

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Mega-petition

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

The Southeastern United States, including the Southern Appalachians, is a global center of aquatic biodiversity, which includes nearly 500 different fish, more than 300 snails, and nearly 300 mussels.

Unfortunately, many of those species are imperiled enough to be protected by the Endangered Species Act, and that number may go up in the coming months. The Endangered Species Act allows anyone to ask, or petition, the Fish & Wildlife Service to place a plant or animal on the federal endangered species list. Several groups asked the Service to place 404 species on the list. After reviewing the material provided with the request and its own information, the Service determined 374 of the species needed further investigation to see if adding to the list is warranted. All 374 live in or near water.

The Service will now spend the next several months compiling and reviewing information on these plants and animals, eventually making the decision to add them to the list or not. The review includes 13 amphibians, six amphipods, 17 beetles, three birds, four butterflies, six caddisflies, 81 crayfish, 14 dragonflies, 43 fish, one springfly, two isopods, four mammals, one moth, 35 mussels, 12 reptiles, 43 snails, eight stoneflies, and 81 vascular plants.

For the Southern Appalachians, this means species like the Grandfather Mountain crayfish or the Appalachian snaketail dragonfly may one day be protected under the Endangered Species Act.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.