

**Chiricahua Leopard Frog Recovery Team
West-Central New Mexico Stakeholders Group Meeting
Silver City, New Mexico
October 23, 2007**

Chiricahua Leopard Frog Recovery Update for Recovery Units (RUs) 6-8 (NM portions)

Likely extant populations in the NM portions of RUs 6-8 as of October 2007: 30

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 Gila National Forest:

- Quemado Ranger District: 2 populations extant
- Reserve Ranger District: 7 populations extant
- Glenwood Ranger District: 1 population extant.
- Wilderness Ranger District: 2 populations extant.
- Black Range Ranger District: 2 extant populations

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

General Recovery Activities Needed in West-Central New Mexico 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 headstarting/rearing facilities; and 6) gauge the desirability of a Safe Harbor Agreement for West-Central NM.

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 West-Central New Mexico in 07 and Overview of Specific Actions Needed by RU in 08

RU6: Mogollon Rim – Upper Gila

Participants: Gila NF, USFWS

Review of 2007:

- ✓ In 2006, the Reserve Ranger District of the Gila NF fenced out livestock from three occupied Chiricahua leopard frog streams (Negrito, South Fork Negrito, and North Fork Negrito), and four stock tanks which were fenced to exclude livestock except at a single narrow water point at each tank. One or two of the tanks

currently support frogs, but all had frogs recently, and captive headstarting next year could supply animals for reestablishments.

- ✓ Gila NF designing projects to minimize impacts to Chiricahua leopard frog
- ✓ Gila NF conducting surveys according to protocols for Chiricahua leopard frogs
- ✓ Developing headstarting/propagation facility at USFWS, Albuquerque

Specific Activities Proposed for 2008:

- Headstart frogs at USFWS facility from Long Mesa Tank for population reestablishment at nearby tanks
- Continue surveys
- Continue implementation of LRMP biological opinion

RU7: Upper Gila – Blue River

Participants:

Review of 2007:

- ✓ Gila NF designing projects to minimize impacts to Chiricahua leopard frogs
- ✓ Gila NF conducting surveys for Chiricahua leopard frogs according to protocols
- ✓ Developing headstarting/propagation facility at USFWS, Albuquerque
- ✓ Developed/enhanced habitat and established 2 populations at Burro Cienega on the Cole property. A 20 X 30 m pond was constructed with a Partners for Fish and Wildlife grant. Twelve frogs were placed in an outdoor refugium, and another 22 frogs were established in a steel rim tank

Specific Activities Proposed for 2008:

- Continue surveys
- Continue implementation of LRMP biological opinion
- Headstart tadpoles from Chino Mines and continue establishment of populations at Burro Cienega

RU8: Black-Mimbres-Rio Grande

Participants:

Review of 2007:

- ✓ Frogs held in captivity at Ft Worth Zoo from Cave Creek on the Ladder Ranch. Only 3 frogs (all female) remain at the Zoo. Need to collect additional frogs from an adjacent drainage (frogs are extirpated from Cave Creek) and begin captive propagation.
- ✓ Monitoring and planning for semi-captive facilities at Ladder Ranch. The Ladder is building eight AZ-Sonora Desert Museum style frog enclosures, which can be used to headstart, captive propagate, and/or hold frogs. They should be ready in 2008. The Ladder will hire a person to be responsible for maintaining the facility and husbandry of the frogs.
- ✓ Planning for steel tank populations on Chino Mines/Phelps Dodge property
- ✓ Developed headstarting/propagation facility at USFWS, Albuquerque

Specific Activities Proposed for 2008:

- Headstart frogs from Cuchillo Negro Warm Springs
- Continue surveys
- Continue planning/implementation for facilities at Ladder Ranch

- Continue planning/implementation of steel tank populations at Chino Mine properties
- Continue implementation of LRMP biological opinion

Overview of Activities in Arizona RUs

A Statewide Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) 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.

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.

RU5 – Frogs have apparently disappeared from the Buckskin Hills of the Coconino NF (West Mogollon MA). However, approximately 40 frogs that were either salvaged from the area in 2005, or are offspring of salvaged frogs, are in captivity primarily at the Phoenix Zoo. Outbreeding experiments with Gentry Creek frogs are being conducted at the Phoenix Zoo and ASDM to increase genetic variability. Tank habitats are available in the Buckskin Hills for reestablishment. In the Gentry Creek MA, much habitat restoration, monitoring, and reestablishment has occurred. Headstarting occurred at the Phoenix Zoo and Bubbling Ponds hatchery, population augmentation occurred at 5 sites and a new population was established at Cherry Creek. Habitat improvements were made at several sites. Chiricahua leopard frogs observed at Ellison Creek in the Upper East Verde River MA in 2006 were not found in 2007, despite repeated surveys.

RU6 and RU7 (AZ): Limited monitoring has occurred at Three Forks (RU6), Dix Creek and Rattlesnake Pasture Tank (RU7). Frogs are apparently still extant at these localities. Moving forward on a refugium population in RU6 under the Statewide SHA.