



## CALIFORNIA TIGER SALAMANDER WORKSHOP: ECOLOGY AND SURVEY TECHNIQUES

The following represents a compilation of the evaluation forms and comments submitted by attendees of the California Tiger Salamander Workshop held October 4-5, 2003, at Sonoma State University. Also included are responses to comments. We appreciate your comments, suggestions, and continued support. Of 145 attendees, 18 evaluation forms were submitted or 12.4%.

**To what extent were your personal/professional objectives satisfied? (5=highest, 1=lowest)**  
**18 responded. 5=7 (39%), 4=9 (50%), 3=2 (11%)**

### Comments:

“I was shocked to discover how little is known about this species.”

“I am new to the CTS issue being from Orange County, but I was very impressed and satisfied by the quality of the speakers on Saturday and the field work was helpful as well.”

“Would like a checklist of equipment (potential to recommended) though maybe this is on the web links/PDFs identified as references.”

“More natural history of CTS and USFWS info in more detail would have been nice.”

“Would like the field portion to have been focused on natural history, not manual labor—it was good to have exposure to trap line design and installation; however, actual habitat examination and discussion would have been much more beneficial in the field.”

“Speakers were good/knowledgeable.”

“Pretty good; met contacts but could have included more real time for meeting and reflecting. Breaks were rushed.”

“I enjoyed (and learned from) the presentations. They were informative; however, the room was miserable.”

“First day was great.”

“More info on policy and permitting would be great.”

“Great speakers and variety of topics covered.”

“Well-rounded group of speakers that shared good information.”

“Most speakers provided current information that was relevant to my job. The presentations were very good.”

“Dave’s expertise was apparent and a great contribution to the workshop.”

### Responses:

We are happy that most of you found the workshop valuable and informative. Thank you for the additional suggestions.

**To what extent did the environment contribute to the learning experience? (5=highest, 1=lowest)**  
**17 responded. 5=4 (24%), 4=9 (53%), 3=2 (12%), 2=1 (5.8%), 1=1 (5.8%)**

### Comments:

“I learned how emotionally charged this issue is in Sonoma County; that science plays a back-seat role.”

“The room was extremely warm (stuff) and the chairs were cramped and uncomfortable—too many people in a small area.”

“Room needed more space to fit number of people plus better ventilation.”

“Space too limited and temp. control faulty.”

“The classroom was pretty tight.”

“The room was a bit too crowded and too warm. Otherwise, it was fine—it was nice that it was at a university.”

“I appreciated the workshop being held at a university very much. I believe it enhanced the experience.”

“Both sites were good.”

“The room became very hot, unpleasant. Not enough chairs at first too. The format was nice with presentation one day and field next day; good order.”

“Hit it home.”

“I felt the classroom was a bit small/crowded for the number of people in attendance and might prefer a slightly smaller group for a more intimate learning experience.”

“Full hands-on field day very helpful.”

“Great opportunity for schmoozing and networking. More time for questions would be good.”

“A larger venue/room would be nicer.”

“Choose a better facility for the presentations. Remove Ramada Limited from your suggested choices—it was filthy! It would have been nice to see “good” habitats for CTS versus digging a pit trap. At least an options to do either/or. I felt the field day was a waste of money. Stay on time better.”

“Send a map that would help a person get to the university and another to the building. A larger lecture hall would have helped; the one provided was filled beyond capacity.”

“If future workshops are held at universities (which I think is a fine idea), please provide a map with where to park and how to get to the building that the workshop is in. The pitfall trap/design discussion was excellent. The trenching/augering/trap and fence assembly was very informative and helpful; however, it might have been good to have the fence line partially trenched ahead of time to speed up the process. This portion took longer than the other tasks and seemed to hold things up. Great presentations and workshop!”

“We were only informed about decontamination procedures after the workshop began. Had it been advertised, there might have been more interest in attending, someone assigned to address it in detail, and people could have been warned about chemicals used, clothes to bring, etc. We were warned that SSU charged \$2.50 to park. We were not advised to bring exact change (required). In the end, after lots of worrying, we discovered one by one that a fee was not required on Saturdays!!”

### **Responses:**

Thank you for the information on the Ramada Limited. We will try to avoid this facility in the future.

Regarding the meeting room: We apologize for the uncomfortable room. We were obligated to allow several more attendees because of our Internet problems early in the registration process. Some registrations were lost and we discovered the problem only after registration was “full”. The room capacity is 139 people; we had about 145. Room temperature is something beyond our control.

Regarding providing maps to the facility and parking fees: A detailed campus map is provided on the Sonoma State University website, which is easily accessed by simply typing “Sonoma State University” in your website browser. We were told that there would be a fee for parking and fee information was posted in the workshop materials on the website. Attendees should have been prepared to pay the \$2.50 charge.

We had captive CTS and photos at the workshop. CTS live secretive lives, live underground, and are rarely seen, except during evening winter rain storms. The workshop field trip could focus on larval surveys in the spring or trapping surveys in the fall. I chose trapping because it is more technical and more difficult to do.

**To what extent did the written materials contribute to the learning experience? (5=highest, 1=lowest)  
14 responded. 5=2 (14.3%), 4=2 (14.3%), 3=6 (42.9%), 2=2 (14.3%), 1=2 (14.3%)**

### **Comments:**

“The power point presentations should be available for download.”

“The materials were helpful although it would also have been nice to have access to some of the power point presentations.”

“Pretty good materials list but FG link contained nothing about CTS status. No answers. Would have preferred having all background papers in folder but liked having available to read early!”

“No written materials were distributed. Website link was provided but did not have enough information from speakers.”

“No written materials were given. We were referred to the TWS website but info. From the speakers’ presentations wasn’t given (except for one speaker). The think it is better to provide written materials at the workshop.”

“References for natural history info/presentations were great but would like a written reference list (I haven’t downloaded the list available on the web yet—maybe that was what I’m looking for).”

“There were practically no written materials. It would have been extremely helpful to have copies of the presentations especially since I need to share the info learned with my coworkers.”

“Don’t know yet—probably a great deal.”

“Didn’t see any—didn’t download and print web links.”

“Did not print out yet. Agenda was fine.”

**Responses:**

Attendees were alerted to the availability of reference materials by e-mail before the workshop. We purposely avoided printed copies to save resources and expenses. We will consider asking presenters for copies of their PowerPoint presentations in the future, as this is often requested and would be helpful for taking notes; however, we find that many presenters either don’t provide them or provide them at the last minute and too late to be copied for the workshop.

**To what extent were the objectives stated in the promotional literature or those stated at the beginning of the workshop satisfied? (5=highest, 1=lowest) 18 responded. 5=7 (38.9%), 4=7 (38.9%), 3=2 (11%), 2=1 (6%), 1=1 (6%)**

**Comments:**

“I believe all the objectives were met.”

“Everything promised was delivered except the info on how to identify CTS in all stages could have been better distinguished/explained.”

“I feel I received a well-rounded experience from the workshop with presentations and field work.”

“Field portion really should have included examination of good-quality habitat or occurred during time of year when animals might be in pools. Look at several sites as opposed to one.”

“I had my own personal expectations of seeing adult CTS in the wild but this may have been an unreasonable assumption.”

“Don’t remember seeing or hearing the objectives of the workshop.”

**To what extent did the workshop contain significant and current intellectual or practical information? 16 responded. 5=14 (87.5%), 4=2 (12.5%), 3=0, 2=0, 1=0**

**Comments:**

“It was good to help put the fence together, but I couldn’t help feel like really cheap labor...”

“The lectures were very informative and scientific while the field work was very practical. The one area of concern was the presentation of the new draft protocol and the associated lack of clarity on how this affects us as field biologists.”

“A large amount of recent data and information was provided, which was great.”

“Excellent, very current information.”

“More on habitat.”

“Speakers were very well prepared.”

“Wonderfully well. Top-notch, cutting-edge information.”

“The presenters were excellent!”

**How would you rate the registration fees for the workshop? (5 = Too High, 1 = Too Low) N=17. 5=6 (35.3%), 4=5 (29.4%), 3=4 (23.5%), 2=1 (5.9%), 1=1 (5.9%) NOTE: Based on comments compared with attendee’s rating, some number ratings were incorrectly marked.**

**Comments:**

“Way too expensive for 1 day of presentations and 1 day of our manual labor, although thank you for providing lunches.”

“Too high for Saturday’s accommodations. Lunches were good.”

“Fine”

“I’m a student—\$40 is a good deal.”

“Just perfect but the registration form was confusing. The table and message that membership can be on registration form made me think that the membership was included in registration fee but I found out it is not.”

“I thought the fee was fine especially since meals and snacks were included.”

“Fee should be less (e.g., \$100). Cost could be offset by contributions by event sponsors.”

“I realize that these workshops are fundraisers but I think the costs often exclude students and non-supported interested parties.”

“It seems too expensive given that it was at a university and no written materials were given. It was nice that lunch was included in the cost though.”

“The second day appeared to be an opportunity to obtain free labor. There was little information provided of significant value. I think those participating should have been offered a discount on their reg. in return for their services, or at least asked if they wouldn’t mind helping set up the study area.”

“The fee is a writeoff for most of us so I’m not complaining about affordability, but I really don’t understand why we paid so much for a venue, snacks, and a box lunch. A similar situation at the Radisson cost \$50.00 a year ago.”

“Too much downtime on day 2. Offering a later night survey would be perfect. I don’t know how you could work it though.”

#### **Responses:**

Re the registration fees: We purposely held the workshop at the university to reduce costs, which would have been much higher if it were held at a hotel or other facility. Even so, the expenses for this workshop exceeded \$16,000; lunches and snacks alone cost about \$3,000! Fundraising this past year was fairly nonexistent because of the poor economy. If we reduce the student fees even further, the other fees would need to be raised and we cannot justify charging more to others. These events are not “fundraisers”; however, the Western Section and our cosponsors for events must realize a small profit to be able to continue to perform day-to-day operations, such as maintaining the website and pay for insurance, utilities, office supplies and equipment, etc.

A reference was made to a previous workshop at the Radisson that cost only \$50 in registration fees. This workshop was subsidized by USFWS; it was not a Western Section event and no profit was realized. USFWS paid for all expenses that registration fees did not cover.

Re the registration form: The following note was included on the registration form: “NOTE: If you pay your membership with your registration, you pay the “Member” rate.” The note explains that you can pay the “member” registration fee if your membership of \$20 is paid at the same time, thus avoiding the higher “nonmember” fee. This seems to be clear to most as we rarely receive inquiries.

#### **I would like to suggest the following topics for workshops/conferences:**

“Flycatcher, Bell’s vireo, S.F. garter, habitat restoration in an urban landscape.”

“Freshwater/wetland ecology—tying in wildlife with habitat. Use of GIS/remote sensing/telemetry in wildlife research and management. Policy and permitting of specific—not sure how to organize this; maybe by taxa or by habitat(?)”

“California red-legged frogs, snowy plover status, S.F. garter snake.”

“Bird banding; mist netting.”

“Raptors—possibly dealing with Migratory Bird Treaty Act and other regs that protect nesting birds and how to avoid impact/mitigate.”

“Freshwater shrimp—*Syncaris pacifica*”

“Public communication/education.”

**Responses:**

Thanks to all of you who offered suggestions for future workshops. Your suggestions will be passed on to the Western Section’s Professional Development Committee for consideration.