



# Bell County Adaptive Management Coalition

## Redesignation of Critical Habitat for the Georgetown and Salado Salamanders

October 29, 2020



# Background

- **2012:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) proposed to list Georgetown & Salado salamanders as 'endangered' and designate critical habitat for both
- **2012:** Bell County Adaptive Management Coalition (Coalition) formed...Bell County, Village of Salado, Salado Water Supply Corporation, and Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District
- **2014:** FWS lists both salamanders as 'threatened', critical habitat areas were never finalized

# Background (Con't)

- **2019:** Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) files lawsuit vs. FWS asking for critical habitat to be designated
- **2020:**
  - CBD & FWS reach settlement agreement which required FWS to propose critical habitat by Aug 12, 2020
  - FWS publishes proposed critical habitat rule on Sept 15, 2020 & gives interested parties until Nov 16, 2020 to comment
  - FWS proposed 80-meter surface and 300-meter subsurface circles around 10 sites in Bell & Williamson County

# Foundational Coalition Comments

Critical habitat designation is *not* prudent at this time because we have successfully addressed threats, and the species is stable.

However, if it were to be designated, based on the scientific data and literature, it should be site-specific, and not arbitrary 80-meter and 300-meter circles.

# FWS Proposed Critical Habitat Designation

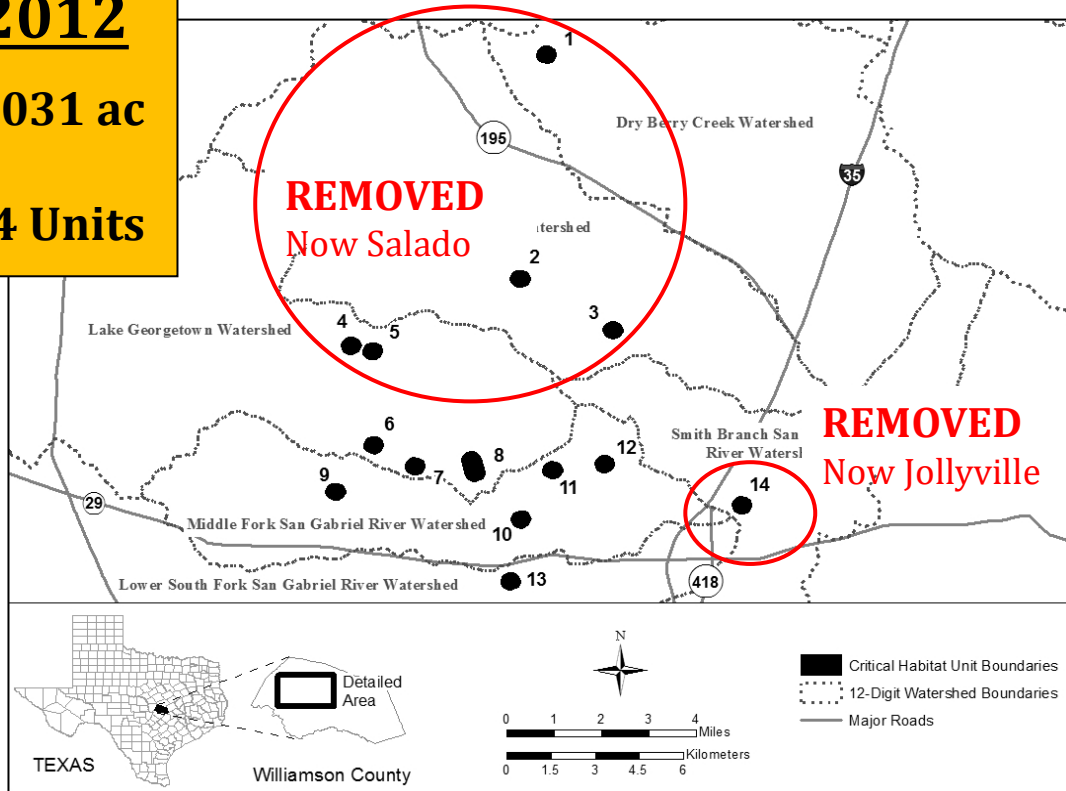
- All occupied sites designated at 80 meters for the surface and 300 meters for the subsurface
- Total combined acreage proposed for both salamanders is 1,519 acres
  - Increased 8%, or 116 ac from 2012

# Georgetown Salamander 2012 - 2020

**2012**

**1,031 ac**

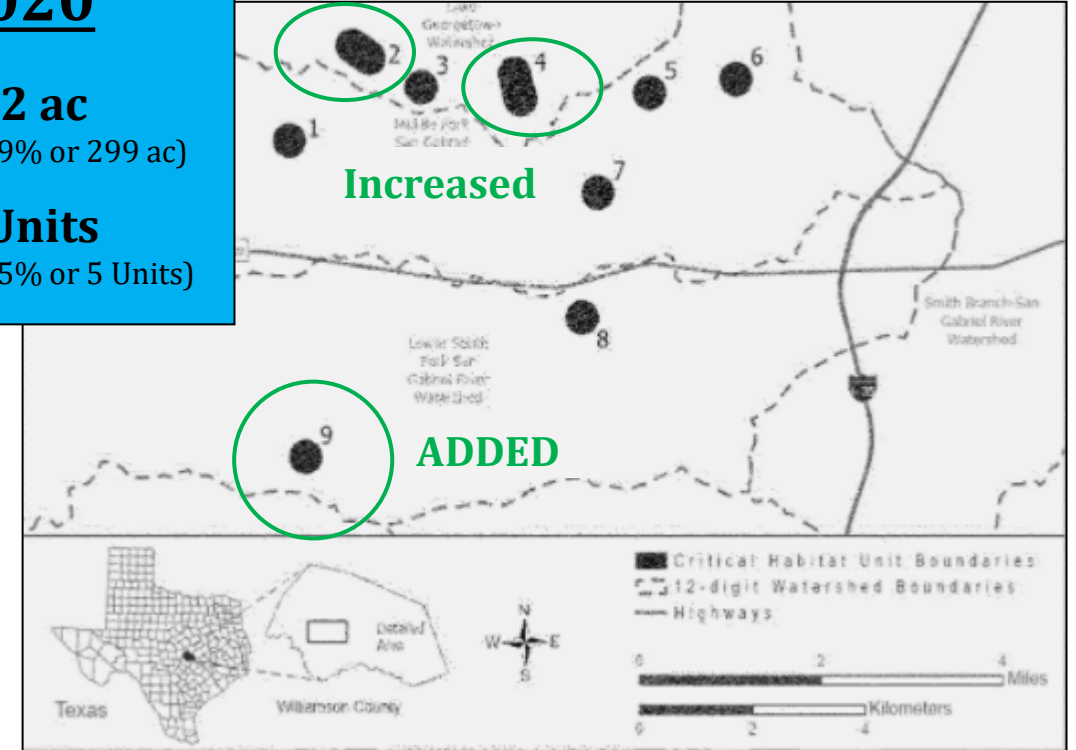
**14 Units**



**2020**

**732 ac**  
(↓ 29% or 299 ac)

**9 Units**  
(↓ 35% or 5 Units)



<b>Unit 1. Cobb</b>	Private	83 ac
<b>Unit 2. Cowen Creek Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 3. Bat Well</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 4. Walnut Spring</b>	Private, County	68 ac
<b>Unit 5. Twin Springs</b>	Private, County	68 ac
<b>Unit 6. Hogg Hollow Spring</b>	Private, Federal	68 ac
<b>Unit 7. Cedar Hollow Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 8. Lake Georgetown</b>	Private, Federal	132 ac
<b>Unit 9. Water Tank Cave</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 10. Avant Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 11. Buford Hollow Spring</b>	Private, Federal	68 ac
<b>Unit 12. Swinbank Spring</b>	Private, City	68 ac
<b>Unit 13. Shadow Canyon</b>	Private, City	68 ac
<b>Unit 14. San Gabriel Springs</b>	City	68 ac

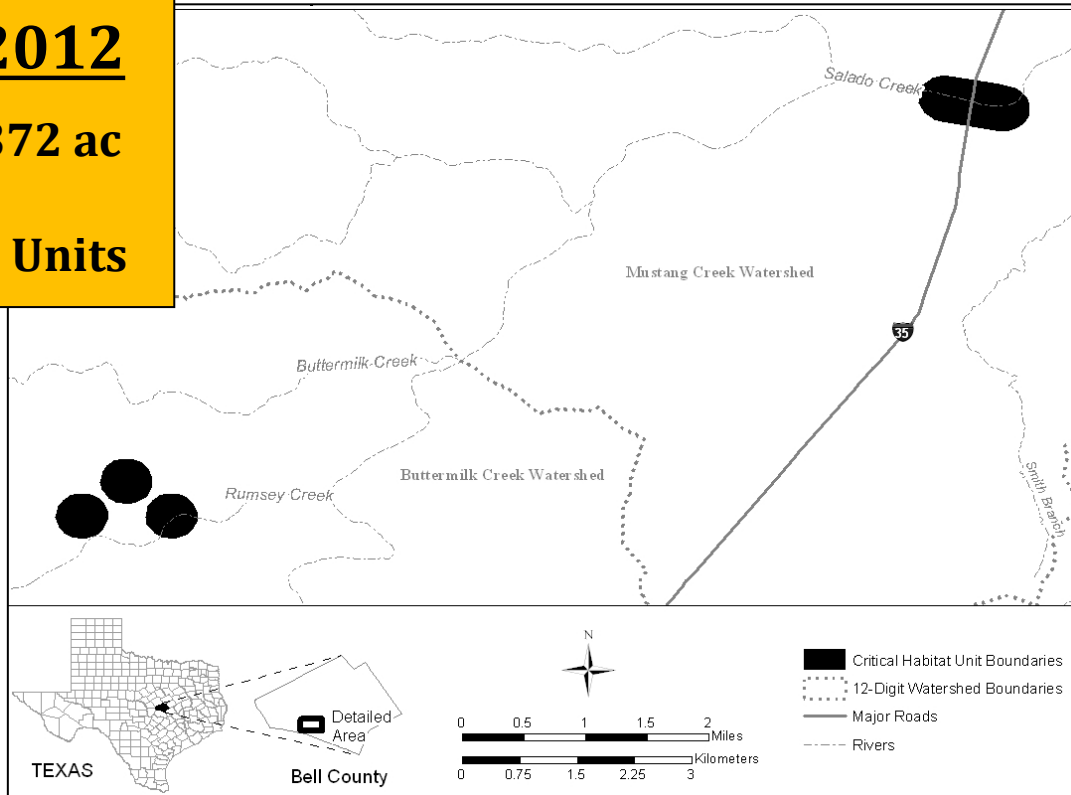
Unit 1. Water Tank Cave	Private	68 ac
Unit 2. Hogg Hollow Spring	Private, Federal	122 ac (↑ 54 ac)
Unit 3. Cedar Hollow Spring	Private	68 ac
Unit 4. Lake Georgetown	Private, Federal	134 ac (↑ 2 ac)
Unit 5. Buford Hollow Spring	Private, Federal	68 ac
Unit 6. Swinbank Spring	Private, City	68 ac
Unit 7. Avant Spring	Private	68 ac
Unit 8. Shadow Canyon	Private, City	68 ac
Unit 9. Garey Ranch Spring	Private	68 ac

# Salado Salamander 2012 - 2020

**2012**

**372 ac**

**4 Units**



<b>Unit 1. Hog Hollow Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 2. Solana Spring #1</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 3. Cistern Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 4. IH-35</b>	Private, State, City	168 ac

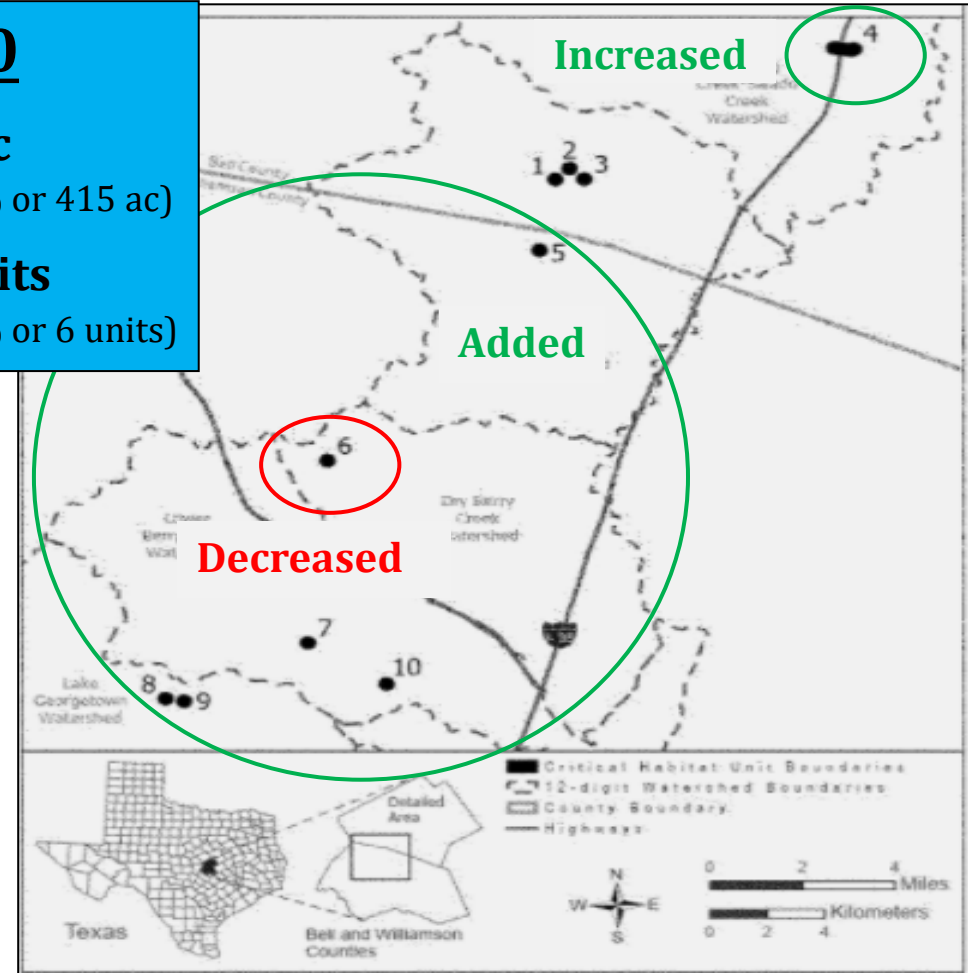
**2020**

**787 ac**

(↑ 112% or 415 ac)

**10 Units**

(↑ 150% or 6 units)



<b>Unit 1. Hog Hollow Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 2. Solana Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 3. Cistern Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 4. IH-35</b>	Private, State, City	175 ac (↑ 7 ac)
<b>Unit 5. King's Garden Main Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 6. Cobbs Spring</b>	Private	68 ac (↓ 15 ac)
<b>Unit 7. Cowan Creek Spring</b>	Private	68 ac
<b>Unit 8. Walnut Spring</b>	Private, County	68 ac
<b>Unit 9. Twin Springs</b>	Private, County	68 ac
<b>Unit 10. Bat Well Cave</b>	Private	68 ac

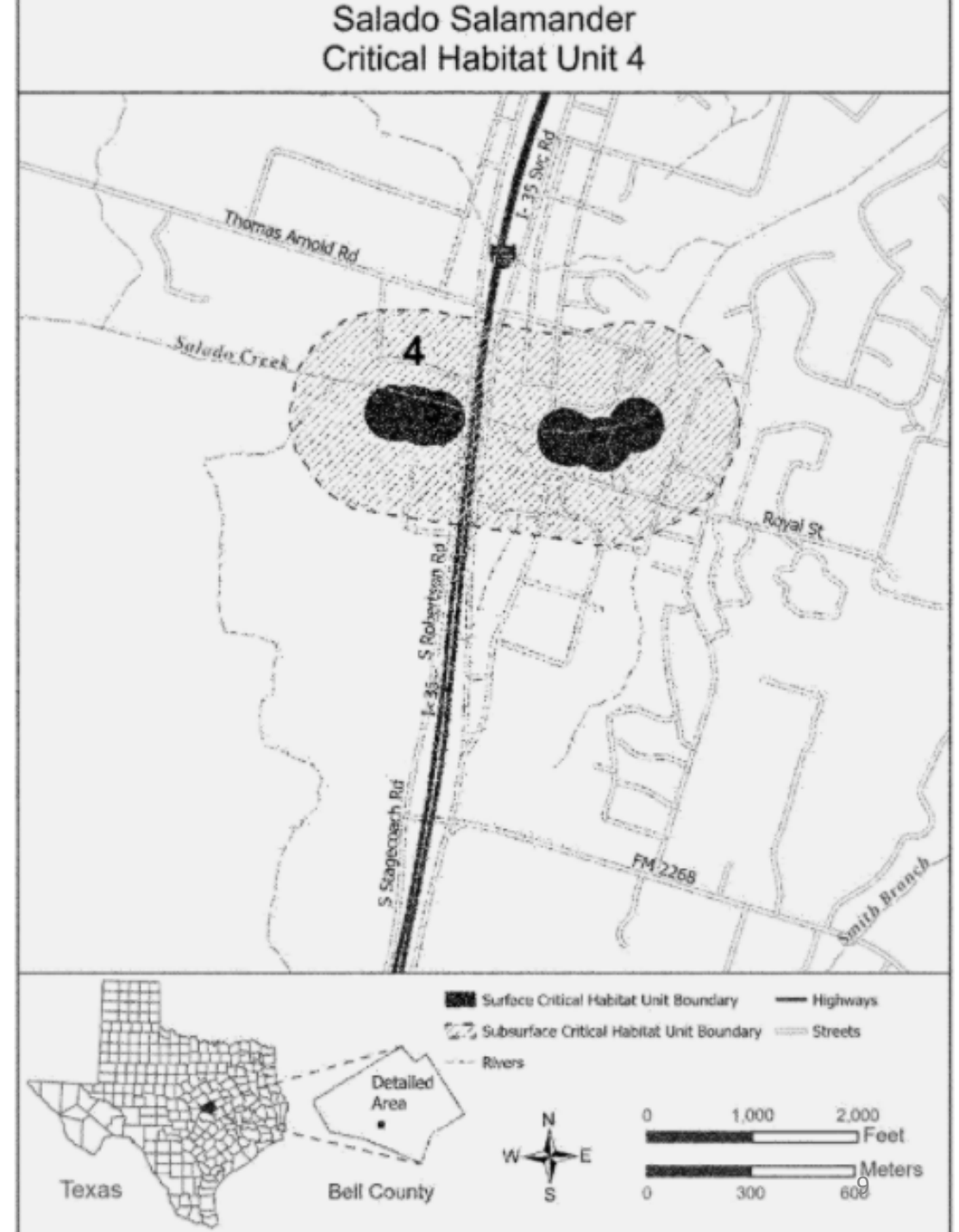
# 6 Key Coalition Comments

1. Foundational science used to support surface and subsurface designation is not consistent with scientific literature;
2. *Water quality* is being successfully addressed;
3. *Water quantity* is being successfully addressed;
4. Public identification of sites could increase site disturbance and harassment;
5. Economic Analysis does not include all anticipated impacts; and,
6. Existing public and private conservation activities have worked to preserve and protect the species



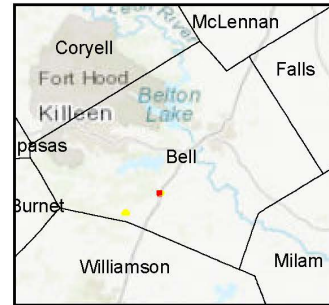
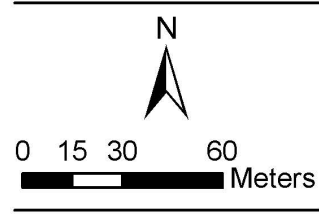
# FWS Inconsistent Text in Proposed Designation

“The surface critical habitat was delineated by extending a line upstream and downstream 80 m ...When determining surface critical habitat boundaries, we were not able to delineate specific stream segments on the map due to the small size of the streams. Therefore, we drew a circle with 80 m radius”



# One Example of the Coalition's Preferred Critical Habitat Approach



## Salado Salamander Proposed Critical Habitat for Bell County (Robertson Complex)



Date: 7/13/2020



### Legend

-  Spring Locations
-  Proposed Critical Habitat





# Any Questions?

