

MEETING MINUTES: CHIRICAHUA LEOPARD FROG RECOVERY TEAM WEST-CENTRAL NEW MEXICO STAKEHOLDERS

23 October 2007, 1000-1500

Gila National Forest, Silver City Ranger District Office

Attendees

<i>NAME</i>	<i>AFFILIATION</i>	<i>EMAIL ADDRESS</i>
Mike Sredl	AZ Game and Fish Dept	MSredl@azgfd.gov
Charlie Painter	NM Dept of Game and Fish	charles.painter@state.nm.us
Lyndsay Hellekson	Gila National Forest	lhellekson@fs.fed.us
Michael Robinson	Center for Biological Diversity	michaelsr@biologicaldiversity.org
Richard Carter	Land owner with frogs	richard@cartercare.com
Lois Carter	Land owner with frogs	richard@cartercare.com
Randy Jennings	Western New Mexico University	jenningsr@wnmu.edu
Phil Rosen	University of Arizona	pcrosen@u.arizona.edu
Melissa Kreutzian	Fish and Wildlife Service, NM	Melissa_Kreutzian@fws.gov
Jim Rorabaugh	Fish and Wildlife Service, AZ	Jim_Rorabaugh@fws.gov

I. Introductions and overview of the final recovery plan

We started the meeting with introductions, and then briefly reviewed the final recovery plan. The recovery plan was finalized and signed in April 2007. It was signed not only by the Fish and Wildlife Service's Regional Director, but also by the Directors of the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF). None of the primary elements of the plan (goal, recovery strategy, recovery criteria, or primary recovery actions) changed between the draft and final. Changes were made in response to comments on the draft and are summarized in Appendix M.

II. Recovery accomplishments in 2007

We then discussed recovery accomplishments in the West-Central New Mexico Region, but also touched on recovery activities elsewhere within the range of the Chiricahua leopard frog. These accomplishments are detailed in the attached Recovery Update. The Update was drafted for the meeting, but the attached version includes new information and details made available at the meeting.

Additional relevant information that emerged at the meeting:

- The population at Diamond Creek is the largest and most robust population on the Gila National Forest
- Of the four tanks that were fenced on the Gila NF, only one or two are currently thought to support populations

III. Implementation phase – where do we go from here?

a. Recovery website. Recovery webpages will be developed and made available on the Fish and Wildlife Service's Arizona Ecological Service's website

(<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/>). The website will provide information on the species and its recovery program, meeting announcements and meeting notes, links to the recovery plan and other important documents, and other information that will allow anyone to track recovery as well as to obtain information about how they can contribute to the recovery effort. We hope to have a website up and running by the end of 2007. Any comments or suggested additions to the website should be sent to Jim Rorabaugh at Jim_Rorabaugh@fws.gov.

b. Roles of Local Recovery Groups, Stakeholders Group, and the Technical Team during implementation.

During recovery plan preparation, the Technical Team provided the technical expertise for a scientifically sound recovery approach while the Stakeholder groups kept the process grounded in the political, economic, social, and nuts and bolts details of implementing recovery on the ground. Moving into recovery implementation, these roles need to evolve. In addition, another layer of recovery administration is becoming important – local working groups that focus on specific recovery sites or areas within recovery units. In West-Central New Mexico, the following local working groups were identified (although many are very loose and only have a few people involved):

- Mimbres (TNC, Randy Jennings)
- Ladder Ranch (Turner Enterprises, Bruce Christman, NMDGF)
- Chino Mines (Phelps Dodge, Randy Jennings, NMDGF)
- Burro Cienaga (Burro Cienaga Ranch, USFWS Partners Program, Melissa Kreutzian, Randy Jennings, Chino Mines, NMDGF)
- Negrito Creek (Gila NF, USFWS)

The West-Central New Mexico Stakeholder Group may be able to provide regional perspective that is not possible at the focused level of the local working groups. For instance, the Stakeholder Groups may be able to help put local recovery efforts into the perspective of what is needed for recovery in a recovery unit (e.g. how would establishment of a new population in a local working area help meet the recovery criterion that calls for 2 metapopulations in different drainages and one isolated but robust population in each recovery unit). The Stakeholders could set regional priorities and help find funding and partners, and build support for completing those priorities.

c. 2008 Work Plan

In the remaining hours of the meeting, the group decided its best use of time would be to develop a specific work plan for local recovery areas. All six of the local working groups named above were represented at the meeting, so specific plans could be outlined. NMDGF clarified that no State permit was needed to move Chiricahua leopard frogs within New Mexico (so no State permit is needed for translocations, although a Federal permit is needed from USFWS to work with the species). The work plan was completed by recovery unit.

1. RU 6

a. Monitor extant populations (lead – Gila NF).

- b. The Trick Tank on the Carter's Property needs a well and solar pump. Estimated cost is \$10k. The Carter's will likely pay for this themselves, but potentially they could obtain funds from the USFWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, NRCS grant programs, or the Landowner Incentive Program through NMDGF. Leads – Carters and Melissa
- c. Identify additional reestablishment sites (leads – Gila NF, Randy, Charlie, Melissa).

2. RU 7

- a. Monitor extant populations and search for new populations. Leads – Gila NF.
- b. Identify reestablishment sites.
 - i. Blackhawk Tank on the Gila NF was identified as a possible reestablishment site. However, it would be desirable to take the fence down from half of the tank, and test other amphibians in the area for Bd. Stock for the reestablishment could come from Rattlesnake Pasture Tank on the Apache-Sitgreaves NF, Clifton Ranger District, AZ (also in RU 7). If Charlie or another NMDGF employee is there, no importation permit is needed from the State of New Mexico (but we would need appropriate AGFD and USFWS permits. If AGFD collected the stock, no state permit would be needed. If tadpoles are abundant at Rattlesnake Pasture Tank, a wild to wild translocation could occur. If frogs are uncommon at Rattlesnake Pasture, headstarting at WNMU or other sites would be desirable. Blackhawk Tank and Rattlesnake Pasture Tank should be visited in the spring to further evaluate and develop a reestablishment strategy. Leads – Melissa, Gila NF, Randy, Charlie, Mike.
 - ii. The Burro Mountains should be investigated in the spring or summer for possible reestablishments sites. In particular, Barney Kerr Tank (which is very large) may be a good site for leopard frogs. Erik Kern at the Gila NF should be consulted regarding other potential reestablishment sites in the Burro Mountains. Leads – Gila NF
 - ii. Other sites to investigate were identified in the Arizona portion of RU 7, including Hannah Creek above the falls, and a tributary to the Little Blue that is across from the Hannah Creek/Little Blue confluence. Leads – Mike and Michael.
- c. Monitor the two reestablished populations at Burro Cienaga Ranch. Recently dead frogs were found at this site. Need to test for Bd and monitor for additional mortality. If frogs test positive, reevaluate strategy. If negative, augment populations with additional animals as needed to establish viable populations. Leads – Randy and Melissa.

3. RU 8

- a. Monitor extant populations. Lead – Ladder Ranch, Randy, Gila NF
- b. Develop 6 steel tank populations at Chino Mines property. Source of animals – Ash Cyn (??). Leads – Randy and Jerry Donaldson.
- c. Complete the 8 ASDM-style frog facilities at the Ladder Ranch and stock 6 of them with animals from the following areas: 1. Diamond Creek, 2. Black Creek, 3. Cave Creek, 4. Cuchillo Negro, 5. Paloma Creek, 6. Mimbres. These animals would provide refugia for these populations and also provide tadpoles for population restocking or augmentation. Leads – Ladder Ranch, Bruce Christman, Melissa.
- d. Obtain 2 males from Seco Creek on the Ladder and transport to the Ft Worth Zoo where they would be bred with the remaining 3 Cave Creek frogs. Progeny would be used to restock Cave Creek. Leads – Ft Worth Zoo, Bruce Christman, Melissa.

4. Other Recovery Actions

- a. Complete the headstarting/captive propagation facilities at the USFWS New Mexico ES Office and stock with animals from Cuchillo Negro. Lead – Melissa
- b. Organize a meeting of the Adopt-A-Site monitoring crew in January 08. This is a crew of volunteers and agency biologists that commit to surveying specific sites for Chiricahua leopard frogs. Recruit volunteers from the Center for Biological Diversity. Leads – Melissa, Michael.