What Does a Terrapin Turtle Tracker Do?
#1. Look for signs of nesting activity

**Depredated Nests**
Unprotected nests are often destroyed by predators.

- Eaten by raccoon
- Eaten by fox

**Test Holes**
Terrapin females often try many spots before they find one that is just right.
#2. Search for Diamondback Turtles

They are often hard to spot when they are nesting.

- Turtles move more quickly than you’d expect.
- Observe from a distance
- In the brush, it is difficult to spot them nesting, so enter these areas very carefully
- If they are resting or have finished nesting, take a photo – without disturbing her
- Report the location using the turtle shaped numbers on the edge of the road or GPS

They are often seen crossing the road.
If a turtle is found, the team will:

- Measure with a caliper
- Weigh using a bag and scale
- Record measurements, location, markings, notches, tag number
- Shell marking (i.e., notches, patterns, peeling, scars)
- Various head patterns
If the turtle nests, the team will PROTECT the nest

- Remove layers of soil until eggs are found
- Check for roots and insects
- Place small cover over eggs
- Add another layer of soil and a 2' x 2' piece of netting and secure with tent stakes in corners
- Take nest temperature
- Cover to original level
- Record nest location using GPS photo and describe how to find it just in case GPS is not available.
The Nesting Process

Step #1: Usually looks around putting nose in the air and might throw some sand in the air

Step #2: If she likes the spot she'll turn around and start digging with her rear legs

Step #3: Once hole is deep enough, she makes a side chamber and starts laying the eggs

Step #4: When finished, she covers the nest so completely, you can't find it
Diamondback Terrapin Turtles come in all sizes

Full grown males are 1/3 the size of females

A hatchling, a one-year old and an adult