

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
MEMORANDUM**

DATE: August 26, 2004

TO: Files; Cheat Mountain Salamander

FROM: Ken Sturm; Wildlife Biologist

SUBJECT: Survey with Forest Service Employees

On August 24, 2004, Biologists Sturm and Warren met with Forest Service employees to conduct surveys for Cheat Mountain salamanders (*Plethodon nettingi*) on refuge property. The goal for the Forest Service was to train their employees on positive identification of the species as well as to learn what the refuge was doing to monitor this species on refuge property.

Two general areas were searched for salamanders where previous surveys had documented their presence. The refuge long term monitoring plot on Cabin Knob was surveyed as well as the scree area extending from Forest Road 80 up slope towards the Timberline Ski area. No new locations were surveyed so that Forest Service employees could have the opportunity to see Cheat Mountain salamanders and view their habitat.

Surveys were conducted between 10:00am and 2:30 pm. On Cabin Knob we used mainly the cover boards to search but in all other areas rocks and logs were turned to search for the species. Temperatures ranged from 70 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the day. The surface conditions appeared quite dry and the last rain occurred on August 21.

A total of four Cheat Mountain salamanders were found on Cabin Knob and eleven were found along the scree area north of Forest Road 80. A map showing the search areas is attached. All salamanders but one were found underneath rocks. It may be that moistures under fallen logs were too low due to the relatively high temperatures and lack of recent rainfall. Nonetheless salamanders were found throughout the day with most captures occurring between 11 am and 2:00 pm.

The scree area was first surveyed for Cheat Mountain salamanders in 2003 when they were first documented. The habitat where they were found includes an overstory of mountain holly with some yellow birch and red maple in the lower elevations and mixed spruce and yellow birch in the higher elevations. Rocks were moss covered and numerous.

The only other salamanders recorded during the survey were one slimy salamander, one Wherle's salamander and several red backed salamanders.

Plethodon nettingi Survey with
U.S. Forest Service
August 24, 2004

Timberline Ski Area

11 P. nettingi

North

4 P. nettingi

FR 80

