

# Western Pond Turtle Recovery Project

## FAQ

- Site requirements
- Report a turtle



### Is my property a viable site for pond turtle recovery?

#### General considerations:

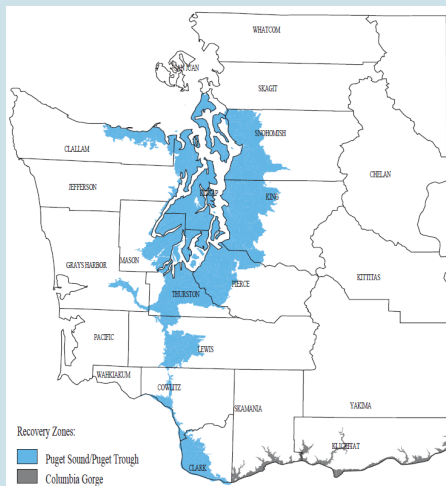
1. The site needs to support hundreds of turtles
2. The site will likely require regular and on-going habitat management to maintain suitable habitat for the pond turtles
3. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) will need a guarantee that biologists have access to the property whenever necessary and in perpetuity

#### Recovery site requirements (not a complete list)

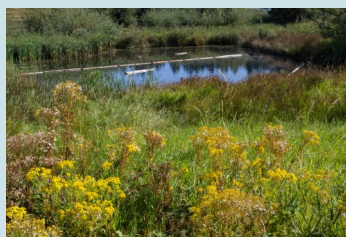
1. The site must be within the recovery zone.  
The recovery zones are highlighted in Fig. 6, page 36, of the [Washington State Recovery Plan for the Western Pond Turtle](#)
2. Elevation below 300 m
3. Preferred upland habitat is prairie and open forests. Examples include  
South Sound prairies  
Oak woodlands  
Oak-pine woodlands  
Pasture may be suitable in some cases.
4. Preferred aquatic habitat is a wetland complex that includes multiple bodies of water with some that are permanent in most years.
5. The occupied area needs to be isolated by at least 1/4 mile from primary/secondary roads and urban centers.

#### Important site features

- Upland habitat that includes open grassy areas interspersed with deciduous trees and shrubs
- Abundant emergent basking logs (or potential to add)
- Aquatic water bodies with emergent vegetation and mud bottoms
- Abundant invertebrate prey
- No bullfrogs or predatory game fish (e.g., bass) or the ability to remove these predators before introduction of pond turtles



If you believe your site may be a good recovery location, you can email [WILDTHING@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:WILDTHING@dfw.wa.gov)



A larger view of the recovery zones (left) are highlighted in Fig. 6, page 36 at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/00398/>

### How do I report a Western pond turtle?

#### How to report a Western pond turtle

1. Photograph the turtle, including
  - Top of the turtle (carapace)
  - Bottom of the turtle (plastron)
  - Side of the turtle
  - Head
2. Send the photographs along with a description of the location where the turtle was observed to [WILDTHING@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:WILDTHING@dfw.wa.gov)



It is **not** a Western pond turtle if it:

- has any red or yellow markings on the shell, head or limbs
- has a lower shell that only partially covers the body
- has a leathery flat shell without hard scales (i.e., scutes) and a snorkel-like nose
- can completely close its shell to protect its head and legs
- has a neck that bends sideways when it pulls its head into the shell
- has stump-like legs
- is aggressive (i.e., tries to bite when approached)

