

New grants to assist Black Rock Forest projects

By JASON KAPLAN

Grant proposals are being reviewed by a panel of college professors and winners, of up to \$6,000 in funding, will be announced in March.

Black Rock Forest Consortium has a new small grants program, which is named after its Board of Directors

co-chair, David Redden. Grants are being awarded for conservation-related science projects, which must be conducted at least in part in Black Rock Forest.

Research can be focused at any biological level -- genes, organisms, populations, communities, or ecosystems.

Redden has been chair of the Board of Directors for

over five years, is a past chairman of Scenic Hudson and the Hudson Highland Nature Museum, as well as a previous board member of the Hudson Highlands Land Trust. So naming the grant in his honor seemed like a no-brainer.

"He's such a remarkable man," said William Schuster,

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Black Rock Forest's executive director. "He's done so much good for our area and for the Hudson Valley, particularly in the area of conservation. He's such a delightful person to work with. For all those reasons, we're just honored and grateful he allowed us to name this fund in his honor."

The small grants program started last year and has served two functions. The first is to bring in important conservation speakers from around the country. The second is to fund science projects. Black Rock Forest previously had a small grants program, which ended about five years ago, and it was only open to college and graduate students. When it was reinstated, a committee voted to allow high school students to apply.

"Our consortium just naturally serves such a wide age group from elementary school kids up through college and graduate school," Schuster said. "It seemed to make sense to make the program as broad as possible. We've had a couple of high school students in the past few years do really good programs here, so we know that

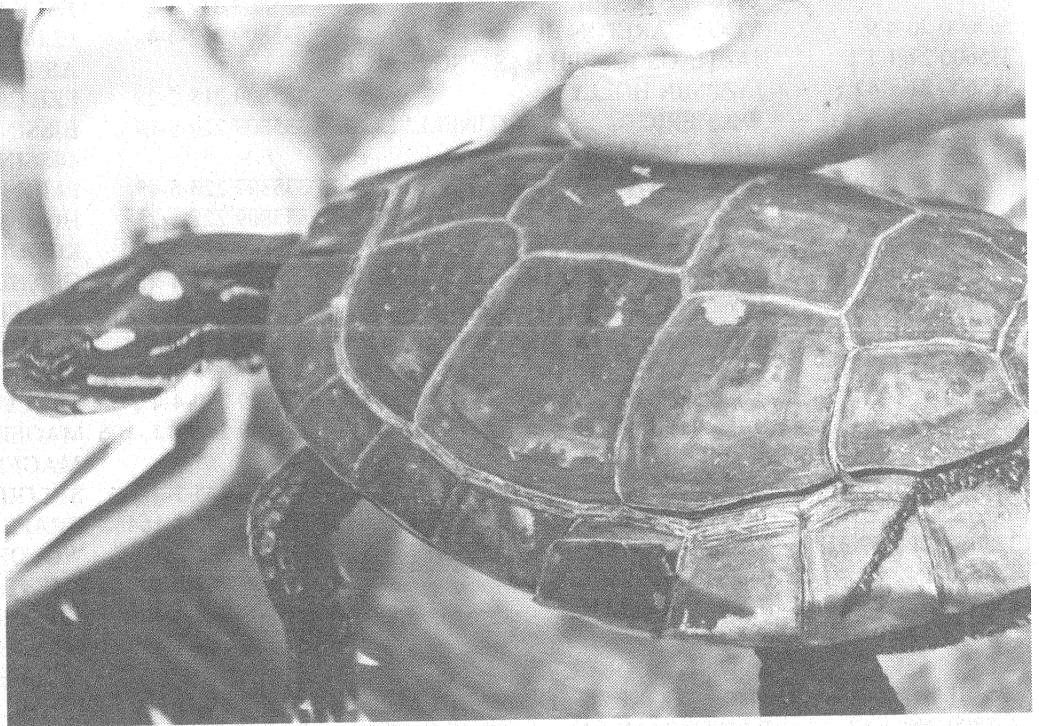


Photo contributed

A small grants program, offered through the Black Rock Forest Consortium, has been named after Board of Directors co-chair, David Redden. The grant will help fund projects, such as a turtle population study which started over 20 years ago.

there are young people out there with great ideas."

Over 20 years ago, a grant was awarded to start a long-term turtle population study. Turtles were captured, tagged with an electronic ID, and then released to live their lives. By tracking the turtles, it's possible to observe how fast they're growing, how old they are, and whether they've moved

from one pond to another. The study is still ongoing.

Another ongoing project is one started by Kevin Griffin, a professor at Columbia University. He was awarded a grant to study the effect of environmental variation on tree growth.

"I think it's very important to do long-term ecological research," Schuster said. "All

too often a grant or a project study will last a year or two. The world is complex, it changes over time. Only with really good long-term ecological studies can we develop enough understanding to predict what the future holds. It's really delightful some of these shorter term studies have endured now for decades."