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**A.D. MARBLE & COMPANY**  
PUBLICATION



**Surroundings**

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# Bog Turtle Review Guidelines

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**C**lemmys muhlenbergii, also known as the bog turtle, is a species that is commonly encountered during the project review process. Professionals such as transportation planners, developers, and consultants are aware that the bog turtle is listed as a threatened species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and that it is necessary to consult with the Service in order to determine the effect of a project on the bog turtle. Below is a quick and easy user guide to help you through this review process.

## Bog Turtle Review Process

The Service developed the *Guidelines for Bog Turtle Surveys* in order to facilitate and standardize the bog turtle review for each project. The guidelines can be obtained from the Service upon request. Some professionals may not know that these guidelines were revised in April 2006. A few of the significant changes are as follows:

- Recommendation that Phase 1 Surveys be completed by qualified surveyors.
- Notification that a Phase 1 field form and report template is available for reference.
- Explanation that forested wetlands may be potential habitat and subject to Phase 2 surveys if they contain suitable soils and hydrology.
- Change in the number of search hours required for Phase 2 surveys from a minimum of 3-6 hours to a minimum of 4-6 hours.



*A female bog turtle found while monitoring a bog turtle reference site. Note the orange neck markings characteristic of this turtle species.*

- Clarification regarding the extent of the Phase 2 survey area. Phase 2 efforts should focus on the “designated survey area” of the wetland, which is the area most likely to support bog turtles due to the presence of suitable soils and hydrology.
- Clarification on the information that should be submitted along with the Phase 2 Survey report.

The bog turtle review process is summarized on the flow chart on the reverse side of this newsletter.

## How Can We Help?

A.D. Marble & Company employs two qualified bog turtle surveyors that can help guide transportation professionals through the bog turtle review process. Our surveyors

can perform Phase 1 and 2 surveys and are able to assist in Phase 3 surveys. All three types of bog turtle surveys must be conducted by a qualified bog turtle surveyor according to the USFWS guidelines. If the project is located in or adjacent to bog turtle habitat, one of our surveyors could also provide guidance on: 1) design modifications that could be used to avoid bog turtle wetland(s); and 2) mitigation measures, such as timed construction or placement of buffers, which could be utilized to avoid adverse impacts to the species.

A.D. Marble & Company is not only involved with bog turtles during the project review process, but is involved with other aspects

# The Bog Turtle Review Process



as well. Our surveyors attend annual bog turtle meetings with state agencies and fellow bog turtle surveyors, monitor a reference site with a healthy population to document emergence from hibernation and update annual turtle records, and also volunteer to assist the Maryland Department of Natural Resources with locating turtles at sites throughout Maryland.

Whether your project is in the phase of determining the need for surveys, conducting surveys, or developing mitigation measures, A.D. Marble & Company is able to aid in facilitating the bog turtle clearance process. Continued consultation with the USFWS and/or state wildlife agency during the life of the project will also ensure that your project stays in accordance with federal and state regulations, will aid in preventing the project from being stalled, and will continue to enable the conservation and recovery of the bog turtle.

Jessica Klinefelter and Melissa Kline are A.D. Marble and Company's qualified bog turtle surveyors. Ms. Klinefelter is a qualified surveyor in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland and can be reached at (410) 902-1421. Ms. Kline is a qualified surveyor in Maryland and can be reached at (484) 533-2500.