



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Post Office Box 1306
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/R2/ES-ARD/060401

RECEIVED BY:

JUN 16 2015

JUN 22 2015

SWCA, Incorporated

Steven W. Carothers, Ph.D.
SWCA Environmental Consultants
4407 Monterey Oaks Blvd.
Building 1, Suite 110
Austin, Texas 78749

Dear Dr. Carothers:

This letter is in regard to your petition dated May 26, 2015, received by our office via electronic mail on the same date, requesting that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) delist the federally endangered Navasota ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes parksii*) pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act).

Under the provisions of section 4 of the Act, we must first make an initial finding as to whether a petition to delist a species from the endangered species list presents substantial information indicating that the requested action may be warranted. Section 4(b)(3)(A) of the Act provides that, to the maximum extent practicable, this finding be made within 90 days. If this initial finding concludes that the petition presents substantial information indicating that the requested action may be warranted, then section 4(b)(3)(B) gives the Service one year from the date the petition was received to either: decide that the petitioned action is not warranted; decide that the petition action is warranted, but precluded; or decide that the petitioned action is warranted, and promptly publish a proposed rule.

We are currently required to complete a significant number of listing and critical habitat actions in Fiscal Year 2015, including: complying with court orders and court-approved settlement agreements requiring that petition findings or listing determinations be completed by a specific date, section 4 (of the Act) listing actions with absolute statutory deadlines, and high-priority listing actions. Complying with these court orders, settlement agreements, and other statutory deadlines will require us to spend most of our resources on these actions during Fiscal Year 2015. Therefore, we are not able to address your petition to delist the federally endangered Navasota ladies'-tresses at this time.

Steven W. Carothers, Ph.D.

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If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Michelle Shaughnessy, Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, at 505-248-6671.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Faye E. Nikolopoulos". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "F" and "N".

ACTING

Regional Director

Steven W. Carothers, Ph.D.

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cc: Field Supervisor, Coastal Office, Ecological Services, Clear Lake, TX
Chief, Branch of Recovery and Restoration, Southwest Regional Office, Albuquerque, NM
(Attention: Jennifer Smith-Castro)
Chief, Branch of Classification, Southwest Regional Office, Albuquerque, NM