

SERVICE APPROVES FIRST AMERICAN BURYING BEETLE CONSERVATION BANK IN THE NATION IN OKLAHOMA

Since September 2012, the Oklahoma Ecological Services Field Office has been working with the Muddy Boggy Conservation Bank (MBCB) on efforts to conserve the American burying beetle (ABB) and its habitat with the goal of providing industry a means to offset/mitigate project impacts. The MBCB is the first conservation bank in Oklahoma and the first ABB bank in the nation. It will help provide an expedient way for project proponents to mitigate their impacts to ABB and provide assurances to industry that there is a convenient way to offset those impacts.

The MBCB is located where Hughes, Coal, and Pontotoc Counties meet in South Central Oklahoma. The property covered by the MBCB is a former Noble Foundation Research Station that has been actively managed over the last 15 – 20 years and supports other wildlife such as deer and quail. In addition, the property owners have undertaken fire management activities that have maintained the area to support the ABB and its habitat. Approximately 2,965 acres of ABB habitat are being protected through a Conservation Easement and a Perpetual Endowment for management of the property in perpetuity. The Bank will directly offset many of the threats to ABB, such as habitat fragmentation, conversion of native habitat, extirpation and depletion of carrion (needed for food and reproductive success), lack of fire/fire suppression, and closure of forest canopy and understory.

The ABB is a scavenger dependent upon carrion for their life cycle and must compete with vertebrate and other invertebrate species for carrion. The ABB is a large shiny black beetle that has hardened protective wing covers that meet in a straight line down the back. It lives for one year, is nocturnal, usually reproduces once and undergoes a complete metamorphosis. The beetle buries a small vertebrate carcass, lays eggs within the carcass and the larvae feed on the carcass until mature.