



Gopher Tortoise Management Plan
Annual Update
September 2008

Accomplishments (Year 1)

- Legislative budget request funded
- Revised permitting guidelines
 - Capture, handling, transport, and health considerations implemented
 - Recipient Site permit
 - Authorized Gopher Tortoise Agent permit
 - Approval of Authorized Agent training providers
- Continued involvement with the stakeholder group
 - gopher tortoise technical advisory group (GTTAG)



Accomplishments (Year 1)

- Coordinated with other public lands' managers on restocking efforts
- Developed a prescribed fire database
- Outreach presentations conducted
 - Article highlighting private landowner incentives published
- Hired a plan coordinator and other staff
- Developed specifications for online permitting system (contract in process)



Current activities (Year 1)

- Development of the online permitting system (Implementation date: Spring 2009)
- Continue to work with public and private landowners on restocking efforts
- Coordinate with local governments on plan implementation
 - Outreach activities
 - Coordinate with counties on establishing recipient sites, including off-site relocations for less than 10 gopher tortoises



Current activities (Year 1)

- Create and distribute educational materials
 - Draft guidance addressing gopher tortoise and horse interactions
- Expand partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Law enforcement training manual development and distribution
 - Train law enforcement officers and recruits
- Research activities implemented
 - Soft release on the Apalachicola National Forest
 - Genetics of panhandle tortoises



Looking ahead

- Implement all permitting guidelines
- Ongoing coordination with local governments
- Coordinate a fire strike team
- Conduct regional workshops
 - Local governments
 - FWC law enforcement
- Conduct research
 - Compatible gopher tortoise and cattle grazing capacity
- Data needs
 - Mapping study every five years to assess gopher tortoise habitat
 - Management, permitting, prescribed fire databases



Stakeholder engagement

- Ad hoc subgroups working with FWC staff's gopher tortoise (GT3) team
 - Certification and training
 - Local government coordination
 - Other species that live in gopher tortoise burrows (commensals)
 - Monitoring recipient sites
 - Education
 - Online permitting
 - Research



Summary of ongoing efforts

- Significant progress being made:
 - Permitting guidelines implementation
 - Education and outreach
 - Research projects
 - Ongoing coordination with public agencies
 - Law enforcement training
 - Stakeholder (GTTAG) participation in management plan implementation
- We are pleased with the progress to date and are on schedule in implementing the gopher tortoise management plan to ensure the long-term conservation of the gopher tortoise in Florida



Questions?



For more information on the Gopher Tortoise Management Plan,
please visit our website at: <http://MyFWC.com>.

