



# News Release

Public Affairs Office  
PO Box 1306  
Albuquerque, NM 87103  
505/248-6911  
505/248-6915 (Fax)

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**For Release:** June 22, 2010

**Contacts:** Christine Tincher at 505/248-6909

## Draft Environmental Assessment Available Revised Designation of Critical Habitat for Four Invertebrate Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today a proposal to revise designated critical habitat for the Pecos assimineia (*Assimineia pecos*), and to newly designate critical habitat for the Roswell springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis roswellensis*), Koster's springsnail (*Juturnia kosteri*), and Noel's amphipod (*Gammarus desperatus*), under the Endangered Species Act. In total, the Service is proposing to designate as critical habitat approximately 515 acres for the four species. The proposed critical habitat is located in Chaves County, New Mexico, and Pecos and Reeves Counties, Texas. The Service is also announcing the availability of the draft economic analysis and draft environmental assessment (EA) for this action.

All four invertebrate species are associated with aquifer-fed spring systems in desert grasslands of the Pecos River Basin in southeast New Mexico and southwest Texas. The isolated limestone and gypsum springs, seeps, and wetlands located in and around Roswell, New Mexico, and Pecos and Reeves Counties, Texas, provide the last known habitats in the world for several endemic (native) species of fish, plants, mollusks, and crustaceans.

The Roswell springsnail and Koster's springsnail are aquatic species. These species are currently known only from the Middle Tract of Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge and a nearby complex of springs owned by the city of Roswell, Chaves County, New Mexico. The core population is in the Sago Springs Complex and Bitter Creek.

The Pecos assimineia prefers a humid microhabitat created by wet mud or beneath vegetation mats, typically within about 1 inch (in) (2 to 3 centimeters (cm)) of running water. It is presently found at two sites on the Refuge, at Diamond Y Spring and its associated drainage in Pecos County, Texas, and at East Sandia Spring, in Reeves County, Texas.

Noel's amphipod is a small freshwater shrimp in the family Gammaridae that inhabits shallow, cool, well-oxygenated bodies of waters. It is currently known from five sites at the Refuge, including Sago Springs Complex, Bitter Creek and its headwater springs. It is also found in several springs just outside the Refuge boundary on property owned by the City of Roswell.

-More -

Comments on the draft analysis and EA must be received or postmarked on or before **August 23, 2010**.

Send comments to:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
New Mexico Ecological Services Field Office  
2105 Osuna Rd NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87113

Or by facsimile at: (505) 246-2542

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:** Wally Murphy at (505) 761-4781. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD), call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

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