

Authorized Gopher Tortoise Agent Training Program

Course 2

Syllabus Provided to:

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 S. Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Syllabus Provided by:



**Environmental & Permitting
Services, Inc.**

1174 Camp Avenue Mount Dora, FL 32757

(352) 383-1444 (352) 383-3877 Fax

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Course Instructors:

Instruction conducted by professional staff certified by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) as Authorized Gopher Tortoise Agents.

Pre-requisite Materials:

LPG Environmental & Permitting Services, Inc. (LPGEPS) to provide a list of recommended materials to registered course participants. The list includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. (April 2008, Revised April 2009). Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines (*Gopherus polyphemus*). April 2008, Revised April 2009, from <http://myfwc.com/permits/Protected-Wildlife/permits.html#gophertortoise>.
- Cox, James, Douglas Inkley, and Randy Kautz. (December 1987). Ecology and Habitat Protection Needs of Gopher Tortoise Populations Found on Lands Slated for Large-Scale Development in Florida. Nongame Wildlife Program Technical Report No. 4.
- Updated studies and policies as appropriate/applicable.

The following details information to be provided during the Authorized Gopher Tortoise Agent Training Program. Information will be provided via PowerPoint presentations, handouts and field exercises. Hours required for each medium are detailed below.

COURSE 2** – 8.0 hours classroom, 16.0 hours field exercises and 8.0 hours practical exam (classroom & field components), total 32.0 hours- \$1,500/person (min. 10, max. 15) and 10% discount if advanced registration of 10 or more. (Prerequisite – Course 1 or documentation of similar experience)

- Relocation Methods and Procedures
- Bucket Trapping/Live Trapping/Hand Shovel Excavation Techniques & Protocol
- Mechanical Excavation of Gopher Tortoise Burrows
- Transport, Marking and Release Techniques & Protocol (Gopher Tortoise & Commensal Species)
- Recipient Site Selection and Habitat Management & Monitoring

**** This course will completely supplement the FWC Authorized Gopher Tortoise Agent experience requirement for Gopher Tortoise Capture using Bucket Trapping/Live Trapping/Hand Shovel Excavation and Transport/Marking and Release of Gopher Tortoises, and will supplement a portion of the requirements for Supervision of Gopher Tortoise Burrow Excavations Using Mechanical Equipment.**

Course Outline:

- I. Relocations (*16.0 hours field total*)
 - A. Methods
 - i. Mechanical Excavation
 - a) When/Why
 - b) How to Excavate
 - c) Use of Scoping
 - ii. Bucket Trapping, Live Trapping & Hand Excavation
 - B. Post-Extraction Considerations

- i. Visual Evaluation of Captured Tortoises
 - ii. Measuring and Marking of Captured Tortoises
 - iii. Storage/Transportation of Tortoises
 - iv. Protected Commensal and Other Species Capture/Considerations
 - v. Release Considerations
 - C. Reporting Requirements
- II. Post-Relocation Habitat Management of Recipient Sites
(8.0 hours of field exercises total)
 - A. Long-Term Protected Recipient Sites
 - i. Sites Suitability Assessment
 - B. Short-Term Protected or Unprotected Recipient Sites
 - i. Sites Suitability Assessment
 - C. All Recipient Sites
 - i. Vegetation Sampling to Determine Percent Cover in Recipient Site Assessment (ie, Vegetative Considerations)
 - ii. Record keeping
 - iii. Long-term Management and Monitoring
- III. Evaluation of Trainee
 - A. Written comprehensive exam to test competency of covered materials. (2.0 hours)
 - B. Field exam (6.0 hours)
 - C. Successful completion (80% or better competency level) of the above outlined course will result in the issuance of a certificate bearing the LPGEPS Logo and original signature by both trainers.