

September 26, 2019

Public Meeting Concerning the State Engineer's Water Right Policy in Snake Valley, Parts of Iron, Millard, Juab and Tooele Counties
Eskdale High School
1000 Circle Drive
Eskdale, Utah

Sensitive Aquatic Species Status
Presented by Kevin Wheeler
Native Aquatic Biologist
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Two species of concern are dependent on spring-fed ecosystems of Snake Valley, the Least Chub and Columbia Spotted Frog. Any reduction of flow from springs within the habitats in which they occur will have an impact on their populations.

Least Chub (*Lotichthys phlegethontis*) are endemic to the Bonneville Basin of Utah, and have experienced population declines since the 1940s. Concern about their survival prompted the creation of the Least Chub Conservation Agreement and Strategy in 1998, to coordinate conservation and recovery actions for the species. Three of the six native populations of Least Chub are found in Snake Valley (Bishop Springs, Gandy Salt Marsh, and Leland Harris/ Miller Springs). A proposal from Southern Nevada Water Authority to pump water from Snake Valley prompted a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity and other conservation groups for the US Fish and Wildlife Service to list the Least Chub as endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The Service issued a not warranted 12-month finding in 2014, based on landscape-scale conservation actions provided by signatories to the conservation agreement. Any reduction or loss of flow from springs associated with wetlands in which Least Chub occur will have direct impacts on the populations, and may result in extirpation. Because other populations are also facing threats associated with groundwater withdrawal (particularly at Clear Lake south of Delta), additional groundwater withdrawal may be viewed as a reason for conservation groups to again petition the Service to list the species.

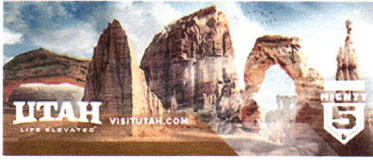
Regional declines and threats to Columbia Spotted Frog (*Rana luteiventris*) populations led the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources to conduct inventories in 1993 and implement conservation actions. The Columbia Spotted Frog Conservation Agreement and Strategy was developed to coordinate these activities. Utah populations of Columbia Spotted Frog represent the southernmost extent of its distribution, and populations in Snake and Tule Valleys are some of the most robust in Utah. In 1989, the Service was petitioned to list the Columbia Spotted Frog under the Endangered Species Act. In 1999, the Columbia Spotted Frog was removed as a candidate for listing following implementation of conservation actions pursuant with the Conservation Agreement. Additional findings from the Service found the Wasatch Front populations not warranted for listing in 2002. Because Columbia Spotted Frog in the West Desert are dependent on spring-fed wetlands, any decline or loss of flow associated with these springs will have direct impact on these populations, and may result in extirpation.

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waterrights DNR <waterrights@utah.gov>

Sensitive species information for Snake Valley Meeting

1 message

Kevin Wheeler <kevinwheeler@utah.gov>
To: waterrights DNR <waterrights@utah.gov>

Mon, Sep 30, 2019 at 10:59 AM

Attached is a document with more details of two of the sensitive species found in Snake Valley that would be impacted by loss of spring flow.

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Kevin Wheeler
Native Aquatics Biologist
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Washington County Field Office
[451 North SR 318](#)
Hurricane, UT 84737
Phone: 435-879-8694
Fax: 435-879-8743



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