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# Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

## News Release

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### **Tracking Toads at Klondike Gold Rush NHP**

Just like wolves in Yellowstone and grizzlies in Glacier National Park, this summer Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park is outfitting boreal toads with radio transmitters that allow biologists to follow the movements of these elusive amphibians. Local and regional declines of boreal toad populations prompted the initiation of the Klondike Gold Rush NHP Amphibian Monitoring Program in 2004 by former Natural Resources Program Manager, Meg Hahr. Until the 2012 season, efforts focused mainly on monitoring breeding success and testing for diseases. Very little is known about where toads go after they leave their breeding ponds. Unlike frogs, toads spend a majority of their time out of water in upland habitat.

Weighing less than 2 grams and attached by a specially designed plastic belt, each radio unit transmits a unique signal that can be located using radio telemetry. This radio tracking study will help researchers locate important habitat features such as hibernation sites, additional breeding ponds and migration corridors. Discovering where the toads spend the other 11 months of the year, away from the breeding ponds, is crucial in helping to conserve Skagway's small remaining boreal toad population.

Because of their unique life cycle between water and land, amphibians are very sensitive to environmental changes and pollution. Even in remote Southeast Alaska, amphibian deformities, diseases and significant population declines are being experienced. By monitoring the health of amphibian populations, larger environmental problems can be detected.

The public is encouraged to report amphibian observations to Jaime Welfelt at [Jaime\\_welfelt@nps.gov](mailto:Jaime_welfelt@nps.gov) or (907) 983-9240.



Tracker Device placed on toad by researcher. NPS Photo.

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