

Abstract: Habitat Evaluation and Surveys for Listed Plant and Animal Species at Pecos National Historical Park Pigeon's Ranch and Cañoncito Subunits

Surveys for the Santa Fe cholla, cyanic milkvetch, and grama grass cactus were conducted in 2008, 2009, and 2010. None of the three species was detected on any of the surveys. The low hills of the Cañoncito survey area appear to contain the most likely habitat for rare plants. While the Santa Fe cholla could occur within this area, it has not been observed and is not expected to occur here. The other species are much more cryptic and are more likely to have escaped detection.

Evaluation of riparian habitats in the Pigeon's Ranch and Cañoncito Subunits did not detect suitable breeding habitats for Southwestern Willow Flycatchers or Yellow-billed Cuckoos. Riparian patches lacked the necessary structure and area for either species. Several emerging coyote willow patches along the Pecos River are also deficient in area and height but show promise for the future if they are left to develop. Two years of surveys of the riparian habitat adjoining the Pecos River revealed 77 bird species in four vegetation types, but we detected no Southwestern Willow Flycatchers or Yellow-billed Cuckoos. Habitat in the Pigeon's Ranch Subunit was not suitable for breeding Gray Vireos. Piñon-juniper habitat in the Cañoncito Subunit appeared marginal, primarily due to slope and area, and 2009 and 2010 surveys did not detect Gray Vireos.