

NEWS RELEASE

**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228**

For release on: August, 29, 2012

**Contacts: Michael D. George; 308-382-6468 ext. 12; michael_george@fws.gov
Leith Edgar; 303-236-4588; leith_edgar@fws.gov**

PLATTE RIVER CADDISFLY NOT WARRANTED FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that the Platte River caddisfly, a small, moth-like insect found in backwaters along rivers in Nebraska, is not warranted for protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

We have completed a comprehensive status review — known as a 12-month finding — and determined that there is sufficient scientific and commercial data to demonstrate that the Platte River caddisfly is secure throughout its range. If information becomes available in the future to indicate that the species is in decline and threatened with extinction, we will conduct an assessment on the status of the caddisfly at that time. If we propose the Platte River caddisfly for protection under the ESA in the future, the public will have an opportunity to comment.

The Platte River caddisfly is a species of insect in the order Trichoptera (caddisfly; means “hairy wing”). Caddisflies are a diverse group and can be collected from a variety of habitats, including: streams, lakes, springs, ponds, bogs, fens, seeps, marshes, pools, rivers, and sloughs. Caddisflies are often modeled by fly fishermen for catching trout and are typically known for their case-building behavior during the larval stage. All caddisflies spin silk, and several species use this silk to cement together bits of leaf or stone material to construct a case around the abdomen for camouflage and anti-predatory purposes.

The status review assessed several potential threats to the species including: the potential present and future threat of habitat modification resulting from large water development projects (dams, irrigation canals, center pivot irrigation), invasive species, climate change, and poor dispersal ability (Platte River caddisfly is a poor flier and cannot readily find new habitat to colonize). Other factors we analyzed in the finding include grazing, road and bridge development, and wetland modification, such as through restoration activities.

Although each of these potential threats could adversely affect the caddisfly, the information we have does not indicate that the species is in decline or is likely to decline in the future based on these threats. When the species was discovered in 1997, it was thought to be extremely rare. However, since that time we have conducted over 100 surveys for the species in Nebraska, and our knowledge about its range and distribution has grown tremendously. We have found the

species at 35 sites across a large portion of the State of Nebraska, and many of these sites appear to be free from threats. Additionally, the species appears to be a habitat generalist occurring across a large precipitation gradient, which increases its resilience against potential threats such as climate change.

Several programs and regulations are in place in Nebraska to protect the state's rivers and maintain current water levels, and these policies adequately protect the caddisfly and its habitat from future losses. Approximately 60% of known caddisfly populations occur on lands managed by conservation organizations, and these areas are protected from development activities that could affect wetlands. Through lab and field studies, we have determined that the species is not threatened by poor land management practices, such as grazing or predation.

Despite our determination that the species does not warrant listing, we will continue to support efforts to conserve the species and its habitat within Nebraska. Several agencies and organizations are actively restoring wetlands throughout Nebraska, particularly along the Platte River, and this work is anticipated to have a positive effect on the species by increasing the amount of available slough habitat. Partner agencies and organizations, such as the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Headwaters Corporation, which oversees the Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP) have expressed interest in conducting restoration work that would benefit the caddisfly. These groups have also worked with us to avoid impacts to the caddisfly during restoration activities. We also support PRRIP's goal of maintaining current flow conditions in the central Platte River. This work is being conducted through an environmental account managed by the Service and by offsetting depletions to the river that occurred after 1997. Several groups, including TNC, the Headwaters Corporation, the Crane Trust, Nebraska Public Power District, Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, and the Central Nebraska Natural Resources District have been involved with conducting surveys for the caddisfly on their properties or otherwise, and this work is ongoing. This work has been important in contributing to our knowledge of the caddisfly. We will continue to seek opportunities to learn more about the species now and into the future.

For more information about the Platte River caddisfly and this finding, please visit the website from the Service's Nebraska Field Office at <http://www.fws.gov/nebraskaes>.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/>. Connect with our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/USFWSMountainPrairie>, follow our tweets at <http://twitter.com/USFWSMtnPrairie>, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws>, and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmtnpairie/>.