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Tennessee Wildlife Action Plan

From Vision to On-the-Ground Action

Tennessee's wildlife action plan identifies a total of 37 potential sources of stress that affect species of greatest conservation need and their habitats, including incompatible land use and development. Tennessee's human population is projected to grow by 1.5 million people by the year 2025. This projected growth will require communities to plan for and meet the needs of its citizens while conserving and managing the land, water, and wildlife resources that enhance the quality of life within and near those same communities.

Working with Partners to Bring Back Wildlife and Natural Areas

Restoring Polluted Aquatic Habitat

Restoring aquatic habitat to benefit aquatic wildlife is an important goal in Tennessee's wildlife action plan. Refuse from underground mines that were abandoned 100 years ago made Panther Branch so polluted and acidic that virtually nothing could live in the water. With State Wildlife Grant funds,

the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency partnered with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation to restore Panther Branch. They removed the mine refuse, restructured the stream channel, built a drainage system to reduce the water's acidity, and constructed artificial wetlands to remove any dissolved metals. Completed in the spring of 2007, Panther Branch will soon re-colonize with aquatic wildlife. Maintaining clean and healthy waters benefits both wildlife and people.



Panther Branch before restoration/Tennessee Department of Conservation



Panther Branch after restoration/Tennessee Department of Conservation



Golden mouse/Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Gathering Information to Take Action Improving Wildlife Knowledge

Tennessee's wildlife action plan outlines the need for current and comprehensive information on the distribution and abundance of the state's wildlife in order to make the best management decisions for wildlife and people. Over the last three years, 31 wildlife management areas, state forests, and natural areas have been surveyed for wildlife. Almost 20,000 amphibians, reptiles, small mammals, and bats were captured and released in this effort. From that, over 600 new records of species of greatest conservation need were obtained, furthering our basic knowledge of their distribution and abundance. This important information will help Tennessee fulfill its responsibility to conserve wildlife and the places they live for future generations.

Protecting Imperiled Land, Water, and Wildlife

Restoring Alligator Snapping Turtles

The alligator snapping turtle is a species of greatest conservation need in Tennessee's wildlife action plan. The Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

has initiated a restoration project to save the alligator snapping turtle in Tennessee. Since 2000, over 400 turtles have been reintroduced into many major Mississippi River drainages in West Tennessee. Previously, lack of funds prevented monitoring of the project and evaluating its success. Now, with State Wildlife Grant funds a multi-year project to monitor juvenile snapping turtle survival and habitat use is underway. Data on preferred habitat characteristics are being collected and integrated with

mapping technology to help researchers determine the best locations for future releases, thus giving the young turtles the best chance for survival. This proactive effort will conserve the alligator snapping turtle before it becomes more rare and more costly to protect.

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

444 North Capitol St, NW
Suite 725
Washington, DC 20001
202.624.7890
www.teaming.com
www.wildlifeactionplans.org

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

Ellington Agricultural Center
P.O. Box 41489
Nashville, TN 37204
<http://www.state.tn.us/twra/cwcs/cwcsindex.html>



Juvenile alligator snapping turtle with radio transmitter attached/Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

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