The following document summarizes the input received during and immediately following the 2018 Controlled Wood Regional Meetings and provides rationale for the resulting mitigation options for the Dusky Gopher Frog (DGF), along with definition of any identified gaps in the final set of options.

*Consultation Insights: Overall, stakeholder feedback on the proposed mitigation options for the DGF were limited. However, this limited feedback does provide support for the thematic approaches of research, education and outreach, and implementation of proper management practices to protect populations of DGF. Additionally, comments on similar themes for other risk topics have consistently suggested merging similar mitigation options, adapting options to provide greater flexibility (e.g., avoid specifying any particular NGO for collaboration, avoid limiting the management tools that may be used for conserving the species), and providing more information on the intent of the mitigation option and what it is expected to achieve. Finally, consistency of mitigation approaches between risk topics should provide the potential for efficiencies for Organizations that would like to take similar approaches for different risk topics, or in different regions, and therefore, the following revised options draw from options for similar themes that were developed for other risk topics.*

**Please note that almost any of the proposed mitigation options may be done individually or in collaboration with other certificate holders, or other entities that have similar desired outcomes. Collaboration is encouraged to scale up potential mitigation impact, and FSC US will seek to assist with that collaboration when feasible.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Implement Management Activities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Original Proposed Option: (#1) Actions that will promote Longleaf Pine forests within the species’ range(#2) Actions that will promote fire as a management tool for the forests within the species’ range(#3) Actions that will reduce the destruction of ephemeral ponds (temporary pools) within the species’ range | Topline Input* Support for implementation of known management techniques that support DGF (low density plantings, open canopies near ephemeral ponds, prescribed fire, leave stumps, etc.)
* Encourage appropriate management of ephemeral ponds
* Align with proposed mitigation options for Native Longleaf Pine Systems
* Limiting factor = funds to conduct prescribed burning near ephemeral ponds
* Work through landowner associations and professional (logger/forester) associations
 |

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Option**

**The following is offered as an option that could be scaled for any impact level:**

**Engage with and/or provide monetary or in-kind resources to conservation organizations or similar entities (as described below) that are facilitating active, on the ground implementation of management activities (as described below) to restore, maintain or enhance Dusky Gopher Frog (DGF) populations, with a goal of long-term DGF conservation within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area.**

* **Conservation Entities/Associations: These may include: non-governmental organizations that have active programs/projects to conserve DGF; federal, state and/or local agencies with natural resource conservation responsibilities; and/or organizations that have active programs/projects focused on conservation of DGF populations.**
* **Management Activities: These should include efforts to: increase and improve the use of existing Best Management Practices for Native Longleaf Pine Systems that support populations of DGF; increase and improve the use of existing Best Management Practices near ephemeral ponds that support populations of DGF; increase the use of fire as a management tool; restore and maintain native understory communities; and restore and maintain essential hydrology.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Research**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Original Proposed Option(#5) Support research on terrestrial habitat requirements of the species | Topline Input* Support for researching habitat requirements as well as proper management practices to protect DGF habitat
* Research on populations in other likely areas
 |

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Option**

**The following is offered as a two-part option for ‘high impact’ organizations:**

1. **Engage with and/or provide monetary or in-kind resources to an entity or alliance that is currently conducting, or has the capacity to initiate, research on clarifying positive and negative impacts of forest management activities on Dusky Gopher Frog (DGF) populations and/or on management practices for DGF conservation within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area; and**
2. **Use the results of the research to improve implementation of another mitigation option.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Education & Outreach**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Participant Proposed OptionProvide education on identification of habitat, populations, and management tools | Topline Input* Indication of support for educational efforts to landowners, foresters, loggers
 |

**Proposed Revised Mitigation Options**

**The following is offered as an option that could be scaled for any impact level:**

**Using materials (as described below), and with a desired outcome of engaging landowners, foresters, and loggers within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area in conservation of Dusky Gopher Frog (DGF) populations, communicate to audiences (as described below) the conservation values of DGF, potential threats from forest management activities, and opportunities for conservation through management that maintains, enhances, or restores habitat for DGF and reduces or eliminates potential threats.**

* **Materials: Developed by, or developed in cooperation with, organizations/individuals with expertise in DGF, or FSC US, and delivered in a manner that will be the most effective in achieving the desired outcome of engaging landowners, foresters, and loggers in conservation of DGF populations, while reflecting the specific context and characteristics of the Organization.**
* **Audiences: Audiences will reflect the specific context and characteristics of the Organization, but communications should be directed toward those audiences where the communications will be most effective in helping to achieve the desired outcome of engaging landowners, foresters, and loggers within the specified risk area and the Organization’s supply area in conservation of DGF populations. Depending upon the Organization’s location in the supply chain, communications may be directly with landowners, foresters, or loggers, or through intermediaries such as community members, suppliers, or in collaboration with organizations/individuals already addressing DGF conservation needs.**

**The following is offered as an option for Organizations with suppliers that are land managers or that purchase directly from the source forest:**

**Develop/adapt a procurement policy that reflects the above communications themes and clearly states the expectation that suppliers will promote conservation of DGF populations and will not provide materials from forests where this HCV is threatened as a result of the forest management activities that produced the forest materials. This will require providing a description of the forest type (as it occurs in the supply area), potential threats from forest management activities, and the kinds of activities that would maintain or enhance DGF populations in the supply area.**

**NOTE: Actions to demonstrate policy enforcement and communicate policies on sourcing to suppliers should be audited under the Due Diligence system requirements within the 40-005V3-1 standard section 1.1**

**GAPS IN THE SET OF MITIGATON OPTIONS**

FSC US Staff evaluation of this set of mitigation options, through the lens of the shared criteria, did not identify any significant gaps, with the possible exception of the requirement for 'auditability.' We will be looking to your comments for suggestions on how to address this potential gap, as well as for identification of any other gaps and suggestions for their resolution. Additionally, we will be meeting with Certification Bodies during the consultation and expect that they will also provide input on improvements in auditability.