

Proposed Threatend Status for the Georgia rockcress (*Arabis Georgiana*)

About the Document

Title: Proposed Threatened Status for the Georgia rockcress (*Arabis georgiana*)

Summary: The Service proposes to list the Georgia rockcress (*Arabis georgiana*), as threatened and propose to designate critical habitat for the species. The Georgia rockcress is a State endangered species and has been a candidate for listing since 2000, with a listing priority number of 2. In total, approximately 786 acres (323 hectares) of riparian, river bluff habitat are being proposed for designation as critical habitat. The effect of this regulation is to conserve Georgia rockcress and its habitat under the Act. The proposed critical habitat is located in Georgia including Gordon, Floyd, Harris, Muscogee, Chattahoochee and Clay Counties; and in Alabama, including Bibb, Dallas, Elmore, Monroe, Russell, Sumter and Wilcox Counties. The Georgia rockcress is a distinct taxonomic entity qualifying for protection as a species under the Endangered Species Act The Georgia rockcress is a distinct taxonomic entity qualifying for protection as a species under the Endangered Species Act. We are required to make a listing determination, and if prudent designate critical habitat for this species as part of a settlement with the Center for Biological Diversity.

Type of Review: Influential

Timeline of the Peer Review (Estimated Dates):

Draft document disseminated: Fall 2013

Peer review initiated: Fall 2013

Peer review completed by: Winter 2013

Date Document will be finalized: Fall 2014

About the Peer Review Process:

The Service sent preliminary requests for participation in the peer review process of this rule to four independent scientific reviewers. These reviewers were selected by the Service for their recognized expertise and experience in ecology of this species. One reviewer each from the states that will be affected by this rule, one reviewer from academia and one private reviewer, have agreed to participate in the review process:

Reviewer 1.

Mincy Moffett, Ph.D.

Botanist

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Reviewer 2.

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Reviewer 3.

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Reviewer 4.

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The Service will solicit written comments, through formal requests for peer review, during the public comment period for the proposed action. The Service will use the information received from the peer review, as appropriate, to develop the final listing rule for the Georgia rockcress. All peer reviews and comments will be public documents. The Service will use the information received from the peer review, as appropriate, to develop the final listing rule for the Georgia rockcress.

About Public Participation:

Public comments on the Georgia rockcress proposed listing rule will be sought upon publication of the proposed rule in the Federal Register and the distribution by mail and press release of this announcement to interested parties. The comment period will be open for 60 days. 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:

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