The small number of populations and individuals of many of these taxa increases the potential for extinction from naturally occurring events. The small gene pool may depress reproductive vigor, or a single humancaused or natural environmental disturbance could destroy a significant percentage of the individuals or the only extant population. Two of the proposed plant taxa, Achyranthes mutica and Panicum niihauense, are each known from a single population. Five additional proposed taxa have 5 or fewer populations (Cyperus trachysanthos, Phyllostegia parviflora, Platanthera holochila, Sanicula purpurea, and Schiedea kauaiensis), and 7 of the taxa are estimated to number no more than 100 individuals (Achyranthes mutica, Cenchrus agrimonioides, Panicum niihauense, Phyllostegia parviflora, Platanthera holochila, Schiedea kauaiensis, and Schiedea nuttallii). All of the proposed taxa either number fewer than 20 populations or total fewer than 1,000 individuals (see Table 2).

The Service has carefully assessed the best scientific and commercial information available regarding the past, present, and future threats faced by these taxa in determining to propose this rule. Based on this evaluation, the preferred action is to propose listing 13 of these plant taxa as endangered (Achyranthes mutica, Cenchrus agrimonioides, Cyanea grimesiana ssp. grimesiana, Cyperus trachysanthos, Euphorbia haeleeleana, Isodendrion laurifolium, Panicum niihauense, Phyllostegia parviflora, Platanthera holochila, Sanicula purpurea, Schiedea hookeri, Schiedea kauaiensis, and Schiedea nuttallii) and Isodendrion longifolium as threatened. The 13 taxa proposed as endangered are threatened by one or more of the following-habitat degradation and/or predation by pigs, goats, deer, cattle, and rats; competition for space, light, water, and nutrients from alien plants; habitat loss from fires; human impacts from military training practices and recreational activities; and substrate loss. Seven of the proposed taxa have 5 or fewer populations, and 7 of the taxa are estimated to number no more than 100 individuals. Small population size and limited distribution make these taxa particularly vulnerable to extinction from reduced reproductive vigor or from naturally occurring events. Because these 13 taxa are in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their ranges, they fit the definition of endangered as defined in the Act. Therefore, the determination of

endangered status for these 13 taxa is warranted.

Although populations of *Isodendrion* longifolium are threatened by habitat degradation and/or destruction by goats and pigs and competition with six alien plant species, the larger distribution of populations and total numbers of plants reduce the likelihood that this species will become extinct in the near future. For these reasons, Isodendrion longifolium is not now in immediate danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. However, *Isodendrion longifolium* is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future if the threats affecting it are not curbed. As a result, Isodendrion longifolium is proposed to be listed as a threatened species.

Critical habitat is not being proposed for the 14 taxa included in this rule for reasons discussed in the "Critical Habitat" section of this proposal.

Critical Habitat

Critical habitat is defined in section 3 of the Act as—(i) the specific areas within the geographical area occupied by a species, at the time it is listed in accordance with the Act, on which are found those physical or biological features (I) essential to the conservation of the species and (II) that may require special management consideration or protection; and (ii) specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by a species at the time it is listed, upon a determination that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species. "Conservation" means the use of all methods and procedures needed to bring the species to the point at which listing under the Act is no longer necessary.

Section 4(a)(3) of the Act, as amended, and implementing regulations (50 CFR 424.12) require that, to the maximum extent prudent and determinable, the Secretary propose critical habitat at the time a species is determined to be endangered or threatened. The Service finds that designation of critical habitat is not prudent for the 14 taxa proposed in this rule. Service regulations (50 CFR 424.12(a)(1)) state that designation of critical habitat is not prudent when one or both of the following situations exist—(1) The species is threatened by taking or other human activity, and identification of critical habitat can be expected to increase the degree of threat to the species, or (2) such designation of critical habitat would not be beneficial to the species. As discussed under Factor B, these taxa are threatened by overcollection, due to low numbers or population size. The publication of

precise maps and descriptions of critical habitat in the Federal Register and local newspapers as required in a proposal for critical habitat would increase the degree of threat to these plants from take or vandalism and, therefore, could contribute to their decline. The listing of these taxa publicizes the rarity of the plants and, thus, can make these plants attractive to researchers, curiosity seekers, or collectors of rare plants. All involved parties and the major landowners have been notified of the location and importance of protecting the habitat of these taxa. Additional protection of the habitat of these taxa will be addressed through the recovery process and through the section 7 consultation process. The Service finds that designation of critical habitat for these 14 taxa is not prudent at this time. Such a designation would increase the degree of threat from vandalism, collecting, or other human activities and is unlikely to aid in the conservation of these taxa.

Available Conservation Measures

Conservation measures provided to species listed as endangered or threatened under the Act include recognition, recovery actions, requirements for Federal protection, and prohibitions against certain activities. Recognition through listing can encourage and result in conservation actions by Federal, State, and local agencies, private organizations, and individuals. The Act provides for possible land acquisition and cooperation with the State and requires that recovery plans be developed for listed species. The protection required of Federal agencies and the prohibitions against certain activities involving listed plants are discussed, in part, below.

Section 7(a) of the Act, as amended, requires Federal agencies to evaluate their actions with respect to any species that is proposed or listed as endangered or threatened and with respect to its critical habitat, if any is being designated. Regulations implementing this interagency cooperation provision of the Act are codified at 50 CFR part 402. Section 7(a)(4) requires Federal agencies to confer with the Service on any action that is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a species proposed for listing or result in destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat. If a species is listed subsequently, section 7(a)(2) requires Federal agencies to ensure that activities they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or to destroy or adversely modify its critical habitat. If a Federal action may