

## **Proposed Endangered Status and Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for Spikedace (*Meda fulgida*) and Loach Minnow (*Tiaroga cobitis*)**

**Title: Proposed Endangered Status and Proposed Designation of Critical Habitat for Spikedace (*Meda fulgida*) and Loach Minnow (*Tiaroga cobitis*)**

**Purpose:** In October 2010, we will publish a rule in the Federal Register proposing reclassification of spikedace and loach minnow to endangered along with a proposed designation of critical habitat for the two species in Arizona and New Mexico. At that time, we will solicit comments from independent scientific reviewers concurrently with public review of the proposed delisting rule in accordance with our July 1, 1994, Interagency Cooperative Policy for Peer Review in Endangered Species Act Activities (59 FR 34270).

### **About the Peer Review Process**

**Type of Review:** Influential

**Date of Peer Review:** Peer review will occur between October 25, 2010 and December 25, 2010.

**Estimated Dissemination Date of the Final Rulemaking Document:** October 2011.

**Process:** In accordance with the peer review requirements of the Office of Management and Budget's "Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review" (available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy2005/m05-03.pdf>), scientific information influential to a listing or reclassification decision shall be peer reviewed. In October of this year, the Service will publish a proposed rule for reclassification of spikedace and loach minnow to threatened status, and to designate critical habitat for the two species. At that time, we will open a 60-day public comment period. We intend to initiate peer review concurrent with the public comment period.

We will solicit external peer review of this document through formal requests to independent scientific reviewers experienced with the biology and ecology of this species, native fishes in the southwest, and/or southwest rivers systems. We anticipate soliciting peer review from individuals at Arizona State University, the University of Arizona, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the U.S. Forest Service, The Nature Conservancy, and members of the Desert Fishes Council, as well as private individuals. We will request written responses from peer reviewers on the scientific information used in our analysis of the status of the species and proposed critical habitat complexes. We anticipate receipt of reviews from a minimum of three individuals in response to our peer review request.

**Handling of Peer Review Comments:** All peer review responses and comments will be public documents. If a peer reviewer does not want his/her name to appear in the final decision document he/she must inform us of this early in the review process. Peer review comments will be incorporated or addressed, as appropriate, in the final decision document.

**Public Participation:** We will request public comments on the reclassification of spikedace and loach minnow and designation of critical habitat for the two species with publication of the proposed rule on approximately October 25, 2010. We will provide notice to individuals who have expressed an interest in these species by mail and to the public through press releases. The comment period is expected to end in December 2010. The public review process will run concurrently with the peer review process. We will provide responses to comments received through this process in the final rule.

This peer review plan is made available on this website to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's "Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review".

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