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## WESTERN PAINTED TURTLE DISTRIBUTION AT MPG RANCH

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This study seeks to understand western painted turtle (*Chrysemys picta*) distribution at MPG Ranch, a 9500-acre conservation property in the Northern Sapphires. The recent completion of a large pond in our Clubhouse Floodplain provided a larger habitat for western painted turtles. Prior to the pond's completion no more than 16 turtles basked at any one time in the smaller pools of this floodplain. After the completion of the pond in early 2012, 57 turtles concurrently basked on a sunny spring day. MPG staff sought to better understand western painted turtle distribution after the completion of the pond. How many turtles live at the pond? Are these turtles now able to remain in the pond throughout their life cycle? What specific advantages does this pond provide for a resident population? How can we further promote turtle habitat in the Clubhouse Floodplain? In order to begin answering these questions staff set up multiple basking traps in the Clubhouse Pond. For two years we marked and measured 90 adult and sub-adult turtles caught in the traps during the summer months. Our initial findings should help us begin to answer these questions.