

Information Needs and Guidelines for Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) for US Fish and Wildlife Service Technical Assistance Analysis California Red-legged Frogs (CRF)

I. Definitions:

- A. Wet Season starts with the first frontal rain system depositing a minimum of 0.25 inches of rain after October 15 and ends on April 15.
- B. Dry Season starts April 16 and ends with the first frontal rain system...
- C. Suitable California Red-legged Frog (CRF) Habitat:
 - 1) Permanent water (Class I or II watercourses or ponds/wetlands) that is more than 12 inches deep;
OR
 - 2) Permanent water (Class I or II watercourses or ponds/wetlands) that is less than 12 inches deep if suitable shelter/cover habitat is available, e.g. over-hanging vegetation, emergent vegetation, over-hung banks, root wads, rock piles, log debris, etc.;;
OR
 - 3) Permanent wet ground (e.g. seep) with vegetative or other cover.
OR
 - 4) Intermittent water that persists through late July
- D. Species Range: See attached map (Figure 1).

II. Package Components to include for THPs within the Species Range:

- A. All documentation submitted for Technical Assistance must be legible
- B. Letter requesting Technical Assistance must provide general information relevant to the THP such as:
 - i. THP number
 - ii. Township-Range-Section location data. Include PLSS description, maps of units, haul roads and landings
 - iii. Other important information that might influence take determination:
 - a. Operating schedule
 - b. Watershed where the THP is proposed
 - c. Types of timber operations and how harvested timber will be removed from the site
 - d. Whether new roads will be created for access to or within the site; number of roads; length of roads; road landings; skid trail maintenance and construction; pile burning; herbicide treatment; and dust abatement
 - e. Description of watercourse and wetland crossings necessary to access the site
 - f. Total acres, including access roads and logging sites that would be affected by logging activities

- C. Hard copy map and aerial photo coverage (or equivalent imagery) showing the location of THP units in relation to suitable CRF habitat within a 5 mile radius from these units
- D. Map of the most recent known locations of CRF observations (from CDFG California Natural Diversity Database and other information) within 5 miles of THP unit boundaries. Map should include the following:
 - 1. version date, which must correspond to the present rendition of the CDFG database
 - 2. if known observations differ from CDFG database, submit documentation supporting the location of these observations.
 - 3. Occurrences should be shown as polygons, not points
 - 4. The approximate route of access routes if timber will be removed by ground transportation (roads and skid trails)

III. If requesting a determination of unoccupied status for a THP the following are also required:

- i. Current condition of habitat
- ii. Discussion of past and approved timber operations and natural events such as fire that has or will alter the condition of the habitat.

* The February 1, 2008 document was modified, resulting in this March 25, 2008 version, in response to CALFIRES comments on clarity and consistency in terminology.

California Red Legged Frog Take Avoidance Scenarios

March 25, 2008ⁱ

(Replaces 2/1/08 version)

The following describes how the Fish and Wildlife Service determines whether take is likely to occur for California red-legged frogs (CRF). While we believe this is the most effective manner in avoiding take, it is likely not the only manner in which take can be avoided. These programmatic scenarios do not take into consideration site-specific conditions that can be used to design alternative methods for avoiding take. Using site-specific information and evaluation, CALFIRE may design alternative take avoidance methods on a case-by-case basis. The scenarios below are recommended tools to avoid take, but are not required approaches imposed by the Service.

If the THP occurs within Historic Range of CRF (see map), we assume presence of the frog unless Service approved protocol surveys demonstrate no presence. Please note that the survey protocol has limited use for determining no presence in upland dispersal areas. The protocol focuses on assessments and surveys in and around aquatic and riparian suitable habitat.

If the THP occurs within Historic Range of CRF, we assume presence of the frog unless protocol surveys demonstrate absence.

The following scenarios describe conditions for which take is not likely to occur when presence is known or assumed:

- I. Scenario I: No suitable habitat within harvest units and within 2 miles of harvest units.**
- II. Scenario II: Suitable habitat within 2 miles of harvest units or in units, but no harvest activities within 300 feet of suitable habitat**
- III. Scenario III: Suitable habitat within 2 miles of harvest units or in units and harvest activities planned within 300 feet of suitable habitat during the wet season. No take is estimated only under the following conditions:**
 - i. For Class III watercourse, when dry, maintain a 30-foot no cut buffer, trees felled away from watercourse
 - ii. For Class II watercourse and intermittent ponds/wetlands that meet the definition of suitable habitat, where water is present, 300 foot no cut buffer; where dry, 30-foot no cut buffer, no equipment within 75 feet of annual high water mark, trees felled away from suitable habitat.
 - iii. Class I watercourse and permanent ponds/wetlands that meet the definition of suitable habitat – no cutting and no equipment within 300 feet of this suitable habitat

IV. Scenario IV: Suitable habitat within 2 miles of harvest units or in units and harvest activities planned within 300 feet of suitable habitat during the dry season.

- i. All suitable habitat must maintain a 30-foot no-cut buffer; no equipment within the no-cut buffer; trees felled away from suitable habitat

Under all the above scenarios, the following operational conditions must also be included:

- 1) Pile burning must be outside the 300-foot buffer of suitable habitat
- 2) No herbicide use allowed within 300 feet of suitable habitat except for direct application to stumps
- 3) Roads and landings, if constructed, must be at least 300 feet from suitable habitat, and construction must occur in the dry season
- 4) Water drafting from suitable habitat (for dust abatement) must be done with a hose placed in a bucket in a deep pool. The bucket must be covered by < 1 inch mesh, and the mouth of the hose must be covered by ¼ inch mesh

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