

# 2019 PROGRESS REPORT

Quarter: (circle one)

2019 1<sup>st</sup>

2019 2<sup>nd</sup>

2019 3<sup>rd</sup>

2019 4<sup>th</sup>

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 contract with between The Oriante Society (TOS) and The Wildlife Management Institute was finalized in the late spring and TOS began work on the project on July 1. The primary focus of TOS this quarter was to review all existing site management plans for Blanding's Turtles in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania and to hold meetings with state biologists and site leaders in each state to discuss the management, conservation, and research histories of each Blanding's Turtle Focal Core Area (FCA). During these state meetings, TOS joined biologists to visit a handful of sites with potential for selection as one of the ten highest priority FCAs in this process. These state meetings began on July 15 and concluded on September 19, however meetings by phone are still required for the state of New York as the experts most knowledgeable about the most southerly New York FCAs were unable to attend the in-person meeting. These teleconference meetings should be concluded by the end of October. The next step will be to meet with key members of the Northeast Blanding's Turtle Working Group to discuss criteria for selecting the 10 highest priority sites. The upcoming Spotted, Wood, and Blanding's Turtle Symposium presents an opportunity for an in-person meeting with most of the group, but if the symposium agenda does not allow time for the meeting to take place TOS will ensure that the discussion occurs shortly afterwards. Once the 10 sites are selected we will begin the process of scheduling site-specific meetings.

Concurrent to the site selection process, TOS began reviewing management guidelines for Blanding's Turtles such that documents outlining Best Management Practices (BMPs) can be updated and created next year. Although TOS planned to begin populating a geospatial database being developed by a different contractor as early as this summer, the database is not yet finalized, but is expected to be ready for use soon. Apart from the database not yet being ready for use, the project is progressing on schedule with most deliverables expected to be met by the fall of 2020, after which we will spend a year helping the states implement site-specific conservation plans prior to submitting a final report no later than March 2022.

Were planned goals/objectives achieved last quarter?

Yes

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

- Reviewed all available Blanding's Turtle site conservation plans
- Participated in three monthly conference calls

- Held in-person meetings and field visits with all five states
- Began review of Blanding's Turtle BMPs

Difficulties Encountered:

None so far.

Activities Anticipated Next Quarter:

- Meet via phone with New York experts to discuss southeastern NY FCAs
- Meet with Liz Willey to go over in-draft conservation plans
- Determine selection criteria and finalize the ten highest priority sites with the working group
- Attend Blanding's, Wood, and Spotted Turtle Symposium
- Continue reviewing Blanding's Turtle BMP and begin drafting new documents
- Begin populating geospatial database (if database becomes ready)

Expected End Date:

March 2022

Costs:

Total life to date expenses (include this quarter): \$7582.06

Total Approved Budgeted Funds: \$7582.06

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 in a cursive style.

Date: October 11, 2019