

Mazda Toyota Manufacturing, U.S.A., Inc. Partners with Environmental Groups to Protect Rare Fish

December 20, 2018

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HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (Dec. 20, 2018) – Mazda Toyota Manufacturing, U.S.A., Inc. (MTMUS) announced today an agreement with the Center for Biological Diversity and Tennessee Riverkeeper (Conservation Groups) to protect the spring pygmy sunfish and its unique habitat, which is adjacent to the MTMUS auto plant site in Huntsville, AL. The agreement is designed to protect and restore the habitat of the sunfish, protect against long-term risks to the sunfish and its habitat, and provide funding for measures to be used for the benefit of the sunfish over the long-term.

“Environmental sustainability and the conservation of natural habitat is a global priority for both Mazda and Toyota,” said Mark Brazeal, VP of Administration, MTMUS. “We are pleased that this effort to protect the sunfish and its habitat further demonstrates our commitment to protecting biodiversity, particularly regarding threatened and endangered species. We will continue to work with the Conservation Groups, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and environmental experts to develop our plant site sustainably.”

MTMUS will, in cooperation with other stakeholders, work to secure property in and around the sunfish habitat to develop a conservation corridor near the site, designed to protect no less than 1,100 acres of the Beaverdam Spring and Creek Complex, one of two known locations in the world where the sunfish lives.

“We’re happy Toyota and Mazda have stepped up to do the right thing for this pretty little sunfish and the unique spring where it survives,” said Elise Bennett, a staff attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. “With this agreement, the sunfish has more than a fighting chance to make it.”

“This agreement will help ensure that citizens can enjoy clean water, wildlife and new jobs,” said David Whiteside, founder of Tennessee Riverkeeper. “Clean, wholesome rivers are everyone’s right, and Tennessee Riverkeeper is dedicated to protecting that right. This agreement will benefit Huntsville and future generations of Americans.”

MTMUS further committed \$6 million to protecting the spring pygmy sunfish and its habitat. Of that amount, \$2 million will support habitat restoration and monitoring projects in the Beaverdam Spring and Creek watershed, including a project to restore the connection between Moss Spring and the other spring heads in the Beaverdam Spring and Creek Complex and to detect and protect against future threats to the species. MTMUS, together with Toyota and Mazda, will contribute a total of \$4 million to a restricted endowment that will provide permanent funding for future conservation projects to benefit the spring pygmy sunfish, including habitat restoration, captive propagation, genetic studies and reintroduction efforts. This endowment will be guided by a Scientific Committee consisting of experts with relevant scientific, technical and/or regulatory expertise in preservation of the pygmy sunfish.

“The conservation corridor will be maintained by a land trust that will be designated at a point in the future, with the goal to establish the conservation corridor and identify the land trust that will maintain the habitat,” said Brazeal.

MTMUS broke ground on the \$1.6 billion plant in November 2018. It will have the capacity to build 300,000 vehicles a year beginning in 2021 and is expected to create up to 4,000 jobs.