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**ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS PETITION THE U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE
SERVICE TO DESIGNATE CRITICAL HABITAT
FOR THE ENDANGERED PALLID STURGEON**

(ST. LOUIS-MO) Today, on behalf of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment (“Coalition”) and the Missouri Clean Water Campaign, a program of the National Water Sentinels of the Sierra Club (Campaign), Great Rivers Environmental Law Center sent by mail a petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) requesting FWS to designate critical habitat for the endangered pallid sturgeon.

Over ninety percent of the pallid sturgeon’s habitat in the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers has disappeared as a result of damming and channelization. The species was listed as federally endangered on September 6, 1990, but the FWS failed to designate critical habitat due to the insufficiency of scientific data on the species’ habitat requirements. Over the past twenty years, the Service has conducted many studies that enable critical habitat to be designated.

“The pallid sturgeon has become so rare that the failure to protect its habitat would most certainly result in its extinction,” said Brook Spear, of Great Rivers Environmental Law Center. “The listing of the species as endangered is only a part of the protection needed to ensure its continuation. That protection means little if there is no habitat in which the fish can live and breed.”

“How can the USFWS protect the Pallid Sturgeon without protecting the habitat in which it lives?” asked Ken Midkiff, Director of the Missouri Clean Water Campaign. The Coalition and Campaign hope that the FWS will act quickly on the petition to prevent further loss of habitat.

Great Rivers is a nonprofit public interest environmental law firm in St. Louis that provides free and reduced-fee legal services to those working to promote preservation of open space, clean energy, clean air and clean water. Its web address is:
www.greatriverslaw.org