

## Mill Creek Mountainsnail (*Oreohelix howardi*)

### **Species Status Statement.**

#### Distribution

This terrestrial snail does not occur outside Utah. Its currently understood distribution is limited to Mill Creek Canyon in Salt Lake County, Utah. At this time, there are three occurrences known, one in each of Porter and Church Forks of Mill Creek Canyon, and one in the main stem of the canyon. Since its current distribution in the canyon is not completely understood, whether the occurrences should be considered one large colony or divided into smaller colonies cannot yet be determined (Oliver and Bosworth 1999).

Table 1. Utah counties currently occupied by this species.

<b>Mill Creek Mountainsnail</b>
SALT LAKE

#### Abundance and Trends

Information is very limited in this regard. No declines in this species since its original description in 1944 are apparent; however, there is a lack of quantitative data to support this claim and continued monitoring is necessary to determine the current population status of this species (Oliver and Bosworth 1999).

### **Statement of Habitat Needs and Threats to the Species.**

#### Habitat Needs

Mill Creek mountainsnail lives in moist coniferous forests on north-facing slopes in Mill Creek Canyon (Clarke 1993).

#### Threats to the Species

Since this species is endemic to a very small area, its population is susceptible to catastrophic events and human disturbance. Specific threats include increasing recreational use (i.e., hiking, mountain biking) and forest fires, with the latter potentially exacerbated by climate change (UDWR 2005).

Table 2. Summary of a Utah threat assessment and prioritization completed in 2014. This assessment applies to the species' entire distribution within Utah. For species that also occur elsewhere, this assessment applies only to the portion of their distribution within Utah. The full threat assessment provides more information including lower-ranked threats, crucial data gaps, methods, and definitions (UDWR 2015; Salafsky et al. 2008).

<b>Mill Creek Mountainsnail</b>
<b>Very High</b>
Small Isolated Populations

### **Rationale for Designation.**

The currently known range of Mill Creek mountainsnail is only three locations in one canyon, which makes its population susceptible to catastrophic events and human activities. In order to improve the understanding of the distribution and status of this species in Utah, managers need to conduct occasional surveys, and monitor potential threats. These activities will help prevent the possibility of Endangered Species Act listing of this species.

### **Economic Impacts of Sensitive Species Designation.**

Sensitive species designation is intended to facilitate management of this species, which is required to prevent Endangered Species Act listing and lessen related economic impacts. An ESA listing of Mill Creek mountainsnail could impact outdoor recreation (e.g., hiking, biking) and the management and development of land resources in Salt Lake County, the only known location for this species. There would also be increased costs of regulatory compliance for many land-use decisions and mitigation costs.

### **Literature Cited.**

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