

From: Connie Barlow conniebarlow52@gmail.com 
Subject: win-win proposal to ABG for solving Torreya problem
Date: August 7, 2018 at 10:59 AM
To: Mary Pat Matheson mpmatheson@atlantabg.org
Cc: Tiffany McClurkin foiar4@fws.gov, Negron-Ortiz, Vivian Vivian_NegronOrtiz@fws.gov

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To: Mary Pat Matheson, President of the Atlanta Botanical Garden

Fr: Connie Barlow, Founder of Torreya Guardians

Re: **Proposal for win-win solution of Freedom of Information Act data request** I placed with USF&WS re management of AGB ex-situ seed production of Florida Torreya at Blairsville GA

Dear Ms. Matheson:

Attached is a lengthy pdf to provide the entire background documents on **the impasse bt. ABG and our citizen group (Torreya Guardians)**. For 14 years Torreya Guardians has been utilizing a loophole in the Endangered Species Act to assist the climate-endangered (glacial relict) Florida Torreya in moving to states northward of Georgia. The terms of the 2010 Recovery Plan update and AGB's own policies prohibit such actions within the confines of the official plan. However, the Recovery Plan does direct the implementing institutions to "coordinate" with Torreya Guardians.

1. The **impasse began** 15 February 2018, when I received a hostile email response from Emily Coffey (p. 12 of pdf) to a query I made to Carrie Radcliffe February 14 (p. 10 of pdf).

2. In March I filed **a data request to the USF&WS, via the Freedom of Information Act**. The key part of my FOIA data inquiry is:

... 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.torreyaguardsians.org/>

3. USF&WS FOIA officer (Tiffany McClurkin) **partially fulfilled my data request** (with documentation I mostly already knew about, including the hostile email from Emily Coffey). Ms. McClurkin stated (July 6):

"I'm currently in possession of the responsive records for your request, but it requires a review and signature prior to sending to you. Some information will need to be sent to the Solicitor's Office for review prior to sending to you, but there are some documents that have been deemed clearly releasable. I hope to have a partial response to you soon. Thanks for your continued patience."

4. I extended the deadline two weeks in order to receive the remaining data held back at DOI. When that deadline extension passed, I sent an August 3 email to the FOIA officer, titled **"Proposed win-win solution and the larger ESA imperative."** In that email I requested that my FOIA request be "put on hold" until the relevant parties could consider my proposal. If a win-win outcome is achievable, I believe the remaining date will not be necessary for me to receive.

5. I am now sharing that proposal directly with you in the attached 29-page pdf.

The win-win proposal itself is just 4 pages long, and know that I found **I could easily step into the shoes of ABG management decisions and see them in a favorable light — given the conservation worldview assumptions of AGB staff.** Staff's stated goal is to "prevent extinction" and "safeguard plant materials," which they indeed have done. However, **my goal as a citizen activist** (author of 4 books, with the 2001 book being grounded in paleoecology) is to attempt to **help Torreya taxifolia to "recover" its presumed pre-glacial ecological niche as a self-sustaining member of the sub-canopy vegetation of the southern Appalachians.** I believe all our conflicts have arisen from these basic worldview differences.

REQUEST: Please do a quick email reply just to let me know that this email made it all the way to you. Then, peruse the pdf and also please see how we Torreya Guardians make our **"glacial relict" rationale evident** and make **our actions and outcomes publicly accessible.**

Finally, please consider the **brief window of opportunity** we have to ensure that (a) the Florida Torreya story will not contribute to the current **Congressional feeding frenzy to de-fang the Endangered Species Act**, (2) I will be motivated to speak well of the official management of this species when I post my own comments re the proposed changes to USF&WS ESA regulations (deadline for comments is Sept 24), and (3) when the **"Dusky Frog" critical habitat case is heard by the U.S. Supreme Court Oct 1**, the example of Florida Torreya can be tapped by the media as the polar opposite: that is, private landholders are excited to be given opportunities (via seeds) to dedicate their own properties to helping a species recover. Note: Two journalists spoke with me last month, and one is contracted (by Norton) to write a book on "people moving trees north", which will feature the example of Torreya Guardians. Let's make this story a win-win for all!

For the future,

Connie Barlow



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