

Peer Review Plan - Revised Critical Habitat Determination for the Comal Springs dryopid beetle, Comal Springs riffle beetle, and Peck's Cave amphipod

About the Document

Title: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is working on a revised critical habitat determination for the Comal Springs dryopid beetle, Comal Springs riffle beetle, and Peck's cave amphipod. Following a revised critical habitat proposal determination, we will publish a final revised critical habitat determination within the statutory timelines.

About the Peer Review Process

Estimated Peer Review Timeline: October 2012 to December 2012

Peer review process:

- We will solicit comments of the proposed revision of critical habitat from three or more independent peer reviewers with expertise in invertebrate ecology, conservation biology, and/or freshwater ecology. This scientific peer review will be held concurrently with the public review.
- Peer reviewers will not be asked to provide recommendations on the designation of critical habitat. Peer reviewers may be asked to comment specifically on the quality of any information and analyses used or relied on in the document; identify oversights, omissions, and inconsistencies; provide advice on reasonableness of judgments made from the scientific evidence; ensure that scientific uncertainties are clearly identified and characterized, and that potential implications of uncertainties for the technical conclusions drawn are clear; and provide advice on the strengths and limitations of the scientific data used in the document.
- Peer reviewers will be selected based on the following criteria:
 - Expertise in invertebrate ecology, conservation biology, and/or freshwater ecology.
 - Independence: Reviewers will not be employed by the Service. Academic and consulting scientists should have sufficient independence from the Service, if the government supports their work.
 - Objectivity: Reviewers will be recognized by their peers as being objective, open-minded, and thoughtful. The reviewers should be comfortable sharing their knowledge and identifying their knowledge gaps.
 - Advocacy: Reviewers will not be known or recognized for an affiliation with an advocacy position regarding the protection of these species under the Endangered Species Act.
 - Conflict of Interest: Reviewers will not have any financial or other interest that conflicts with or that could impair their objectivity.

- The Service will use the information received from the peer review in the final rule designating revised critical habitat for the Comal Springs dryopid beetle, Comal Springs riffle beetle, and Peck's Cave amphipod.

About public participation

Our revised critical habitat determination will be made available to the public through news releases, direct mailings, and posting on Service websites (with solicitations for public comment if it is a proposed rule). If appropriate, the Service will implement an outreach plan to provide ample opportunity for public involvement in the review process. The Service will publish a final rule designating revised critical habitat following consideration of all comments received from the public and peer reviewers. This peer review plan is made available to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review.

Contact:

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