



Tumbling Creek Cavesnail

Final Critical Habitat Designation

Questions and Answers

What action is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service taking?

We designated approximately 25 acres of critical habitat for the Tumbling Creek cavesnail under the Endangered Species Act by publishing a final rule in the *Federal Register*. The critical habitat encompasses Tumbling Creek and associated springs, located near Protem, Taney County, Missouri. The area is all on land privately held by one landowner.

What is the Tumbling Creek cavesnail?

The Tumbling Creek cavesnail is a federally endangered aquatic snail, found in a single cave stream and associated springs in Taney County in southwestern Missouri. The species is known only from Tumbling Creek and a few of its small tributaries and underground springs within Tumbling Creek Cave and downstream to Big Creek at Schoolhouse Spring. The primary threats are the degradation of water quality in Tumbling Creek due to increased siltation from overgrazing, tree removal, and other activities, and non-point source pollution within the recharge area of Tumbling Creek Cave. Sources of pollution include the drainage of barnyard and feedlot wastes and the discharge of treated sewage into sinkholes, which eventually may reach the cave. Accidental chemical spills and dumping trash into sinkholes also threaten Tumbling Creek's water quality.

What is critical habitat?

Critical habitat, under the Endangered Species Act, refers to specific geographic areas that are essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management consideration or protection. These areas do not necessarily have to be occupied by the species at the time of designation. This means that areas must be identified which will allow for the protection of the current population, and any population increases that may be required to achieve recovery (allowing the species to be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species).

How will the designation help the Tumbling Creek cavesnail?

Federal agencies are required to consult with the Service on actions they carry out, fund, or authorize to ensure that their actions will not destroy or adversely modify critical habitat. In this way, a critical habitat designation protects areas that are necessary for the conservation of the species.

What was the result of the economic analysis conducted by the Service?

When designating critical habitat, the Service must take into consideration the potential economic impact, as well as any other benefits or impacts, of specifying any particular area as critical habitat. Any area may be excluded from critical habitat if it is determined that the benefits of excluding it outweigh the benefits of specifying the area as part of critical habitat,

unless the Service determines that the failure to designate the area as critical habitat will result in the extinction of the species.

An economic analysis of the costs and benefits of designating critical habitat for the Tumbling Creek cavesnail was completed on March 11, 2011. The analysis did not identify any disproportionate costs due to the designation, therefore no areas were excluded from the designation. The Economic Analysis is available online at www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/Snails/TCCA_CHfinalEconAnalys11March2011.html.

Where can I learn more about the Tumbling Creek cavesnail and its critical habitat?

Information is online at <http://www.fws.gov/midwest/endangered/> or you may contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Columbia Missouri Field Office at:

Field Supervisor
Columbia Missouri Ecological Services Fish and Wildlife Office
101 Park DeVille Drive, Suite A
Columbia, MO 65203

Telephone: (573) 234-2132
FAX: (573) 234-2181.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.