

2007 ISSSSP Project Final Report with 2008 Follow-up
Siskiyou Mountains Salamander (*Plethodon stormi*): Survey of area of possible
range extension

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Abstract

A contractor hired to carry out mollusk surveys, in 2005, reported 2 locations of Siskiyou Mountains Salamander (PLST) (*Plethodon stormi*) outside the current known range (approximately 5 and 7 miles, respectively) of this species in the Foote Creek drainage of the Ashland Resource Area, Medford District BLM. Surveys were conducted using the 1999 survey protocol for the Siskiyou Mountains Salamander. The 2007 spring survey season was a difficult period in which to find windows of climatic conditions which met the prescribed conditions for protocol survey. Only one protocol visit was conducted at each of the reported PLST locations. Extensive habitat survey was accomplished in the vicinity of the sightings. Approximately 60 acres of optimal PLST habitat were located within the Galls Creek, Foothills Creek, and Kane Creek drainages. Approximately 4 acres of this optimal habitat is within 1 mile or less of either reported PLST site. No salamanders of any species were located at either of the contractor reported locations. Within the entire area surveyed for suitable habitat only 2 *Ensatina eschscholtzii* were located. Additional surveys will be attempted in the fall of 2007 and the spring of 2008 at the contractor reported locations. Surveys will be attempted at habitat located through the spring 2007 mapping effort as time and conditions allow.

Follow-up (2008)

On April 22, 2008, a live Siskiyou Mountains salamander (*Plethodon stormi*) was discovered at Galls Foot Unit 52A within the Galls Foot Project Area. This was the second of three survey visits to Galls Foot Unit 52A in the spring of 2008. During the first survey visit at Galls Foot Unit 52A on April 17, 2008, one ensatina (*Ensatina eschscholtzii*) was located and no *Plethodon stormi* (PLST) were found. Results of the third and final visit to Galls Foot Unit 52A on April 30, 2008 revealed three *Ensatina eschscholtzii* (ENES) and no PLST. No ENES were found during the second visit to Galls Foot Unit 52A. The second of two survey locations within the Galls Foot Project Area, Timberfoot Unit 14A, located in T370S-030W-S14 was surveyed twice with no salamanders found on April 23, 2008 and one ENES found on April 29, 2008. These two locations were being surveyed following unconfirmed reports by a contracted mollusk surveyor claiming to have seen a PLST at these locales in 2005.

Galls Foot Unit 52A is located at 3411' elevation with a 60% conifer and 5% hardwood canopy cover. The plant community is predominantly Douglas-Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) with Pacific madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) present. The salamander specimen was found under a 25 pound rock on top of moist soil on a 60 % north slope (Fig. 2.). The soil temperature averaged 6.64° C when the PLST was found. The average air temperature was 8.5° C over the 55 minutes surveyed time. The relative humidity was 100 % at the time the PLST was discovered.

The live PLST (Fig. 1.) was brought into the Medford District BLM office where it remained overnight for species confirmation by Steve Godwin, wildlife biologist, BLM, Medford, Oregon. The length of the live PLST specimen was 4.0 centimeters snout to vent length (SVL). A three millimeter genetic sample of the end of the salamander's tail was clipped off and sent to Douglas DeGross (PLST researcher) and now reside at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon awaiting genetic analyses. On April 23, 2008, the salamander was returned to the location from which it was found.



Figure 1: Siskiyou Mountains salamander (*Plethodon stormi*) captured April 22, 2008 at Galls Foot 52A, Galls Creek, Jackson County, Oregon. (Photo by Steven Godwin)