

41st Annual Gopher Tortoise Council Meeting

Friday, November 15, 2019

The Lodge at Gulf State Park, Gulf Shores, Alabama

Agenda

Registration, Lodging check-in, & Sign in Silent Auction items

07:45 - 9:00 AM

Welcome & Keynote Address

09:00-9:15 AM Ericha Nix, GTC Co-Chair, Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries Division and Greg Lein, Alabama State Parks Director.

09:15-10:00 AM *Lessons from the largest gopher tortoise translocation project: implications for a range-wide conservation strategy.* **Matthew J. Aresco**, PhD, Director, Nokuse Plantation.

Session 1 Oral Presentations

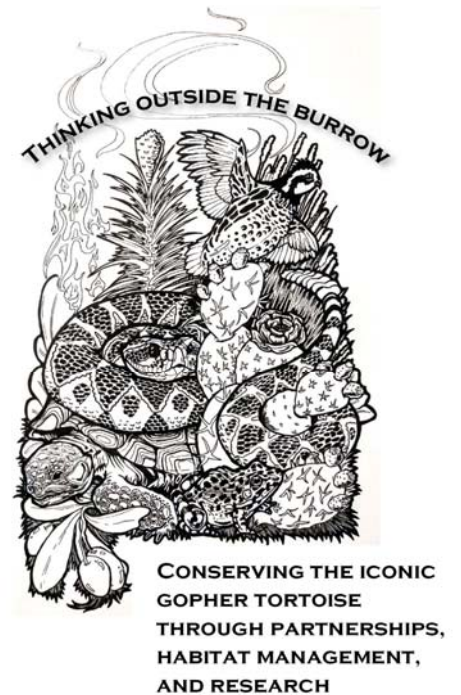
10:00 -10:20 AM *No Habitat Left Behind: Future Challenges Associated with Relocation of Gopher Tortoises in Florida.* **Neal Halstead** and Eric Sievers, Wildlands Conservation, Inc.

10:20-10:40 AM *Bridging the Gaps to Save the Burrows: The Power of Proactive Conservation and Local South Florida Findings.* **Katherine Hendrickson**, Nova Southeastern University.

10:40 – 11:00 AM **BREAK**

11:00 – 11:20 AM *Implementing a Wildlife Incident Management System (WIMS) Database to address the Human Dimensions of Gopher Tortoise Conservation.* **Katherine Gentry**, Kelly Smith, and Deborah Burr, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

11:20 – 11:40 AM *Stepping Outside the Burrow and into the Expressway: Road Governance and the Conflict between Residential Properties and Conservation Easement Lands.* **Caitlin Jones** and Tyler McCreary, Florida State University.



11:40 – 12:00 PM *Protecting Conservation Lands through Grass Roots Activism.* **Valerie C. Anderson¹ and Kimberly A. Buchheit²**, ¹Friends of Split Oak Forest, Inc., ²Buchheit Associates, Inc.

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM **LUNCH** (on your own)

12:15- 1:15 PM ***Special Session: GTC Needs YOU! Investing in our volunteers helps us meet our mission. The GTC Education Committee is recruiting volunteers to serve as GTC Representatives at various events throughout the gopher tortoise range but close to you. All materials, supplies and training needed to perform as a confident GTC volunteer will be provided to you during this training session. Your success is GTC's success! (PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED)***

Session 2 Student Oral Presentations (*J. Larry Landers Student Award Recipient)

1:30 – 1:50 PM *Assessing Stability of Gopher Tortoise Populations through Line-Transect Distance Sampling.* **Heather Gaya**, Bryan L. Nuse, Thomas J. Prebyl, and Clinton T. Moore, Georgia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources University of Georgia

1:50 – 2:10 PM *Health and Density Effects on Overwintering Behavior of Translocated Gopher Tortoises in Northwest Florida.* **Rebecca A. Cozad^{1,4*}**, Terry M. Norton^{2,3}, Matthew J. Aresco⁴, Tracey D. Tuberville⁵, and Sonia M. Hernandez⁶. ¹Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia, ²Georgia Sea Turtle Center, ³St. Catherines Island Foundation, ⁴Nokuse Plantation, ⁵University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology, Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study, ⁶UGA College of Veterinary Medicine.

2:10 - 2:30 PM *The Effectiveness of Long-Distance Translocation of Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnakes (*Crotalus adamanteus*).* **Allison G. Kelley¹**, Shane Welch¹, John Holloway², Will Dillman³, April Atkinson⁴, Jayme Waldron¹. ¹Marshall University, ²Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Office, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, ³South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, ⁴James W. Webb Wildlife Center and Management Area.

2:30- 2:50 PM *Vertebrate Use of Pine Stump Holes in the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem.* **Chris M. Murphy^{1,2*}**, Lora L. Smith², Steven B. Castleberry¹. ¹University of Georgia Warnell School of Natural Resources, ²The Jones Center at Ichauway.

2:50 – 3:10 PM

BREAK

3:10 – 3:30 PM

*Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) Habitat Associations and Population Demographics on Working Forest Landscapes.* **Duston R. Duffie**¹, Scott A. Rush¹, Darren A. Miller², and Daniel U. Greene³.
¹Mississippi State University, ²NCASI, Box 9681, ³Weyerhaeuser Co.

3:30 – 3:50 PM

Development of a Habitat Suitability Model to Guide Gopher Frog Management in Georgia. **Erin Cork**^{1,2}, Jeffrey Hepinstall-Cymerman¹, nd John Maerz¹. ¹University of Georgia Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources. ²Quail Forever.

3:50 – 4:10 PM

*Evidence for Fine-Scale Genetic Structuring of a Florida Mouse (*Peromyscus floridanus*) Population in a Heterogeneous Upland Landscape.* **Andrew J. Marx** and James D. Austin. Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida.

4:10 – 4:30 PM

*Effects of Habitat and Weather on Nightly Movements of Gopher Frogs (*Lithobates capito*) during the Nonbreeding Season.* **Garrett R. Lawson** and Betsie B. Rothenmel. Archbold Biological Station.

4:30 – 4:50 PM

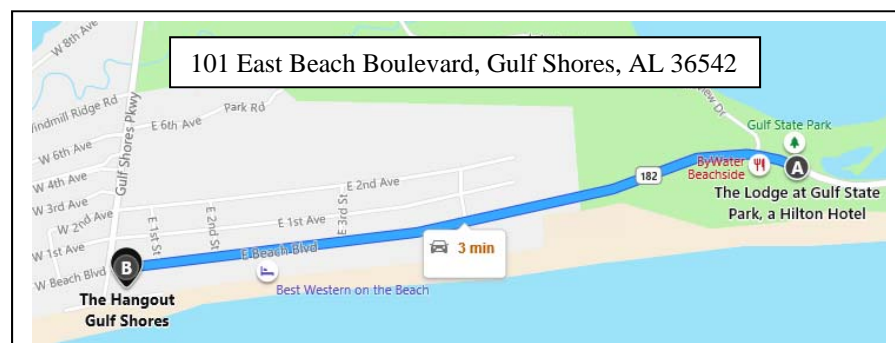
A Method for Estimating Gopher Tortoise Densities at Spatial Scales Relevant for Habitat Studies. **Thomas J. Prebyl**¹, Bryan Nuse¹, and Clinton T. Moore². ¹Georgia Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, ²U.S. Geological Survey.

4:50 – 5:10 PM

*Using Integrated Population Models to Describe Demography and Evaluate Population Viability of *Gopherus Polyphemus*.* **Brian Folt**¹, Anna Tucker¹, Jeffrey M. Goessling², Craig Guyer³, Sharon M. Hermann⁴, Ericha Shelton-Nix⁵, and Conor P. McGowan⁶. ¹Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University, ²Eckerd College, ³Department of Biological Sciences and Auburn Museum of Natural History, Auburn University, ⁴Department of Biological Sciences, Auburn University, ⁵Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, ⁶U.S. Geological Survey, Alabama Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, Auburn University.

6:30-10:00 PM

SOCIAL - The Hangout (Must wear name badge to get in.)



Saturday, November 16, 2019

Registration, Lodging check-in, & Sign in Silent Auction items

8:00 - 9:00 AM

Session 3 Oral Presentations and Membership Meeting

- 9:00 – 9:20 AM *Recipients of the 2018 Donna J. Heinrich Environmental Education Grant: A New Gopher Tortoise Exhibit.* **Mallore Holcombe** and Katie Dillard. Flint RiverQuarium.
- 9:20 – 9:40 AM *Gopher Tortoise Exploration and Conservation through Teacher Education.* **Susan Collins**¹, Dr. Leigh Funk², Madison Cauthen³, Katie Fasnacht⁴, and Jenny Rusch¹. ¹Kennesaw State University, Elementary and Early Childhood Department, ²Kennesaw State University, Office of the Dean, ³Kennesaw State University, Elementary and Early Childhood Education Department, ⁴Clark Creek Elementary.
- 9:40 – 10:00 AM *Effects of Fire Management on Gopher Tortoise Population Dynamics Depend on Habitat Context.* **Elizabeth A. Hunter** and David C. Rostal. Department of Biology, Georgia Southern University.
- 10:00 – 10:20 AM *Apparent Establishment of a Novel Social Network Following Translocation of Multiple Source Populations of the Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*).* **Philip A. Schulte**^{*1,2} and Sharon M. Hermann¹. ¹Department of Biological Sciences, Auburn University, ²Fitzhugh Carter Tract of Econfina Creek WMA.
- 10:20 – 10:40 AM **BREAK**
- 10:40 - 11:00 AM *The Influence of Prescribed Fire on Site Selection in Snakes in the Longleaf Pine Ecosystem.* **Jennifer M. Howze**¹ and Lora L. Smith¹, ¹Jones Center at Ichauway.
- 11:00 – 11:20 AM *Minimum Density Estimates of Terrestrial Snakes in the Munson Sandhills Adjoining Apalachicola National Forest, Florida.* **J. Steve Godley**^{1,2}, Joshua L. Hofkes², Colleen M. Reilly¹, ¹Cardno, ²Kleinfelder.
- 11:20 – 12:30 AM **Membership Meeting**
- 12:30 – 1:45 PM **LUNCH** (on your own)

Session 4 Oral Presentations

- 1:45 – 2:05 PM *Temporary Exclusion and Natural Repatriation of Gopher Tortoises on a Linear Utility Corridor.* **Michelina C. Dziadzio**¹, Kent Williges², Samantha Cobble³, Cyndi Gates⁴, and Deborah Burr¹, ¹Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, ²Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Gainesville, FL, ³Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Ocala FL, ⁴Southwest Florida Water Management District.
- 2:05 – 2:25 PM *Analysis of FWC Gopher Tortoise Relocation Permit Records 2009-2019 to Identify Locations, Acreage and Animals Impacted by Land Development in the State of Florida.* Alexandra Nieve and **Nora Egan Demers**, Florida Gulf Coast University.
- 2:25 - 2:45 PM *Demographic Consequences of Habitat Alteration and Inbreeding for a Gopher Tortoise Population in Southern Florida.* **Betsie B. Rothermel**¹, Hunter J. Howell², K. Nicole White^{1,3}, Christopher A. Searcy², Tracey D. Tuberville⁴, Michael L. Yuan⁵, and Kelly R. Zamudio⁶. ¹Archbold Biological Station, ²University of Miami, ³Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, University of Georgia, ⁴Savannah River Ecology Lab, University of Georgia, ⁵College of Natural Resources, University of California, ⁶Cornell University.
- 2:45 – 3:05 PM **BREAK (NOTE: SILENT AUCTION ENDS AT 3:05pm!)**
- 3:05 – 3:25 PM *Evaluation of Electric Fences to Exclude Predators on Gopher Tortoise Translocation Sites.* **Derek B. Breakfield**, Rebecca A. Cozad, and Matthew J. Aresco, Nokuse Plantation.
- 3:25 - 3:45 PM *Some Like it Hot: The Thermal Activity of Translocated and Resident Gopher Tortoises (*Gopherus polyphemus*) in Georgia.* **Miranda L. Gulsby***¹, Lance M. Paden¹, Kimberly M. Andrews¹, Oscar P. Thompson¹, James F. Renner², Thomas Fazio², and Steven White², ¹University of Georgia, Applied Wildlife Conservation Lab, UGA Marine Extension, ²Southern Ionics Minerals, LLC.
- 3:45 – 4:05 PM *Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*) Behaviors Observed at the Naples Preserve, Collier County, Florida.* **Rebecca J. Speer**¹, ¹Naples Preserve, City of Naples Community Services Department.
- 4:05 – 4:20 PM *Update on the Gopher Tortoise Species Status Assessment.* **Mike Marshall**, Texas A&M Natural Resources Institute.

- 4:30 – 05:45 PM **POSTER SESSION** (Gulf Ballroom II)
- 6:00 – 7:00 PM **RECEPTION** (1hr open bar) (The Dunes Terrace)
- 7:00 – 10:00 PM **AWARDS DINNER AND LIVE AUCTION** (The Dunes Terrace)

Sunday, November 17, 2019

Field Trip

07:30 - 11:00 AM ADCNR Gulf State Park tour by bicycle. Tour guides: Kelly Reetz, ADNCR, Gulf State Park Naturalist and Roger Clay, ADCNR, DWFF Wildlife Biologist. This is an easy 6-mile bike ride on flat paved bike trails.

NOTE: This event is open to the first 30 people who sign up. You must be pre-registered unless you brought your own bicycle. MEETING LOCATION: At 7:30 meet at the Gulf State Park Camp Store (22116 Campground Rd., Gulf Shores; GPS Coordinates 30.2634, -87.6418). **Tour begins at 8am sharp.**

11:00 AM Check out

THANK YOU SPONSORS AND MEETING VOLUNTEERS!

PLATINUM SPONSORS

**Edwin L. and Elizabeth L. Skelton Foundation
U.S. Forest Service – National Forests in Alabama**

SILVER SPONSOR

Birmingham Zoo



SUPPORTERS

**Alabama Forestry Association - Sustainable Forestry Initiative Committee
Hodges, Harbin, Newberry & Tribble, Inc.
Hopping, Green & Sams
Jones Timberlands, LLC.**