



File Code: 2670

Date: August 26, 2011

Route To:

Subject: Sensitive Species Designation for Whitebark Pine

To: Forest and Grasslands Supervisors, Staff Directors

With this letter, I am designating whitebark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*) as a sensitive species in the Northern Region.

On July 19, 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) published in the Federal Register its 12-month status review finding on a petition to list whitebark pine under the Endangered Species Act. After a review of all available scientific and commercial information, the FWS concluded that listing the species as threatened or endangered is warranted, but precluded by higher priority actions. Detailed information about the assessment of threats to the species is provided in the finding, which is available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-07-19/pdf/2011-17943.pdf>.

This finding results in whitebark pine being a FWS candidate for listing. Because of this finding, I am designating the species as sensitive. This designation should not change our approach to management and restoration of whitebark pine, as such activities are clearly needed for the recovery of the species. In fact, this designation will hopefully accelerate our actions to restore whitebark pine. A regional interdisciplinary working group is being formed to help achieve these objectives, in collaboration with Forest personnel.

This sensitive species designation will go into effect 120 days from the date of this letter, in order to allow for completion of ongoing projects and provide time to adjust project analyses that are currently in progress.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact Steve Shelly, Regional Botanist, at (406) 329-3041 or sshelly@fs.fed.us, or Kristi Swisher, Regional Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species Program Leader, at (406) 329-3558 or kswisher@fs.fed.us.

/s/ Thomas A Schmidt (for)

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