

## **Resolution to Support the Wisconsin Turtle Management Program**

**Whereas** turtles are an integral part of the wetland ecosystem by occupying specialized niches such as predators, prey, and by functioning as herbivores and carnivores that collectively balance the ecosystem; and

**Whereas** turtles have a low level of recruitment, and have a high sensitivity to adult mortality, many turtle populations in Wisconsin are threatened. As an example, a 2-3% increase in adult mortality is sufficient to cause a turtle population to decline; and

**Whereas** these populations are threatened by habitat loss, vegetation change, habitat fragmentation, human disturbance, and collection of turtles for use in the pet trade; and

**Whereas** scientific studies suggest road mortality is a significant cause of turtle decline with some studies suggest a 5-20% road mortality annually; and

**Whereas** the direct impact of roads on turtles is crossing mortality, specifically in high frequency crossing areas known as hotspots; and

**Whereas** roads provide easy access for animal predation on turtles nesting in close proximity to roads; and

**Whereas** Wisconsin has created a Turtle Conservation Program, which calls for the construction and design of turtle friendly roads, the enhancement of current wildlife roadside structures, turtle friendly roadside management, and installation of turtle crossing signs in hotspot areas.

**Now therefore be it resolved** that the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation at its annual meeting on April 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin requests that the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources collaborate with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and organizations such as the Wisconsin Herpetological Society, to develop a statewide strategy that addresses turtle road mortality in the state of Wisconsin, consistent with the Wisconsin Turtle Conservation Program.

Submitted by the Conservation Leadership Corps:

Marco Mascitti

Savanna Harmon

Janel Scharhag