

## **Turtle Power! RBG releases rescued turtles back into native habitat**

**HAMILTON ON, September 4, 2019** – Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) staff will be releasing over a dozen snapping turtle hatchlings back into their natural environment, this Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 p.m. as part of RBG's ongoing turtle recovery plan. The hatchlings will be released near the Cootes Drive crossing of Spencer Creek.

These turtles' eggs were recovered from a project worksite just south of the release location at the edge of McMaster University and have been incubating at RBG Centre ever since in order to mitigate environmental and urban challenges.

In 2015, Royal Botanical Gardens launched a broad scale multi-faceted turtle population that includes focus on a variety of water quality and habitat recovery initiatives in Cootes Paradise and Grindstone Marsh, as well as mitigating road kills on the various roads built through the western end of Cootes Paradise Marsh. Partnership with multiple organizations and participation by the local citizens has been integral to the plan's success as turtle habitats range well beyond marsh boundaries.

Through partnerships with City of Hamilton and Hamilton Conservation Authority, approximately one kilometer of Cootes Drive now has small animal/turtle fence barrier, installed in stages over the past four years. This fence is successfully guiding small wildlife, including turtles, to roadway water underpasses as they go about annual migrations.

While substantial work remains to be done on these fronts, incredible progress has been made with no recorded turtle deaths within the barrier section in recent years. Dundas Turtle Watch volunteers as well as other local citizens have done a wonderful job in monitoring the roadway for spring and fall migrating turtles, as they continue with rescuing turtles before they find dangerous roadways.

**WHAT:** Turtle Hatchling Release  
**WHEN:** Thursday, September 5; approx. 2:30 p.m.  
**WHERE:** Spencer Creek, near Cootes Drive crossing

**For more information, please contact:**

Nick Kondrat  
Manager, Communications  
Royal Botanical Gardens  
(905) 527-1158 ext.223  
[nkondrat@rbg.ca](mailto:nkondrat@rbg.ca)