

CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT AND LISTING PRIORITY ASSIGNMENT FORM

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Astragalus equisolensis*

COMMON NAME: Horseshoe milkvetch

LEAD REGION: 6

INFORMATION CURRENT AS OF: February 11, 2003

STATUS/ACTION:

New candidate

Continuing candidate

Non-petitioned

Petitioned--Date petition received: ____

90-day positive--FR date: ____

12-month warranted but precluded--FR date: ____

Listing priority change

 Former LP: _

 New LP: _

Latest date species first became a Candidate: 1985

Candidate removal: Former LP: ____

A - Taxon more abundant or widespread than previously believed or not subject to a degree of threats sufficient to warrant issuance of a proposed listing or continuance of candidate status.

F - Range is no longer a United States territory.

M - Taxon mistakenly included in past notice of review.

N - Taxon may not meet the Endangered Species Act=s definition of Aspecies.@

X - Taxon believed to be extinct.

ANIMAL/PLANT GROUP AND FAMILY: Flowering Plants - *Fabaceae*

HISTORICAL STATES/TERRITORIES/COUNTRIES OF OCCURRENCE: Utah.

CURRENT STATES/COUNTIES/TERRITORIES/COUNTRIES OF OCCURRENCE: Utah - Uintah County.

LEAD REGION CONTACT: Chuck Davis, (303) 236-7400, extension 235.

LEAD FIELD OFFICE CONTACT: Larry England, (801) 975-3330, extension 138.

BIOLOGICAL INFORMATION:

Astragalus equisolensis is restricted to one population in the vicinity of Horseshoe Bend of the Green River in the center of the Uinta Basin in Uintah County, Utah. The species grows on sand and sandy silt soils derived from the Duchesne River Formation and Pleistocene alluvium immediately above that geologic formation. The species is a component of the salt-desert shrub vegetative community dominated by *Artemisia*, *Atriplex*, and *Tetradymia* species. The species range is a discontinuous series of small stands over an area of about 10 kilometers (6 miles) across. The total number of *A. equisolensis* individuals is estimated at about 10,000.

THREATS:

A. The Present or Threatened Destruction, Modification, or Curtailment of its Habitat or Range.

The total population of *A. equisolensis* is estimated to be about 10,000 individuals occurring sporadically over a range of about 30 square miles (Welsh and Neese 1984, Franklin 1992). The occupied habitat of *A. equisolensis* is within a developed and expanding oil and gas field with several wells and access roads within the species' occupied habitat. The location of the habitat of *A. equisolensis* exposes its population to the likelihood of habitat destruction from off-road vehicle use, road, pipeline, and well site construction in connection with oil and gas development. With such a small population and limited occupied habitat, any destruction, modification, or curtailment of the habitat would have a highly negative impact on the species. Recent oil and gas development projects are projected to directly impact in occupied habitat of the species by increasing by a factor of 4 the current level of habitat disturbance (J. Sinclear, Bureau of Land Management, Vernal Utah pers. comm.).

B. Overutilization for Commercial, Recreational, Scientific, or Educational Purposes.

None known.

C. Disease or Predation.

None known.

D. The Inadequacy of Existing Regulatory Mechanisms.

No Federal or State laws or regulations specifically protect *A. equisolensis*. The BLM administratively recognizes species for special management consideration, but does not have the legal authority to require Federal mineral lease holders to modify their mineral recovery plans and on the ground actions solely to protect this species.

E. Other Natural or Manmade Factors Affecting its Continued Existence. The populations of *A. equisolensis* may not be at levels that would ensure the species long-term demographic stability.

FOR RECYCLED PETITIONS: N/A.

LAND OWNERSHIP: Bureau of Land Management--90 percent. State of Utah--10 percent.

PRELISTING: No specific actions have been taken to protect the species other than BLM's administrative consideration of the species special status as a candidate species.

REFERENCES:

Bureau of Land Management. 1989. Report on the Special Status Plant Inventory Conducted on the Diamond Mountain Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management, Vernal, Utah. 13 pp.

Franklin, M.A. 1992. Report for *Astragalus equisolensis* Neese & Welsh (Horseshoe Milkvetch). Unpublished report on file with the Bureau of Land Management, Vernal, Utah. 8 + xxxii pp.

Neese, E., and S.L. Welsh. 1981. *Astragalus* Section *Desperati* (*Leguminosae*) and a New Species from the Uinta Basin of Utah. *Rhodora* 83:455-460.

Welsh, S.L., and E. Neese. 1984. Status Report for *Astragalus equisolensis* Neese & Welsh (Horseshoe milkvetch) *Fabaceae* (*Leguminosae*) Utah Endemic. Unpublished report on file with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service, Denver, Colorado. 13 + vi pp.

LISTING PRIORITY

THREAT			
MAGNITUDE	IMMEDIACY	TAXONOMY	PRIORITY
High	Imminent	Monotypic genus	1
		Species	2
		Subspecies/population	3
	Non-imminent	Monotypic genus	4
		Species	5
		Subspecies/population	6
Moderate to Low	Imminent	Monotypic genus	7
		Species	8*
		Subspecies/population	9
	Non-imminent	Monotypic genus	10
		Species	11
		Subspecies/population	12

Rationale for listing priority number:

Magnitude: *Astragalus equisolensis* is restricted to one small population within an existing oil and gas field. A significant portion of this species habitat is adversely modified by oil and gas development and ORV activity. Increased activity by these threats may cause a reexamination of the magnitude in the future.

Imminence: The threats described above are currently occurring.

APPROVAL/CONCURRENCE: Lead Regions must obtain written concurrence from all other Regions within the range of the species before recommending changes to the candidate list, including listing priority changes; the Regional Director must approve all such recommendations. The Director must concur on all additions of species to the candidate list, annual retentions of candidates, removal of candidates, and listing priority changes.

Approve: Ralph O. Morgenweck
Regional Director, Fish and Wildlife Service

April 1, 2003
Date

Concur: _____
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service

Date

Do not concur: _____

Director=s Remarks: _____

Date of annual review: February 11, 2003

Conducted by: Larry England