

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of SAVE THE FROGS! and our worldwide network of supporters, staff and volunteers, I am writing to submit an official comment related to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposal to provide protections and designate critical habitat under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for two slender salamanders living in California's southern Sierra Nevada.

SAVE THE FROGS! is the world's leading amphibian conservation organization. Our mission is to protect amphibian populations and to promote a society that respects and appreciates nature and wildlife. We work in California, across the USA, and around the world to prevent the extinction of amphibians, and to create a better planet for humans and wildlife. Since 2008, SAVE THE FROGS! scientists and volunteers have held over 2,000 educational events in 59 countries to educate people about the plight of frogs and teach them ways to protect amphibians.

SAVE THE FROGS! supports the listing of the Relictual Slender Salamander (*Batrachoseps relictus*) as endangered and the Kern Canyon Slender Salamander (*Batrachoseps simatus*) as threatened; and the designation of 2,685 acres of critical habitat for *B. relictus* and 2,051 acres of critical habitat for *Batrachoseps simatus*.

The Relictual Slender Salamander is found from the lower Kern River canyon in Kern County to highlands drained by Tule River and Kern River in central Tulare County, and from one site on the western margin of the Kern plateau. It has apparently been extirpated in the lower Kern River Canyon, possibly due to highway construction, which altered the salamander's habitat of seepages and springs. It is currently known from only two locations separated by about three miles, making the range extremely limited and vulnerable.

The Kern Canyon Slender Salamander is found in the lower Kern River Canyon from the Stork Creek to Erskine Creek. Their available habitat is in small disjunct patches, suggesting that population sizes are small. The potential threats are the resident and commercial development, agriculture, and road and railroad construction.

We thank you for taking action to protect these species and the habitats on which their survival depends.

Sincerely,



Kerry Kriger, Ph.D. 15-December-2022



Dr. Kerry Kriger
Executive Director
415-878-6525

1968 S Coast Hwy Ste 622
Laguna Beach, CA 92651 USA
E-mail: kerry@savethefrogs.com

savethefrogs.com