

Chronicle staff report -- Associated Press

Three environmental groups sued the state Department of Fish and Game on Thursday, challenging the agency's decision to deny protection to a Northern California salamander.

By denying state protection to the Scott Bar salamander, the state opens up the amphibian's habitat to logging operations, according to the lawsuit filed in state court by the Center for Biological Diversity, Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center and Environmental Protection Information Center.

Troy Swauger, a state agency spokesman, said his department had not yet seen the lawsuit and could not comment on it.

The Scott Bar salamander was first described as a new species in May 2005.

The salamander is found in a small area of the Siskiyou Mountains near the California-Oregon border.

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