

## State wants to protect rare Las Vegas Valley plant

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**By Mary Manning**  
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The state is moving toward protecting the Las Vegas buckwheat, a unique subspecies of plant found only in pockets of gypsum-rich soil in and around the Las Vegas Valley.

The state forester's office has scheduled a hearing from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Tuesday at the Nevada Division of Forestry Office, 4747 Vegas Drive.

The Las Vegas buckwheat is

found only in small areas of Clark and Lincoln counties, where the gypsum-rich soils and "badlands" have been lost to growth in the Las Vegas Valley.

Some of the remaining concentrations of plants grow in the Upper Las Vegas Wash and Area III of Nellis Air Force Base, both threatened by residential, commercial and energy-related development, said Rob Mrowka, an ecologist and conservation advocate with the Center for Biological Diversity based in Tucson, Ariz.

Other threats to the plants include unmanaged off-road vehicle use on federal public lands, mining, climate change and utility corridor and energy developments, Mrowka said.

In April the Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to upgrade the priority status for listing the Las Vegas buckwheat under the Endangered Species Act. It is expected that the service will make a decision on the federal petition in December.