



News Release

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Service Announces Revised Special Rule for Georgetown Salamander

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

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is publishing a revised proposed 4(d) rule for the Georgetown salamander. The rule if adopted will enable development activities to continue if they are in compliance with the measures in the City of Georgetown's Unified Development Code. The Service is also announcing the reopening of the comment period on the revised 4(d) rule and the availability of the draft 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. Under the original proposed 4(d) rule for the salamander, incidental take resulting from activities that are consistent with conservation measures in the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone Water Quality Ordinance would not be prohibited under the ESA. Since publication of the proposed 4(d) rule, the City of Georgetown has incorporated and expanded upon the ordinance in their Unified Development Code, which is the primary tool used by the City to regulate development. The revised proposed 4(d) rule provides greater clarity around the activities that would be covered.

The Georgetown salamander is unique to Texas and entirely aquatic, living its entire life in springs and caves fed by the northern segment of the Edwards Aquifer. 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.

We will accept comments on the revised proposed 4(d) until May 11, 2015. Comments may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- (1) *Electronically:* Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS-R2-ES-2014-0008, which is the docket number for this rulemaking. You may submit a comment by clicking on "Comment Now!"
- (2) *By hard copy:* Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing,

Attn: FWS–R2–ES–2014–0008; Division of Policy, Performance, and Management Programs; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC; 5275 Leesburg Pike; Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

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