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 Houston Toad, 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* Houston Toad *were limited. However, this limited feedback does provide support for the thematic approaches of research and development of proper management practices to protect populations of DGF as well as education and outreach to landowners, loggers, and foresters. 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: Research**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Original Proposed Option  (#5) Support research to quantitatively assess the results of management practices and research on the habitat needs for the Houston toad and its prey base (including, but not limited to canopy cover, stem density of canopy and shrub cover, and ground cover density). | Topline Input   * Support for efforts to determine habitat requirements and where Houston Toad may be found |

**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 Houston Toad populations, management practices for Houston Toad conservation, Houston Toad distribution, and/or habitat needs for the Houston Toad and its prey base 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: Implement Management Activities**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Original Proposed Option:  (#2) Work with Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the conservation community to expand the landowner incentive network and enhance connectivity among Houston Toad sites.  (#3) Work with Farm Bill and Partners Program to implement beneficial land management practices on suitable lands using current Houston Toad guidelines. | Topline Input   * Support for implementing actions to enhance habitat |

**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** **Houston Toad populations, with a goal of long-term conservation of Houston Toad 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 Houston Toad or amphibians generally; federal, state and/or local agencies with natural resource conservation responsibilities; and/or organizations that have active programs/projects focused on conservation of Houston Toad populations.**
* **Management Activities: These should include efforts to increase and improve the use of management practices that conserve Houston Toad populations.**

**CENTRAL THEME: Education & Outreach**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Participant Proposed Option  Share information on Houston Toad with landowners | 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 Houston Toad populations, communicate to audiences (as described below) the conservation values of Houston Toad, potential threats from forest management activities, and opportunities for conservation through management that maintains, enhances, or restores habitat for Houston Toad and reduces or eliminates potential threats.**

* **Materials: Developed by, or developed in cooperation with, organizations/individuals with expertise in Houston Toad, 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 Houston Toad 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 Houston Toad 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 Houston Toad 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 Houston Toad 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 Houston Toad 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 40-005 V3-1 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.