**PROJECT MANAGER QUALIFICATIONS**

Dr. Seth Stapleton, Minnesota Zoo’s Field Conservation Supervisor, will serve as project manager for the proposed work. He has built a diverse professional portfolio in wildlife research and conservation over the past 19 years, with work spanning a variety of species and geographic regions. Stapleton has particular expertise with aquatic ecosystems. He has conducted research on native freshwater turtles in Minnesota for past 2 years and serves as project manager for ENRTF grants supporting the conservation of turtles and native mussels. Stapleton also has studied the critically endangered hawksbill sea turtle since 2004 and has served as the principal investigator and director of a monitoring program in the eastern Caribbean since 2009. Stapleton has a proven track-record of fund-raising and managing large budgets, obtaining more than $3 million to support his research, and he has been successful in initiating and expanding collaborative studies among government agencies, NGOs, academic institutions and community groups.

For the proposed project, Stapleton will oversee project planning, implementation, and coordination with project partners, provide scientific guidance for the research elements of this work, supervise Zoo staff implementing rearing activities and associated conservation programs, manage budgets, and prepare reports and resultant peer-reviewed publications.

**ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION:  Minnesota Zoological Garden**

The Minnesota Zoo is a unique state agency.  Established in 1978 to provide Minnesota residents and guests with an opportunity to experience animals from the exotic to the familiar in natural habitats, today the Zoo is one of the State’s premier cultural, educational and conservation institutions.

The Minnesota Zoo’s mission is ***to connect people, animals and the natural world to save wildlife.***  With 1.3 million guests a year, over 2.7 million website hits annually and state-wide outreach programs reaching thousands more, the Zoo is in an excellent position to strengthen Minnesotans’ awareness and understanding of our State’s commitment to wildlife, science and conservation.  The Zoo is the State’s largest environmental educator with more than 500,000 participants in Zoo education programs.

The Minnesota Zoo is also a leader in conservation – directing efforts and partnering with others on a variety of conservation programs at the Zoo, in Minnesota and across the globe.  Over the past seven years, the Zoo has enhanced its efforts to focus on Minnesota wildlife and habitats, including projects to conserve Minnesota’s native moose, bison, mussels, turtles, and prairie butterflies.  Advancing the science of wildlife conservation is an important part of the Zoo’s work, as evidenced by the Zoo’s research on wildlife behavior, ecology, genetics, disease, and conservation techniques.

The Zoo has a proven record of using its resources efficiently and effectively, ***matching*** the State’s investment with private funds and earned income.