

To: Animal Acquisition Committee

From: Dr. Willam Rapley
Executive Director
Conservation, Education & Research

Subject: **TURTLE ACQUISITIONS**

Date: 2010-04-19

Summary:

This report requests the approval to acquire two new turtle species partner with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) for a head starting and release conservation programme partnership.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- 1. (12) Eastern box turtles (*Terrapene Carolina*) be added to the collection for display in the Kids Zoo;**
- 2. (50) Wood turtle hatchlings (*Clemmys insculptaca*) be added to the collection for the purpose of headstarting and recovery; and**
- 3. the Toronto Zoo partner with the Ministry of Natural Resources to rear wood turtles respectively as part of a head starting and release conservation programme.**

Financial Impact:

Minor modifications, in the amount of \$1,000.00 to secure the area of the Kids Zoo will be funded from the Curator of Amphibians and Reptiles 2010 Operating Budget. The Ministry of Natural Resources is providing funding for the care of the turtles until they are released.

Background:

Both species have been displayed at the Toronto Zoo in the past.

The MNR has an ambitious head starting programme for one of Canada's most endangered turtles. Similar to the Parks Canada's Blanding's turtle head starting programme for a species already in the Toronto Zoo collection, wood turtle eggs hatched by MNR are reared in captivity until a size suitable for release is obtained in 12 months. Toronto Zoo staff have the expertise to make a significant contribution to these head starting programmes and the recovery of endangered species. We are currently in the eighth year of a local Rouge Park Blanding's turtle habitat use and recovery programme.

Comments/Discussion:

The Eastern box turtle, once native to Canada is an engaging, child relevant turtle that will utilize an empty exhibit in the Kids Zoo and add to the parent child experience. Winter holding is available in the Education Portable with the removal of a single outreach painted turtle to the Animal Health Centre outreach holding. Existing Animal Health Centre reptile holding space will be utilized for the wood turtles.

In a conservation partnership with the MNR, the wood turtles will be reared at the Toronto Zoo until size allows for a return to the wild.

John Tracogna
Chief Executive Officer

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