



News Release

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AGENCIES PLEDGE TO CONSERVE UNIQUE ARIZONA SNAIL - Seeking Input on Page Springsnail Agreement-

Protection for the rare Page springsnail is on the way. Arizona Game and Fish Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have drafted an agreement to conserve the snail and its habitat. The agencies are seeking comments on the agreement and inviting area spring owners to participate in conserving and restoring this unique species.

The one-tenth inch snail – a candidate for Endangered Species Act protection – is primarily found in a series of springs located within an approximately one-mile area along the west side of Oak Creek around the community of Page Springs, Yavapai County.

The draft agreement identifies measures to insure that Department management of Page Springs and Bubbling Springs fish hatcheries will minimize loss of Page springsnails and impacts on their habitat. The two agencies will monitor springsnail populations and encourage neighboring landowners to assist in conserving the species. The draft Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for the Page springsnail accompanies an application for an enhancement of survival permit that the Game and Fish Department submitted to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs) are for species that are not yet listed as endangered or threatened, but are considered to be in decline and could be listed in the future. They identify actions that the landowner commits to take to conserve declining species. They may include habitat protection; management; or restoration actions such as fencing, stream rehabilitation, controlled burns, or species reintroduction. Landowners who participate in this program will receive assurances from the Service that no additional conservation measures above and beyond those contained in the CCAA will be required and that no additional land, water, or resource-use restrictions will be imposed upon them should the species become listed in the future.

Page springsnails require permanent springs, seeps, marshes and running water where they can attach to firm substrates such as cobble, rocks, woody debris and plants. They graze predominantly on microscopic attached diatoms. The species is vulnerable because its available habitats are small and isolated and can be subject to vegetation removal, the introduction of non-native species, such as crayfish and spring flow changes resulting from groundwater pumping.

The Oak Creek springs complex containing Page springsnails includes the outflow to Lo Lo Mai Springs and Bubbling Ponds. Another population was recently discovered at the Spring Creek headwaters. A population at Shea Springs at Tavaschi Marsh, east of Clarkdale, is believed to be lost.

Comments on the draft conservation agreement are due by Feb. 28, 2008, and should be submitted to the Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, 2321 W. Royal Palm Rd., Ste. 103, Phoenix, AZ 85021. The draft conservation agreement and related information is available by calling the Service at 602-242-0210 or on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/>.

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Note to editors: Photo support available from contacts listed above.