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Submission ID: 3726

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Your FOIA request has been created and is being sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

You'll hear back from the agency confirming receipt in the coming weeks using the contact information you provided. If you have questions about your request, feel free to reach out to the agency FOIA personnel using the information provided below.

Contact the agency

FOIA Requester Service Center

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Carrie Hyde-Michaels, FOIA Public Liaison

703-358-2291

Carrie Hyde-Michaels, FOIA Officer, MS-IRTM
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Request summary

Request submitted on **March 27, 2018**.

The confirmation ID for your request is **3726**.



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Contact information

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Your request

The Fish & Wildlife Service has not yet posted anything in its ongoing reports database as to the actual quantities of endangered *Torreya taxifolia* seeds produced year-by-year from ex situ plantings in Smithgall Woods and Blairsville GA, since those trees began producing seeds. It is important for the public to know the success of seed production, year by year, and especially the final destinations of those precious seeds, as produced under the terms of the 2010 update of the ESA recovery plan for this endangered species. My concern is that the seeds at Smithgall Woods may have been unharvested, and therefore "wasted" as food for local squirrels. I have already checked the online "Record of Actions" at this USFWS url: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/reports/implementation-activity-status-ore-report?documentId=600127&entityId=1191> No information is available there for any year. However, the 2010 recovery plan, on p. 9, documented that the agency was already aware that at least the Smithgall Woods ex situ plantings were already producing seeds. It says, "The material planted at Smithgall Woods was propagated from all Georgia source population material (Army Corps. of Engineers, site at Woodruff Dam, Lake Seminole, in Georgia). The trees have grown quite large and are now reproductively mature producing male and female cones annually. " As founder of the citizen activist group *Torreya Guardians*, I would like to know documentation of seed production year by year, beginning in 2007. I am aware that the Blairsville site has likely been producing seeds every year since 2007, yet there is no online documentation of quantities and year-by-year reporting of ultimate destinations of the precious seeds. Please provide me (and thereby our group of citizens) this information. You can access our group's website at <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/>

Fees

What type of requester are you?

other

Fee waiver

yes

Fee waiver justification

I am the founder of Torreya Guardians, which is a group of citizen volunteers who legally access a loophole in the Endangered Species Act to help the glacial relict ancient conifer tree, *Torreya taxifolia*, escape a warming climate by legally accessing seeds for planting by botanical gardens and private landholders in states north of its historically native range in n. FL and s. GA. We receive no funding from anyone and we all volunteer our own time for helping this critically endangered tree. You can learn about the history of our actions via this webpage on our website, History of Torreya Guardians:

<http://www.torreyaguardsians.org/guardians.html>

Request expedited processing**Expedited processing**

yes

Justification for expedited processing

Our group, Torreya Guardians, has been mentioned in many academic papers and some media reports as successfully pursuing the "assisted migration" northward of the USFWS endangered species, Florida Torreya. Yet, March 1-2 a USFWS staffer (Vivian Negrón-Ortiz) in charge of this species attended a "Torreya Symposium" organized by a variety of institutions. Today, an article appeared by a journalist in an online environmental magazine that indicates that the "official" plans created by this institutional team exclude coordination with our group. Yet the 2010 recovery plan mentions in 3 places for institutions to coordinate their efforts with us. Our group is entirely engaged in moving seeds north, as and easy to implement and inexpensive solution to the species' ongoing decline (since its listing as an endangered species in 1984) in its small peak-glacial refuge in Florida. Yet the article indicates that the official institutions and scientists plan to engage in expensive and highly interventionist strategies of freezing embryos and also undertaking CRISPR genetic manipulation -- with no indication that they are considering the success we are achieving

in simple and cheap actions of simply helping this large-seeded species move its seeds to cooler realms. You can access this journal article (March 27 in Yale Environment 360) via the newest entry posted on our own Torreya Guardians reports page here: <http://www.torreyaguardians.org/comments.html>



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