



# C California Tree Farm News

*Dedicated to providing useful information to Tree Farmers and family forest owners.*

## MANAGING AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES on Tree Farms

*By Michael Dunkelberger*

Managing biodiversity on your tree farm whether it is plant or animal life is easier for tree farmers than for most agricultural farmers. Agriculture with intensive annual growing cycles is often not conducive to wildlife abundance or diversity. Tree farms, geared to the production of timber are unique in the relative lack of intensity. Disturbances are usually limited to intermittent silvicultural practices, actual harvest of mature trees and their replanting. Depending on the tree species involved, disturbance in managed forests can be widely spaced (50-80 years) relative to the annual cycle in agricultural lands allowing wildlife to thrive.

Two groups of wildlife often overlooked are amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders, and newts) and reptiles (lizards, snakes, turtles, and tortoises) can make up a significant part of wildlife in a given forest. Amphibians and reptiles are indicator species and may be a large part of the wildlife in any given area; however, they are often the least known. This lack of knowledge is due mostly to their shy and secretive nature where there is a basic need to remain hidden either to escape detection by predators or, in the case of amphibians, to avoid exposure to dry conditions. The secretive nature and mystery surrounding these animals often leads to fear, especially for venomous snakes. This aversion is unfortunate because the real value of amphibians and reptiles is as both prey and predators; adding to nature's balance. They control insect and rodent pests, some of which can have major impacts on our ability to grow food and or remain free of insect and rodent borne diseases such as the recently introduced West Nile virus or the Hanta virus. Having healthy populations of amphibians and reptiles in your forest is an indicator that you are doing a good job of sustainable forest management.



**Figure 1. Western Pond turtle habitat; site is a pool in lower Yager Creek September 2005.**

Photograph by Michael Dunkelberger

Educating yourself on the presence, habits and needs of the amphibian and reptile species on your land helps you plan forest management activities that will ensure their continued survival. It will also give you the opportunity to encourage or discourage the presence of reptiles and amphibians. Pond turtles (*Emmys marmorata*), for example, need open bankside areas with woody debris or rocks on which to bask. At the same time

protecting willows and other shrubby riparian vegetation provides them with cover from terrestrial predators. Another example, maintaining a low shrubby understory and some open areas along



**Figure 2. Red legged frog habitat in lower Elk River drainage April 2006.**

Photograph by Michael Dunkelberger

the banks or riparian zones of a stream encourages populations of foothill yellow legged frogs (*Rana boylei*). Pond turtles are designated as "threatened" in Northern California and are "endangered" in Washington State and Southern California. Both the foothill yellow legged frog and the Red legged frogs (*Rana aurora*) are listed as "species of special concern" in Northern California, and other *Rana* subspecies are "threatened" in Central California, and "endangered" in Southern California (See Figures 1 and 2 depicting habitat and species).

### Finding Information

So how and where do we find information regarding various species of amphibians and reptiles at a given locale? The approach is simple first, obtain a list of reptiles and amphibians that might be in your area and then learn more about them by searching for them on the intranet, using their common name and or scientific names, or talking to experts. If you use these approaches you will have sufficient information to respond to any permitting requirements on endangered or rare species. Here is how to learn more about reptiles and amphibians.

### Internet Sources

A personal computer system and the internet can provide you with readily available information from many sources. These sources can be (but are not limited to) federal, state, or local fish and wildlife agencies; local colleges and universities; major zoological exhibits (zoos); and museums of natural history. A very good website to start with is the California Department of Fish and Game's Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB). It can be opened with a web browser by going to the CNDDDB website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/whdab/html/cnddb.html>. On the left

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## MANAGING AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES on Tree Farms (cont.)

side of the screen, click on “animals.” Here you will find lists of rare, endangered, or species of special concern that can be downloaded and printed. These lists cover the entire State of California; though they do not provide specific locations, it is a starting point.

Clicking on the “Quick Viewer” launches a program that can provide basic locality information. With the toolbar, you can zoom in to the county and location of concern, obtaining a list of rare animal species by county or USGS 7.5 topographic quadrangle (quad) maps that can be printed for later reference. This map can be expanded to nine quads at a time, the quad of concern and all the quads that surround it for any potential populations that may be present close by.

Other good websites for information on amphibians and reptiles can be accessed from the CNDDDB web page by scrolling down and clicking on “Partners” that brings up several links to related web sites. Two of these are NatureServe (<http://www.natureserve.org>) and California Interagency Wildlife Task Group (CIWTG) or go to <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/whdab/ciwtg/index.html> that can offer additional information.



**Figure 3. Southern torrent salamander habitat in Bear River Watershed Humboldt County.**

Photograph by Michael Dunkelberger

### Identifying an Amphibian or Reptile

For amphibians or reptiles found on one’s property there is a link given on the CNDDDB web page known as CalPhotos, click on this or go to <http://elib.cs.berkeley.edu/photos/fauna>. Using the common and scientific names from earlier searches, photos can be found that will identify the species that was found. This search will confirm whether or not it is of the same species listed on any of the rare animal lists that were printed up from the earlier searches on the CNDDDB web page.

### Human and Institutional Information Sources

For those of us that are computer challenged or do not have a computer is available, this information can be obtained by going to any number of the above mentioned agencies, institutions, and private companies. These institutions usually have professional biologists, zoologists, or even herpetologists (specialists in amphibian/reptiles) on staff that would be willing to help and assist anyone in finding desired information with regard to species likely to be found in their local area. Information will also be available concerning conditions of the populations of each species, whether they are common, uncommon, rare, threatened, or even endangered. These people also can offer valuable guidance as to laws enacted to protect rare and/or endangered amphibians and reptiles from further decline often requiring permits for any major land disturbance. They can provide information on life history and habitat requirements for any amphibians and reptiles identified. Experts can offer assistance in gathering information required as part the process of getting the required permits for forest-related operations.

Many firms now offer handouts on managing for wildlife diversity through national associations as a result of the SFI® program requirements. For example, the PALCO Landowners Assistance Program can provide upon request a handout with photographs and life histories of northern California amphibians and reptiles, a fish identification handout, and a brochure on managing wildlife diversity prepared by the American Forest and Paper Association.

### Why Care About Amphibians and Reptiles

In recent years too many amphibians and reptiles have been facing increasing threats to their continued existence due to increases in pollution, habitat destruction, pesticide use, and climate change (global warming). We can encourage amphibians and reptiles by educating ourselves about the needs of these creatures, not destroying habitat, and leaving habitat intact. We can make Tree Farms havens for reptiles and amphibians by leaving critical understory plant species, providing riparian protection, and working at times when the species is not likely to be present. Let’s not put Tree Farmer forestry



**Figure 4. Male Southern torrent salamander.**

Photograph by Michael Dunkelberger

practices on the list of reasons for this alarming decline and, in an increasing numbers of cases, outright extinction.



## FORESTRY INCENTIVE OPPORTUNITIES for Forestry Landowners

*By Adam Wyman, Forester, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection*

### Current Funding Status of the California Forest Improvement Program (CFIP)

Historically, funding within CFIP has been cyclical over the years. Currently, the funding cycle is at or near lows not seen in the past 6-7 years or so. The CFIP program typically receives funding from timber sales from CDF's State Forest system, of which Jackson Demonstration State Forest is the largest in size.

For the past several years, timber sales have been interrupted by legal challenges and systematic review of a new environmental impact report, which must be approved prior to resuming the timber sale program. The CFIP program has managed to deliver cost-share funding to small non-industrial forest landowners in the absence of Jackson State Forest's timber sales. This is a result of

federal funding granted to the State of California from programs such as the Forest Land Enhancement Program (FLEP), which is a federal Farm Bill program.

For the new fiscal year 2006-2007, CFIP will have approximately \$180,000.00 statewide. During peak years, CFIP has received approximately 2.2 million dollars in funding. Many new CFIP applications have been received statewide. Applications are ranked, prioritized and reviewed by Forestry Assistance Specialists (FAS) prior to awarding new contracts for projects. Applications may be submitted to your local CDF FAS anytime.

For more information on the CFIP program, eligibility requirements, contacts, forms, etc., visit the website: [www.fire.ca.gov/php/rsrsmgt\\_content/downloads/1Revised10\\_26CFIPUsersGuide05-06Vol1.doc](http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/rsrsmgt_content/downloads/1Revised10_26CFIPUsersGuide05-06Vol1.doc).

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### THE IMPACTS OF FIRE ON SOILS

Some ecosystems experience soil water repellency (hydrophobicity) problems following fire.

Organic gasses created by the burning of forest fuels move along the temperature gradient (by the laws of physics) to a lower depth. At some depth, the condensation point of the gasses are reached and the gasses condense and coat the soil particles and fill soil pores. Hence the hydrophobic layer of organic condensates - acting much like oil-repelling water.

The amount of gasses that can move thru the soil per unit of temperature gradient is a function of soil porosity and gas conductivity. Clay soils have large amounts of total porosity, but most are in very small pores making the conductivity low. They also are insulating soils where the change in temperature is restricted to a few inches. Hence hydrophobic layers, if they form, are shallow and not very severe due to lack of depth and condensate richness. Coarse grained soils have large pores, relatively high total porosity and high gas conductivity. Hence, gas condensates occur at depth, in rich amounts and often in thicker layers. Thus coarse grained soils tend to be most susceptible to hydrophobicity.

Sands and pumice soils are good examples.

### FIELD TOUR OF THE JIM & ANN DENNEY TREE FARM

**August 19, 2006 • 10 a.m.**

The tour is jointly sponsored by the Tree Farm Committee and Forest Landowners of California. The tour is set for August 19, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. You will be seeing the results of a 100-acre biomass thinning, 40 acres of brush clearing with tree planting and the response of a herbicide treatment on a 12 year-old plantation.

Directions to Denny's Coyote Flat Tree Farm are as follows: From Redding, take the 44 East through Shingletown to Starlight Drive. Turn right on Emigrant Trail. Then left on Ritts Mill Road to 8996 Ritts Mill Road.

Subway sandwiches and a beverage will be provided. Please e-mail George Belden at [lake1777@pachell.net](mailto:lake1777@pachell.net) or phone George at (530) 229-3798 with your RSVP, so we can order the correct number.

Plan ahead on your calendar another field trip this fall. A tour of Jim Nile's Tree Farm then on up the hill to tour Hal Bowman's Tree Farm. Both tree farms are located on the west side of Dunsmuir. The date is October 14, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. Further information will be included in the next Tree Farm Newsletter.



## **GREETINGS FROM THE TREE FARM NATIONAL OFFICE!**

### **The 13th Annual National Tree Farmer Convention is Just Around the Corner**

This year's convention is shaping up to be the biggest and best to date, taking place October 19-22 in Mobile, Alabama. For the first time, the convention will be opened up to those outside of the Tree Farm program; industry professionals, family forest owners, and others associated or interested in forestry and land management will be invited to attend our workshops and learn about what makes ATFS such a great program. We're also excited to welcome members of CEPF, an organization representing family forest owners in the European Union, who will attend our convention and speak to attendees about the differences and similarities in forest management across many European nations.

Additionally, the Alabama Tree Farm Committee has worked very hard to put together several amazing pre and post convention tours. You'll have the opportunity to learn about Tree Farming in Alabama, tour historic Mobile, board the USS Alabama, see firsthand the damage done by hurricanes Katrina and Ivan, and maybe even see a ghost! Interest in tours seems to be running high this year, with many signing up for more than one, so don't wait! Tours are booked on a first-come, first-served basis. More details, including tour itineraries, are available by visiting [http://www.treefarmssystem.org/cms/test/73\\_1.html](http://www.treefarmssystem.org/cms/test/73_1.html).

## **CALIFORNIA TREE FARM COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATION**

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### **Chairman**

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### **Committee Secretary**

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### **Northern District**

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### **Redwood Region**

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### **Mid-State Region**

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707-489-8669

**NATIONAL WOODLAND OWNER'S ASSOCIATION**

## **TOP TEN FORESTRY ISSUES FOR 2006-2007**

**NWOA IS THE ONLY NATIONAL ORGANIZATION THAT CONDUCTS AN ANNUAL SURVEY OF OUR AFFILIATED STATE FOREST AND WOODLAND OWNER ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DESCRIBING AND RANKING THE *TOP TEN FORESTRY ISSUES AFFECTING PRIVATE LANDOWNERS.***

- 1. FAIR INCOME, INHERITANCE AND PROPERTY TAXES**
- 2. PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**
- 3. RIGHT-TO-PRACTICE FORESTRY**
- 4. EXTENSION EDUCATION AND SERVICE FORESTRY**
- 5. WILDFIRE AND FOREST HEALTH**
- 6. TIMBER MARKETS, BIOMASS AND FAIR TRADE**
- 7. COST SHARING AND INCENTIVES**
- 8. LANDOWNER LIABILITY**
- 9. CERTIFICATION OF LOGGERS, FORESTERS & FOREST**
- 10. FORESTRY ON WETLANDS – BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**



A Book to Read:  
"Rest in Peace Rural America"  
by  
Charles L. Ciancio  
Available at Bookstores

## CALIFORNIA TREE FARM COMMITTEE

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



## **C**alifornia Tree Farm News

FOREST LANDOWNERS OF CALIFORNIA

### Receiving the Tree Farmer Newsletter Electronically

Some Tree Farmers and Inspectors have expressed the idea of receiving the Tree Farmer Newsletter electronically to those who would like to use that option. Beginning with the Spring newsletter, I will employ that option. So if I do not hear from you, the newsletter will be mailed as usual. If you want the newsletter via the computer, please send your e-mail address to: [lake1777@pacbell.net](mailto:lake1777@pacbell.net).



#### **Tree Farm Mission**

To promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private lands while protecting environmental benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forestry.