



TSA NEWSLETTER

April 7, 2009

IN THIS ISSUE:

New TSA Board Holds First Meeting
Meet the New Board
TSA Conference
Animal Management

Please help us meet our commitment to zero turtle extinctions in the 21st century. [Support the TSA!](#)

TSA Foundation Board holds inaugural meeting

By: Scott Davis

The first meeting of the expanded TSA Foundation Board of Directors was hosted by Eric Goode and Maurice Rodrigues at the Maritime Hotel in New York on March 6th. The Board includes: Rick Hudson (President), Dwight Lawson (Vice President), Chuck Landrey (Secretary), Walter Sedgwick (Treasurer), Scott Davis (Executive Director), Bill Holmstrom, John Iverson, Pat Koval, John Mitchell, Hugh Quinn, Anders Rhodin, David Shapiro, Frank Slavens and Bill Zeigler. The new Board will oversee major aspects of fund-raising and administration, and be responsible for strategic planning and decision making that will insure the long-term viability and future of the TSA. Abbreviated bios and photos of the Board are included here for your review; full bios will be posted on the TSA website soon.

This meeting marked the official beginning of the TSA as an independent conservation NGO rather than as a task force of the IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group. The TSA will continue their day-to-day operations through Standing Committees, which include all of the previous Steering Committee members:

- Field Conservation, chaired by Rick Hudson and managing our range country programs.
- Animal Management, chaired by Dwight Lawson and managing our captive breeding programs and records.
- Conference, chaired by Lonnie McCaskill and managing our annual conference
- Advisory Board: serving as a resource for the Board of Directors on various subjects related to turtle conservation and providing an ongoing dialog with related turtle conservation organizations and the private sector for purposes of coordination and integrative planning.. The Advisory committee will provide input on topics including taxonomy, range country programs, ex situ breeding projects, international trade, and field research priorities.

The new Board shares the vision of the TSA as the “Go To” organization for turtle and tortoise

conservation. As the year unfolds, we expect exciting developments, including major new fundraising, a new look for the TSA website, field blogs from some of our leading range country programs, and a major marketing initiative and membership drive.

One of the most exciting results of this first meeting was the decision to hire Heather Lowe as our full time Program Coordinator. Heather will be responsible for the TSA Membership Program, managing correspondence with members and donors, managing communications, coordinating registration, program publication, travel and catering arrangements for the Annual Meeting and accounting and grant management. Heather will be based at the Fort Worth Zoo, who will be supporting her office operations, and will be right across the hall from Rick. So those of you who are behind on your dues (or, like me, do not remember) can expect to hear from Heather soon!

Meet the new TSA Board

Rick Hudson (President)



Rick Hudson was a Curator in the Fort Worth Zoo's renown Department of Herpetology for twenty years, before moving to the zoo's Conservation & Science Department in 2000 as Conservation Biologist. Rick helped organize the IUCN Iguana Specialist Group, which he helped lead from 1997 – 2008, and developed the International Iguana Foundation. In 2001 Rick organized an IUCN Asian Turtle Workshop - Developing Conservation Strategies Through Captive Management - that led to the formation of the TSA as an IUCN partnership network for sustainable captive management of freshwater turtles and tortoises. Rick served as the co-chair of the TSA from 2001 to 2009 and under his leadership the TSA grew into an independent NGO that supports or manages turtle research and conservation programs in Madagascar, Brazil, Mexico and throughout Asia.

Dwight Lawson (Vice President)



Dwight Lawson holds a Ph.D. in Quantitative Biology from the University of Texas at Arlington and is the Sr. Vice President of Collections, Education and Conservation at Zoo Atlanta, overseeing the animal and plant collections as well as the zoo's education, research and conservation programs. He is also an Adjunct Professor of Biology at Georgia State University where he regularly teaches. Before joining Zoo Atlanta, Dr. Lawson worked as an Associate Research Scientist for The Wildlife Conservation Society where he directed a community-based wildlife conservation project in southwestern Cameroon, Africa. Dwight helped found the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) and served as co-chair of the TSA, President of the TSA Foundation and chair of the TSA's Animal Management Committee. Dwight is currently involved in revamping the TSA's Animal Management process and strategies.

Chuck Landrey (Secretary and Marketing Committee Chair)



Chuck Landrey is founder of the Turtle Conservation Project and the New England Turtle Atlas. He runs the Thai Turtle Trust, a conservation initiative of the food brand “A Taste of Thai.” Chuck is past Chair of NE-PARC’s Box Turtle Working Group and organized the 2008 Diamondback Terrapin Conference on Cape Cod. He is currently filming a documentary about New England’s turtles.

Walter Sedgwick (Treasurer and Development Committee Chair)



Walter C. Sedgwick has a long-standing interest in conservation and has served on the Boards of a diverse range of conservation NGO’s, including the National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy - Florida, Bat Conservation International, Island Conservation, the Pacific Forest Trust and the Wildlife Conservation Society, where he is Chair of the Program Committee. Because of his interests in turtles, he helped to found the Turtle Conservation Fund in 2002. Walter has been a driving force behind the TSA's strategic fund-raising efforts for many years, helping to get programs in India and Myanmar off the ground, and most recently championing the effort to bring the pair of Rafetus in China together for breeding.

Scott Davis (Executive Director)



Scott Davis holds a Ph.D. in Population Biology from Washington University. He was a Genetics professor at Texas A&M University and served two years as Chairman. His research program focused on the genetic analyses underlying the recovery programs for everything from Speke’s Gazelles to Galapagos tortoises, to the measurement of levels of variation at quantitative trait loci, to the positional cloning and identification of the genes responsible for quantitative variation. In 2000 Scott left the University environment to found Biotech startup companies. He retired in the fall of

2006 and lives with his two sons on a ranch in the Texas Hill Country where he focuses on the captive breeding of giant Asian softshell turtles in the genera Chitra and Pelochelys. In the fall of 2008, Scott left retirement to assume the position of Executive Director of the Turtle Survival Alliance.

Bill Holmstrom



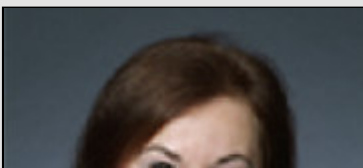
Bill Holmstrom started his career with the Department of Herpetology at the Wildlife Conservation Society’s (WCS) Bronx Zoo in 1976 and has served as the Department Collection Manager since 1988. He was appointed Species Coordinator and Studbook Keeper for the American Zoo and Aquarium Association’s Radiated Tortoise Species Survival Plan (SSP) in 1985, and became Studbook Keeper and Co-coordinator for the Burmese Star Tortoise SSP in 2006. Bill has served as an instructor in a number of WCS and TSA sponsored workshops in SE Asia, and he maintains and breeds a group of pancake tortoises for TSA at his home. Bill retired from WCS in March 2009.

John Iverson



John B. Iverson holds a PhD in Biology from the University of Florida and is Professor of Biology and Director of the Joseph Moore Museum of Natural History at Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. Because of his interests in the natural history, ecology, and evolution of iguanas and turtles, he is currently Deputy Chair (and founding member) of the IUCN/SSC Iguana Specialist Group, and on the Steering Committee (and founding member) of the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group. He has been on the Scientific Advisory Committee to the Turtle Survival Alliance since its inception in 2001. He has maintained long-term field research sites for rock iguanas in the Exumas in the Bahamas, and for turtles at the Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge in western Nebraska. His hobby is restoring a 76 acre woodlot (now in a Conservation Easement) to a mature hardwood forest.

Pat Koval (Governance Committee Chair)



Pat Koval is a partner of Torys LLP, a business law firm based in Toronto, Ontario and New York, New York. She practices in the area of corporate and commercial law, with primary emphasis on corporate finance, securities regulation and mergers and acquisitions. Among other things, Pat co-

founded and is co-chair of the firm's interdisciplinary Climate Change and Emissions Trading Practice Group. She is also a member of the Environmental Finance Advisory Committee and the Carbon Finance Advisory Committee of the Centre for Environment, at the University of Toronto. Pat has had a long history of involvement with, and support for, organizations and public interest groups dedicated to conservation and, in particular, to species preservation. She has been a member of the boards of directors of a number of small Canadian charitable organizations focused primarily on the conservation of African wildlife and endangered reptiles. She has served as a Director of World Wildlife Fund (Canada) for nine years and is currently the Chairman of the Board of WWF.

John Mitchell

- no Bio or photo currently available

Hugh Quinn



Hugh Quinn holds a PhD in Biology and has spent his career in zoos: as Supervisor of Education at the Fort Worth Zoo, Zoological Curator at the Oklahoma City Zoo, Curator of Herpetology at the Houston Zoo, Director at the Topeka Zoo, and finally as General Curator at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo (retired). Hugh currently resides in the Black Hills of South Dakota, and serves on the Board of Directors and Animal Management Committee of the Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA), on the Steering Committee of the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG), as Co-Chair of the Turtle Conservation Fund (TCF), and as Research Associate at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, South Dakota. He has been very active in the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles (SSAR), and served as president of that organization.

Anders Rhodin



Dr. Anders G.J. Rhodin, M.D., is Founder and Director of Chelonian Research Foundation (CRF), a private nonprofit organization focused on production, publication, and support of research and conservation efforts for turtles and tortoises. He is Chair of the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG) and a member of the Marine Turtle Specialist Group (MTSG). He is also Co-Chair of the Turtle Conservation Fund, a partnership-based strategizing and funding consortium supporting global turtle conservation efforts. Additionally, he is Editor of Chelonian Conservation and Biology and Chelonian Research Monographs, two peer-reviewed professional scientific journals published by CRF in association with the TFTSG and MTSG. He is also an orthopedic surgeon and maintains an active private medical practice.

David Shapiro



David Shapiro was born and raised in Chicago and graduated from University of Illinois, Urbana Champagne in 1996 with a Bachelors Degree in Speech Communications. He began working for his family's business - It's Academic - straight out of college. David lives in Hong Kong and acts as director for It's Academic international operations in Asia. The company manufactures school supplies in China and Vietnam which are sold throughout North America and Europe. He is working on a side project developing a line of plant characters for kids called "Sprouts." David cares for a Leopard Tortoise named Finn. He is passionate about turtle conservation and the role of TSA, and has been a generous supporter over the years.

Frank Slavens



Frank Slavens retired in 2001 as Curator of Reptiles from the Woodland Park Zoo (WPS) in Seattle WA where he worked for 30 years. While at the WPS, Frank produced numerous editions of his book Reptiles and Amphibians in Captivity, a series of annually produced inventories of the world's reptiles and amphibians in captive collections. Each volume represented almost 500 collections, both public and private, with contact phone numbers and addresses. Sections on longevity and breeding were invaluable tools for those interested in the captive breeding of reptiles and amphibians. In 1990 he started the Western Pond Turtle Head-start & Recovery program at WPZ in cooperation with the Washington Dept of Fish & Wildlife. The program eventually expanded to include the Oregon Zoo. The main turtle site is in the Columbia River Gorge area along the Washington/Oregon border. After retiring from the zoo, Frank and his wife

Kate moved down to the Gorge to continue their work with pond turtles. Frank and Kate have generously supported the TSA in recent years.

Bill Zeigler



F. William (Bill) Zeigler is President of Zeigler & Zeigler, Inc. a consulting firm for zoos, aquariums, and wildlife organizations. Bill began his zoological career at Crandon Park Zoo in Miami, Florida, then as General Curator for the Miami Metrozoo, He was awarded the AZA's prestigious Bean Award for his crocodylian breeding program and has four first breeding records for crocodylians in North America. Upon leaving the Miami

Metrozoo, Bill was Vice President of Animal Science for Ogden Entertainment of New York, where he developed the American Wildlife Experience, a series of facilities exhibiting North American wildlife. Although he is no longer in the zoological profession, Bill still lectures for the AZA's Crocodylian Biology and Captive Management course on exhibit design and husbandry. He is a member of IUCN/SSC Crocodylian Specialist Group and is currently the Development Coordinator for the Gharial Conservation Alliance. He is a member of the Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group and served on the TSA Steering Committee for five years where he was instrumental in leading their financial growth.

TSA Annual Conference in St Louis

A Call To Action

By: Chuck Schaffer and Andrew Walde

Session Chairs needed

Mark your calendars! We're going back to St. Louis which was arguably our best symposium yet, certainly the best attended. Something clicked in St. Louis and we hope to recapture that magic. The Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) and the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG) will be hosting their Seventh Annual Symposium on Conservation and Biology of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles on 5 - 8 August (Wed - Sat).

We'll have hands-on demonstrations and workshops, concurrent sessions including – hopefully - a full day captive husbandry symposium. To date the schedule looks like this:

- **Biology of the Chelonia** - Chuck Schaffer
- **Chelonian Conservation** - Chuck Schaffer & Elizabeth Walton
- **Enclosures A to Z** - Dave Manser, Greg George - demonstration
- **Graptemys** - Will Selman
- **The genus formerly known as Clemmys** - Andrew Walde, Ray Saumure, Jim Harding
- **Southwestern Kinosternids** - J. Daren Riedle
- **Mexican Chelonians** - Dick Vogt
- **Posters** - Elizabeth Walton

Although this is the 7th annual conference hosted by the TSA, and is the largest gathering of non-marine turtle biologists and captive breeding specialists in the world, we want to continue growing and better serving our diverse membership. We want to ensure that the program has something for everyone – academics, private breeders, zoo workers, and field biologists – and that everyone has time to interact. So we will pay special attention to ensuring lots of time for socializing.

So this is where we need input from you, the membership. *If you have a special area of interest, and have a group of likeminded friends, acquaintances, etc..., then share your knowledge and the spotlight in*

St. Louis.

Other sessions that would be especially welcome according to surveys and listserv activity would be **Aquatic Turtle and Tortoise Facilities**. This was a popular session last year and we want to expand in 2009 with a dedicated session for each. So please share your turtle and tortoise management techniques and show us your facilities!!

Call for Session Chairs

- If you have ideas for a stellar session, we are collecting ideas now. Please contact the program chairs for more information.

Call for Papers

- A wide variety of symposia are planned. Those interested in speaking or presenting a poster should contact **Program Co- Chairs, Chuck Schaffer** (Chelonian1@aol.com) and **Andrew Walde** (awalde@hotmail.com)

The **deadline** to submit proposals for presentations is **May 15th 2009**.

Please include:

1. title,
2. authors (indicate presenting author) with addresses,
3. brief abstract (not to exceed 250 words),
4. preference for Oral or Poster presentation, and
5. indicate if you are a Student (or within one year of finishing your studies).

- Student presentations are only eligible for awards if the student is sole or senior author.

Presenters will be notified of the status of their proposed presentation by June 30th 2009. Extended abstracts will be requested for publication in the conference proceedings later in the year. Presentations will be 15 minutes in length including introduction and questions. Microsoft PowerPoint is preferred, but presenters with slides will be accommodated.

This year's poster session will be coordinated by Beth Walton. Those interested in presenting a poster should contact her for details (walton.beth@yahoo.com).

Vendor booths are available and those interested in vendor space, or in sponsoring a particular event or speaker, should contact **Conference Chair Lonnie McCaskill** (Lonnie.McCaskill@disney.com) for more information.

The symposium venue is the Hilton St Louis at the Ballpark and the web page address for registration is:

<http://www.hilton.com/en/hi/groups/personalized/STLBVHF-TSA-20090802/index.jhtml>

We have negotiated \$95 room rates – breakfast included – and rooms are held for us until July 13.

Group Name: Turtle Survival Alliance
Group Code: TSA
Check-in: 02-AUG-2009
Check-out: 10-AUG-2009
Hotel Name: Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark
Hotel Address: 1 South Broadway
Saint Louis, Missouri 63102
Phone Number: 314-259-3316
Toll Free registration 877-845-7354

We will have conference registration set up on the TSA web site soon.

Animal Management

By: Brad Poynter and Sheena Koeth

A *Pyxis arachnoides brygooi* hatched on 22 March 2009, the third in two years. This subspecies was recently confirmed as the most threatened of the three spider tortoises, and has been heavily impacted by conversion of habitat for agriculture and over collection. Few viable wild populations remain making *brygooi* a high priority for coordinated captive management.



Left to right: 5days, 1 year, 2 years



5 day old hatchling

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