

# Midwest Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (MWPARC) Student Travel Grant Report 2024

**Awardee:** Grace Allen

**Professional association:** Missouri Western State University

**In one or two paragraphs, describe the work you participated in that was facilitated by this award.**

In the late spring to summer, I began my second year on the “Spatial Ecology of Blanding’s turtle, *Emydoidea blandingii* at Loess Bluffs National Wildlife Refuge” project. This research is vital due to Blanding’s turtles being state endangered, and currently in review for federal listing.

Our team was able to survey twice a week using radio telemetry to track the spatial ecology of Blanding’s turtles, where we would collect different types of data: weather, vegetation, and water data. We have begun developing custom-built GPS transmitters tailored for the use of Blanding’s turtles and are currently in the testing phase.



**How has this work aided you in achieving your career goals?**

The Blanding’s Turtle Project has been instrumental in my career goals as I look toward graduate school and potentially expanding the current research. I’ve had the opportunity to learn and build many skill sets including radio telemetry, navigation, data entry, and not getting stuck in the mud. I’ve connected with like-minded professionals and built foundational connections. I presented our current data at The Wildlife Society Annual Conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

**Image description:** Grace wears chest waders and holds a Blanding’s Turtle.