway right-of-ways. The species is threatened by glauconite quarrying activities; oil and gas development, including, pipeline construction; competition from native and nonnative species; herbicide spraying; and conversion of pastures or forest with native prairie patches to pine plantations.

The Neches River rose-mallow is a non-woody perennial plant that is known to occur naturally in Cherokee, Houston, and Trinity Counties in east Texas. The species has also been introduced in Nacogdoches and Harrison Counties. Populations are located on private, State, and Federal lands (Davy Crockett National Forest). This species is found in wetlands and is threatened by activities that would alter the hydrology of wetland areas; competition with native and nonnative species; drought; and effects of herbicide spraying.

The Service is proposing to designate approximately 1,353 acres as critical habitat for the Texas golden gladeceess and approximately 187.8 acres as critical habitat for the Neches River rose-mallow in east Texas.

Critical habitat is a term in the Endangered Species Act that identifies geographic areas containing features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species, and which may require special management considerations or protection. Designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership, establish a refuge or preserve and has no impact on private landowners taking actions on their land that do not require federal funding or permits.

Federal agencies that undertake, fund or permit activities that may affect critical habitat are required to consult with the Service to ensure such actions do not adversely modify or destroy designated critical habitat.

The proposed rule, maps, and other information about the Texas golden gladdess and the Neches River rose-mallow are available at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/> or <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by contacting the Service's Corpus Christi Ecological Service Office at (361) 994-9005. Comments on the proposal and related documents will be accepted through November 13, 2012, and can be submitted electronically via the Federal eRulemaking Portal at: <http://www.regulations.gov>, or can be mailed or hand delivered to Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R2-ES-2012-0064: Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042-PDM; Arlington, VA 22203. Also, the Service must receive requests within 45 days for public hearings, in writing, at the address shown below by October 26, 2012.

For additional information, contact Allan Strand, Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Corpus Christi Ecological Services Field Office, 6300 Ocean Drive, USFWS Unit 5837, Corpus Christi, Texas, 78412-5837, by telephone 361-994-9005 or by facsimile 361-994-8262. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

The Endangered Species Act prohibits malicious damage or destruction of threatened or endangered plant in any area under Federal jurisdiction, and the removal, cutting, digging up, or damaging or destroying of any such species on any other area in knowing violation of any State law or regulation, or in the course of any violation of a State criminal trespass law. Listing also focuses attention on the needs of the species, encouraging conservation efforts by other agencies (federal, state and local), conservation groups, and other organizations and individuals.

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, and to assist in organ transplants. Plants are also used to develop natural pesticides.

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 actively engaged with conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species. To learn more about the Endangered Species program, go to <http://www.fws.gov/angered/>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov). Connect with our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/usfws](http://www.facebook.com/usfws), follow our tweets at [www.twitter.com/usfws](http://www.twitter.com/usfws), watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfws>.

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