

# TECHNICAL NOTES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
PLANT MATERIALS-16

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
SPOKANE, WASHINGTON  
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## THREATENED and ENDANGERED PLANT SPECIES

### Introduction

The **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)** requires federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision making processes by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions, including impacts and/or potential impacts to rare (listed) plants and animals. The **Endangered Species Act** was created to address the preservation of these species. The purposes of the Endangered Species Act are to provide a means for conserving the ecosystem upon which endangered and threatened species depend and to provide a program for the conservation of such species. The ESA directs all Federal agencies to participate in conserving these species. Specifically, section 7 (a)(1) of the ESA charges Federal agencies to aid in the conservation of listed species, and section 7 (a)(2) requires the agencies to ensure that their activities are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of listed species or adversely modify designated critical habitats.

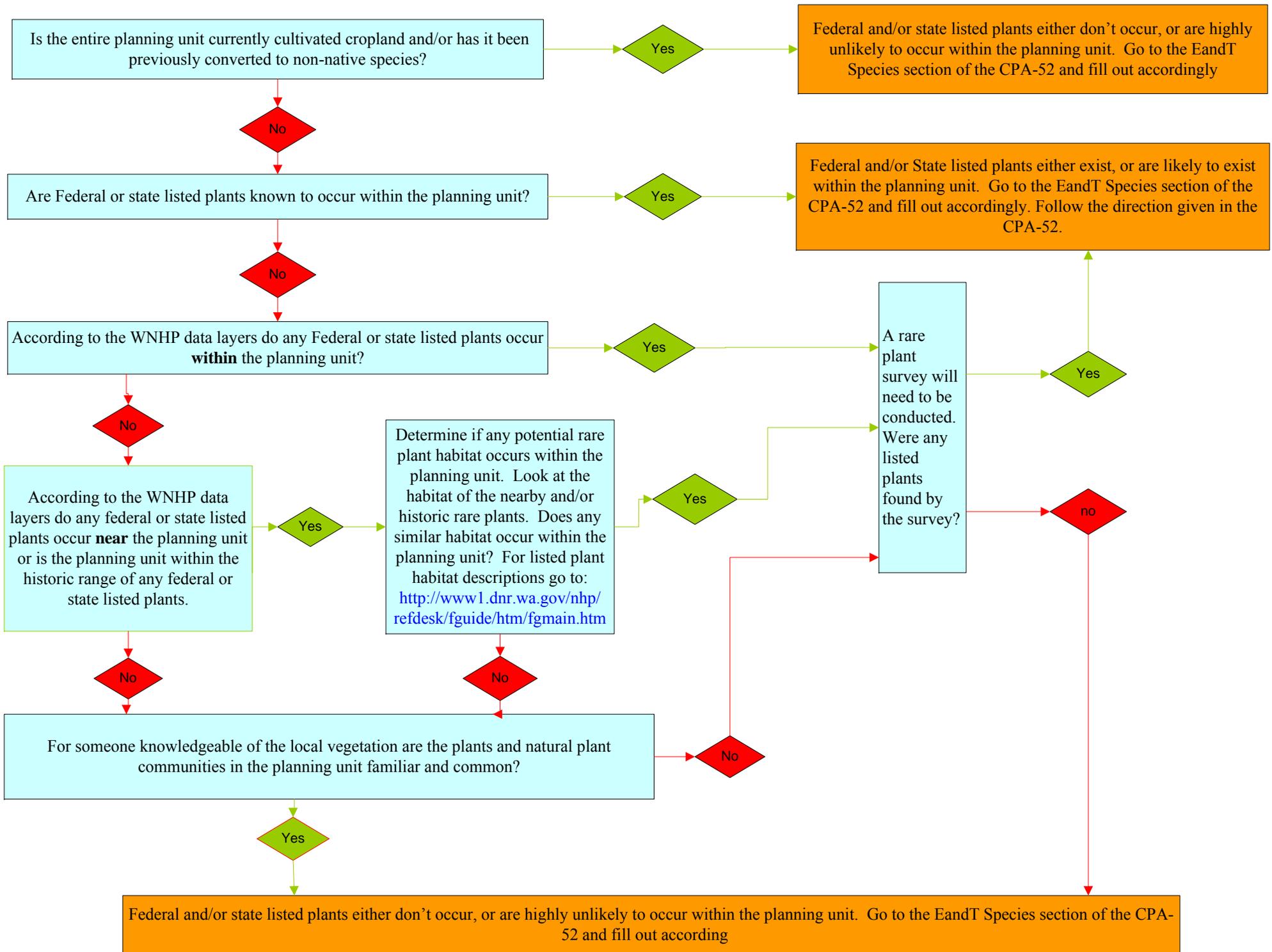
**NRCS policy** (General Manual, Title 190, Part 410, Subpart B, Related Environmental Concerns, Section 410.22, Endangered and Threatened Species of Plants and Animals and State Species of Concern) directs that Agency personnel will not proceed with technical assistance (TA) to landowners and landusers for actions that may affect listed or proposed species. Furthermore, NRCS will provide and encourage the use of alternative measures which benefit listed/proposed species and State Species of Concern, or avoid or reduce any adverse impacts to those species or their habitats.

In order to aid in the conservation of listed plant species, ensure activities are not likely to jeopardize the existence of these species, and avoid adversely modifying designated critical habitats NRCS planners need to consider listed plant species during the planning process.

## **Planning**

Once a planning unit is determined, use the WNHP datasets (see below for details) to identify the existence and/or potential existence of rare plants and plant communities within and/or near the planning unit. The WNHP data are in shapefiles and are to be used in Toolkit or ArcMap. In Toolkit, or ArcMap, the shapefiles are displayed as polygons which represent endangered areas and/or buffer zones around historical or currently known rare plant sites. In Toolkit use the identify button on a polygon to access species and habitat data. Data includes, among other things, scientific name, common name, federal status (i.e. Listed Threatened, Listed Endangered, etc.) and state status.

**Rare Plant Planning Flowchart - see below**



### Appropriate Use of the WNHP Data Set

The WNHP plants data is a sensitive data-set that we use under a data sharing agreement and should be used appropriately. Redistribution or sharing of these maps or data is not permitted, as this could compromise species protection and/or landowner interests. Appropriate uses of WNHP data include the internal sharing of data or maps within a work group under supervision of the licensed user. Data referenced in reports should be presented in general summary form only.

## Rare Plant Information

### Washington Natural Heritage Program (WNHP) Web Site

[http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience/Topics/NaturalHeritage/Pages/amp\\_nh.aspx](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/ResearchScience/Topics/NaturalHeritage/Pages/amp_nh.aspx)

- Provides lists of rare plants and gives their rank and status (both federal and state)
- Provides lists of plants by county
- Provides descriptions, habitats, and photos of rare plants
- Guidelines for conducting rare plant surveys
- Rare plant sighting form
- Other rare plant info.

### WNHP Geographic Information System (GIS) Data Set

Spatial and tabular information on rare plants can be found in files located on the 'O' drive.

[O:\geodata\project\\_data\nrcs\WNHP\\_Plants\\_Data](O:\geodata\project_data\nrcs\WNHP_Plants_Data)

[wnhp\\_curr\\_1083](#) - information gathered from recent surveys for UTM zone 10

[wnhp\\_curr\\_1183](#) - information gathered from recent surveys for UTM zone 11

[wnhp\\_hist\\_1083/1183](#) (1083 (UTM zone 10) / 1183 (zone 11)) - information on historic sightings (pre-1977); occurrences that have been extirpated or destroyed; or occurrences whose current presence at the site is in question.

[WNHP\\_Data\\_Dictionary\\_0809.doc](#) – provides a comprehensive description of the above datasets and discussions on appropriate use.

[OaksGrasses2005\\_1083](#) existing grasslands and oak woodlands in the Puget Lowland and Willamette Valley Ecoregions, Washington

[OakGrasses2005\\_DD\\_809.doc](#) – a description of the OakGrasses2005 data

The WNHP data sets contain the most authoritative information available for Washington's rare plant species populations and endangered ecosystems. However, absence of information in WNHP for any location does *not* indicate that a location lacks significant natural features. The WNHP data set represents an ongoing and incomplete inventory of the state and does not eliminate the need for field surveys.

The WNHP data set currently represents more than 5,500 site-specific records and provides information on:

- Rare vascular and non-vascular plant species
- High-quality terrestrial and wetland ecosystems of special concern
- State and federal listing status of species
- State and global ranks of species rarity as maintained by the Natural Heritage Network.

Federal and state status codes used in the WNHP data-sets\*

FED_STAT (Federal Status)	
LE Li	listed Endangered
LT Li	listed Threatened
PE Pro	Proposed Endangered
PT Propo	sed Threatened
C Candi	date
SC Sp	species of Concern
ST_STAT (State Status)	
E Enda	ngered
T Th	reatened
S Se	nsitive
X Exti	rpated
R1	Review Group 1, Vascular plant species of potential concern, but for which a status has yet to be assigned.
R2	Review Group 2, Same as R1 except this taxon has unresolved taxonomic questions.
P1	Priority 1, Non-vascular plant species needing conservation action.
P2	Priority 2, Non-vascular plant species needing more fieldwork
W	Watch, A plant taxon that is more abundant and/or less threatened in Washington than previously thought.
Blank	No state status has been assigned.
See WNHP_Data_Dictionary_0809.doc located in the same folder as the data-sets for complete descriptions of all attributes and codes.	

\*For more information see [WNHP\\_Data\\_Dictionary\\_0809.doc](#)

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