

# 2019 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one)      2019 1<sup>st</sup>      2019 2<sup>nd</sup>      2019 3<sup>rd</sup>      2019 4<sup>th</sup>

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 Eastern Box Turtle 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), three meetings with the NEPARC Turtle Working Group to discuss prescribed fire BMPs, the chair of the NRCS Habitat Technical Committee, state wildlife biologists to determine their level of interest in implementing the population monitoring protocol, attending a Fire Learning Network workshop, developing an expert survey and compiling the results to help guide further refinement of the population monitoring protocol, continued working with the states to obtain legacy data on box turtle locations for WV, NY, NJ, and DC.

During the next quarter, we plan to hold monthly calls, continue to collect Eastern Box Turtle observation data from state data sources, continue development of the regional database including entering the 2019 survey data, and begin to develop the Species Distribution Model (SDM).

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 EBT RNC Steering Committee and drafted meeting notes.
- Organized and lead a Turtle breakout session during the annual meeting for the Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation. We discussed the development of prescribed fire BMPs for EBT habitat.
- Conducted a call with the NRCS Habitat Technical Committee chair.
- Conducted various calls with partners (e.g., state wildlife biologists)
- Attended a two-day meeting in New Jersey held by the Northeast Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation.
- Attended a two-day meeting in western Maryland entitled “Central Appalachians Fire Learning Network Workshop”
- Revised a provisional population monitoring protocol.
- Drafted and distributed an EBT expert survey. Results will be used to further refine the population monitoring protocol.
- Supported volunteer pilot surveys in PA.

- Compiled and summarized the 2019 survey data for PA, MD, and DE.
- Performed literature searches for information related to EBT and fire.
- Fully executed data use agreements with NY and DC
- Obtained observation data from NJ, NY, DC, and WV for records of EBT in those states.
- Distributed EBT conservation information via the NEPARC Facebook and Twitter pages. The post reached 19,311 people, had 1,885 engagements, and was shared 279 times.
- Drafted the quarterly report.

Difficulties Encountered: None.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- We will hold monthly conference calls with the EBT SC.
- We will continue to enter the 2019 survey data.
- We will continue to evaluate the 2019 survey data results.
- We will continue to collect EBT observation data from state data sources.
- We will continue development of the EBT regional database.
- We will begin to develop the SDM.

Expected End Date: The end date of the next quarter is December 30, 2019

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$10,171.04

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$68,499.72

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes

Signature:

Date: 10/29/2019