



# Critical Habitat Designation for the Salado Salamander Community Meeting

July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Presented by:



# Agenda

## I. Bell County Adaptative Management Coalition (BCAMC)

- Introduction & Initial Position Statements
- Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) Timeline
- Addressing Threats
- Purpose of Meeting

## II. Natural Resources Solutions (NRS)

- Salado Salamander
- Critical Habitat Timeline
- Critical Habitat Maps

## III. BCAMC Position

## IV. Questions





# Bell County Adaptive Management Coalition

# BCAMC Position

- I) Locally managed regulations are sufficient to protect the Salado salamander
- II) Salado salamander populations are stable
- III) Additional federal regulations are not needed
- IV) Community involvement is important and wanted



# BCAMC

**Mission:** Collectively address the unknown aspects of the Edwards BFZ Aquifer in Bell County by developing new science and understanding of the system.

Formed in 2011 upon the announcement that the Salado salamander was on a proposed list for designation as an endangered species.

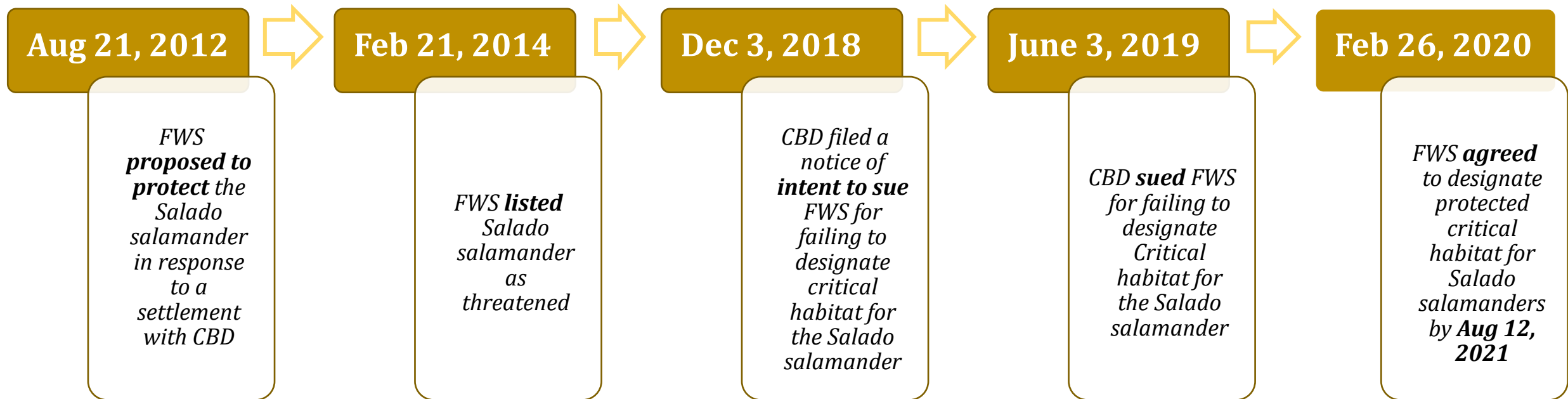
Members of BCAMC have included the private sector and public entities concerned about the possible listing and lack of scientific understanding of the Edwards BFZ, as it relates to habitat for the salamander.





# CBD Timeline

Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) is a national nonprofit membership organization, headquartered in Tucson, Arizona.



# Addressing Threats 2013-2020

**2004:** CUWCD manages the Edwards BFZ by maintaining spring flow.

**2011:** Local entities created the coalition known as BCAMC to collectively fund ongoing research and understanding of the Aquifer System in Bell County.

**2014:** Solana Ranch Springs per a Section 6 Grant with TPWD established conservation easement (Nature Conservancy).

**2015:** Scientific Research Teams include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) (reimbursable task order), Baylor Geology Department Dr. Joe Yelderman, Texas AgriLife Research (former Texas Water Resource Institute, USGS Texas Water Science Center – Austin).

**2015 – 2020:** Acknowledging and Addressing Threats: Groundwater Pumping, Regulatory Permitting, Decommissioning of Legacy Waste-Water Treatment Plant, New \$10M Waster-Water Treatment Plan, Removal of all downtown On-Site Septic Systems.



# Purpose of Community Meeting

BCAMC has engaged the professional services of NRS to help the Coalition identify options, and to negotiate as may be necessary, for responding to the FWS' proposed designation of critical habitat for the Salado salamander.

- I. Discuss future actions by the FWS regarding the Salado salamander; and,
- II. Discuss proposed actions by BCAMC to address critical habitat designation.







# Natural Resources Solutions

# NRS

**Mission:** A consulting firm specializing in policy, science, and technical natural resource and environmental issues.

Headquartered in Austin, Texas, the NRS team focuses on environmental permitting and frequently works with state and local government agencies, academia, non-governmental organizations, industry, and private landowners.

NRS maintains a current understanding of everchanging statutes, regulations, and policies that affect our clients, to create solutions to complex, regulatory-related issues.

# Salado Salamander

**Scientific Name:** *Eurycea chisholmensis*.

**Habitat:** aquatic (springs, spring-runs, wet caves, and groundwater).

**Range:** Springs and caves in the Northern Segment of the Edwards Aquifer; Springs and caves in Southern Bell and Northern Williamson County.

**Threats:** Water quality and quantity.

**Current Status:** Because of 2019 CBD lawsuit, upcoming proposed critical habitat designation by August 12, 2020.

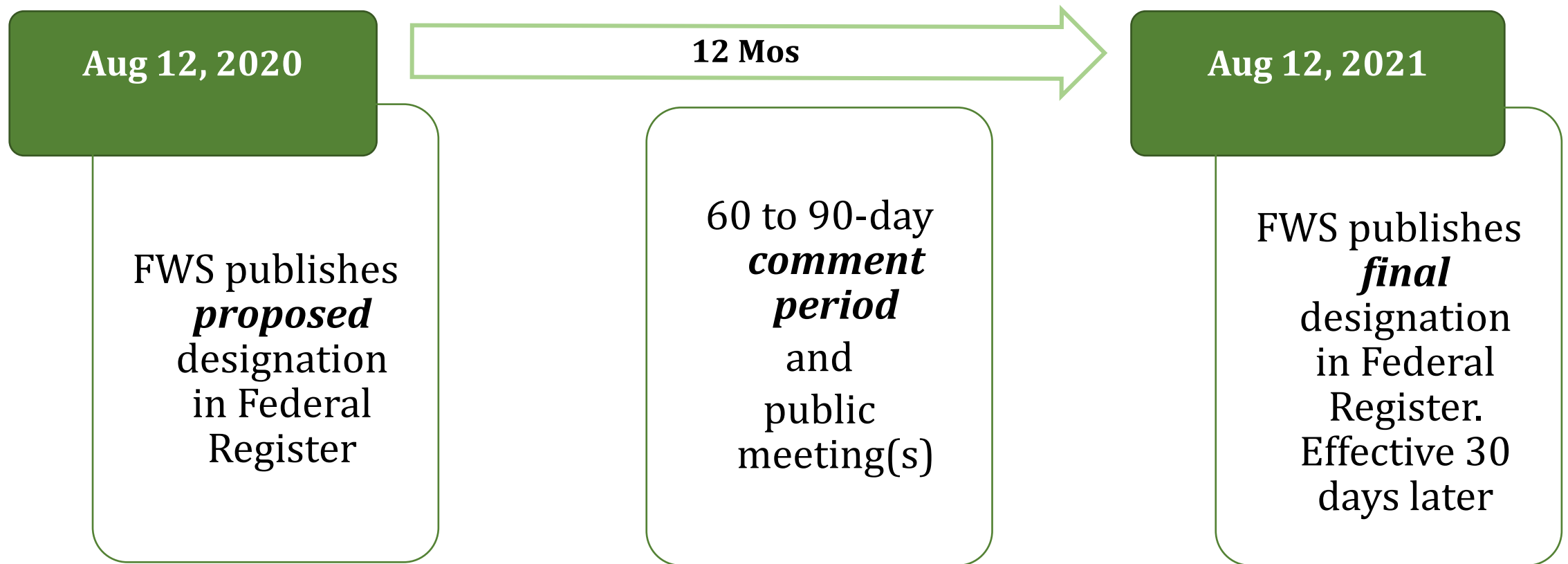


Entirely aquatic

# Critical Habitat Designation Timeline

Estimated timeline based on an August 12, 2020 start date.

- **Total time:** 12 Months

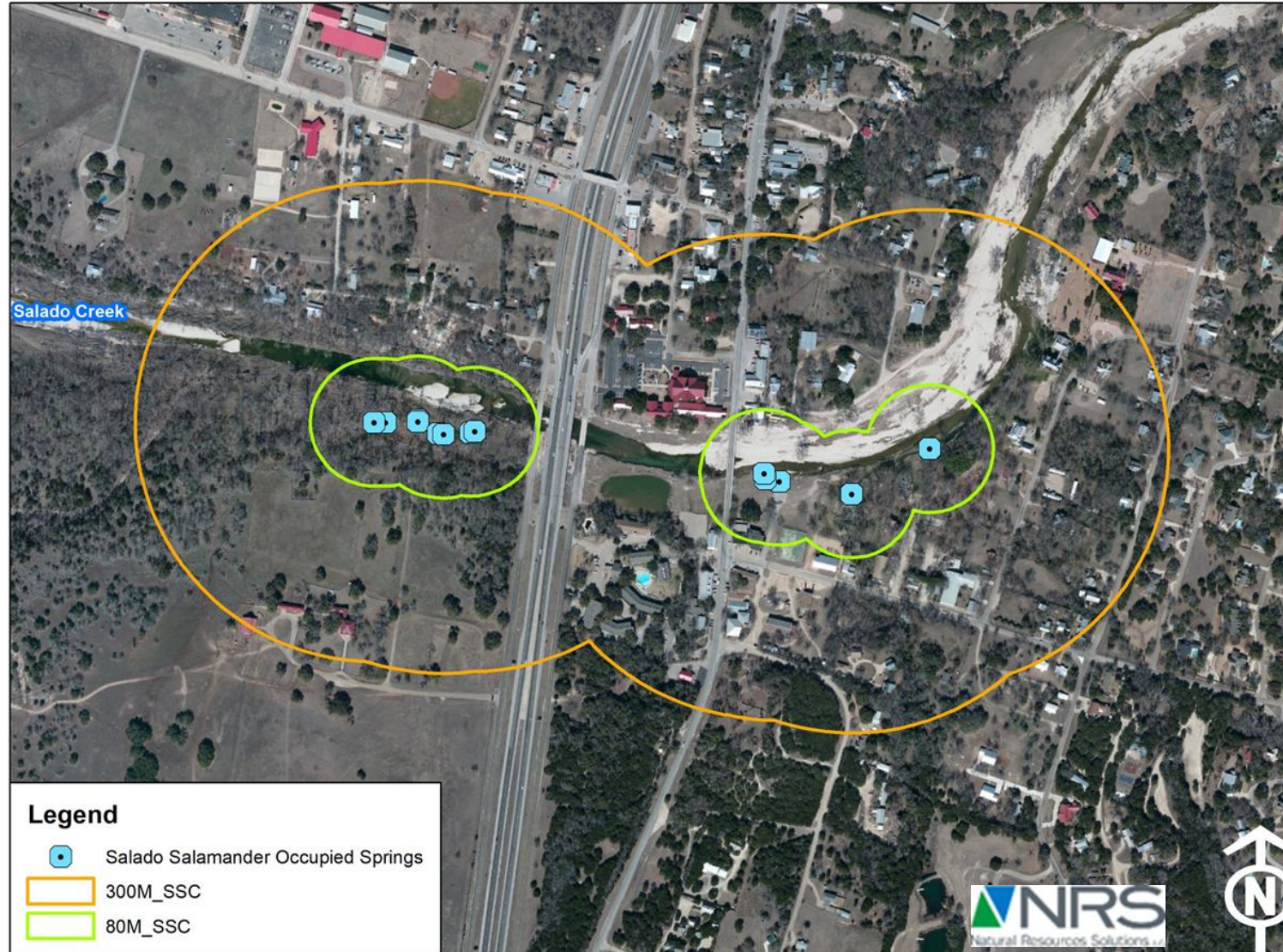




# Anticipated FWS Critical Habitat Designation

Salado and Robertson  
Spring Complex  
anticipated  
designation:

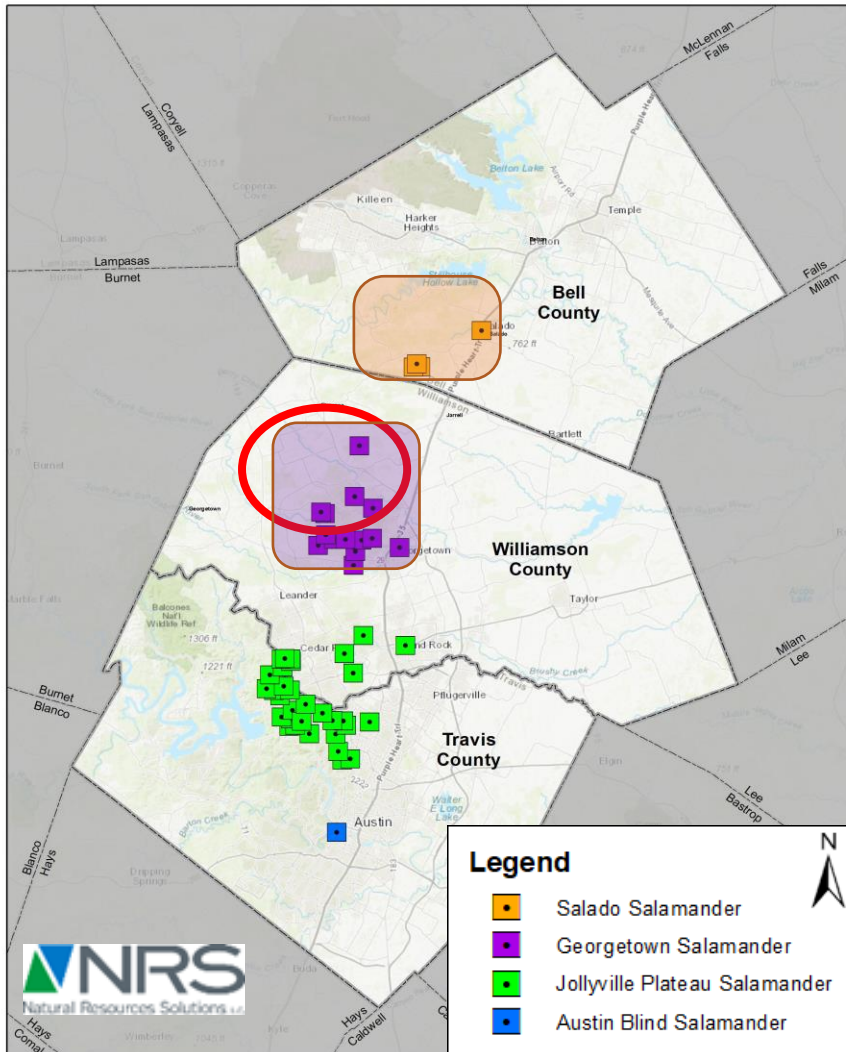
- 80 m surface  
(green)
- 300 m subsurface  
(orange)





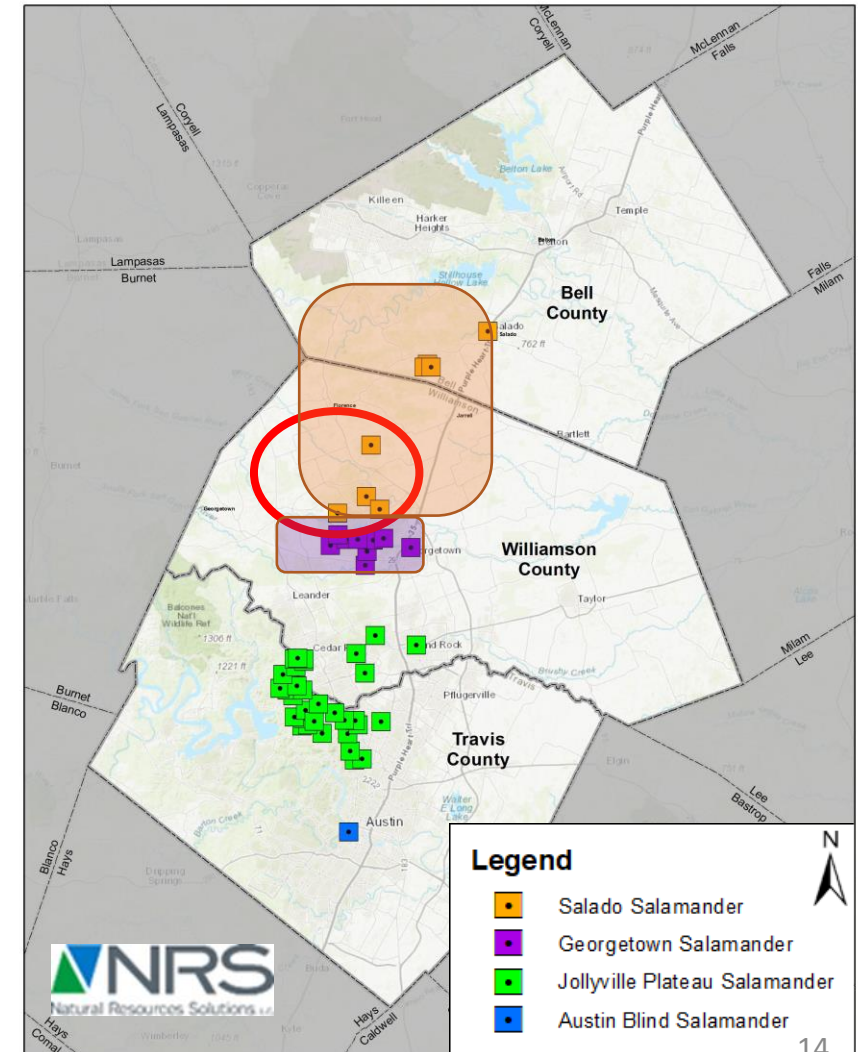
# Revised Range (FWS Best Available Science)

2013



The intent of this image is to demonstrate changes in the classification of occupied springs in Williamson County. This image is not intended to suggest an identified range for the species.

Devitt et al. (2019)





# BCAMC Position

- I) Locally managed regulations are sufficient to protect the Salado salamander.
- II) Salado salamander populations are stable.
- III) Additional federal regulations are not needed.
- IV) Community involvement is important and wanted.





# Now Available for Questions

