



## ENDANGERED SPECIES:

### FWS to list 2 central Texas salamanders, protect 4,450 acres

Allison Winter, E&E reporter  
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The Obama administration plans to add two Texas salamanders to the endangered species list, a move that could lead to more protections for central Texas waterways.

The Fish and Wildlife Service said today it will give “endangered” species status to the Austin blind salamander and “threatened” status to the Jollyville Plateau salamander. The agency will publish the finding in tomorrow’s Federal Register.

Both salamanders live in freshwater streams and require “water of high quality” within a narrow range of temperature and pH, according to the service. The agency proposed protecting a total of 4,450 acres of habitat for the two animals.

The listing is one of hundreds the service is addressing as part of a massive settlement reached in 2011 with environmental groups that had sued to protect the species.

“This is a critical step toward saving these two salamanders that live nowhere else in the world,” said Collette Adkins Giese, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity, a group involved in the settlement. “But we can’t forget that it’s also an important step for the region’s long-term water quality and health.” Adkins Giese said she hopes the protections will help the government address pesticides and chemicals in waterways.

The Austin blind salamander lives in Travis County, which has a population of more than 1 million people and includes the area around Austin. The Jollyville Plateau salamander lives in Travis County and more rural Williamson County.

The Austin blind salamander has feathery gills, a long nose and no external eyes. Jollyville Plateau salamanders have large eyes. Some Jollyville salamanders morph to live in caves, with small eyes, flat heads and less color on their bodies.