

2020 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one)

2021 1st

2021 2nd

2021 3rd

2021 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.

In this quarter we continued to work with biologists in NY, ME, NH, and MA to advance conservation priorities identified over the past year and a half. Accomplishments this quarter included helping facilitate meetings between state biologists and town conservation commissions to identify opportunities for habitat restoration on town land, helping to organize a land protection meeting with federal and land trust partners in Maine, meeting with biologists in New York to discuss alternative strategies for nest protection at a constructed nest site, and meeting with US Fish and Wildlife Staff to discuss funding opportunities for enacting future conservation priorities at important Blanding's Turtle sites. In July we also conducted a rapid trapping assessment at a large private property within a high priority site in New Hampshire to collect baseline data on the resident Blanding's Turtle population. Concurrent to helping advance conservation priorities at select sites, we also continued working on a BMP booklet and brochure, made progress toward the completion of two conservation plans for sites in New York, and compiled information necessary for updating several existing conservation plans. We will continue working with partners to plan future conservation actions at select sites, but our primary focus for the remainder of this grant will be on finalization of the BMP booklet and brochure, as well as drafting and updating site conservation plans. The projected end date is March 31, 2022.

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter?

The anticipated activities outlined at the end of quarter 2 were all accomplished with the exception of completing drafts of two conservation plans for sites in New York, which will be the primary focus of our work in the next quarter.

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

Goal: Continued partner outreach.

Accomplishment: Initial and continued meetings between state biologists, The Oriante Society, and the towns of Dunstable MA, Groton MA, New Market NH, and Fremont NH. One meeting in Maine between Oriante, state biologists, and partners from USFWS, NRCS, and several land trusts. Separate meetings with local experts and state biologists in New York to discuss alternative conservation strategies for a site in Dutchess County.

Goal: BMP booklet and brochure completion (Q3 or Q4)

Accomplishment: Brochure draft completed (in review). Booklet still in-draft.

Goal: Plan for future conservation and monitoring projects to take place after this RCN grant closes.
Accomplishment: Met several times with USFWS and corresponded over email with state biologists to discuss funding possibilities for future work. These discussions will continue after the end of this grant and may help facilitate a CSWG application in 2023.

Goal: Work with partners to improve nesting habitat through volunteer work days in MA.
Accomplishment: This goal was largely accomplished through meetings with town officials in Groton and Dunstable where nesting habitat may be improved or created in 2022, but possibly without volunteer participation.

Goal: Conduct one rapid trapping assessment on a private property in NH.
Accomplishment: Conducted one trapping assessment for one week in NH.

Goal: Draft conservation plans for two sites and begin updating others.
Accomplishment: Met with NY biologists to discuss priorities for sites plans and how they can complement the existing state-wide conservation plan for Blanding's Turtles, but drafts for the two sites in question will be completed in quarter 4, along with updating additional plans. Finalization of these drafts will take place in quarter 1 of 2022.

Difficulties Encountered:

The database intended for tracking monitoring and restoration priorities and accomplishments remained in development until late in quarter 3 when beta testing finally took place. We have been unable to assist with curation of that database until this point, but will work with NHFG this quarter to see what role we can plan in data management within that system for the remaining two quarters of this grant.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Continued partner outreach including meetings with town conservation commissions, land trusts, researchers, and state biologists.
- BMP booklet and brochure completion (printing in early Q1 of 2022)
- Plan for future conservation and monitoring projects to take place after this RCN grant closes
- Continue drafting two conservation plans and updating others

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:



Date: October 28, 2021