

Bog Turtle Project Review Fact Sheet
Prairie Peninsula/Lake Plain Recovery Unit
New York Field Office
October 2006

The following fact sheet is intended to provide information to assist with the review of projects which occur within the likely range of the bog turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*) (within the Prairie Peninsula/Lake Plain Recovery Unit) within State of New York. The bog turtle is Federally-listed as threatened and State-listed as an endangered species.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) recommends that an evaluation be completed of any existing wetland habitat that would be disturbed, directly or indirectly, by the project, and its potential to support the bog turtle (Phase 1 survey). Information on surveys can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/btsurvey.pdf>.

Please note that known bog turtle sites in central/western New York exhibit distinct differences from sites in southeastern New York/northern New Jersey and some of the descriptions in current Service survey protocols. Please consider the following information, in addition to the guidelines in the Recovery Plan, to assist you with your Phase 1 evaluation.

Our current concept of a suitable bog turtle site in this region would include an open canopy medium or rich fen (Edinger et al. 2002) with:

- surface waters within the fen community having a pH of 5.0 or greater
- waters of any bordering pond or stream having a pH consistently higher than that of the fen itself
- a cover of predominately graminoid plants (usually sedges) with
- sphagnum mosses restricted to hummocks or other localized areas
- scattered raised hummocks usually associated with shrubs and/or small (stunted) trees
- narrow channels of open water (rivulets or game trails) that remain flooded well into or throughout the summer
- In addition, confirmed, historic, and possible sites, usually have a drainage outlet and probably a significant input of ground water.

The Service and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) should be sent a copy of the Phase 1 survey results for review and comment including a USGS topographic map indicating location of site; project design map, including location of wetlands and streams; color photographs of the site; surveyors name; date of visit; opinion on potential/not potential habitat; description of the hydrology, soils, and vegetation.

If the Phase 1 survey identifies any wetlands with potentially suitable habitat, an evaluation is needed to determine whether the proposed project will completely avoid all direct and indirect effects to the wetlands, in consultation with the Service and the NYSDEC. Information to assist with the evaluation of potential impacts on bog turtles can be found in Appendix A - Bog Turtle Conservation Zones of the Bog Turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*) Northern Population Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2001) which can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/btconszone.pdf>. If impacts cannot be avoided, a Phase 2 survey should be completed. The purpose of the Phase 2 survey is to determine the likely presence of bog turtles at the site in potentially suitable habitat. Please see detailed instructions

regarding survey protocols at <http://www.fws.gov/northeast/nyfo/es/btsurvey.pdf>. Also, please contact this office before conducting any Phase 2 surveys.

The project's environmental documents should identify project activities that might result in adverse impacts to the bog turtle or their habitat. Information on any potential impacts and the results of any recommended habitat analyses or surveys for the bog turtle should be provided to this office and they will be used to evaluate potential impacts to the bog turtle or their habitat, and to determine the need for further coordination or consultation pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (87 Stat. 884, as amended; 16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

References:

Edinger, G.J., D.J. Evans, S. Gebauer, T.G. Howard, D.M. Hunt, and A.M. Olivero (editors). 2002. Ecological Communities of New York State. Second Edition. A revised and expanded edition of Carol Reschke's Ecological Communities of New York State. (Draft for review). New York Natural Heritage Program, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Albany, NY.

http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/heritage/draft_ecny2002.htm

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2001. Bog Turtle (*Clemmys muhlenbergii*), Northern Population, Recovery Plan. Hadley, Massachusetts. 103 pp.