

Northern Colorado BUSINESS REPORT

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Groups plan to sue USFWS over Poudre River insect

By Staff

FORT COLLINS - A coalition of citizens' groups Wednesday provided the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a formal written notice of their intent to sue over its failure to address a petition to list the Arapahoe snowfly, an insect important for the ecological health of the Poudre River basin, as an endangered species.

"Our organization's mission is to protect and restore the Poudre River," said Gary Wockner of Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper, in a prepared statement. "And that extends to every species living in the river. We believe the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is violating the Endangered Species Act by not addressing our petition to list the Arapahoe snowfly."

By law, when any person or group petitions to list a species under the Endangered Species Act, the USFWS has 90 days to evaluate the petition and make a finding. The coalition filed the petition on April 6; the finding should have occurred by July 6.

There are now 251 species of plants and wildlife awaiting federal listing. Many have been on the waiting list for protection for a decade or more. Outside of Hawaii, only four new U.S. species have been listed under the ESA since Interior Secretary Ken Salazar took office.

Co-signing the NOI are all of the groups that filed the original petition, including The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation; Boris Kondratieff, a Colorado State University entomologist and expert in aquatic insects who discovered the Arapahoe snowfly; Save the Poudre: Poudre Waterkeeper; Cache la Poudre River Foundation; WildEarth Guardians; and Center for Native Ecosystems.