

# NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY

EPA Wetland Program Development Grants



Policy and Implementation Committee

October 27, 2023

# Proposals Must Address Two Existing and Two New National Priorities

Protecting Wetlands  
Monitoring and Assessment  
Climate Change  
Environmental Justice

Science Office is Proposing a 4 Part Project to EPA

Project Title:

“Protecting Wetlands, Monitoring Climate Change, Reducing Wildfire, and Educating the Public”

# 1. Protecting Wetlands

## PC and NJDEP ENSP funding radio tracking of box turtles

50% hibernated in uplands and 50% in wetlands  
Most turtles maintain heavy wetland use for daily activities

### Proposing to EPA:

Determine box turtle activity range size and core activity

Determine upland and wetland habitat types that turtles use  
to add value to these habitats in the NJDEP Landscape Project

Evaluate the 300-foot upland buffer to wetlands to support turtles

Timing of activity, hibernation, and spring emergence for use in NJDEP  
stewardship plans, prescribed burning, vegetation management, etc.

## 2. Monitoring Climate Change

**PC monitors water levels in 37 ponds and 43 wetland forest plots as part of Long-term Environmental Monitoring Program**

### **Proposing to EPA:**

**Install weather stations at 5 ponds that currently have continuous water-level recorders to be long-term climate change monitoring stations**

**Install a well adjacent to each pond and install continuous water-level recorders for when ponds dry**

**Install continuous water-level recorders in 4 wetland forest plots, including pine lowland, pine-hardwood lowland, maple swamp, and cedar swamp**

### 3. Reducing Wildfire

Part of box turtle study: working with NJFFS through ENSP to direct prescribed burning to where we have clusters of turtles

#### Proposing to EPA:

Direct prescribed burns to areas with clusters of turtles that are also in tracts listed as high wildfire risk and/or disadvantaged in EPA Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)

Reduce wildfire risk to protect forests and people in CEJST tracts

Better understanding of the relationship between turtles and fire

## 4. Educating the Public

Communication Office currently offers spring Pinelands Short Course, Summer Short Course, fall World Water Monitoring Challenge, interpretive center and bog/rain garden tours, and education programs at schools and community centers

### Proposing to EPA:

Integrate more Science Office wetland research and climate change information into all education programs

Contact elementary, middle, and high schools and community centers in disadvantaged CEJST tracts to schedule free interpretive center and bog/rain garden tours and education programs at the schools

# Timeline and Cost

**4 year project: 2025 - 2028**

**Funding 75% EPA and 25% PC**

**Total Project Cost: \$202,480**

**EPA Funds Requested: \$151,860**

**Cost Share Match: \$50,620**

# Letters of Support:

**NJDEP Endangered and Nongame Species Program**  
**American Turtle Observatory**  
**New Jersey State Climatologist**  
**New Jersey Conservation Foundation**  
**Pinelands Preservation Alliance**



