

# Rare S.F. bush gets federal protection

S.F. HABITAT

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Federal wildlife officials will issue a final ruling Wednesday designating as an endangered species the last wild Franciscan manzanita found in the world.

The [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) made its decision after years of intensive study, a lawsuit and much hand-wringing over the plant, which was thought to be extinct until a single shrub was discovered in the Presidio in 2009.

The Endangered Species Act listing for the rare bush, known scientifically as *Arctostaphylos franciscana*, will take effect in 30 days. The designation means anyone who removes or tampers with the plant could face criminal prosecution and fines. It would also qualify the plant for federal conservation funds.

The Fish and Wildlife Service also proposed designating more than 300 acres of critical habitat in San Francisco for Franciscan manzanita. The areas in the Presidio deemed suitable for the shrub were Fort Point, Fort Point Rock, the World War II Memorial, Immigrant Point and Inspiration Point.

Six other locations around the city were also named: Corona Heights, Twin Peaks, Mount Davidson, Diamond Heights, Bernal Heights and Bayview Park, all under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

The habitat proposal, which is subject to a 60-day comment period before a final decision can be made, designates locations where the species can be reintroduced and protected from development, trampling and other lethal disruptions.

"People move to San Francisco because it is a unique, diverse place, and a big part of that is the natural environment," said [Brent Plater](#), executive director of [Wild Equity Institute](#), which sued the federal government to list the plant as endangered. "By preserving the Franciscan manzanita and, more importantly, the critical habitat, we are preserving the very reason we all love the Bay Area."

The ground-hugging shrub was thought to have been wiped out in 1947, when the old Laurel Hill Cemetery was bulldozed near the [University](#) of San Francisco's Lone Mountain campus. Then, in October 2009, [Daniel Gluesenkamp](#), director of habitat restoration at Audubon Canyon Ranch, spotted the plant's distinctive white flowers on a recently cleared bluff next to Doyle Drive.

The plant was moved elsewhere in the Presidio to protect it from the Doyle Drive construction project. Clippings of the original manzanita have since been planted in the national park.

Environmental groups, including the Wild Equity Institute, Center for [Biological Diversity](#) and [California Native Plant Society](#), petitioned for the listing shortly after the plant was found. The Wild Equity Institute then sued, accusing Interior Secretary [Ken Salazar](#) of failing to protect the last remaining specimen in the wild.

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