

## Conservationists Lobby to Join Fray Over Frog Habitat

December 15, 2017

NATHAN SOLIS

CN) – Conservation groups on Friday lobbied a federal judge for permission to join a fight between the federal government and a ranching association over a trio of California amphibian species.

The Center for Biological Diversity wants the judge to uphold a 2016 Endangered Species Act designation of critical habitat for the amphibians that covers 1.8 million acres in California across the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

The amphibians include the Yosemite toad, Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog, and mountain yellow-legged frog, which live in the high elevations of the Sierra.

This past July, the California Cattlemen's Association sued the federal government claiming the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not comply with the Regulatory Flexibility Act when it designated the large swath of land, and did not consider the impact on farmers and their livelihood.

On Friday, the Center for Biological Diversity and two other groups filed a motion to intervene.

"These frogs and the Yosemite toad have disappeared from most of the Sierra lakes and streams where they once lived.



Protecting some of their most important habitat gives them a fighting chance at recovery," said Jenny Loda, an attorney with the Center for Biological Diversity.

The Western Watersheds Project and Central Sierra Environmental Resource joined the center in its request to intervene. Meanwhile, the California Wool Growers Association and California Farm Bureau Federation have joined the cattlemen's group as plaintiffs.

A California Cattlemen's Association representative said the federal government did not examine the potential economic impact on small business owners when it designated the land, which spans 16 of California's 58 counties.

Loda said the plaintiffs do not object to the request to intervene, and the government defendants are still reviewing the motion.