

**Chiricahua Leopard Frog Recovery Team SE AZ/SW NM Committee Meeting
January 22, 2015 Meeting Minutes
AGFD Tucson Office**

Attendees:

Mike Sredl	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Phoenix	msredl@azgfd.gov
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Cody Mosley	AZ Game and Fish Dept.-Phoenix	cmosley@azgfd.gov
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Cat Crawford	US Fish and Wildlife Service-Tucson	cat_crawford@fws.gov
Bill Radke	US Fish and Wildlife Service-Douglas	bill_radke@fws.gov
Angela Barclay	US Forest Service-Coronado NF	abarclay@fs.fed.us
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Brent Sigafus	US Geological Survey-Tucson	bsigafus@usgs.gov
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Dawn Wilson	Southwestern Research Station (SWRS)	dwilson@amnh.org
Geoff Bender	Southwestern Research Station (SWRS)	gbender@amnh.org
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Stephane Poulin	AZ-Sonora Desert Museum	spoulin@desertmuseum.org
Stuart Wells	Phoenix Zoo	swells@phoenixzoo.org
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	Albuquerque	
Reuben Gay	US Forest Service-Coronado NF-Douglas	reubengay@fs.fed.us
Blake Hossack	US Geological Survey-Montana	blake_hossack@usgs.gov

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 1-4, 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.

Recovery Unit Updates for Units 1-4: (Note: 2014 Annual Updates will be distributed at a later date.)

RU 1 (C. Akins, D. Hall)

Alamo-Peña Blanca-Peck Canyons MA & Pajarito Wilderness MA

- 89 surveys at 48 sites
- CLFs detected at 12 sites
- Breeding detected at 6 sites
- RACA detected at 7 sites
- Tarahumara frogs were repatriated to Sycamore Canyon in October.

Buenos Aires NWR (B. Sigafus)

- CLFs detected at 14 sites
- Breeding detected at 4 sites
- Telemetry project to look at dispersal planned for 2015 (B. Sigafus)

RU 2

Santa Rita Mountains MA (C. Akins, D. Hall, H. McCall)

- 69 surveys at 30 sites
- CLFs detected at 15 sites
- Breeding detected at 5 sites
- Nonnative fish removed from Sweetwater Dam
- Telemetry study, looking at winter hibernacula use, ongoing at Gardner Canyon and Greaterville Tank (H. McCall)
- Bd die-offs at Gardner Canyon and Greaterville Tank

Empire Cienega MA (D. Hall)

- CLFs detected at 11 sites
- RACA eradicated from Cienega Creek
- Die-offs observed in November at majority of ponds

Huachuca Mountains MA (C. Mosley)

- 33 surveys at 17 sites
- CLFs detected at 8 sites
- Breeding detected at 4 sites
- Adult RACA removed from Peterson Ranch Pond

- Southern leopard frog (SLF) detected at House Pond and Wild Duck Pond at Brown Ranch
- Large removal effort including construction of fences surrounding both ponds
- Evidence of small-scale dispersal of SLFs to nearby ephemeral pond
- Most SLFs removed, but all three ponds will be closely monitored
- Caren Goldberg looking at doing SLF eDNA work in area

RU 3

Northern Chiricahua Mountains MA (A. King, D. Wilson)

- 42 surveys at 15 sites
- CLFs detected at 6 sites (5 SHAs)
- Breeding detected at 4 sites
- Augmentation/Release at 1 site (Cave Creek Ranch SHA)

Peloncillo Mountains MA (M. Christman, J. Rorabaugh)

- 4 surveys at 2 sites in AZ
- CLFs detected at 1 site in AZ
- 3 surveys at 3 sites in NM
- CLFs and breeding detected at 1 site in NM

Southern Chiricahuas MA (A. King)

- 3 surveys at 3 sites
- No CLFs detected

Swisshelms MA (B. Radke)

- 7 surveys at 1 site (Leslie Canyon NWR)
- CLFs observed on all surveys
- 26 tadpoles from SWRS SHA released to only occupied site in MA

RU 4

Galiuro Mountains MA (A. King)

- 68 surveys at 32 sites
- CLFs detected at 11 sites
- Breeding detected at 4 sites
- CLFs dispersed naturally to 3 new sites
- 6 egg masses from Discovery Park SHA released to 2 sites
- AMTI removed from 1 site

Dragoon Mountains MA (A. King)

- 31 surveys at 12 sites
- CLFs detected at 10 sites
- Breeding detected at 4 sites
- CLFs observed at 4 new sites; likely dispersal
- Nonnative fish removal at USFS Half Moon Ranch

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

- Contributed \$20,000 to pond construction at new SHA near Sonoita

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

- New SHA at Apache Springs Ranch near Sonoita (RU 2)
- Pond being constructed at Apache Springs SHA; primarily for frogs
- Turner Endangered Species Fund working on writing and holding statewide SHA in NM

Captive Rearing Update (S. Wells)

- Lack of literature regarding headstarting/rearing successes and failures
- 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

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

(M. Sredl)

- 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
- Brainstorming: 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
- 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. This group includes: Mike Sredl, Stuart Wells, Stephane Poulin, Dawn Wilson, and Michelle Christman.

Big Picture Theme 2: Increasing our emphasis on identifying and managing local threats

(C. Crawford) (In practice, Local Recovery Groups have assessed threats and identified priorities for a 5-year period during each meeting)

- 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. Members included: David Hall, Mike Sredl, Brent Sigafus, Phil Rosen, Cat Crawford, and Michelle Christman. There will be additional members from the Rim SCM and, possibly, NM.
- 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

- Suggest mechanisms to the Sub-committee by which unachievable actions could be made possible

Announcements/Misc. News

Federal & State Scientific Collecting Permits

- Apache-Sitgreaves is the currently 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.
- 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 released immediately.

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 Recover 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.

Important, Upcoming Dates

RU 2-Huachuca LRG – Feb 17 (Sierra Vista Ranger District Office)
 RU 4-Dragoons LRG – Mar 2 (USFS Half Moon Ranch)
 RU 4-Galiuros LRG – Mar 11 (Safford-BLM/USFS Office)
 RU 2-Santa Ritas LRG – Mar 26 (Apache Springs Ranch)
 RU 1 LRG – Mar 18 (AGFD Tucson Office)
 RU 3 LRG – Mar 25 (Portal-Southwestern Research Station)
 AZ CLF Certification Workshop - May 27-28 (Payson-Quality Inn)
 SE AZ/SW NM Steering Committee – Jan 21, 2016 (AGFD Tucson Office)