

From: Connie Barlow conniebarlow52@gmail.com 
Subject: Re: FOIA FWS-2018-00613 Final Response - *Torreya taxifolia*
Date: August 30, 2018 at 2:46 PM
To: Tiffany McClurkin foiar4@fws.gov
Cc: Donald Imm donald_imm@fws.gov, Phillips, Catherine catherine_phillips@fws.gov

CB

Ms. McClurkin -

Thank you for sending me the final documents (below) re my FOIA request. I am satisfied with what I have received. I am cc-ing two staff members of USF&WS because these are the two people with whom I have recently had long phone conversations, and who have helped tremendously in this matter.

I thank Lisa Ellis (headquarters communication) for urging me to contact Catherine Phillips. From Dr. Phillips I then realized I could also reach out to Dr. Imm. Both were excellent listeners re my concerns, and both were very receptive to discussing the science (notably, paleoecology) that prompted me beginning in 2004 to dedicate time and action in behalf of *Torreya taxifolia*.

You have been an excellent communicator in this FOIA matter since the beginning. My one suggestion for the future is that, with respect to USF&WS, so long as it is not a lawyer or a journalist who launched the inquiry (and is merely a citizen, like myself), and so long as the matter seems to pertain to policy or management, do try to recruit a senior staff person at the outset to make a phone call to see if the issue can be resolved in a friendly manner, outside of the FOIA.

I now sense that the USF&WS and I are on the same team. We all want to see the endangered *Torreya taxifolia* well served under the guidance of the ESA and possibly with the free help of volunteer citizens like myself who are eager to host "nonessential, experimental" seeds on our own forested properties within states northward of the tree's historic range in Florida. I personally will continue to document (and report on our TorreyaGuardians.org website) what we learn about the exact micro-habitats where the species seems to do best "in the wild" at this stage of ongoing climate change.

What I personally have learned thus far leads me to conclude that *Torreya taxifolia* can be de-listed soon. This stage would entail botanical gardens continuing their excellent work and we citizens continuing ours. Notably, the ex situ "orchard" plantings by Atlanta Botanical Garden and University of Georgia that have been producing seeds prolifically at the Blairsville and Smithgall Woods sites demonstrate that such plantings in or near the southern Appalachian Mountains easily "prevent extinction".

As well, horticultural plantings from long ago that established specimens at a cemetery in Ohio (now the "national champion" *Torreya taxifolia*) and in Pennsylvania attest to the species' ability to thrive in latitudes well north of the historic range in Florida.

Crucial too are the near-century old groves planted in North Carolina: at Biltmore Gardens near Asheville and Harbison House near Highlands. Both have been producing seeds for quite awhile. Moreover, the multi-age seedlings and saplings naturally established nearby attest to the species' ability to thrive and expand its population without becoming invasive in the recipient ecosystems. Thanks to these two historic groves, "recovery" clearly is possible for this species (and with no need for genetic engineering toward disease resistance), so long as the locales chosen for seed distribution reflect the scientific understanding that *Torreya taxifolia* is a "glacial relict" — unable to move north from its peak-glacial refuge in Florida at the end of the Ice Age.

Documentation of *Torreya*'s ability to thrive in northern states and the "naturalization" of century-old groves in North Carolina can be found at this webpage on the Torreya Guardians website: <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/historic-groves.html>

The long-understood recognition of *Torreya taxifolia* as a glacial relict can be accessed here: <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/extinction.html>

The scholarship and news reports on the climate-change adaptation strategy known as "assisted migration" is here: <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/assisted-migration.html>

The history of Torreya Guardians actions and what others have written about us is here: <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/guardians.html>

Our ongoing learnings about how to plant and nurture *Torreya* is here: <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/propagate.html>

Finally, if you are curious about how deeply concerned I am about the problem of climate change overall (and thus my insistence on moving a glacial relict northward), here is a video of a guest sermon I delivered this past Sunday:

VIDEO: Grief and Gratitude in a Time of Climate Change (Barlow)

<https://youtu.be/XDhXyBPj2qo>

For the future,
Connie Barlow, founder of Torreya Guardians

On Aug 29, 2018, at 8:44 AM, Tiffany McClurkin <foiar4@fws.gov> wrote:

Good Morning Ms. Barlow,

Attached is your Final Response and responsive document. Please consider this matter closed. Thanks!

V/R

Tiffany McClurkin
Government Information Specialist
Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Coordinator
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Southeast Region (Region 4)
1875 Century Blvd, Suite 214
Atlanta GA 30345
(E) foiar4@fws.gov

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