

Skagit Land Trust Amphibian Monitoring Program

Thank you for your interest in Skagit Land Trust's Amphibian Monitoring Program! It should be a fun season filled with exciting discoveries. We try to make the monitoring season as flexible as possible. The most important aspects of the program are that our volunteers get outside, exercise appropriate safety precautions and HAVE FUN! At any time Trust staff can answer any questions or assist with any concerns you might have. We appreciate your commitment to conservation in the Skagit and willingness to dedicate your precious time to this awesome cause. Happy monitoring!

Staff Contact Info:

Office Phone: 360-428-7878

Primary- Lisa Miller: volunteer@skagitlandtrust.org

Secondary- Heidi Nichols : heidiknichols@comcast.net

Important Websites:

Land Trust Website: www.skagitlandtrust.org

SLT Amphibian Monitoring Project webpage w/ data entry form:

<http://www.skagitlandtrust.org/pages/amphibians.aspx>

Whatcom County Amphibian Monitoring (References and photo IDs): www.whatfrogs.org

Monitoring Structure:

Each volunteer will sign up to survey 1 or more properties. Each property needs a Group Leader. Groups should consist of 3-5 volunteers who are generally available on the same days of the week, depending on the size of the wetland.

Group survey dates will be posted on the webpage as SLT staff learns of them – other groups can reference these to tell when monitoring kits and waders are available for their own visits. We will have 2 kits available for use and a variety of wader sizes (other gear is available- reference To Bring list below)

Group Leader Responsibilities:

- Choosing dates for survey visits that work with all or most group members.
- Communicate these dates and times with Trust staff (Lisa Miller).
- Ensure one group member can pick up/drop off monitoring equipment at Trust office.
- Make sure one group member enters data on online form for each monitoring visit.
- Reports any difficulties group has to trust staff, asks for assistance when needed.

How to Choose Dates:

Each site should be monitored 2-3 times (2 weeks apart) in March and April, for egg masses and live Red Legged Frogs, Pacific Chorus Frogs, Northwestern Salamanders, Long Toed Salamanders and Oregon Spotted Frogs.

Sites where Western Toads may be present should be monitored 1-2 times in May (mid-May if 1 visit).

Sites where Bullfrogs or Green Frogs may be present should be monitored 1-2 times in June.

Tips and Tricks for Amphibian Surveying:

- Focus on areas that are shallower –generally not deeper than 1', unless you survey around higher clumps or mats of vegetation in deeper water that would provide shallower water.
- Clean your waders before moving between wetlands to prevent carrying the fungus. Rinse them with water, remove any vegetation and then spray or soak them with a 10% bleach solution. If soaking, let the solution be in contact for at least 3 minutes, then rinse with clean water.
- It's worth it to wait for a dry, calm day – it is much easier to spot the egg masses than in rainy or windy weather. Also, frogs are more likely to be surface active on warm, sunny days.
- When doing transects with multiple people through the wetland, start in a line at one side, and move slowly and together across the area. Staying together ensures that you keep each other in a straighter line, and that you don't double count egg masses. Stay close enough (perhaps 10 feet apart) that you aren't seeing all of the same masses, but so that there may be some vision overlap.
- One person should record numbers, and the others should tell numbers to that person fairly slowly to make recording a little bit easier. The recorder will probably want write in the rain paper (*small Rite-in-the-Rain notebooks* are provided in the Amphibian Monitoring Kit)
- If there are hundreds of masses, as can be the case of Pacific Tree frogs, recording a minimum number of egg masses (i.e., 100+) is okay. You do not need to locate every amphibian egg mass at a site.

To Bring:

- *Site Info Binder*
- *Amphibian Monitoring Kit*
- *Clipboard, Datasheets and pencils*
- *Laminated ID guide or field guide to help with identification*
- *Walking stick (SLT can loan you a PVC pipe one that is marked in feet to see how deep the water is). Use the stick to test where you are stepping before you step there.
- **Polarized sunglasses to see into the water more easily.*
- GPS if you have one, and turn it on to track your path through the wetland. It will help you see whether you are covering the entire area and moving in a fairly straight transect.
- Camera to take a picture of an egg mass or adult that you can't quite ID or think might be Oregon Spotted Frog. It is also helpful to take several photos showing the habitat.
- *Chest or hip waders.
- *Life vest to wear whenever you are monitoring in water- err on the side of caution!
- *Garbage bag to pick up trash.*
- Cell phone and *emergency numbers* in case of an emergency.
- Warm liner gloves, and potentially rubber gloves for use as a waterproof layer.
- Patience, a sharp eye, and a sense of humor
- Snacks, water, hot drink, change of clothes, backpack, sunscreen/hat, rain gear

*= SLT can loan you this item... just ask!

Italicized= this item is in Amphibian Monitoring Kit