

Peer Review Plan for the Two West Virginia Cave Species: Cannulate Cave Isopod (*Pseudobaicalasellus cannulus*) and Dry Fork Valley Cave Beetle (*Pseudanophthalmus montanus*) Species Status Assessment Report

About the Document

Title: Species Status Assessment Report for two West Virginia Cave Species: Cannulate Cave Isopod (*Pseudobaicalasellus cannulus*) and Dry Fork Valley Cave Beetle (*Pseudanophthalmus montanus*)

Purpose: The Species Status Assessment (SSA) report will inform the determination by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) whether these two West Virginia cave species warrant listing as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act. The information in the SSA report is likely to be influential scientific information.

About the Peer Review Process

Estimated Timing of Peer Review: October 16th – November 16th

Type of Peer Review: The Service will solicit comments on the draft report from independent scientific reviewers and invite comments in written form.

Anticipated Number of Reviewers: The Service will request review from at least three individuals.

Reviewer Selection Method: A Service office not associated with development of the SSA report will select peer reviewers and coordinate the process. In selecting peer reviewers, we will consider four key factors: expertise, balance, independence, and avoidance of conflict of interest. We are not seeking nominations for peer reviewers from the public.

Necessary Expertise: Peer reviewers will have expertise on the two West Virginia cave species or related taxa, the ecosystems in which the species lives, the threats to or management of the species or its habitat, or the analytical methods we used.

Peer reviewers will not be asked to provide recommendations on the listing determination or any other associated rulemaking under the Act. Peer reviewers will be asked to comment specifically on the quality of any information and analyses used or relied on in the document; identify oversights, omissions, and inconsistencies; provide advice on reasonableness of judgements made from the scientific evidence; ensure that scientific uncertainties are clearly identified and characterized, and that potential implications of uncertainties for the technical conclusions drawn are clear; and provide advice on the overall strengths and limitations of the scientific data used in the document.

About Public Participation

We anticipate publishing our decision whether to list the species as threatened or endangered in the Federal Register around December 2025. Upon publication, we will make the peer review comments on the draft SSA report publicly available and if we prepare a proposed rule to list the species as threatened or endangered, we will also provide an opportunity for public comment on

the SSA report and rule. If appropriate, the Service will implement an outreach plan to provide opportunity for public involvement in the review process. If appropriate, the Service will publish a final determination and any associated rulemakings following consideration of all comments received from the public and peer reviewers.

This peer review plan is made available to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review. The public is invited to submit comments on this peer review plan by contacting the agency person listed below.

Contact

Matt Hinderliter, North Atlantic-Appalachian Region, Division of Threatened and Endangered Species, 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley, MA 01035; matthew_hinderliter@fws.gov