

**Chiricahua Leopard Frog Recovery Team Mogollon Rim Steering Committee Meeting
January 29, 2015 Meeting Minutes
Payson Ranger District Office, Payson, AZ**

Attendees:

Mike Sredl	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Phoenix	msredl@azgfd.gov
Abi King	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Phoenix	aking@azgfd.gov
Cody Mosley	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Phoenix	cmosley@azgfd.gov
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Dave Daniels	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Mesa	ddaniels@azgfd.gov
Susi MacVean	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Flagstaff	smacvean@azgfd.gov
Matt Rinker	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Flagstaff	mrinker@azgfd.gov
Dan Groebner	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Pinetop	dgroebner@azgfd.gov
Cat Crawford	US Fish and Wildlife Service-Tucson	cat_crawford@fws.gov
Shaula Hedwall	US Fish and Wildlife Service-Flagstaff	shaula_hedwall@fws.gov
Jill Oertley	US Forest Service-Coconino NF	joertley@fs.fed.us
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John Wilcox	US Forest Service-Tonto NF	johnwilcox@fs.fed.us
Brad Poynter	Phoenix Zoo	bpoynter@phoenixzoo.org
Phone-ins:		
Sharon Lashway	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Mesa	slashway@azgfd.gov
Stephanie Coleman	US Forest Service-Apache-Sitgreaves NF	smcoleman@fs.fed.us
Nancy Spencer-Morris	US Forest Service-Apache-Sitgreaves NF	njspencermorris@fs.fed.us
Allen Graves	US Forest Service-Apache-Sitgreaves NF	agraves@fs.fed.us

I. Meeting Purpose and Focus:

The objective of the annual steering committee meeting is to 1) focus on the status of Chiricahua leopard frogs (CLF) across Recovery Units 5-7, 2) exchange regional successes and challenges relating to recovery of CLF, 3) identify priorities of CLF recovery for long term delisting, and 4) determine appropriate goals for use of limited resources among objectives.

II. Recovery Unit Updates for Units 5-7: (Please see 2014 Annual Updates for additional details on recovery activities and summaries.)

RU 5

Upper Verde MA (C. Akins, B. Burger, J. Wilcox)

- 26 surveys at 15 sites
- CLFs detected at 8 sites
- Breeding detected at 5 sites
- Augmentations/Releases to 7 sites (147 tadpoles, 369 juveniles)
- Dispersal adult CLF to new locality east of Tonto Village (Cabin Draw is nearest source)
- 1 RACA removed (J. Wilcox from Pieper Hatchery Springs)
- Emergency salvage of adult CLFs and tadpoles from drying pond during Workshop

Gentry Creek MA (C. Akins, B. Burger, J. Wilcox)

- 41 surveys at 23 sites
- CLFs detected at 9 sites
- Breeding detected at 7 sites
- Augmentations/Releases to 8 sites (520 tadpoles, 531 juveniles)

Buckskin Hills MA (S. MacVean, S. Hedwall)

- 75 visits at 46 sites
- CLFs detected at 5 sites
- Breeding detected at 3 sites
- Augmentation at 1 site (Middle Tank; 234 tadpoles, 226 juveniles)
- Significant decrease in number of occupied sites and numbers of CLFs and reproduction at these sites
- CLFs at Middle Tank tested positive for Bd in November
- Reconstruction/remodeling of enclosure fencing at 3 sites (Buckskin, Middle, and Sycamore tanks) using a method that requires less maintenance
- There is a preliminary test at Divide Tank to examine the efficacy of liquid ammonia to eradicate crayfish. This work was conducted with permits from AGFD (for take of crayfish) and with permission from the USFS to put the chemical in the tank. So far, crayfish have decreased, but they have not been eliminated. S. Hedwall (FWS) and D. Ward (USGS) are working with others to develop a 5-year Special Local Needs (SLN) permit from the Arizona Department of Agriculture in order to be able to use liquid ammonia for removing invasive aquatic species.

RU 6

Black River MA (A. King, D. Groebner)

- 22 surveys at 13 sites
- No CLFs detected
- AGFD Pinetop facility housing frogs, but no productive breeding in 2014
- SHA in Pima holding BRMA CLFs visited in Feb; observed adults, tadpoles, and 10 recently hatched egg masses

Coleman Creek/Blue River MA and Nutrioso and Rudd Creeks MAs (A. King)

- 17 surveys at 14 sites
- No CLFs detected

- S. Coleman shared that the Castle Creek/Buckalou brown trout population has expanded possibly affecting Campbell Blue Creek.

RU 7

San Francisco-Blue River MA (C. Akins)

- 29 surveys at 18 sites
- Possible CLF detected at 1 site (post-release at Dix Creek)
- No CLF detections in MA since 2011
- Lower numbers of LLFs in Dix Creek; Bd positive
- First multi-state release in June; frogs and tadpoles from Ladder Ranch (NM) released to Dix Creek
- Major challenge is lack of compliance/consultation across MA.

CAMP (Conservation and Mitigation Program) Updates (S. Lashway)

- Hope to work on Bar X, but not set to consult until 2016/17

SHA (Safe Harbor Agreement) Updates (C. Mosley)

- Concho SHA pump upgraded from propane to solar and plans to fix fence
- Plans to start discussions in the Blue River area of RU 7
- Turner Endangered Species Fund working on writing and holding statewide SHA for NM

Captive Rearing Update (B. Poynter)

- 2 egg masses from Carroll Springs (approx. 4,000 tadpoles)
- Optimal density study; 7.7 tadpoles/gallon is optimal
- Plans to expand density study in 2015
- Results from optimal rearing temperature study; 76°F is optimal
- S. Hedwall discussed possibility of Phoenix Zoo holding adult CLFs for captive breeding from Buckskin Hills if a salvage is necessary
- Headstarting may not be needed in RU 5 in 2015; more wild to wild translocations
- Local Recovery Groups will discuss headstarting needs for 2015

III. Big Picture Theme 1: Improving translocation success and gaining insight into failures

(M. Sredl)

Brainstorming topics discussed included these diverse topics:

- A study that will review existing data:
 - B. Hossack, B. Sigafus, and E. Muths (USGS) analysis of AGFD release data
 - Plans to incorporate data from other sources/agencies
 - May help determine what data is important to collect in the future
 - Shaula Hedwall expressed interest in involvement in the USGS study
- Methods to improve translocations by:
 - Establishing better criteria to assess potential release sites?
 - Determine which life stages and how many individuals released work best?
 - ... and related questions
- Ways to increase detectability

- Need an accurate assessment
- Help from telemetry?
- Approaches and strategies for conduction and monitoring releases
 - Fewer releases per year with more intensive monitoring?
 - More releases in many locations with less intensive monitoring in the short-term, but more intensive once releases were conducted for a several-year period.
- Assess threats to translocation success
 - Management of translocation sites in light of disease
 - Optimize habitats to increase survival (e.g. larger shallow areas for warm water)
 - Better detect disease at potential sites
 - AMTI
 - How are AMTI a threat?
 - Disease vector
 - Resource competition
 - Predation
 - When are AMTI not a threat?
 - Complex habitat
 - No paedomorphs
- Brainstormed Post-release Monitoring
 - Develop a more regimented protocol for monitoring release success
 - Increase detectability
 - Need an accurate assessment
 - Help from telemetry?
 - Total coverage of area to pick up movement/dispersal
- A group was created to identify sources of data and additional studies to gain greater insight into factors associated with successful establishments and reestablishments of CLF populations. .

IV. Big Picture Theme 2: Increasing our emphasis on identifying and managing local threats (In practice, Local Recovery Groups have assessed threats and identified priorities for a 5-year period during each meeting)

(C. Crawford)

- Cat suggested creating a sub-committee that would have as its general goal to understand the priorities, needs and constraints of Chiricahua leopard frogs throughout their range and suggest strategies to meet those needs in as many local areas as possible.
- It was suggested that each Local Recovery Group would:
 - Discuss and develop recovery priorities for the next 5 years:
 - This includes discussion of local threats (e.g. nonnatives, disease, fire, drought) and other recovery actions (e.g. releases, habitat renovations...) for each MA/RU
 - Identify limitations/constraints (e.g. consultation/compliance, habitat availability, access, limited monetary resources) for each MA/RU
 - Determine which actions are achievable given current limitations/constraints
 - Prioritize achievable actions

- Incorporate into annual work plan or plan to incorporate work plan within the next 5 years
- Outline mechanisms by which unachievable actions could be made possible

V. Strategies to get ahead of the compliance curve Discussions on compliance were integrated in other parts of the agenda and action items.

Announcements/Misc. News

Federal & State Scientific Collecting Permits

- Apache-Sitgreaves is currently the only Forest with both a Federal and State permit.
- Everyone performing actions must be named on permit as an agent.
- Ensure that all potential actions, particularly emergency actions, are covered.
- Ensure that language or at least the actions on both permits are the same.
- Contact C. Crawford before contacting the Regional Office to discuss any questions about language or actions.

Update on Molecular Work

- University of Arizona was given a \$25,000 grant to study the genetics of the Vegas Valley Leopard Frog and the CLF, throughout its range. UofA was given a no-cost extension for 6 months due to administrative hold-ups. A report is due in April and results will be circulated as soon as feasible.

Update on Partners for Fish and Wildlife Service Opportunities

- Jennifer Kaplan at the Partners for FWS has money for work on private and tribal lands. Potential projects will be discussed at Local Recovery Group meetings.

Update on Gartersnakes Critical Habitat Rules

- C. Crawford will have a proposed rule written by June and in the register by October.

Action Items:

- M. Sredl will send meeting handouts and presentations to phone-ins.
- Work on priorities for grazing consultation.
- B. Poynter will talk to Stuart Wells about the possibility of holding adult CLFs from Buckskin Hills for S. Hedwall.
- S. Hedwall and S. MacVean will organize a Buckskin Hills Local Recovery Group meeting.
- Contact M. Sredl for details regarding USGS project looking at translocation data.
- C. Crawford will organize a subcommittee to discuss translocation and propagation.
- C. Crawford will make Disease Meeting and LISTSERV information available on the CLF website.
- M. Sredl will send Programmatic Translocation EAC to C. Overby, Cat Crawford, and Shaula Hedwall.
- A. King will ask S. Lashway about AMTI at Bull Tank and the possibility of swabbing and looking at gut contents.
- Local Recovery Group leads will expand discussions of threats, constraints, and priorities during their respective meetings.

- M. Sredl will update the group on the UofA molecular work when it becomes available.
- Local Recovery Groups will discuss needs and priorities regarding headstarting.

Important, Upcoming Dates

RU 7 LRG – Feb 10 (Safford BLM/USFS Office)

RU 5 LRG – Feb 26 (Payson Ranger District Office)

RU 6 LRG – Mar 20 (Pinetop AGFD Regional Office)

AZ CLF Certification Workshop - May 27-28 (Payson-Quality Inn)

Mogollon Rim Steering Committee – Jan 26, 2016 (Payson Ranger District Office)