

Plan for Peer Review of Scientific Information

Division of Endangered Species, Southeast Region, USFWS

2013

Action: Proposed rules, listing of three southeastern plant species and designation of their critical habitat

Species:

Physaria globosa (Short's bladderpod)

Helianthus verticillatus (whorled sunflower)

Leavenworthia crassa (fleshy-fruit gladececess)

Titles:

- Proposed Endangered Species Status for *Physaria globosa* (Short's bladderpod), *Helianthus verticillatus* (whorled sunflower), and *Leavenworthia crassa* (fleshy-fruit gladececess)
- Designation of Critical Habitat for *Physaria globosa* (Short's bladderpod), *Helianthus verticillatus* (whorled sunflower), and *Leavenworthia crassa* (fleshy-fruit gladececess)

Summary: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing to list *Physaria globosa* (Short's bladderpod), *Helianthus verticillatus* (whorled sunflower), and *Leavenworthia crassa* (fleshy-fruit gladececess) as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service also is proposing to designate critical habitat for these three plants. In total, we are proposing 30 units comprising approximately 1004 hectares (2487 acres) in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, and Tennessee. We are proposing to designate approximately 372 hectares (ha) (924 acres (ac)) of critical habitat for Short's bladderpod in Posey County, Indiana; Clark, Franklin, and Woodford Counties, Kentucky; and Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Jackson, Montgomery, Smith, and Trousdale Counties, Tennessee. We are proposing to designate approximately 624 ha (1542 ac) of critical habitat for whorled sunflower in Cherokee County, Alabama; Floyd County, Georgia; and Madison and McNairy Counties, Tennessee. We are proposing to designate approximately 8.4 ha (20.5 ac) of critical habitat for fleshy-fruit gladececess in Lawrence and Morgan Counties, Alabama. We consider all of these units to be occupied at the time of listing. A designation of this size is necessary to conserve these species and allow for their recovery.

The proposed rules can be found on www.regulations.gov, Docket #: FWS-R4-ES-2013-0086 and Docket #: FWS-R4-ES-2013-0087, on the Southeast Region's Listing Program Sharepoint Site, <https://fishnet.fws.doi.net/regions/4/eco/listing/SitePages/Home.aspx>., or at www.fws.gov/cookeville.

Type of Review: Influential

Timeline of the Peer Review (Estimated Dates):

Draft document disseminated:

Peer review initiated:

Peer review completed by:

Date document will be finalized:

About the Peer Review Process: The Service solicited written comments from XX independent scientific reviewers. We mailed individual letters to request peer reviews from experts of various backgrounds at Auburn University, Austin Peay State University, Eastern Kentucky University, University of Kentucky, Vanderbilt University, Missouri Botanical Garden, State Botanical Garden of Georgia, and several agencies. Reviewers were selected by the Service for their recognized expertise with southeastern plants, 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 review is occurring concurrently with the public comment period for the proposed action. The public comment period is now open and will close on **[INSERT DATE HERE]**. The Service will use the information received from the peer review process, as appropriate, to develop the final listing rule for the species 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 determination. Peer review comments will be public documents.

About Public Participation: Public comments on the proposed listing of Short's bladderpod, whorled sunflower, and fleshy-fruit glaucous as endangered and designation of critical habitat were sought with a Federal Register announcement on **[INSERT DATE HERE]** and by the distribution via mail, and press release of this announcement to interested parties. This comment period will end 60 days from the date it published in the Federal Register (**INSERT DATE HERE**). The peer review plan is made available on this website to allow the public to comment and monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's "Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review."

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