

Landowner Resources

Conserving Wood Turtle habitat can benefit landowners too. Management practices that help Wood Turtles may also improve agricultural sustainability, and often include financial incentives. Below are just two examples of how restoring Wood Turtle habitat can go hand-in-hand with working landscapes. [Contact The Orianne Society](#) to learn about conservation options that might be a good match for your property.

Department of Agriculture

Farm Bill programs restore wetlands and provide financial assistance to eligible producers to establish riparian buffers, either permanently or temporarily. These buffers protect agricultural lands from flood damage and reduce erosion. The USDA also provides financial assistance toward practices that protect sensitive habitat.

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

River Corridor Easements restore natural stream patterns within a defined corridor and establish a vegetated buffer. Agriculture and channel management aren't allowed within the buffer, but farmers are compensated for setting aside some land for the corridor and turtles get a safe place to forage and nest.

The Orianne Society

We are the leading organization for the conservation of reptiles and amphibians. Our focus is using science to conserve imperiled species and the landscapes they depend on. Though we think globally, we work strategically in specific landscapes through well-designed initiatives. Within each of these initiatives, we define places and species as conservation priorities and work with a diverse group of partners to achieve conservation success.



THE Orianne Society

Help Conserve Wood Turtles

We need your help to conserve this charismatic species and the landscapes it depends on. Learn more about this initiative and others at www.OrianneSociety.org. Find out how you can help - make a donation, become a member, pass this information on to your friends - together, we can do more for conservation in the Great Northern Forests.

The Orianne Society

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Wood Turtle Conservation

In Working Landscapes

Turtle Biology & Habitat Management
Resources for Producers
Technical Assistance
Financial Incentives

“The Great Northern Turtle”

Glyptemys insculpta



Helping Farms. Conserving Habitat.



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Wood Turtles

With vibrant orange legs contrasted against a black head and brown shell, few people are likely to forget an encounter with a Wood Turtle. As a rare and very secretive species, most people are unaware that we share the landscape with Wood Turtles, and unfortunately, their populations are in decline and their future is uncertain.



About The Turtle

Wood Turtles are a stream species that forage on land in river floodplains. The landscapes they depend on are highly impacted by human use and the species has experienced major declines due to the development of floodplains and from turtles being killed by cars and agricultural equipment.

Thankfully, there are ways to manage working lands to lessen the impact we have on this unique species. Managing land for Wood Turtles also reduces pollution into our waterways and improves habitat for other wildlife, including trout, mink, rabbits, and bobcats.

Turtles on Your Farm?

Wood Turtles like meandering streams with pools at least 4-feet deep, a floodplain on either side, and some exposed sand or gravel beaches. Not all of these features need to be present, but when they are, there is a good chance you may have Wood Turtles! This can make your farm a good candidate for voluntary conservation programs.



An example of a stream with a thriving population of Wood Turtles.

Agricultural Landscapes

Agricultural land can be beneficial to Wood Turtles if properly managed. Unfortunately, farm equipment can unintentionally kill Wood Turtles. Because they may live up to 90 years and have low reproductive rates, the survival of adults is critical. Losing even just one or two per year from an area can cause Wood Turtle populations to disappear over time. Our goal is to work with farmers to find solutions that help turtles survive in working lands.

Agricultural Practices

The following examples of management practices improve Wood Turtle habitat in working landscapes. Many farmers can qualify for financial incentives and technical assistance to incorporate some of these practices into their operations.

1. Establish unmanaged buffers around streams. Buffers can be as small as 35-foot wide, but may be over 300-foot wide where possible, providing Wood Turtles safe places to forage.
2. Manage fields during the turtle inactive period (November–March). If warm season management is necessary, maintain unmanaged buffers >35-foot around streams.
3. Use crops that can be harvested in October or that do not require heavy equipment to harvest near streams.
4. Use livestock to keep land open as an alternative to mowing within 300 feet of streams (but keep livestock at least 35 feet from the streams themselves).
5. Use sickle bar mowers and raise blade height >6 inches when possible.
6. Plant shrubs along stream banks to stabilize soils and provide turtles with places to hide.

SEEN A WOOD TURTLE?



Your sightings are important to our efforts. Report a sighting by sending us an email or reaching out by phone.
(802) 363-2494 info@oriantesociety.org

The Oriante Society works to conserve critical ecosystems for imperiled reptiles and amphibians using science, applied conservation and education.

Science Fueled, Boots on-the-ground Conservation.