

Wetlands Reserve Program Bog Turtle Initiative



Photo by Jonathan Mays

Restoring Pennsylvania's Wetlands and Bog Turtle Habitat

What Can You Do?

Private landowners can play a vital role in conserving bog turtles and their habitat.

Best Management Practices to Conserve Bog Turtles:

- Avoid development activities (i.e., roads, buildings)
- Avoid use of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides
- Avoid earth disturbance (i.e., plowing, digging)
- Avoid use of vehicles, including all-terrain vehicles
- Avoid dumping waste materials (i.e., tires, oil, lumber)
- Avoid mowing bog turtle wetlands unless you have consulted a professional biologist who can design a mowing plan that will avoid killing bog turtles and destroying nests.
- STOP POACHERS: Be aware of, and report, any signs of poaching activities to the PA Fish and Boat Commission at 717-705-7861.

For More Information

Contact your local USDA NRCS Service Center and fill out a WRP application or visit us online at www.pa.nrcs.gov/programs/.

For Technical or Habitat Management Assistance:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Bog Turtle Recovery Coordinator
315 S. Allen Street, Suite 322
State College, PA 16801
(814)234-4090

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission
Endangered Species Coordinator
(814)359-5237

What is a Bog Turtle?

The bog turtle (*Glyptemys muhlenbergii*) is a small freshwater turtle with a light-brown to black shell, and large reddish-orange or yellow blotches on each side of its head. The turtle lives in spring-fed wetlands with clear, slow-moving water, soft mud, and grasses and sedges.



Photo by Blaine Rothausser

Status of the Bog Turtle in Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission listed the bog turtle as a state endangered species in 1974. In 1997, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the bog turtle as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act.

Bog turtles face many threats including:

- Habitat succession (from meadow-like wetlands to forested wetlands)
- Invasive exotic plants
- Destruction, degradation, and fragmentation of wetland habitat resulting from development, roads, and agriculture
- Illegal collection for pet trade
- Nest predation by small mammals

Bog Turtle Initiative

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Pennsylvania is partnering with several agencies and non-governmental organizations to restore and permanently protect habitat for the federally threatened bog turtle through the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). NRCS will identify priority areas and restoration practices for WRP enrollment specifically to benefit recovery of the bog turtle. NRCS and partners are committed to working with WRP landowners to maintain restored bog turtle habitat for the long term. The Bog Turtle Initiative area will include eligible sites in Adams, Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Chester, Cumberland, Delaware, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, Schuylkill and York counties.

What is WRP?

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) offers landowners the means and opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. NRCS manages the program and provides technical and financial support to help landowners who participate in WRP.

Enrollment Options for the Bog Turtle Initiative

WRP offers three enrollment options:

1. **Permanent Easement-** A conservation easement in perpetuity. USDA pays 100 percent of the easement value up to 100 percent of the restoration costs.
2. **30-Year Easement-** An easement that expires after 30 years. USDA pays up to 75 percent of the easement value and up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.
3. **Restoration Cost Share Agreements-** 10-year agreements to restore and enhance the wetland functions and values without placing an easement on the enrolled acres. USDA pays up to 75 percent of the restoration cost.