

<http://www.waff.com/story/38409441/lawsuit-filed-to-protect-pygmy-sunfish-in-north-alabama>

<http://www.wsfa.com/story/38409441/lawsuit-filed-to-protect-pygmy-sunfish-in-north-alabama>

Lawsuit filed to protect pygmy sunfish in north Alabama

Tuesday, June 12th 2018, 7:56 pm EDT Tuesday, June 12th 2018, 8:02 pm EDT

By Allen Stroud, Reporter

HUNTSVILLE, AL (WAFF) -

A small fish could cause big problems for the planned Mazda-Toyota development in north Alabama.

The Center for Biological Diversity filed a lawsuit seeking habitat protections for the pygmy sunfish on Monday

The group is asking that the federal government extend protections towards the fish which only lives in a six-mile portion of Limestone County streams.

The lawsuit is the latest in a series of actions taken by the group over the years.

"We petitioned to have it protected under the Endangered Species Act In 2012. it was listed as a threatened species in 2014. At that time, Fish and Wildlife Service proposed to designate protective critical habitat for the fish, but never finalized that protection, so our lawsuit is pretty straightforward. We're just asking Fish and Wildlife Service to finalize critical habitat," Noah Greenwald from the Center for Biological Diversity.

The city of Huntsville released the following statement:

The landowners of the proposed project site have been proactive in environmental stewardship for many years regarding farming operations and future development. The landowners entered into a "Protected Habitat Area" through joint efforts between the original landowners (Sewell and McDonald); the US Fish & Wildlife Service; and Department of Interior in 2012. This joint effort resulted in the issuance of both (i) a Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) and (ii) Enhancement of Survival Permit for the surrounding properties.

The project site has filed for and been granted appropriate permits that allow for both the development of the project site, while also providing protection of the habitat area. The existing CCAA and Permit requires a 150 foot non-disturbance buffer around Moss Spring and no

development activities to occur within a 150 acre aquatic area on the east side of Powell Road. The “no development zone” is defined in the CCAA as the 150 acre PROTECTED AREA.

The project is in full compliance with preliminary construction plans/activities as they related to the CCAA, Army Corp of Engineers, and US Fish & Wildlife.

Copyright 2018 [WAFF](#). All rights reserved.