

# News Release

*Northeast Region*

*External Affairs Office*

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## Public Invited to Comment on Snail Recovery Plan

A unique, dime-sized snail found only at Chittenango Falls State Park in Madison County, New York, and whose survival is threatened, is the subject of a recovery plan now available for review and comment. Comments on the draft plan for the Chittenango ovate amber snail may be directed in writing to: Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New York Field Office, 3817 Luke Road, Cortland, NY 13045, by e-mail to [robyn\\_niver@fws.gov](mailto:robyn_niver@fws.gov), or by fax to 607-753-9699. Comments must be received by Jan. 15, 2004. Copies of the draft recovery plan are available on the Internet at <http://nyfo.fws.gov/es/2003DraftCOASPlan.pdf>, or by writing to the above address or calling 607-753-9334.

The Chittenango ovate amber snail was discovered in 1905. The 8,000-year-old species was protected by the Endangered Species Act in 1978 due to its rarity and apparent population decline, according to Robyn Niver, endangered species recovery biologist for the Service.

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“The primary threats to the snail are the small population size, limited area where it occurs, and a negative reaction with another, introduced, snail that may be crowding out the Chittenango ovate amber snail,” Niver said.

Habitat changes and inadvertent human disturbance are also potential threats, she added. Past attempts to raise the snail in captivity have not succeeded; however, captive efforts are likely to be reinitiated once further information is available about the snail’s habitat needs.

According to Niver, a few of the activities outlined in the plan are already under way. She said that the partners have made significant strides in determining how many snails exist at the park. Next will come attempts to stabilize, then increase this population.

“Our partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry, the Rosamond Gifford Zoo and the Seneca Park Zoo, along with assistance from volunteers, is essential for the recovery of the snail,” she said.

A team of biologists completed this draft revised plan. When finalized, it will supercede the original 1983 recovery plan. The revised plan applies new information regarding the snail’s status and threats to the species.

The federal Endangered Species Act protects 15 animal and plant species in New York State. “Recovering each species represents a unique challenge involving sound science, partnerships among natural resource conservation agencies and public support,” Niver said.

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses more than 540 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.

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