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Subject: Updated Regional Forester's Special Status Species List

To: Forest Supervisors

This letter officially updates the Regional Forester's Special Status Species (RFSSS) list, which includes federally threatened, endangered and proposed, and Region 6 sensitive species (Enclosure 1). Collectively, these species are referred to as "Special Status Species." The updated list reflects comments received from the forests in response to the March 7, 2018 email requesting review of the draft updated list. This letter also informs and issues manager's decision to remove strategic species from the Interagency Special Status/Sensitive Species Program (ISSSSP).

The ISSSSP and development of the Special Status Species list are proactive approaches for meeting our obligations under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the National Forest Management Act, and our National policy as stated in Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2670 and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Regulation 9500-4. The primary policy objectives are to recover federally listed and proposed species and, for sensitive species, to ensure that actions do not contribute to a loss of viability or cause a significant trend toward listing under the ESA. The effects of any action authorized, funded, or carried out by the Forest Service on a federally listed, federally proposed, or sensitive species will be analyzed in a Biological Evaluation or project NEPA analysis. The criteria for determining sensitive status for a species are enclosed (Enclosure 2).

All enclosures are available for download from the ISSSSP website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/sfpnw/issssp/agency-policy/>. The list will remain static until the next update (normally about three years), except for changes relating to ESA status. You will be notified whenever ESA-related changes are made (for example, if a species becomes federally proposed or listed as threatened or endangered), and these changes become effective immediately. Similarly, newly designated federal ESA candidate species are immediately considered sensitive throughout the Region where the species is suspected or documented to occur. For all federally listed, federally proposed and Region 6 sensitive species, each forest is responsible for tracking any changes in occurrence status (documented or suspected) on their unit and reporting those to Regional Office staff. These changes become effective immediately for all relevant land management activities.

The updated RFSSS list included in Enclosure 1 will apply to all projects initiated on or after the date of this letter. Projects initiated prior to the date of this letter may use the updated RFSSS list transmitted in this letter or the RFSSS list that was in effect when the project was initiated. For the purpose of this letter, "initiated" means that a signed, dated document such as a project initiation letter, scoping letter, or Federal Register Notice has been completed for the project.

Field units are still required to utilize the process established for identification and vouchering of bryophytes, lichens, fungi, invertebrates, and vascular plants. Specific information on how to package, label and mail vouchers is provided on the ISSSSP website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/sfpnw/issssp/inventories/identification.shtml>.



Strategic species are removed from the ISSSSP as of this SSS list update. ISSSSP personnel will no longer track strategic species on the SSS list and no resources (funding and time) will be expended on them. Managers want ISSSSP personnel to focus on RF (and OR/WA State Director) sensitive species and focus efforts where actions provide the most conservation benefit to the species and their habitats. We value our partnerships with Oregon Biodiversity Information Center and Washington Natural Heritage Programs, the state organizations/agencies under the NatureServe umbrella. To this end, we request that field units record survey and locality information in the agency's corporate Natural Resource Manager (NRM) databases for species that are tracked by ORBIC or WNHP, but are not RF sensitive species. Please see the rare flora and animal species lists on ORBIC website and the rare flora lists on WNHP websites (ORBIC, <https://inr.oregonstate.edu/orbic/rare-species/rare-species-oregon-publications>; WNHP, <https://www.dnr.wa.gov/NHPlists>). Survey and locality information for vascular plants, non-vascular plants and fungi are entered into NRM TESP-IS; vertebrates, including amphibians, and invertebrates (aquatic and terrestrial) are entered into NRM Wildlife; and fish are entered into NRM Aquatic Surveys.

If you have questions concerning information on the enclosed list or general questions about RFSSS, please contact Carol Hughes, 503-808-2661, or John Chatel, 503-808-2972. For National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) questions, please contact Heidi Hopkins at 503-808-2281.

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for Regional Forester

Enclosures

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