Dear stream salamander expert,

**We are writing to invite you to participate in an expert elicitation process to estimate the effects of climate, land use, and interspecific interactions on several stream salamanders occurring in the northeastern US.**You have been identified as an expert in stream salamander ecology, with field experience working with at least one of our three focal species in at least one region (southeast, mid-atlantic, and/or northeast US).

As you are aware, stream salamanders are vulnerable to decline across their range due to the increasing number of threats associated with climate change and land use development. Multiple management agencies and conservation organizations are interested in managing riparian and upland habitats and barriers that influence dispersal of stream fishes, and without information on the distribution of stream salamanders are finding it difficult to make informed predictions on the potential effects to stream salamanders. Regional data sets useful for estimating and predicting local and broad-scale salamander occupancy in relation to changing abiotic and biotic factors are limited. As a result, management agencies are turning to stream salamander experts to help identify the potential impacts of alternative conservation actions using expert elicitation methods –an approach increasingly used to improve conservation of species with limited empirical data.

The purpose of this survey is to use expert knowledge to predict the effects of climate (temperature and streamflow), land use (riparian and upland habitats) and interspecies interactions (fish and salamanders) on three species of stream salamanders: northern dusky salamander (*Desmognathus fuscus*; *DFUS*), northern two-lined salamander (*Eurycea bislineata*;*EBIS*) and spring salamander (*Gyrinophilus porphyriticus*;*GPOR*) to help inform management decisions.

To obtain unbiased expert knowledge, authors must be willing to engage in the following three steps: take this survey, participate in a follow-up webinar, amend survey responses, and approve publication.

1.     Take the attached initial survey (1-2 hrs, due Monday, March 28)

2.     Participate in a follow-up webinar (3-4 hrs, Early April - please fill out your availability [here](http://www.needtomeet.com/meeting?id=6owa0s54V" \t "_blank))

3.     Amend survey responses (1-2 hrs, Late April)

4.     Approve publication (1 hr, Late May)

All experts that participate in the elicitation process outlined above will be offered co-authorship of the resulting publication and will be given access to the expert data and analyses.

We realize this may be short notice, but would be very pleased if you would accept our invitation. Please let us know by next Wednesday, March 23 if you will be able to participate in this survey and then return the survey by Monday, March 28.   
  
Kind regards,  
Rachel Katz ([rakatz@umass.edu](mailto:rakatz@umass.edu" \t "_blank))

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