



PRESS RELEASE  
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## US FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE CONFIRMS IMPACT TO ENDANGERED SPECIES; ASKS EPA TO CONSIDER NO-DISCHARGE FOR DRIPPING SPRINGS

DRIPPING SPRINGS, TX February 27, 2017 – In a recently obtained letter written to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFW) confirms impact to federally-listed endangered species and asks EPA to consider a **no-discharge solution** after their review of Dripping Springs’ draft discharge permit.

EPA included USFW in their review of the Draft Discharge Permit issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to Dripping Springs. EPA requested that USFW review the permit for potential impacts to endangered species pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

USFW conducted their review in light of three (3) federally-listed endangered species that are aquifer-dependent and could be impacted by the proposed discharge. Two (2) of the species (Austin Blind Salamander and Barton Springs Salamander) inhabit Barton Springs which ultimately obtains 34% of its water from Onion Creek.

USFW notes several major concerns with a discharge from Dripping Springs that could harm known endangered species.

- 1) **Water Quality Degradation.** USFW alerts EPA that direct discharge of municipal effluent presents significant risk to water quality because of elevated nutrients in water (e.g. nitrates) and contaminants of concern not removed during the treatment process. For example, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, personal care products, and inorganic pollutants remain in treated water and pose threats to aquatic life dependent on high water quality.
- 2) **Critical Habitat Impact.** Onion Creek provides approximately 1/3 of the water in Barton Springs. Onion Creek flow reaches Barton Springs very quickly (in just 7 days) based on dye tracing studies.
- 3) **Raw Sewage Risk due to Plant Upsets.** USFW asks EPA to carefully consider risks and impacts of raw sewage discharges that can occur when there are equipment failures or emergency discharges.

Based on these concerns, USFW has recommend no-discharge for Dripping Springs because it could threaten and harm known, federally-listed endangered species with critical habitat that could be impacted by a direct discharge. *“The recommended means of treating wastewater in the contributing zone (of the aquifer) is disposal by carefully planned land application rather than discharging treated effluent into creeks...”*

### About POW

Protect Our Water is a citizen’s group organized to protect Onion Creek and local wells from pollution. The December 22, 2016 USFW Letter is available at <http://www.protectourwaternow.org> . For more information please contact: Stuart Henry, Attorney for POW, 512-858-0385, [stuartnhenry@gmail.com](mailto:stuartnhenry@gmail.com) or Richard Beggs, POW Director, 512 299 -3442, [richardobeggs@hotmail.com](mailto:richardobeggs@hotmail.com).