



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mississippi Field Office
6578 Dogwood View Parkway, Suite A
Jackson, Mississippi 39213

February 8, 2007

Notice of Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for the Flatwoods Salamander

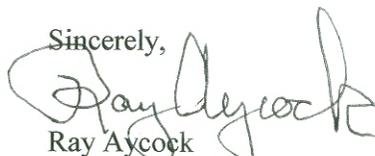
On February 7, 2007, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* to designate critical habitat for the flatwoods salamander in 45 subunits across the states of Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. Copies of the proposed rule can be obtained from our website: <http://www.fws.gov/southeast/hotissues/> or by contacting Connie Dickard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 6578 Dogwood View Parkway, Jackson, MS 39213; 601-321-1121.

The flatwoods salamander was listed as threatened on April 1, 1999 (64 FR 15691). It is endemic to the longleaf pine flatwoods of the lower southeastern Coastal Plain. Extant populations occur in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. The flatwoods salamander historically occurred in Alabama. We are proposing critical habitat units in Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina for this species. These units encompass a total of approximately 31,428 acres (ac), or 12,719 hectares (ha), across the three states. The proposed critical habitat units are located in 11 counties in Florida, two counties in Georgia, and three counties in South Carolina. The counties are: Baker, Calhoun, Franklin, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Liberty, Santa Rosa, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington counties in Florida; Baker and Miller counties in Georgia; and Berkeley, Charleston and Jasper counties in South Carolina.

Critical habitat refers to specific geographic areas that are essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management and protection. Section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act requires that federal agencies ensure that actions they fund, authorize, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of an endangered or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical habitat. A critical habitat designation does not set up a preserve or refuge. It does not affect individuals, organizations, states, local governments or other non-federal entities that do not require federal permits or funding. Most private land use activities, such as silviculture or agriculture, would not involve a federal action that may affect critical habitat and, therefore, would not likely trigger a consultation requirement.

With this proposal, the Service is seeking comments, suggestions, and any additional information on biology, threats, range, distribution, population size, or current or planned activities and their possible impacts on the flatwoods salamander and its proposed critical habitat. A final decision on whether or not to designate critical habitat for this species will consider all comments and information received by April 9, 2007. If you have any questions or if we can provide additional information, please contact Linda LaClaire at 601-321-1126 or Connie Dickard at 601-321-1121.

Sincerely,



Ray Aycock
Field Supervisor