

2020 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one)

2020 1st

2020 2nd

2019 3rd

2020 4th

Grant Program, Number and Title: GSA 00074 - Conservation Plan for the Blanding's Turtle and associated Species of Conservation Need in the Northeastern United States

Organization: Oriante Society

Project Leader: Kiley Briggs

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 start of this year marked a transition in this project, as preliminary meetings and document review meant to help Oriante better understand the conservation needs of each high priority Blanding's Turtle sites wrap up, sites to focus on for the project duration are selected, and efforts shift toward conservation planning. As of January, we had selected two sites in Maine, four in New Hampshire, four in New York, and one in Massachusetts (with additional Massachusetts sites pending additional review). An in-person meeting took place with biologists from all five participating states where we updated the group on our progress to date. Site-specific strategic planning sessions were planned to take place in several states this spring, however the present pandemic caused a sudden halt to those meetings. As it is now clear that interstate travel and in-person office meetings may not be possible for the rest of the year, we recently shifted focus to cover much of the needed ground using online meeting platforms.

In March Oriante held a remote meeting with New Hampshire Fish and Game and the Southeast Land Trust to discuss conservation needs at each of the selected New Hampshire sites. A similar meeting is scheduled to take place with New York and the Thousand Island Land Trust, as well as the Saint Lawrence Land Trust. Additional planning sessions will be scheduled for the remainder of sites and states through the summer, but at this point it is difficult to know the pace at which these meetings will take place as staff in partnering agencies and non-profit organizations adapt to new travel restrictions and remote working environments. We are optimistic that significant ground can still be gained this summer despite these limitations, but if need be we will shift focus to aspects of the project that can be done more independently earlier than scheduled (such as the creation of best management practice documents).

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter?

Mostly. Follow-up meetings required for additional Massachusetts sites. We anticipate some problems keeping up with the proposed timeline in quarter 2 due to pandemic-related travel and meeting restrictions.

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

- Made final site selections for all but one state
- Began site-specific planning sessions (remotely)
- Attended Blanding's RCN group meeting in Massachusetts

- Produced maps to assist with conservation planning in New York

Difficulties Encountered:

Needed to cancel in-person meetings scheduled for quarter 2.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Finish site selection in Massachusetts.
- Remote planning sessions to be scheduled for most sites and states (but meetings may extend in to quarter 3)
- Work day to repair/maintain fencing along Route 2 in Massachusetts may take place in Quarter 2 if interstate travel and working in small groups is possible.
- Begin creation of BMP documents if sufficient progress cannot be made on other aspects of the project due to the pandemic.

Expected End Date:

March 2022

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter):

Total Approved Budgeted Funds:

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? YES

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name, possibly 'K. R.', written over a horizontal line.

Date: May 29, 2020