NORTHEAST REGIONAL CONSERVATION NEEDS GRANT 2013 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one) 2013 1st 2013 2nd 2013 3rd 2013 4th

Grant Program, Number and Title:
Assessment and Evaluation of Prevalence of Fungal Dermatitis in New England Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) Populations

Organization: Roger Williams Park Zoo

Project Leader: Lou Perrotti

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 objectives of this two year project are to asses and evaluate the prevalence of a fungal dermatitis effecting New England Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) populations. In order to achieve the objectives we must first host a meeting of all the participating partners representing the NE states where C. horridus populations occur to identify the target populations to be sampled in each state, insure accountability for each target population, and to outline the logistics, data collection, and sampling protocols. The next step is to be sure all participating biologist are trained (hands on) and comfortable in equipment use, sampling methods, and slide preparation. Each biologist will be given a sampling kit that will be assembled and handed out by the RWPZ veterinary staff. The field kits will include all the materials necessary for the biologists to collect, store, and ship the samples needed. Samples will then be collected and analyzed from the 10 identified populations in four sampling efforts spring 2013, summer 2013, spring 2014, and summer 2014.

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter? Yes

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

A call was put out to the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Diversity Technical Committee (NEFWDTC) looking for project steering committee members to help discus the projects progress. Only three committee members responded.

A meeting was held in February 2013 of all the participating partners representing the NE states where *C. horridus* populations occur to first identify the target populations to be surveyed in each state, insure accountability for each target population, and to outline the logistics, data collection, and sampling protocols.

To prepare the biologist for the sampling efforts in the field the zoo hosted a workshop in March 2013 that allowed the field biologists to practice the art of taking blood samples from captive snakes and preparing microscope slides with the samples.

Each biologist was given a sampling kit assembled by the RWPZ veterinary staff. The 10 field kits include all the materials necessary for the biologists to collect, store, and ship the samples needed throughout the sampling periods.

Difficulties Encountered:

Some of the biologist had a hard time with blood collection which is a key part of the sample collection. Zoo staff will assist in the field when necessary

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

C. horridus activity in New England usually begins in late April early May once snakes are seen emerging from brumation the biologist will begin randomly selecting snakes for the sampling effort. All samples will be sent back to the RWPZ for analysis

Expected End Date: Fall 2014

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): $1003.85

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: $81,148.71

Are you within the approved budget plan and categories? Yes

Signature: Lou Perrotti

Date: 4/30/2013