

# 2021 PROGRESS REPORT

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

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 fourth quarter of 2021, Lori Erb (of MACHAC) and I held monthly Steering Committee calls in October, November, and December to discuss progress toward the overarching goals and objectives of the project as well as other relevant topics. We reached out to Katie Stovall, who recently completed the most thorough study to date regarding the effect of prescribed fire on eastern box turtle, about presenting her findings during our November Steering Committee call. This presentation was made available to state agency biologists and researchers throughout the region who conduct work related to this topic. Information from this presentation/discussion and published article will support the development of the xeric habitat BMPs. I continued to search for literature related to prescribed fire and wildlife/box turtles, and discovered several relevant articles published during this period. I continued to develop the site mapping protocol and implemented a preliminary version of the entire region, which will be shared with state biologists in Q1 2022. Because we wanted state biologists to provide feedback about the mapping protocol, we did not attribute sites or develop the ranking metric; however, we expect this will begin in Q1 2022. Last, we corresponded with several state biologists about the potential of using unspent RCN funds from other projects to support Eastern Box Turtles.

Next steps will be to (1) share the preliminary Conservation Area Network sites with state biologists, (2) refine the mapping protocol using recommendations from state biologists (if needed), (3) continue to support the development of BMP materials and literature review, (4) begin the development of the Conservation Area Network once mapping is complete, and (5) 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
- Continued to support development of BMP materials

- Continued to develop the Conservation Area Network by implementing the regional mapping protocol for the entire region

Difficulties Encountered: None.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Continue to hold monthly conference calls
- Continue to support development of BMP materials
- Refine mapping protocol, if necessary
- If mapping is completed, attribute sites with information used for ranking

Expected End Date: February 28, 2023.

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$51,371.71 (without match)

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$68,500

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

Signature: 

Date: 1/31/2022