

Help Endangered Turtles in Our Schoolyard Habitat

*A proposal from Students at
Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology*



Did you know that a box turtle might pee on you if you pick it up? The students at Cora Kelly know about this anti-predator behavior, because we have turtles living in our outdoor learning area called the Habitat.



In the late 1990s, school construction created a courtyard space with gardens and a pond. Two turtles were also added to the Habitat, and they and their descendants are still living in our schoolyard today.

The turtles provide students with the opportunity to

observe animal adaptations and behaviors in real life. Students observe turtle life cycles and adaptations through the seasons. Students have learned the physical traits of male and female turtles, and they document the turtles on our Habitat website, www.corakellyhabitat.weebly.com.

Our Environmental Concern



We observe the turtles in the habitat and document their daily location so that we can learn more about their behaviors and how they adapt through the seasons. We named the largest and oldest male Tito and the oldest female Téa.



Téa



Tito

However, we have not seen Téa since the spring of 2019, and we believe that she has died. We have also not observed turtle hatchlings for the past two years. We are concerned that the turtle population in our Habitat will decrease without a female turtle. If the decreases continue in this manner, we won't have any turtles left.

Our Solution



We would like to introduce additional Eastern Box turtles to the Habitat, so that the turtle population continues to exist here. If chosen, we will use the award money to purchase two turtle hatchlings: a female and a male. We would also like to acquire four wildlife cameras so we can observe the turtles after school hours, at night and during school breaks and learn even more about them.

Impact on the Watershed

Our Habitat is just a small part of the watershed where we live, but it's a special learning place where we see environmental issues first hand. In

science, we have learned that if the population of a certain animal decreases too much, it can cause changes to the food chain and the overall food web. If turtles become extinct in our Habitat, we might have too many dead plants, bugs and slugs. And while there are not many predators of turtles in the Habitat that will be impacted if there are no turtles to eat, we are concerned that students will not be able to learn about turtles in real life if they are gone. This includes the turtles' habits and behaviors, and also their anatomy and physical traits. We would like future students at Cora Kelly to have the chance to learn about turtles in real life, just like we have loved learning in the Habitat.