

Oregon Spotted Frogs and Wetland Mitigation Sites

WSDOT meets its wetland permit obligations by creating wetland mitigation sites. Many times wetland mitigation is accomplished by enhancing or restoring degraded wetlands such as wet pastures or hay fields. Unfortunately, in some areas, wet pastures and hay fields can be occupied by Oregon Spotted frogs, a species that is listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act (See Photo 1). Unless the wetland mitigation site is enhanced with frogs in mind, they could be impacted by the wetland restoration activities. The following process will help minimize effects to Oregon Spotted frogs from wetland mitigation activities.

1. Determine if the potential wetland mitigation site is in an Oregon Spotted frog occupied watershed. These are identified in the attached map (Figure 1). If the project site is not in any of the identified occupied/ historic watersheds, there will be no Oregon Spotted frog issues.
2. If the project is located in an occupied/ historic watershed, the site needs to be screened using the OSF screening model for the presence of OSF and their habitat. This can be completed by either a regional or Headquarters biologist. (The screening model is on the website at: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/technical/fish-wildlife/policies-and-procedures/esa-ba/species-habitat>)
3. The first screening step is to complete an office based GIS analysis that looks at specific soil, elevation, wetland, land cover, and hydrology data. If the site meets these criteria, it potentially has OSF habitat and the next step is a field based screening evaluation.
4. During the field screening, the site will be evaluated for breeding, summer- season and winter habitat features. The site will also be evaluated for the presence of OSF. If a site has OSFs or if it has potential habitat for frogs and is near occupied habitat it can still be used for mitigation but the mitigation plan should focus on improving OSF habitat. Contact Headquarters experts for help in designing a mitigation plan that takes OSF life cycle requirements into consideration. The regulatory agencies have been very receptive to modifying the wetland mitigation plan at the Potter Road mitigation site to maintain habitat for OSF.

