



Teamwork

Working as a Team

A number of government agencies are working together to ensure the survival of the Alabama Cavefish and its fragile environment. Key Cave National Wildlife Refuge is an exemplary case of this cooperation. Agencies such as USFWS, NRCS, ADCNR, and TVA are cooperating in the refuge's management to significantly increase the chances of survival for this endangered species.

The Threat of Pollution

The karst geology of the Key Cave area makes the groundwater very susceptible to pollution.

- A thin soil cover atop fractured bedrock allows contaminated water to penetrate deep underground.
- Recharge to the water table is very rapid, so managing surface vegetation to limit runoff is especially important.
- Threats to Key Cave include contaminating effluents from private septic systems, agricultural chemicals, livestock waste, motor oil, industrial waste and garbage.



United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service owns the land above Key Cave and is managing the refuge with a focus on grassland bird species. The use of native warm season grasses as a management tool helps to reduce erosion and protect the catchment of the cave from excessive runoff. The grasses also provide important habitat for grassland nesting species and increases diversity on the refuge.



Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR)

Alabama's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources manages public lands along the Tennessee River. The public uses these areas for hunting and fishing as well as hiking and bird watching. ADCNR biologists regularly monitor the status and health of the cave's wildlife.



Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

The Tennessee Valley Authority owns the cave entrance and the property just below the cave. Through their contributions, TVA has provided funds for protecting the cave. In collaboration with other conservation groups, TVA biologists continue to monitor endangered species.



Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)

The Natural Resource Conservation Service has been instrumental in reducing erosion and limiting the flow of polluted runoff into the cave system. NRCS planned specific plantings along drainage ways that are used to limit harmful runoff.

