

NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION AWARDS GRANT TO LOCAL COMMUNITY:

City of Middleton receives \$ 980 for Blanding's Turtles Survey

Madison, WI—April 4, 2011—Local efforts to care for our state's natural resources were recognized by the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin, which provided \$980.00 to support the Citizen Survey of Blanding's Turtles through its C.D. Besadny Conservation Grants. The funding will facilitate the expansion of citizen monitoring efforts of the last two years and involves placement of radio transmitters on the state threatened Blanding's Turtles to enable tracking of their movements to better understand their habitat needs, and risks of movement.

“Our Foundation works to save endangered wildlife, protect natural lands, and promote conservation education. The Besadny Grants are specifically for small-scale projects that have a big impact in local communities. This year, we gave away nearly \$25,000 to 28 projects across the state. We're pleased to support the great work of City of Middleton Conservancy Land Committee and Middleton citizen volunteers,” said Charlie Luthin, executive director of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.

Alice Thompson, survey coordinator declared, “Although Blanding's were thought to inhabit the Conservancy, as we survey the City of Middleton's kettle ponds, the citizen volunteers have found that more contain Blanding's turtles than originally expected and in a much larger geographic area than originally thought. We intend to use these funds to purchase additional radio transmitters to fit a large set of turtles with transmitters to accurately assess turtle habitat and protection needs”.

Of Wisconsin's wetland turtles, the Blanding's Turtle (*Emydoidea blandingii*) uses upland habitat more than all other. At the urban/rural interface, this makes Blanding's susceptible to increased nest failure and predation and mortality on roadways. The Blanding's Study involves both citizen surveys with binoculars, and trapping Blanding's turtles, placing transmitters on as many as possible, and tracking their movements to identify nesting areas and places where turtles commonly encounter increased mortality on roads and via encounters with human pets and wild animals associated with human settlements. This information will be given to the City of Middleton Conservancy Land Committee for planning purposes and to inform Conservancy management, and Blanding's locations will be entered into the DNR's Natural History Inventory. As some city lands abut undeveloped land, this information will be vital to protecting habitat as these areas are developed in the future.

The C.D. Besadny Conservation Grant Program promotes the responsible stewardship of Wisconsin's natural resources at the local level by providing matching grants for small-scale, natural resource projects and programs. Named after C.D. "Buzz" Besadny, former head of the Department of Natural Resources and Natural Resources Foundation co-founder, the program honors Besadny's dedication to the conservation of Wisconsin's natural resources; funds are also provided from the Foundation's Teachers' Outdoor Environmental Education Fund. Public and private organizations, including schools, and governments may apply for the grants.

“Grants awarded program range from \$100 to \$1,000 and must be matched 100% by recipient organizations either through cash or in-kind donations,” said Luthin. “Since the program's inception, the Natural Resources Foundation has contributed more than \$330,000 to 441 projects, covering every county in Wisconsin .”

Projects funded in 2011 included educational signage at Rock County Parks State Natural Area, educational materials for Devil's Lake State Park, benches for an outdoor classroom at Hudson High School, and development of a “Kids for the Earth” program at Pheasant Branch Conservancy.

The Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin is a 501c-3 non-profit organization based in Madison , Wisconsin . For 25 years, the Foundation has worked with citizens, businesses, non-profits, and the government to promote the protection and enjoyment of Wisconsin's public lands, waters, and wildlife. Since its inception in 1986, the Foundation has contributed more than \$3.5 to conservation projects throughout the state. For more information, visit Wisconservation.org.