Expeditions in remote and rugged areas are common to members of the Turtle Team, a group of Wildlife Volunteers who are eager to “stick out their necks” for special status cold blooded critters. The Western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) is our only native California turtle. They have been declining due to a number of stressors including habitat degradation and loss, spread of exotic competitors, non-native predators, and epidemic disease. Female turtles are particularly helpless when the ambition to nest overshadows the need for protection and they hazard onto land, exposing themselves and their ivory-colored eggs to a host of hungry predators. For these reasons, the Western pond turtle is listed as a California Species of Special Concern, meaning that increased management is necessary to keep them off the threatened or endangered lists.

The East Bay Regional Park District Stewardship Department, with the aid of the Regional Parks Foundation, is playing a leading role in wildlife conservation and research. We are embarking on a long-term effort to study, manage and implement habitat enhancement projects that will improve conditions for the Western pond turtle. There is a giant need for dedicated, passionate people to help these small creatures.

For information on how you can get involved call or email “Doc Quack” at (510-544-2319, docquack.ebparks.org) and check out a “Wildlife Volunteer webpage” at (http://www.ebparks.org/getinvolved/volunteer/quack).