

SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY

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Public Comments Processing
Attn: FWS-R8-ES-2016-0078
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
MS: BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22041-3803

**Proposal to List San Fernando Valley Spineflower as Threatened Species
Under the Endangered Species Act**

To Whom It May Concern at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) owns the portion of Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (Preserve), on which one of the two known populations of the San Fernando Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *fernandina*; spineflower) occurs. The Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) manages the Preserve.

The Conservancy supports the proposed listing of the spineflower as threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Staff from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) have consulted with staff from the MRCA and Conservancy. The Service has partnered with the Conservancy and MRCA and we continue to be interested in participating in the recovery efforts.

The Service's assessment of the status of the spineflower is accurate, the scientific basis for the listing is excellent, and this listing is needed. This species is now known to occur in only two locations. In one of the locations, approximately 20,000 new homes are proposed for the Newhall Ranch project. This will result in not only substantial direct impacts (removal of 24 percent of that population), but also fragmentation and extensive edge effects on that population.

If you have any questions, please contact Paul Edelman, Deputy Director of Natural Resources and Planning, by phone at (310) 589-3200, ext. 128 or via email at edelman@smmc.ca.gov. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

IRMA MUÑOZ
Chairperson