

2021 PROGRESS REPORT

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

Grant Program, Number and Title: RCN, GSA 00047; Eastern Box Turtle Status Assessment, Conservation Plan, and Best Management Practices.

Organization: H. Patrick Roberts (Independent Contractor)

Project Leader: H. Patrick Roberts

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 this project is to develop a status assessment and conservation plan for the Eastern Box Turtle (*Terrapene carolina carolina*) in the northeastern United States. This contract with the Wildlife Management Institute was executed at the very end of the first quarter of 2019. As a result of this delayed start, the timeline for the initial objectives of this project was shifted forward accordingly.

During the first quarter of 2021, Lori Erb (of MACHAC) and I held monthly Steering Committee calls in April, May, and June to discuss progress toward the overarching goals and objectives of the project. While we were still waiting for data from an important source (which we recently obtained), I still make progress in refining the SDM and developing the methods document. I also continued to develop a document pertaining to the mapping of eastern box turtles, which will provide an overview of existing mapping protocols for the species and outline a standardized approach for the regional conservation area network. We also made progress in developing Xeric Habitat BMPs. In particular, we held a meeting with Sarah Cooke (contracted with MACHAC) in order to discuss a literature review and establish next directions. I also provided support to state agency biologists regarding the genetics project, particularly Luke Groff who is interested in contributing tissue samples from turtles found in Vermont, at the very edge of the species range.

Next steps will be to (1) incorporate HerpMapper data into species distribution models, (2) continue to support the development of BMP materials and literature review, (3) continue to develop a standardized population mapping protocol, (4) develop and share a survey with state biologists regarding BMPs, (5) begin to test and implement the standardized mapping protocol in ArcMap, and (6) continue to hold monthly conference calls. We expect to complete this project by February 2023.

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes.

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

Planned and accomplished:

- Held monthly conference calls
- Provided assistance to volunteers and agency biologists conducting surveys
- Continued to refine species distribution models and develop methods document
- Continued to develop BMP materials
- Made progress in creating regional population mapping protocol

Difficulties Encountered: None.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Continue to hold monthly conference calls
- Incorporate new data into species distribution models
- Continue to support development of BMP materials
- Make progress on regional population mapping protocol
- Survey state biologist about BMPs
- Test mapping protocol using species occurrence data in ArcMap

Expected End Date: February 28, 2023.

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$42,809.81 (without match)

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$68,500

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes.

Signature: 

Date: 7/30/2021