

# Greenwire

TRACKING POLICY, POLITICS AND THE PRESS

September 22, 2004

## Judge orders critical habitat for Midwestern dragonfly

A federal judge signed a settlement agreement last week between five environmental groups and the Fish and Wildlife Service requiring the agency to establish critical habitat for the endangered Midwestern Hine's emerald dragonfly (John Flesher, AP/Ann Arbor News, Sept. 21). Judge John Bates of U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ordered FWS on Sept. 17 to fulfill its obligations to protect the dragonfly.

The order "will force the Bush administration to put the developers' interests aside and rely on science, protecting our region's precious natural heritage," said Brent Plater of the Center for Biological Diversity, which filed the lawsuit in February. Another Center for Biological Diversity employee, Daniel Patterson, added, "The Great Lakes region of the Fish and Wildlife Service has been really lax in protection of endangered species by not designating habitat."

FWS spokeswoman Gloria Parham: "Just because we didn't designate habitat doesn't mean we don't know what [the dragonfly] needs, just that we haven't formally designated it. It's a very, very detailed, very time-consuming process." The FWS now plans to have a draft critical habitat plan by July 2006 and a final rule by May 2007, said Parham.

The dragonfly, listed as endangered in 1995, is still in decline, according to a report to Congress this year. The insect is found in a few wetlands in Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin. It is already extinct in Alabama, Indiana and Ohio.

Other environmental groups involved in the settlement are: the Door County Environmental Council and the Habitat Education Center in Wisconsin, Northwoods Wilderness REcovery in Michigan and the Michigan Nature Association in Williamston (Paul Brinkmann, Green Bay Press-Gazette, Sept. 21). -- TE