

## Peer Review Plan

**Proposed Endangered Species Status for *Chamaecrista lineata* var. *keyensis* (Big Pine Partridge Pea), *Chamaesyce deltoidea* ssp. *serpyllum* (Wedge Spurge), and *Linum arenicola* (Sand Flax), and Proposed Threatened Species Status for *Argythamnia blodgettii* (Blodgett's Silverbush)**

### About the Document

**Title:** Proposed Endangered Species Status for *Chamaecrista lineata* var. *keyensis* (Big Pine Partridge Pea), *Chamaesyce deltoidea* ssp. *serpyllum* (Wedge Spurge), and *Linum arenicola* (Sand Flax), and Proposed Threatened Species Status for *Argythamnia blodgettii* (Blodgett's Silverbush)

**Purpose:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has prepared a proposal to list four plants endemic to South Florida Big Pine Partridge Pea, Wedge Spurge, and Sand Flax, as Endangered, and Blodgett's Silverbush as Threatened, under the Endangered Species Act (Act). The Service is also preparing a proposal to designate critical habitat for these four plants. The proposed rule to designate critical habitat is expected to publish in 2016.

### **Proposed rules:**

(1) *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS-R4-ES-2015-0137, which is the docket number for the proposed critical habitat designation. You may submit a comment by clicking on "Comment Now!"

(2) *By hard copy:* Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-R4-ES-2015-0137, for the proposed critical habitat designation; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; MS: PDM, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

If you would prefer that we send you digital copies of the rules please contact Dave Bender at [David\\_Bender@fws.gov](mailto:David_Bender@fws.gov).

### About the Peer Review Process

**Type of Review:** Influential

**Date of Peer Review:** Peer review will occur between September 29, 2015 and November 30, 2015.

**Estimated Dissemination Date of the Final Rulemaking Document:** September 29, 2016

**Process:** The Service solicited written comments from at least 3 independent scientific reviewers. Formal request for peer review was made by individual letters to experts from various backgrounds at several universities, institutions, and agencies. Reviewers have been selected by the Service for their recognized expertise with South Florida ecosystems, as well as general expertise with plant ecology and conservation. We are following our national policy on peer review and our regional approach for peer review for rulemakings. In selecting peer reviewers, we considered four key factors – expertise, balance, independence, and avoidance of conflict of interest.

This peer review is occurring concurrently with the public comment period for the proposed action. The public comment period is now open and will close on November 30, 2015. The Service will use the information received from the peer review process, as appropriate, to develop the final listing rules for the taxa indicated above.

The Service has provided each peer reviewer with information necessary to complete the peer review. We have requested that reviewers use the Southeast Region’s guidance to ensure that reviews comply with the 1994 policy statement for listing and critical habitat designation under the Act. Peer reviewers are expected to: review all material provided; identify, review, and provide other relevant data; and, provide written comments on relevance and soundness of data, analysis or assumptions of data, and whether we have used the best available science in making the proposed determinations. Peer review comments will be public documents.

### **About Public Participation**

Public comments on the proposed listing will also be sought with the proposed rule published in the *Federal Register* and by mail to interested parties, a press release of the availability of the proposals to interested parties, and a public hearing if requested. The Service will consider all comments received prior to publishing a final determination.

The Service published a notice in the *Federal Register* for proposed listing of Big Pine Partridge Pea, Wedge Spurge, and Sand Flax, as Endangered, and Blodgett’s Silverbush as Threatened.

A summary of the results of the peer review will also be published with the final rule determinations in the *Federal Register*.

This peer review plan is made available on this website to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget’s Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review.

Contact: Dave Bender, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, South Florida Ecological Services Office, 772-562-4294 or David\_Bender@fws.gov.