

***Questions and Answers
Regarding the Designation of Critical Habitat for
Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse***

--What it Means to Wyoming--

How do you know that the Preble's meadow jumping mouse inhabits Wyoming?

Knowledge about the current distribution of the Preble's comes from collected specimens and live trapping locations by private contractors, as well as State and Federal agencies, from both range-wide survey efforts and numerous site-specific survey efforts mostly conducted in Wyoming and Colorado since the mid 1990s.

Why is the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service designating critical habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse?

As the result of a lawsuit filed by several private conservation groups and individuals, which included Biodiversity Legal Foundation, Biodiversity Associates, Center for Biological Diversity, South Dakota Resources Coalition, David C. Jones, and Dennis Williams, a court-mediated settlement was reached. As a result, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service will complete a designation of critical habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse and the Topeka shiner.

What are the regulatory consequences of a critical habitat designation?

Regulatory consequences of a designation of critical habitat are that Federal agencies must consult with the Service before undertaking actions with a ***federal nexus*** (for example – projects or activities that require a Federal authorization, permit, license, or funding) that might adversely affect critical habitat. Because the Preble's meadow jumping mouse is already listed as an threatened species, consultations are already taking place. Therefore little or no additional regulatory burden is anticipated. There will be no regulatory impact on private landowners taking actions on their lands which do not involve a federal nexus.

What areas in Wyoming are being designated for Preble's meadow jumping mouse critical habitat?

In Wyoming, critical habitat units affect portions of stream reaches in Albany, Converse, Laramie, and Platte counties. The largest units include portions of Chugwater Creek and Cottonwood Creek. Additionally, one smaller unit occurs in the Lodgepole Creek drainage. For more details, please see the final rule. You may obtain the Preble's meadow jumping mouse proposal online at the Service's web site at:

<http://mountain-prairie.fws.gov/preble> or request a copy by writing to: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 755 Parfet Street, Suite 361, Lakewood, CO 80225-0046.

How would a critical habitat designation affect the agricultural community in Wyoming?

The Service anticipates that a critical habitat designation would have little effect on the agricultural community as most activities associated with agricultural production would not have a federal nexus. A critical habitat designation does not affect situations where a federal agency is not involved for example, a landowner undertaking a project on private land that involves no federal funding or permit would not be affected. The fact that land had been designated as critical habitat for the mouse would have no effect on the landowner. As a listed species, the Preble's meadow jumping mouse is already protected under the ESA wherever it occurs.

Would a critical habitat designation prohibit hunting, fishing and other recreational uses in areas in or near critical habitat?

No. A designation of critical habitat will not restrict or prohibit landowners and other people from accessing the land or stream areas for recreational and other activities.

Has critical habitat already been designated for any other species in Wyoming?

No.

How can I get more information about the Preble's meadow jumping mouse critical habitat?

For more information, you may telephone the Service's Cheyenne Office at 307-772-2374, ext 0 or visit our web site at mountain-prairie.fws.gov/preble.

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