

## 21. ENDANGERED SPECIES:

### FWS proposes protection for newly rediscovered Calif. shrub

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The Obama administration proposed granting Endangered Species Act protection today to a shrub found on the San Francisco Peninsula that was thought extinct until two years ago.

The Franciscan manzanita was unseen since the 1940s and thought to have gone extinct until a botanist spotted it in 2009 growing near a construction project in San Francisco. The plant and its 21,000-pound root ball were subsequently replanted in San Francisco's Presidio, a national park. The exact location of the plant within the park is a closely guarded secret ([Greenwire](#), Aug. 2).

The Fish and Wildlife Service -- acting on a 2009 petition from the Center for Biological Diversity and the Wild Equity Institute -- is proposing to study areas that should be designated "critical habitat" for the plant, which would give it protection against federally funded development.

Brent Plater, Wild Equity's executive director, hailed the service's decision.

"Formal protection coupled with the efforts of the Bay Area's best botanists can make this species once again a functioning part of San Francisco's unique native biological community," Plater said. Its habitat could be the same as the endangered Raven's manzanita, another species that exists only in San Francisco and had one surviving plant as of 1987.

The proposed rule is open for public comment for 60 days with a final habitat designation due within 12 months. FWS is particularly interested in getting information on the risks of vandalism and cutting and seed collecting by the public, as well as climate change and disease.

"We must live for the future, not continue to obsess over, shelter, and protect plants that once may have grown profusely in this area in the prehistoric past," said one unsigned comment. "This is an incredible waste of taxpayer money, especially during an economic recession."

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