

FSC US CONTROLLED WOOD REGIONAL MEETINGS LESSER SLENDER SLAMANDER

FSC REGION Pacific Coast

HCVS IN FSC A High Conservation Value (HCV) is a biological, ecological, social or cultural value of outstanding significance or critical importance. FSC is working to ensure that our system helps to maintain and enhance the special places that support these values. For more information on HCVs, see the Common Guidance for the Identification of High Conservation Values.¹

WHY ARE LESSER SLENDER SALAMANDERS CONSIDERED AN HCV? The Lesser Slender Salamander is considered an HCV because it is a rare species population with very limited distribution. The species was identified through an analysis of the NatureServe dataset, considering criteria including level of imperilment (both global and state scales), taxa (e.g., vertebrate species), forest habitat dependency, and recency of confirmed occurrences.



SUMMARY OF LESSER SLENDER SALAMANDERS

The Lesser Slender Salamander's distribution is restricted to the southern Santa Lucia Range of north-central San Luis Obispo County, CA, generally above 400m. The species is considered to have been common historically, but are now more difficult to find. No specific cause for this decline has been identified. The species was only fairly recently identified as being separate from other similar salamander species (via DNA analysis) in 2001.

This species appears to be associated with forests of mixed oak, tanbark oak, sycamore and laurel. They are typically found in areas either with higher elevation or that are more mesic than other sites near their location. Frequently, these are in mesic canyons, where the individuals are found on shaded slopes in deep leaf litter. They are always found in areas that also include black-bellied slender salamanders, but only occur in a small portion of this other species' range.

IDENTIFIED THREATS TO LESSER SLENDER SALAMANDERS Little is known about this salamander and specific threats to the species have not yet been documented. **The species depends on**

¹ Brown, E., N. Dudley, A. Lindhe, D.R. Muhtaman, C. Stewart, and T. Synnott (eds.). 2013 (October). Common guidance for the identification of High Conservation Values. HCV Resource Network.

forest habitat; canopy shading, moisture level and down woody debris appear to be important habitat elements, which can all be affected by forest management and potentially cause negative impacts.

WHAT ARE MITIGATION ACTIONS AND WHAT WOULD WE LIKE TO ACHIEVE?

Companies that mix FSC-certified forest materials and non-certified materials to make products with an 'FSC Mix' claim/logo are required to address certain risks before using the non-certified forest materials. One of these is the risk that their forest materials come from areas where HCVs are threatened by forest management activities. FSC has completed a US National Risk Assessment to identify where this risk is greater than 'low' and the lesser slender salamander's range is one of these places – specifically within its range, defined by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife, in portions of San Luis Obispo County, CA. Companies that wish to use non-certified materials from the identified places are required to either avoid sourcing from specific sites where the threats are occurring, or to implement mitigation actions that reduce the risk of sourcing from those sites. For this rare species, any mitigation actions will need to address the threat concerns identified above.

The FSC US National Risk Assessment also introduces the concept of holding regional meetings to bring stakeholders together to collaboratively identify effective and practical mitigation actions. We are asking participants to consider landscape-scale mitigation actions, that will help to reduce risks across the landscape in which the companies source forest materials. An effective way to do this may be to build on existing programs and projects that are already tackling these issues. The companies implementing mitigation actions are required to select one or more from the options identified at the regional meetings.

Please help us to determine what these mitigation actions should be, by visiting engage.fsc.us.org and joining the virtual discussion, or attending a regional meeting.

INFORMATION SOURCES THAT MAY HELP GENERATE MITIGATION IDEAS

- [NatureServe Explorer](#)
- [California Department of Fish and Wildlife](#)
- [International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources](#)
- [Amphibiaweb](#)
- [California Herps](#)