

2021 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one) 2021 1st 2021 2nd 2021 3rd 2021 4th

Grant Program, Number and Title: GSA 00046 / **Eastern Box Turtle Status Assessment, Conservation Plan, and BMPs.**

Organization: The Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation

Project Leader: Lori Erb and Brandon Ruhe

Abstract: Please provide a short (1-2 paragraphs) abstract that addresses EACH of the following: the objectives of your project, accomplishments to date, future plans and timelines with an estimate for when the project will be completed.

The objective of the Eastern Box Turtle (EBT) project is to develop a status assessment and conservation plan for the EBT to advance conservation efforts for this species. Accomplishments during this quarter includes the completion of three conference calls with the Eastern Box Turtle Steering Committee (EBT SC), corresponding with the grant Co-PI on grant tasks, corresponding with Tangled Bank Conservation to develop a SOW for the genetic subproject, corresponding with volunteer surveyors to answer questions, assisted with the development of a poll to send to Northeast EBT experts, created a list of EBT experts, entering the 2021 field season data collected by MACHAC, compiling the 2021 survey data from all states, and administrative actions (e.g., backing up files, timesheets, drafting reports).

During the next quarter, we plan to hold monthly calls, assist surveyors with questions related to data entry, compile and organize the 2021 field season data, collaborate with the grant Co-PI on development of a SDM, and continue to compile and summarize historical data and literature on prescribed fires and its potential effects on box turtles and their habitat.

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes

Progress Achieved: (For each Goal/Objective, list Planned and Actual Accomplishments)

- Organized and lead 3 monthly conference calls with the Eastern Box Turtle RNC Steering Committee and drafted meeting notes.
- Conducted one meeting with my Co-PI to coordinate projects and actions.
- Conducted meetings with several project partners (e.g., Liz Willey, Richard Novak, JJ Apodaca)
- Coordinated with WMI to ratify a contact for the genetics project.
- Worked with Tangled Bank Conservation to finalize a SOW for the genetics work.
- Coordinated with grant partners on genetic sampling specifics.
- Entered the 2021 survey data collected by MACHAC.
- Compile the 2021 field season data from all states.
- Coordinated volunteer surveyors in MD and PA.
- Continued to summarize literature related to fire and the EBT.
- Coordinated with Richard Novak on an EBT research project.
- Attended presentations on box turtles via TSA meeting.

- Assisted with the development of an EBT expert poll.
- Created a list of experts for the EBT expert poll.
- Reviewed draft site mapping guidelines.
- Organized and backed up files.
- Drafted a quarterly report.

Difficulties Encountered: None.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Hold monthly conference calls with the EBT SC.
- Provide assistance to surveyors and researchers as needed while entering the 2021 survey data.
- Continue to enter, organize and perform quality control on the 2021 field season data collected by MACHAC.
- Compile and clean the 2021 field season survey data from all states.
- Continue to summarize information and literature on prescribed fire and EBT.
- Coordinate with my Co-PI on the development of a SDM, site mapping guidelines, and CANs.
- Coordinate with the pollinator group and habitat technical committee.
- Organize and back up files.
- Complete a quarterly report.

Expected End Date: The end date of the next quarter is December 31, 2021

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$48,557.29
Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$68,499.72

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes

Signature: *Brandon M. Rule*

Date: 12/27/2021