

**Chiricahua Leopard Frog Recovery Team
Mogollon Rim Stakeholders Group Meeting
Payson Ranger District, AZ
November 14, 2007**

Chiricahua Leopard Frog Recovery Update for Recovery Units (RUs) 5-7 (AZ portions)

Likely extant populations in RU5 and the AZ portions of RUs 6&7 as of October 2007: ~13

Status of recovery plan – The Recovery plan was signed in April 2007 and is available at: <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/CLF.htm>. There were no major substantive changes from the draft, but minor edits and revisions were made in response to comments on the document and some new information (see Appendix M).

USFWS biological opinion on the USFS Southwest Region LRMP - The “big BO” establishes the following baseline for Chiricahua leopard frogs on the following National Forests:

Tonto NF

- Payson RD: possibly 1 population extant
- Pleasant Valley RD: 4 populations extant

Coconino NF

- Red Rock RD: 2 populations extant

A-S NF

- Clifton RD: 4 populations extant
- Alpine RD: Status unclear, 2 likely extant populations, perhaps 4

If numbers of fall below the baseline, reinitiation of consultation may be warranted.

General Recovery Activities Needed in Mogollon Rim Region in 08

In general we need help to: 1) monitor extant populations, 2) survey for additional extant populations, 3) survey for habitat; identify and assess potential reestablishment sites, 4) identify and implement habitat improvements in each management unit (MA); 5) identify and establish refugium populations; and 6) Enroll interested/willing partners in the Statewide Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA).

These actions need to occur in all Recovery Units to help meet the recovery criteria (e.g. “at least two metapopulations in different drainages plus at least one isolated and robust population in each RU exhibit long-term persistence and stability”).

Chiricahua Leopard frog Accomplishments in the Mogollon Rim Region (AZ) in 07 and Overview of Specific Actions Needed by RU in 08

RU5: Mogollon Rim – Verde River

Participants: Tonto NF, AGFD, Phoenix Zoo, USFWS, Ray Tanner

Review of 2007:

Gentry/Crouch/Cherry Ck – Tonto NF

- ✓ Carroll Spring (Gentry area) – 2 egg masses collected and reared at Phx Zoo and Bubbling Ponds. 95 metamorphs released to augment the population. Two adult females collected for breeding with Buckskin males at the Phx Zoo and ASDM. Pool deepened and lined.
- ✓ Crouch Creek – augmented population with 37 metamorphs from the Carroll Spring egg masses.
- ✓ West Prong Gentry Creek – Pool deepened and lined. 57 tads and metamorphs released to augment population (reared from Carroll Spring egg masses).
- ✓ Bottle Spring – 35 metamorphs released to augment population (reared from Carroll Spring egg masses).
- ✓ H-Y Tank – Crayfish detected for 1st time. Elk fence completed on south half of tank. A single Chiricahua leopard frog found (probably dispersed from Bottle Spring).
- ✓ Cherry Creek – established new population with release of 842 tadpoles and metamorphs. A frog seen during the release may have come from Bottle Spring.
- ✓ Pine Spring - augmented population (established in 06) with 313 tadpoles and metamorphs (from Carroll Spr egg masses).
- ✓ Ramer Tank – frogs released here in 06 appear not to have persisted.
- ✓ Trail Tank – conducted bullfrog removals.

Ellison Creek

- ✓ No frogs observed in the area despite repeated surveys.

Buckskin Hills

- ✓ No frogs observed despite repeated surveys.
- ✓ The Buckskin 3 have produced several small, largely non-fertile egg masses. There are about 35 metamorphs from those events at the Phoenix Zoo. The Buckskin female is now at the ASDM with 2 Gentry males, and the 2 Buckskin males are at the Phx Zoo with 2 Gentry females for reciprocal breeding.

Specific Activities Proposed or to be Discussed for 2008:

Gentry/Crouch/Cherry Cks – Tonto NF

- ✓ Hold a community meeting needs to be held in Young to discuss Chiricahua leopard frogs (fall 2007). Representatives from AGFD, TontoNF, and USFWS should be present.
- ✓ Hold a coordination meeting needs to be held to develop a work plan for 2008 activities (December 2007). Work plan items to be discussed include:
 1. Crayfish removal at H-Y Tank: continue mechanical removal and other possible means of control.
 2. Possible tank renovation project: removal of non-native predators from several tanks.
 3. Possible SHA with landowners adjacent to Frog Pond.
 4. Possible pond and pump construction at Cunningham Spring.
 5. Possible sediment removal at Crouch Creek.
 6. Possible habitat improvement at Rock Spring: deepen, install liner, build elk fence.
 7. Monitor releases and assess habitats

Ellison Creek

- ✓ Hold a coordination meeting to develop a specific work plan for 2008 activities (December 2007). Work plan will include field surveys, translocations, and habitat renovation. Tadpoles/frogs may be available for release from Buckskin/Gentry breeding experiments.
- ✓ Hold a community meeting in the vicinity of La Cienega Ranch and Ellison Estates to discuss Chiricahua leopard frogs. Representatives from AGFD, Tonto NF, and USFWS should be present.

Bucksin Hills

- ✓ .
- ✓ Hold a coordination meeting to develop a specific work plan for 2008 activities (December 2007). Specific work items to be discussed include:
 1. Complete renovations at Buckskin Tank
 2. If tadpoles/frogs available from Buckskin/Gentry breeding experiments or Offspring of ~35 Bucksin frogs at Phoenix Zoo, conduct translocations to appropriate sites. Will need to discuss source populations.
 3. Continue surveys

RU6: Mogollon Rim – Upper Gila

Participants: A-S NF, AGFD, USFWS, George Gann

Review of 2007:

- ✓ Breeding colony of Three Forks frogs maintained at the AGFD Pinetop Office
- ✓ Released animals to Concho Bill and Sierra Blanca Lake in August
- ✓ Investigating SHA opportunity with George Gann (near Concho)

Specific Activities Proposed or to be Discussed for 2008:

- Hold spring coordination meeting with partners to develop a detailed work plan for 2008 activities. Work plan will likely include:
 1. Monitor Concho Bill and Sierra Blanca Lake reestablished populations
 2. Release additional animals to Concho Bill and Sierra Blanca, as needed
 3. Survey Three Forks and other sites
 4. Complete SHA Certificate of Inclusion on Gann Property, conduct any needed habitat renovations, release and monitor frogs.

RU7: Upper Gila – Blue River

Participants:

Review of 2007:

- ✓ Limited monitoring at likely extant localities on Clifton and Alpine RDs

Specific Activities Proposed for 2008:

- Set up spring coordination meeting with partners to develop a specific work plan for 2008 activities. Work plan will include field surveys, translocations, and habitat renovation.
- Pursue/plan for replication of populations in need management through reestablishments.

Overview of Activities outside the Mogollon Rim, AZ, Region

A Statewide Safe Harbor Agreement between USFWS and Arizona Game and Fish Department, and a SHA between USFWS and Malpai Borderlands Group (SE AZ and SW NM) are in place.

These agreements allow non-Federal partners to sign onto the SHAs with Certificates of Inclusion. Studies are underway by USGS on the rangewide population genetics of *Rana chiricahuensis* and *R. subaquavocalis*, and effects of various contaminants on Chiricahua leopard frogs. Survey Training Workshops were held in Rio Rico, Arizona and Silver City, New Mexico in 07. Headstarting and captive propagation facilities are under development at the USFWS Ecological Services Office in Albuquerque.

RU1 – Two new populations discovered in the Sierrita Mtns, number of populations on Buenos Aires NWR have increased. Pond created at Pena Blanca Spring. Bullfrog control conducted in Sycamore Cyn. Limited monitoring.

RU2 – Lots of recovery work in this RU. Frogs are being reared at the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum from the Santa Rita Mtns; bullfrog control was conducted in the San Rafael Valley; habitat renovation projects are in planning or implementation phases for Redrock Cyn and Scotia Cyn; Ramsey Cyn leopard Frog Team very active in monitoring, frogs were moved to the stream in Ramsey Canyon, and the Conservation Agreement and Strategy were renewed; and a in-situ headstarting facility was established and is now population with frogs at Las Cienegas.

RU3 – Surveys were conducted in the Chiricahua Mtns; Partners Projects progressing to develop a headstarting/rearing facility at Douglas High School and a refugium pond near Portal; Malpai HCP nearing completion; Magoffin Ranch signed on to Safe Harbor Agreement; and a grant proposal was developed and submitted to fund 3 workshops in northern Sonora to build capacity for amphibian monitoring and conservation in Mexico.

RU4 – The one population in the Galiuro Mtns appears to have disappeared. Tadpoles were moved to augment Shaw Tank and reestablish a population at Halfmoon Tank in the Dragoon Mtns. The latter project failed when the tank dried; however, frogs are doing well at Shaw Tank and one other site in the Dragoons.

RU6 (NM) – Gila NF fenced out livestock from three occupied Chiricahua leopard frog streams (Negrito, South Fork Negrito, and North Fork Negrito), and four occupied stock tanks which were fenced to exclude livestock except at a single narrow water point at each tank. Developing headstarting/propagation facility at USFWS, Albuquerque.

RU7 (NM): Developed/enhanced habitat and established two populations of frogs at Burro Cienega.

RU8: Frogs held in captivity at Ft Worth Zoo from Cave Creek on the Ladder Ranch. Monitoring of frogs and Bd at the Ladder. Planning for 8 captive rearing/headstarting facilities at Ladder Ranch, to be ready next year. Planning for establishment of populations in 6 steel tanks at Chino Mines/Phelps Dodge property in 2008.