

Project Design, Review, and Approval, Implementation and Construction, and Mitigation Requirements for Natural Communities and Covered Species

RLF CON 4: Best Management Practices to be Implemented During O&M and Construction Activities

This measure is applicable to project design considerations and is required to be implemented throughout the Inner Coast Range Natural Community (Figure 3-5). These mandatory requirements include the following:

1. **Biological Monitor**
 - a. At least 15 days prior to the onset of work activities, the applicant shall submit the name(s) and credentials of biologists who will conduct California red-legged frog monitoring activities. No work activities shall begin until written approval has been received from SCWA.
 - b. Prior to commencement of work activities, the Approved Biologist shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At minimum, the training shall include: (1) a description of California red-legged frog and its habitat; (2) project-specific measures being implemented to conserve the red-legged frog and the possible penalties for not complying with these requirements; (3) who is authorized to handle and relocate frogs; and (4) identification of the boundaries of permitted work areas.
 - c. The Approved Biologist shall be present at the work site to monitor compliance with all minimization measures. The Approved Biologist shall have the authority to halt any action that might result in impacts in excess of anticipated levels. The Approved Biologist will submit a report detailing the results of the activities to SCWA within 7 days of the completion of the habitat disturbance.
2. **Habitat Protection and Take Avoidance During Work Activities**
 - a. Exclusion fencing shall be installed prior to any required preconstruction surveys and maintained between project work areas and adjacent to preserved habitat during all work activities. Exclusion fencing will consist of silt fabric, plastic, plywood, aluminum, or other SCWA-approved material. The base of the fence will be buried a minimum of 3 to 5 inches in the ground to prevent animals from crawling under and be a minimum of 3 feet in height above ground to serve as a barrier for animals moving on the ground surface. The fence will be pulled taut at each support to prevent folds or snags and the supports shall be placed on the inside of the exclusion fence. Exclusion fences shall also include provisions (e.g., ramps, one-way doors, or exit funnels) for California red-legged frogs and other species to leave the work area.



Construction personnel will also install an orange plastic-mesh construction fence 1 foot on the development side of the exclusion fence to increase visibility unless the exclusion fence is composed of high visibility materials. Exclusion fencing shall be inspected weekly and repaired immediately when damage is observed during construction work.

- b. Control of dense vegetation in and adjacent to water delivery canals (either mechanical or chemical) shall not be conducted until individuals have had sufficient time (minimum of 24 hours) to move away from the work area to more suitable habitats.
3. Preconstruction Surveys
 - a. The Approved Biologist shall survey the work site 2 weeks prior to the onset of construction activities. Any life stage of California red-legged frogs (adults, tadpoles, or eggs) found in construction areas shall be captured and relocated to secure sites approved by SCWA in consultation with the HCP Technical Review Committee. Only Approved Biologists shall participate in activities associated with the capture, handling, and monitoring of California red-legged frogs.
4. Work Timing
 - a. Work activities in riparian and aquatic habitat shall be completed between June 15 and October 15. If the applicant can demonstrate a need to conduct activities outside this time period, SCWA may authorize such activities in writing after consulting with USFWS and CDFW.
 - b. Ground-disturbing, mechanical clearing of vegetation and associated work activities in uplands shall be conducted between June 1 and November 1 or until the first fall rain that produces 0.25 inch of rainfall, unless prior surveys have been conducted and California red-legged frogs are shown to be absent from the site and the site boundary is fenced to preclude California red-legged frogs from moving onto the site.
5. Dewatering Activities
 - a. If pumping will be used to dewater the project site, intakes shall be completely screened with wire mesh no larger than 5 millimeter in size to prevent California red-legged frog adults and tadpoles from entering the pump.
 - b. Prior to dewatering, the Approved Biologist shall capture and relocate any native fish or other vertebrate species found at the project site. Captured animals shall be relocated to a suitable pool or other location in the same waterbody above or below the project site.

- c. All dewatering shall be pumped into a temporary siltation pond/desilting basin, Baker tank, or similar detention device in order to allow adequate time for settling of sediments prior to their release downstream in accordance with the approved SWPPP.
 - d. Following adequate settling time, water shall be released or pumped downstream at an appropriate rate to maintain downstream flows during construction. Upon completion of construction activities, any barriers to flow shall be removed in a manner that would allow flow to resume with the least disturbance to the substrate.
- 6. Exotic Species Removal
 - a. The Approved Biologist shall permanently remove and humanely euthanize any exotic wildlife species, such as bullfrogs and crayfish, to the extent possible from within the project site.
- 7. Site Restoration
 - a. After completion of any work activities that would temporarily disturb California red-legged frog aquatic or upland habitat, temporarily disturbed areas shall be restored to their original condition, including pre-work topography and hydrology. Disturbed areas shall be reseeded, if necessary, using local, native, noninvasive species seed mixes. All such restoration work shall be conducted under the supervision of an Approved Biologist.
 - b. Plastic monofilament or wire mesh straw waddles or erosion control blankets shall not be used. Only erosion control materials (blankets, roles, mats, etc.) with a minimum 2-inch square mesh made of natural coir fibers or other netting approved by SCWA in consultation with the HCP Technical Review Committee shall be used.
- 8. Firebreak Construction and Maintenance
 - a. Mowing to establish fuel breaks is preferred to disking. Mowing shall generally be conducted as late as possible in the spring, reducing the herbaceous cover to less than 2 inches in height.
 - b. Where mowing is not practicable or will not provide an adequate fuel break, disking may be implemented under the following conditions:
 - 1) Prior to firebreak construction, "No Disk" zones shall be established for wetlands and any significant habitat areas such as California red-legged frog aquatic habitat, as well as areas with concentrations of fossorial mammal burrows. "No Disk" zones shall be permanently staked using metal fence posts placed at least 50 feet from the edge of the pools. A post and sign shall be installed on either side of the pool



- (“No Disk” zone) to warn the disk operator of the presence of habitat from either direction.
- 2) At those points designated as “No Disk” zones, the disk operator shall raise the disk blades out of the soil and cross the “No Disk” zone. Not until the disk blades are beyond the “No Disk” sign on the opposite side of the sensitive habitat shall the operator be allowed to lower the blades, and in no case shall the operator allow the blades to touch the soil while in the “No Disk” zone.
 - 3) “No Disk” zones shall not be crossed if water is standing in wetlands, aquatic habitat, or if the soil is wet. In such cases, the operator must raise the disk blades and make a detour around the wetland or aquatic area. Operators shall consult a site map, if available, to determine the best route around this area.

SMS CON 4: Minimize Impacts to Foothill Yellow-Legged Frogs and Western Pond Turtles

For projects resulting in impacts to aquatic habitat known to have or has the potential to support foothill yellow-legged frog or western pond turtle, the following BMPs shall be implemented:

1. An Approved Biologist shall survey work sites for Covered Activities 2 weeks prior to the onset of construction activities. If any life-stage of foothill yellow-legged frog or western pond turtle is found and the habitat area cannot be avoided, the animal(s) shall be relocated to secure sites approved by SCWA.
2. The Approved Biologist shall be present at the work site until all foothill yellow-legged frogs and western pond turtles have been removed and the habitat disturbance has been completed. At that time, the contractor or permittee shall designate a person to monitor on-site compliance with all minimization measures. The monitor and the Approved Biologist shall have the authority to halt any action that might result in impacts that exceed the levels anticipated.

Other required avoidance and minimization measures for the Riparian, Stream, and Freshwater Marsh Natural Community (Section 6.3.5.1) and California red-legged frog (Section 6.3.2.2) provide additional measures that will be implemented concurrently with the above measure and provide various protection measures such as habitat buffers and setbacks to protect aquatic habitats for these species, applicable work windows in aquatic habitats, inclusion of barriers to prevent animal movement into construction areas, and

establishment of secure uplands that can provide opportunities for western pond turtle breeding.

General Mitigation Requirements for Special Management Species: Special Management Species will receive substantial conservation benefit from implementation of the habitat preservation and restoration, water quality protection, invasive species control, and reserve management associated with the Conservation Strategies for Natural Communities and Covered Species described in Chapter 5.0. No additional direct mitigation requirements are required for these species.

