

ADVANCED CONSERVATION STRATEGIES

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Dr. Negrón-Ortiz:

I am pleased to hear that the FWS has formed a working group to aid in the recovery planning and actions for *Torreya taxifolia*. Thank you for your efforts in leading this important and critical process.

As you likely are aware, Assisted Migration (Assisted Colonization, Managed Relocation) has been receiving increasing attention in by both the scientific and conservation practitioner communities. While controversial, the basic idea of proactive management in the face of oncoming climate change is gaining traction. A number of science-based assisted migration projects are underway, providing important knowledge for conservation planning (Willis et al. 2009). Further, irrespective of oncoming extinction risk from climate change, a number of species translocations based on ecological history have demonstrated conservation gains. This includes private efforts such as the Bolson Tortoise in New Mexico (Truett & Phillips 2009) and public efforts (e.g., California Condors in the Grand Canyon). Similarly, New Zealand's Department of Conservation has undertaken a number of innovative species recovery plans that includes species translocations and taxon substitutions.

As you are also aware, private efforts have been underway to translocate *Torreya* populations to locations that are within the species' historical distribution. Those efforts are a missed opportunity for conservation science. An alternative approach managed and/or endorsed by the Fish and Wildlife Service could provide the scientific resources needed to learn a great deal about species recovery plans in an era of climate change. I urge the *Torreya* Recovery Team to consider supporting a science-based pilot program, leveraging experimental populations, that explores translocating *Torreya* populations to historical locations that might prove to be critical habitat in the near future. Such efforts could prove critical to avoid extinction of this iconic conifer.

Sincerely,



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