

Siskyou Mountains Salamander Endangered Species Petition Denied A Second Time

By ROMAN BATTAGLIA
August 18th 2019

The federal government has decided to not list the Siskyou Mountains Salamander as endangered. That's after dealing with a lawsuit because of a failure to respond to the endangered species act petition.

The Klamath Siskyou Wildlands Center and other environmental groups filed a petition last year to protect this rare species. But the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has denied the petition a second time, the first time in 2008. The agency's Laura Finley says the department looked to see if there was a difference from last time it was denied. One difference environmentalists pointed out was increased wildfires in the region threatens their habitat. But Finley says otherwise.

"While I know the wildfire's situation's changed substantially, we don't have any documented evidence that it has changed for the salamanders themselves," she told JPR.

Finley says it's hard to survey the Siskiyou Mountains Salamander because it's underground most of the year and trying to gather data ends up disturbing the habitat.

George Sexton with the Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center fears this decision will put the salamander at further risk.



A Siskyou Mountains Salamander, Native to the Jefferson region.

"The US Fish and Wildlife Service is going to ignore the information from the BLM and the Forest Service and downplay the threats to the salamander, then we'll continue to try and use the Endangered Species Act to get the salamanders the protections that they need," he said.

The Center for Biological Diversity has previously said the new forest management plan adopted by the Bureau of Land Management endangers the salamanders. But the Fish and Wildlife Service says they're actually more protected than ever.

KS Wild says they'll look at what was missing from this petition and worked to gather more evidence for the next time. They still believe this species needs to be listed as endangered.