

FARALLON SALAMANDER TOXICITY STUDY CALL NOTES

December 16, 2015

8:00 – 9:00 AM PST

Attendees: Gerry McChesney (USFWS), John Isanhart (DOI), Gary Witmer (USDA), Vance Vredenburg (San Francisco State University salamander ecologist)

Purpose of Call: To discuss best species to use for salamander rodenticide exposure trial

1) Issue: Will need about 100 salamanders for study. Desire is for a species as closely related to *Aneides* as possible but need a species common enough to gather appropriate sample size. Opinions from northern California salamander experts is that capturing needed sample size of *Aneides* on mainland would be very difficult if not impossible. Recommendations were to use either the more common *Batrachoseps attenuatus* or *Ensatina eschscholtzii* as surrogates, which are in the same family as *Aneides*. *Ensatina* is more closely related and more similar morphometrically to *Aneides*, but is considerably less common than *Batrachoseps*.

- After considerable discussion, we decided to use *Ensatina* as our surrogate species for the study.
- Vance Vredenburg estimates it would take about a couple months of field work to collect 100 *Ensatina*. His lab could hold salamanders until all collecting is done, then ship to Gary.
- Would need to update collecting permits for additional captures.
- If there was difficulty capturing enough *Ensatina*, could change course and use *Batrachoseps* which might only take a few days of effort to capture 100 individuals; but this would also need amended collecting permit.
- With forecast rainy winter, hopefully will be good salamander activity through spring.
- Followup: Need an estimated budget for capture, housing and shipping of 100 *Ensatina* salamanders.
- Followup: Vance will send protocol for salamander captive housing to Gary. Vance also has about 10 captive *Ensatina* he could send to Gary for practice at housing them.

2) Chytrid fungus sampling

- As a side topic, we also discussed the desire to test Farallon *Aneides* for chytrid fungus. Were sampled in 1990s and were negative but would be good to re-test. Is quick and easy to get samples; just rub a cotton swab on salamander's skin.
- Followup: Gerry will send Special Use Permit application to Vance to get samples collected from Farallon salamanders.