



February 24, 2023

Alexander Bussaus  
Barnett Southern Corporation, Inc  
106 N. Alexander Ave.  
Washington, GA 30673

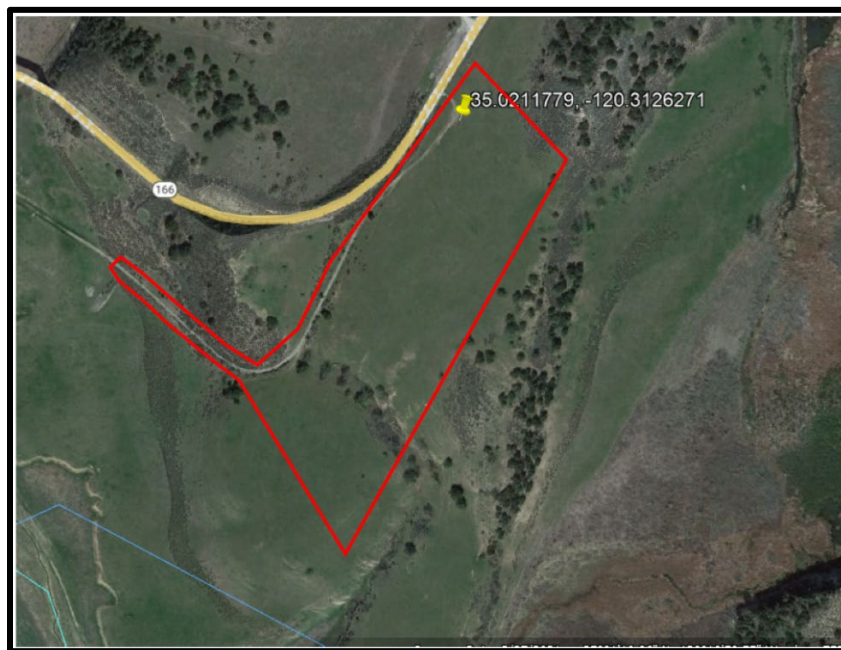
**SUBJECT: Results of Pre-construction Survey for California Red-legged Frogs at Twitchell Reservoir Laydown Area**

Dear Mr. Bussaus,

This memo presents the results of a pre-construction survey conducted by Kleinfelder, Inc. (Kleinfelder) targeting California red-legged frogs (*Rana draytonii*) at a proposed laydown area adjacent to Twitchell Reservoir in unincorporated San Luis Obispo County, northeast of the City of Santa Maria, California. The survey was conducted on February 24, 2023.

**Project Area**

The project area consists of an approximately 38-acre proposed laydown area accessed off Cuyama Highway (State Route 166), approximately 0.5-miles east of the Huasna River Bridge (35.0211779, -120.3126271; Figure 1). The project area consists of cattle grazing lands adjacent to Twitchell Reservoir and an existing access road providing access to the reservoir from Cuyama Highway.



**Figure 1: Boundary of proposed laydown area. (Source: Barnett Southern Corporation)**

## Methods

Surveys were conducted on February 24, 2023 by Kleinfelder biologists Wayne Vogler and Wyatt Petersen, PhD.. Full visual coverage of the project area was obtained by walking meandering transects throughout the proposed project area and areas adjacent to the project area. The focus of these surveys was on detecting the presence of California red-legged frogs (i.e., adults, larvae, egg masses). Additional attention was focused along Twitchell Reservoir shoreline and surface water bodies encountered. The visual encounter survey was performed between 2:00pm and 3:00pm.

## Results

Environmental conditions on February 24, 2023, were cold (49° Fahrenheit), overcast, and raining. Wind speeds at the time of survey ranged between 2 to 7 miles per hour. The dominant vegetation type present consisted of California annual grassland and is typical of northern Santa Barbara County and southern San Luis Obispo County cattle grazing lands. Shrubs, including coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and black sagebrush (*Salvia mellifera*) were present along the edge of the highway and along a southwestern facing slope in between the highway and project area. Individual shrubs were also sporadically interspersed throughout the project area. A small drainage bisected the project area. An ephemeral stock pond (ca. 0.2-acres) was located within the drainage. The pond was inundated (ca. 0.2-acres) at the time of survey. The pond lacked emergent aquatic vegetation needed to be suitable breeding habitat for California red-legged frogs. Within the drainage and along the project area's eastern boundary and along the small drainage were scattered coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*).

An access road leading from State Route 166 to the temporary barge dock was present prior to survey activities. This access road consisted of road base over native soils. A small equipment parking area is located adjacent to State Route 166. An equipment and storage area was located adjacent to the barge dock with a portable, temporary construction office trailer. Earthmoving equipment and off-road dump trucks are parked on road base roads and pads.

No California red-legged frogs were observed within the project area, nor were any other amphibians observed. Few small mammal burrows were observed and most that were observed were restricted to the drainage that bisects the project area. Species observed during the survey included, mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*), western bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), yellow-rumped warbler (*Setophaga coronata*) and a coyote skull (*Canis latrans*). Evidence of former cattle grazing (scat) was common, although no individuals were observed within the project area.

## Summary and Conclusions

No individuals of California red-legged frogs, or other amphibian species were observed during the pre-construction survey. Similarly, no California red-legged frog egg masses or tadpoles were detected. No egg masses or tadpoles of any species were observed. With the abundance of aquatic habitat available along the reservoir bank, individuals are not anticipated to be found in upland burrows; upland refuge sites are not anticipated to be favorable over the abundance of aquatic habitat. Nonetheless, the

proposed project area may be sporadically used by dispersing individuals. To mitigate hypothetical risks to dispersing California red-legged frogs, we recommend Barnett Southern Corporation avoid working after sunset and before sunrise. It is recommended to avoid working one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset during rain events. Work within the ephemeral stock pond should be avoided unless a California red-legged frog pre-activity survey determines no life forms of California red-legged frogs are present.

Kleinfelder services appreciates the opportunity to support Barnett Southern Corporation's project. If you have any questions or clarifications, please feel free to contact Mr. Wayne Vogler at (805) 235-9363.

Sincerely,

**KLEINFELDER**

  
Wayne Vogler  
Senior Biologist