



News Release

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

Southwest Region (Arizona • New Mexico • Oklahoma • Texas) www.fws.gov/southwest/

For Release: August 7, 2015

Contacts: Adam Zerrenner, 512-490-0057, Adam_Zerrenner@fws.gov
Lesli Gray, 972-439-4542, Lesli_Gray@fws.gov

Service Approves Special Rule for Georgetown Salamander

Special Rule Supports a Local Solution to Conservation of the Georgetown Salamander

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has approved a final rule for the Georgetown salamander under section 4(d) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The rule enables development activities that may affect the threatened salamander to continue as long as they comply with the city's development codes. The rule will facilitate the city's efforts to promote sustainable development and cleaner water, which will benefit area residences, businesses and the Georgetown salamander. The Service is also announcing the availability of the final Environmental Assessment on the 4(d) rule.

In February 2014, the Service listed the Georgetown salamander as threatened and proposed a 4(d) rule for the species which stated that "take" resulting from activities consistent with conservation measures in the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone Water Quality Ordinance would not be prohibited under the ESA. Take is a term under the ESA defined as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, would, kill, trap, capture or collect or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

Since publication of the proposed 4(d) rule, the City of Georgetown incorporated and expanded upon the ordinance in their Unified Development Code (UDC), which is the primary tool used by the city to regulate development. In April 2015, the Service revised the proposed 4(d) rule to provide clarity around the activities that it would cover. Under the final 4(d) rule, take of the Georgetown salamander will be exempt from section 9 of the ESA if the activity occurs on non-federal lands and complies with the water quality protection measures in the UDC.

"This serves as an excellent example of collaborative conservation of an endangered species, following several years of the Service and the City of Georgetown working together closely to conserve the Georgetown salamander," said Regional Director Benjamin Tuggle. "We applaud the city's efforts to address the needs of the species along with those of landowners and businesses. The 4(d) rule announced today encourages a locally based solution to conserving the species while enabling projects in the area to move forward."

The Georgetown salamander is unique to Texas and entirely aquatic, found only in springs and caves fed by the northern segment of the Edwards Aquifer. The entire known range of the species is located within the City of Georgetown's boundaries. Reduced water quality, increased sedimentation and altered flow regimes are the primary threats to the species. Recent drought

conditions and human population growth also have negatively affected water resources, reducing the quality and quantity of available habitat for the salamander.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov, or connect with us through any of these social media channels: <https://www.facebook.com/USFWSSouthwest>, http://twitter.com/USFWS_Southwest, http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfws_southwest/, <http://www.youtube.com/user/USFWS>.

-FWS-

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/>