core conservation strategy of the revised plan is to increase recruitment and decrease mortality, thereby allowing populations of Texas snowbells to grow naturally. One recovery objective is to reduce the intensity of ungulate browsing throughout the subspecies’ range, allowing populations to become self-sustaining without human intervention. Another recovery objective is population augmentation and strategic placement of reintroduced populations to restore population connectivity, thereby enhancing gene flow and fertilization between genetically diverse individuals and populations. To date, cooperating landowners and volunteers have made significant progress toward accomplishing these objectives.

The downlisting and delisting criteria provided in the revised recovery plan are based on the natural recruitment of new Texas snowbell individuals, their growth to maturity, and the increase of populations to a viable level that is sustained without human intervention. The time required to improve the viability of Texas snowbells is influenced largely by its life history.

Request for Public Comments

Section 4(f) of the ESA requires us to provide public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment during recovery plan development. It is also our policy to request peer review of recovery plans (July 1, 1994; 59 FR 34270). In an appendix to the approved recovery plan, we will summarize and respond to the issues raised by the public and peer reviewers. Substantive comments may or may not result in changes to the recovery plan; comments regarding recovery plan implementation will be forwarded as appropriate to Federal or other entities so that they can be taken into account during the course of implementing recovery actions. Responses to individual commenters will not be provided, but we will provide a summary of how we addressed substantive comments in an appendix to the approved recovery plan.

We invite written comments on the draft recovery plan. In particular, we are interested in additional information regarding the current threats to the species, ongoing beneficial management efforts, and the costs associated with implementing the recommended recovery actions.

Public Availability of Comments

All comments received, including names and addresses, will become part of the administrative record and will be available to the public. Before including your address, phone number, electronic mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—will be publicly available. If you submit a hardcopy comment that includes personal identifying information, you may request at the top of your document that we withhold this information from public review. However, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. Comments and materials we receive will be available, by appointment, for public inspection during normal business hours at our office (see ADDRESSES).

Authority

We developed our draft recovery plan and publish this notice under the authority of section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Dated: May 24, 2018.

Amy L. Lueders,
Regional Director, Southwest Region.

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