

May 6, 2010

Mr. Andrew White
Benchmark Resources
4990 Hillsdale Circle, Suite 400
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

SUBJECT: Moody Flats Quarry Shasta Salamander Surveys (NSR.51186).

Dear Mr. White:

North State Resources, Inc. (NSR) conducted Shasta salamander (*Hydromantes shastae*) surveys at the 3-M Company Redding property, including the proposed Moody Flats Quarry project area, during March and April 2010. This letter report summarizes these survey efforts.

INTRODUCTION

NSR conducted a Shasta salamander (*Hydromantes shastae*) habitat assessment at the 3-M Company Redding property, including the proposed Moody Flats Quarry project area, to determine potential habitat suitability for the species during December 2009 and January 2010. The letter report *Moody Flats Quarry Shasta Salamander Habitat Assessment* dated 25 January 2010 summarizes the habitat assessment results. NSR conducted Shasta salamander surveys in portions of the areas identified as potential habitat during the assessment in March and April 2010.

STUDY AREA

The 3-M Company Redding property (study area) is located near Mountain Gate approximately five miles north of Redding, Shasta County, California. The study area is generally located west of Interstate 5, south of Lake Shasta, and north of the city of Shasta Lake, and encompasses approximately 1,900 acres. Elevations range from approximately 800 to 2,000 feet and the site topography is relatively flat to very steep. A general location map is included as Figure 1.

METHODS

As described in the habitat assessment, no limestone formations occur within the study area; however, several metamorphic and/or metasedimentary rock outcrop areas occur. Since limestone formations do not occur, areas showing the presence of rock outcrops, talus, extensive scattered rock, and/or areas of layered rock were considered potential Shasta salamander habitat for the purposes of the habitat assessment and for survey planning.

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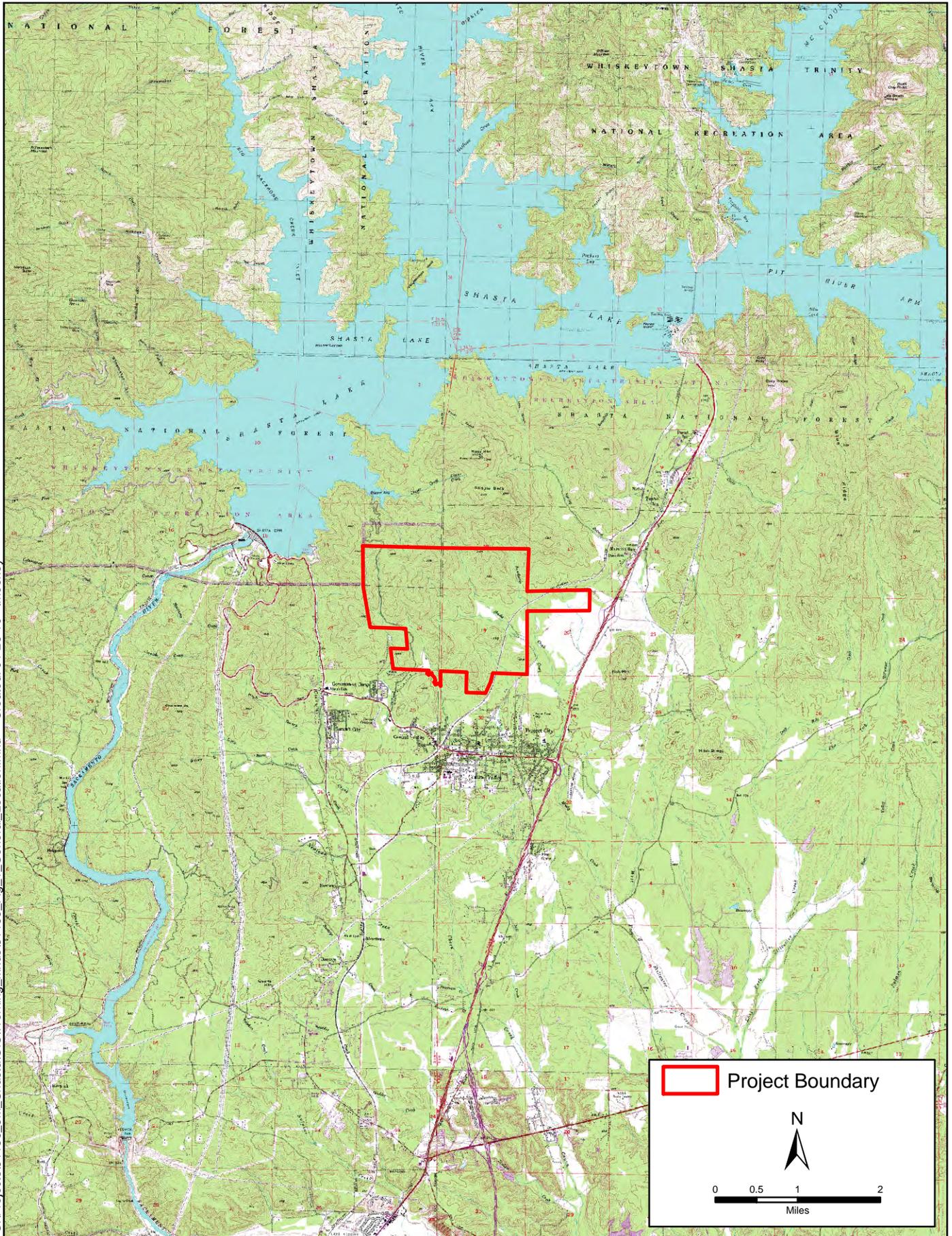


Figure 1
General Location

The Shasta salamander surveys generally followed the guidelines described in *Survey Protocol for the Shasta Salamander (Hydromantes shastae)*, Version 3.0 (Olson and Lewendal 1999) (salamander protocol). These surveys consist of time-constrained searches based on a given survey area and habitat type, and occur during specific weather conditions.

As described in the salamander protocol, eight person-hours of survey time (i.e., search time) is conducted for every 10 acres of “rock outcrop habitat” (i.e., limestone), and four person-hours of survey time is conducted for every 10 acres of habitat in “slope habitat” (i.e., areas adjacent to limestone habitat). In both situations, three survey visits are required, with at least one visit occurring during the spring. Additionally, a minimum of ten days must elapse between visits.

The salamander protocol states that the Shasta salamander surveys must occur only when relative humidity is at a minimum of 65 percent for slope habitat surveys and 90 percent for rock outcrop surveys. Air temperatures must also be no lower than 39°f. NSR used the minimum percent relative humidity requirement for slope habitat (i.e., 65 percent) for this survey effort.

NSR planned the surveys by selecting areas identified as potential habitat during the assessment that occur in or adjacent to the proposed project area (Figure 2). The size of each site served as the basis for determining the required amount of search time for surveys. Approximately 85 acres of potential habitat identified during the assessment occur in the proposed project area. Using the slope habitat search time requirements, approximately 35 hours of search time is required for each survey visit.

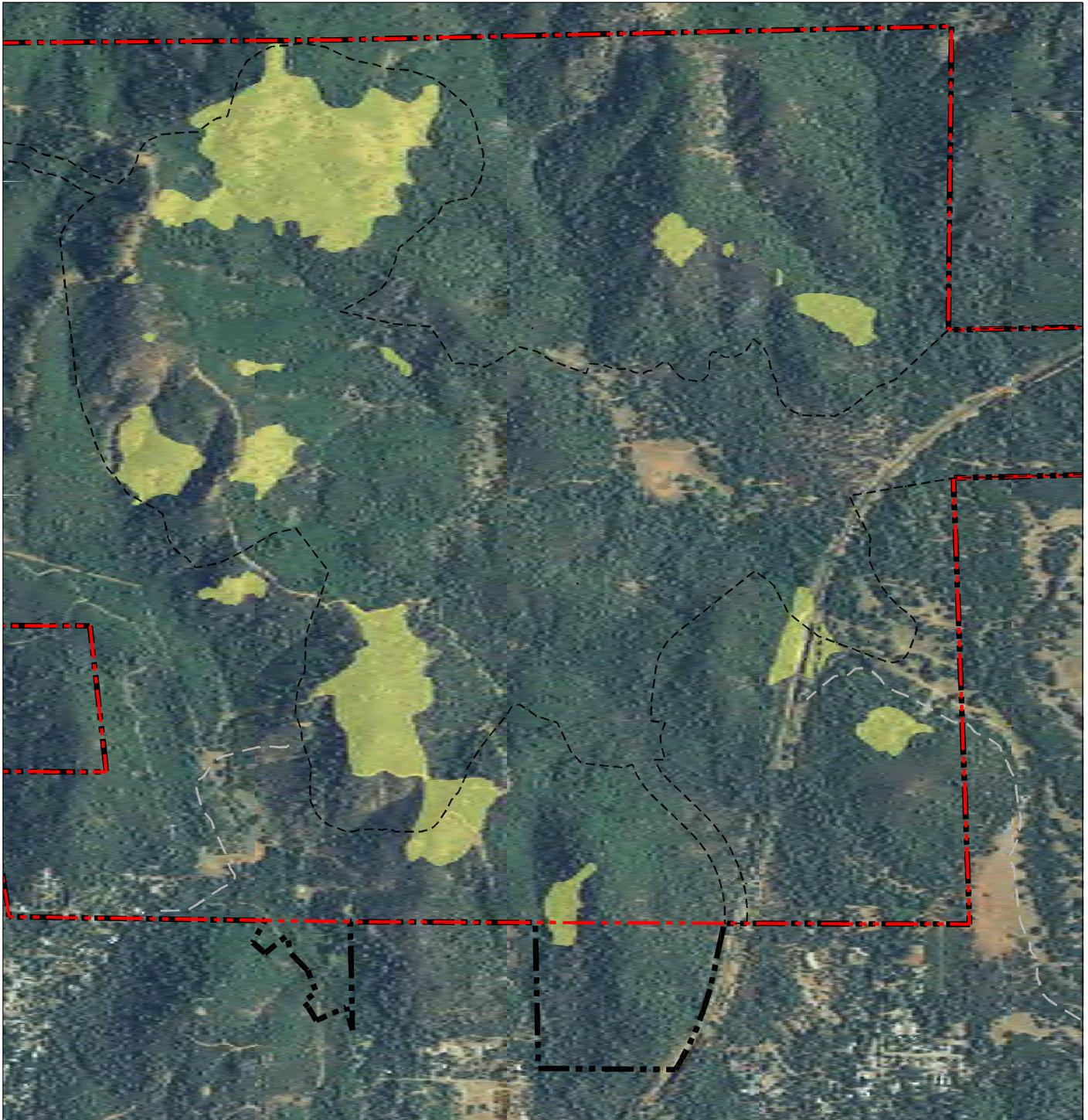
The Shasta salamander surveys consisted of intensive searches of the survey areas looking for salamanders in likely locations where the species seeks cover while surface active. Appropriate microhabitats such as rocks, woody debris, and leaf litter were examined for the presence/absence of Shasta salamanders while actively surveying. All survey results were recorded on field data forms including search effort, weather conditions, and species information.

The Shasta salamander surveys were conducted under California Department of Fish and Game Scientific Collecting Permit #SC-1611, which includes an additional Memorandum of Understanding providing authorization to conduct Shasta salamander surveys.

RESULTS

NSR conducted one complete survey round on 31 March and 1 April 2010, and a partial survey round on 21 April 2010. Forty-one survey hours were expended during the first survey round, while the second survey round consisted of 20 survey hours. All protocol weather and related survey conditions were met during the surveys.

No Shasta salamanders were found during the surveys. Only one terrestrial salamander was found, a single black salamander (*Aneides flavipunctatus*) specimen. Other herpetofauna found included western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), western skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*), northern alligator lizard (*Elgaria coerulea* ssp. *principis*), California kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula* ssp. *californiae*), and gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer*).



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH SOURCE: Pace Civil, Inc. (08-2006)

-  Property Ownership ± 1900 acres
-  Site Boundary ± 1810 acres
-  Limits of Surface Disturbance
-  Potential Shasta Salamander Habitat



0 1/4 mile

SCALE: 1" = 1/4 mile

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or comments.

Sincerely,
North State Resources, Inc.

/s/ *Len Lindstrand III*

Len Lindstrand III, CWB®
Fisheries/Wildlife Biologist,
Terrestrial Biology Program Manager

REFERENCES

Olson, D.H., and P.C. Lewendal. 1999. Survey protocol for the Shasta salamander (*Hydromantes shastae*). Chapter III. In: Survey Protocols for Amphibians under the Survey and Manage Provision of the Northwest Forest Plan. Version 3.0. D.H. Olson (ed.). October 1999.