



Washington Department of  
**FISH & WILDLIFE**

# Controlling invasive bullfrog populations to benefit pond turtles

A WDFW wildlife diversity grant project

Invasive American bullfrogs are one of the top threats to northwestern pond turtles and other at-risk species in Washington. They are prolific breeders and highly opportunistic predators, known to eat virtually anything in front of them. A single bullfrog can decimate already fragile northwestern pond turtle populations. This project reduces the number of non-native bullfrogs through culling and egg mass removal on over 625 acres of property in Skamania County.



Credit: WDFW

**Project name:** Cross-boundary aquatic invasive bullfrog control for Columbia Gorge northwestern pond turtles

**Primary species benefitting:** Northwestern pond turtle

**Grant total:** \$41,690

**Grantee & associated entities:** Sara Woods, Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust (FoCG)

**Webpage:** [gorgefriends.org](http://gorgefriends.org)

The state-endangered northwestern pond turtle is a nutrient recycler that helps maintain the balance of wetland ecosystems and is one of only two freshwater turtles native to the West Coast. Its populations are becoming more and more fragmented due to serious threats from habitat loss and predatory invasive species such as the American bullfrog. Bullfrogs eat pond turtle hatchlings and juveniles, which negatively impacts recruitment and results in population decline. It is important to cull the bullfrog population at this project's selected property to support existing turtle populations and ensure continued recovery.



Credit: WDFW





Credits: NPS (Left), FoCG (Right)

## Project goals and outcomes

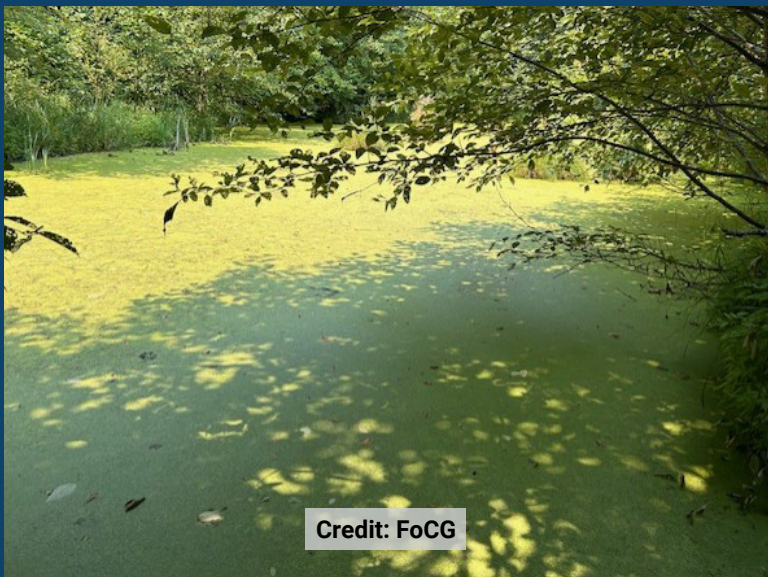
- Continue bullfrog control via individual culling and egg mass removal at the recovery site in Skamania county, which encompasses USDA Forest Service and Friends of the Columbia Gorge ponds.
- Begin bullfrog control on new adjacent property acquired by FoCG.

Outcomes include reducing the number of non-native bullfrogs across all 23 ponds at the recovery site. Bullfrogs have been greatly reduced in some cases, down to a few individuals per pond, specifically in ponds that have been actively managed for the past seven years. However, with a continual source of bullfrogs immigrating from the newly acquired adjacent property, it is critical to continue monitoring all these pond sites. The goal for the newly acquired property is not to eradicate bullfrogs in one season, but to control their numbers and limit dispersal with continued monitoring, culling, and egg mass removal.

## Preventing an influx of bullfrogs in turtle recovery sites

This collaborative effort is an ongoing, long-term conservation project to steward these Columbia River Gorge lands and protect some of Washington's most imperiled wildlife.

Without this project in place, there would be a continual influx of bullfrogs in restored areas where bullfrog management has already been implemented, negating much of the recovery efforts over the past six years. This project is helping prevent the extirpation of northwestern pond turtles from the Columbia River Gorge.



Credit: FoCG

This project was funded by WDFW through the [Wildlife Diversity Grant Program](#).

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