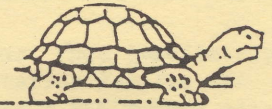


TORTOISE TRACKS



THE DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER
P.O. Box 453, Ridgecrest, CA 93556

FALL, 1989
Volume 10, No. 3

BIG TURNOUT NEEDED FOR HEARING ON ENDANGERED LISTING

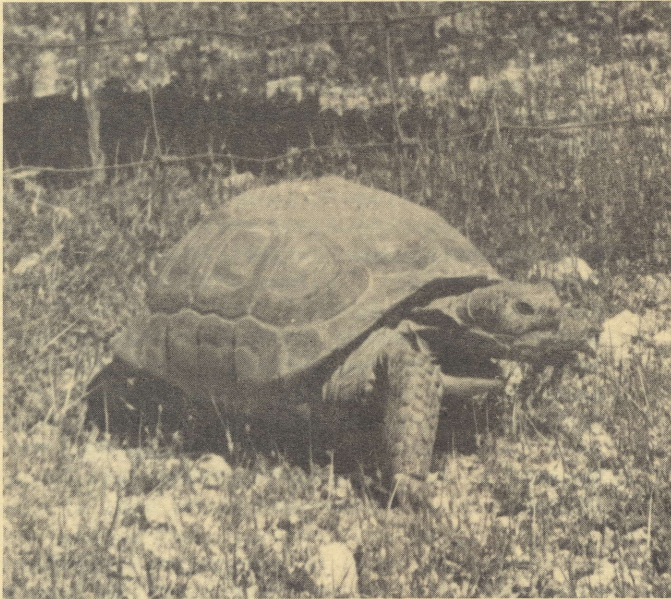


PHOTO by BEV STEVESON

Your presence and participation at an upcoming public hearing is vitally needed to show support for the proposed permanent federal listing of the desert tortoise as endangered. Held by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, this public hearing will be your best opportunity to express your concern for the

tortoise and urge the Department of Interior to enact its proposal to make the current emergency listing permanent, and expand it to cover the entire range of the desert tortoise (the emergency listing does not include the equally endangered tortoise populations in Arizona south of the Colorado River).

Hearings have been scheduled in St. George, Utah; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Riverside, California. Strong opposition to the permanent listing is expected and makes your participation all the more important. The Riverside hearing will be held on November 20, 1989 from 7 to 11 p.m. at the Rain Cross Convention Center located at 3443 Orange Street. For further information, call the Convention Center at (714) 787-7950.

A decision by the Department of Interior to omit the Arizona tortoise population from inclusion in the permanent endangered listing would be a travesty of the listing process. Political bias, not scientific evidence, would be the only basis for such a decision.

The Arizona population is more fragmented than the population now listed as endangered in California, and even before the disease problem emerged, it was recognized to be in more advanced decline than the California population. And now cases of the upper respiratory disease syndrome have been found in the wild tortoise populations in Arizona, as well.

Please express your support in the strongest terms, using personal experience where applicable, for permanent listing of the desert tortoise as endangered throughout its range, either in person at one of the hearings, or if you cannot attend, please write to:

The Honorable Manuel Lujan
Secretary
Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

and send a copy to:

Regional Director
Attention: Desert Tortoise
Listing Coordinator
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1002 N.E. Holladay Street
Portland, Oregon 97232-4181

EMERGENCY PROJECT APPEAL

FRONT LINE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN FOR DISEASE PREVENTION

The emergency endangered listing of the desert tortoise is one measure being taken to deal with the grave and advancing threats to tortoise survival. The Front Line Education Campaign for Disease Prevention, an emergency project of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, is also of critical importance to tortoise survival. We are making this urgent request to our members for your donations to allow us to start the project by December 1, and reach the most important targets of the campaign before tortoise emergence next spring.

Why should we have a Front Line Education Campaign for Disease Prevention? As you probably know, captive tortoises are often illegally released, spreading disease, as a result of improper advice from presumably knowledgeable sources. In the fight to prevent the further spread of disease among wild tortoises, one of the most important needs is to ensure that information provided to the public about tortoise care and handling is as accurate, useful, and consistent as possible.

The Front Line Education Campaign for Disease Prevention is a cooperative effort to educate public and private organizations and individuals about the proper procedure for handling unwanted captive tortoises. It will target the most commonly chosen sources of tortoise information, and expand from there. These will include city and county animal control departments and shelters, state and local law enforcement agencies, Fish and Game Department (DFG) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) staff, veterinarians, humane societies, museums, zoos, military base personnel, and others. The Committee is developing the education campaign together with DFG, BLM, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the California Turtle and Tortoise Club.

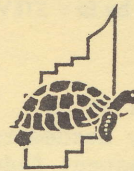
The information provided will include a description of the problem, assistance requested, and contact person for the project. Guides for the information providers, as well as handouts for visitors and clients, will be distributed. The handouts will identify the nearest CTTC chapter as the contact for those people seeking a new home for their tortoise.

Your special contribution will make possible the establishment of a full time person to make personal contacts, research and compile a mailing/phone list, prepare and distribute informational materials, and follow up contacts as needed. Project staff will have BLM

volunteer status, with access to office services for this project. Informational mailings will be sent out under official cover letters reviewed and signed by BLM, USFWS, and DFG representatives.

When we proposed this Front Line Education Campaign for Disease Prevention to the government agencies responsible for tortoise protection, they agreed it is vitally needed. Some are making budget requests to provide scarce matching funding. But future government funding is uncertain and, if approved, will not be available soon enough. Only the Committee is prepared to move forward immediately to fill this major gap in tortoise protection, and to do so we need your contributions now. Project costs may exceed \$30,000 over one year, in addition to any office support provided by government agencies.

While this project is a cooperative effort, with major contributions by the participating organizations, your support is essential to make it possible. Please fill out, detach, and send in the special form (next to the membership renewal), with your project donation today. With each contribution, we can reach many more of the people in the front line of tortoise protection with the information they need to help both wild and captive to survive. We need to be there in the front line by December 1 ... Please help now.



LIFELINE FUND REPORT

The past year or so has seen momentous developments and rapid change in tortoise conservation, both for good and ill. Leading the list of strong positive actions is the federal emergency endangered listing and the multi-million dollar critical tortoise habitat federal acquisition program, both long sought by the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee and its members. Whether these actions have come soon enough to save the tortoise in the wild, in the face of a devastating epidemic, raven predation, and continued destructive human activities, may depend on the resolve of all tortoise conservationists and desert lovers to hold government at every level to its commitment and legal responsibilities, while developing our own efforts to meet the changing situation.

With public and private habitat acquisition programs now proceeding as quickly as willing sellers can be identified (see article on Page No. 5), the Committee believes that new resources must be focused on disease prevention and education. Programs in these areas are always important for the long-term protection of the tortoise habitat we have worked so hard to

acquire and conserve, but both assume a new urgency in the fight against the spread of disease, the push for an effective raven control program, and the need to reach more of the people caring for captive tortoises.

The Committee's Tortoise Discovery Center project leads our expanding educational commitment. By the time you read this, the Discovery Center facility is being outfitted for its multi-purpose mission. Made possible by the extraordinary gift of Committee supporter Helen B. Drake, in memory of her husband Keith Drake, the Center will be staffed by an interpretive naturalist at the Desert Tortoise Natural Area during the spring, and serve as a mobile unit at other times, providing formal school programs and informal public education in outdoor settings. With your support and others', the Discovery Center will work year-round to reach new audiences with the desert tortoise story, told in many ways, leaving behind a new understanding of desert ecology, ways to help the tortoise, and a deeper commitment to desert conservation.

One of our educational goals is the prevention of needless further damage to the wild tortoise population through the release of captives, much of which is unwittingly caused out of ignorance, sometimes by the very officials responsible for wildlife. Our special appeal in this newsletter is for a new project which tackles this massive problem by concentrating resources on reaching key personnel who have wide contact with the public concerning tortoises. Nothing could be more basic to the improvement of tortoise welfare, both wild and captive. Please read more about it in the appeal and respond as generously as you can.

I am delighted to announce that the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee has been accepted as an Associate member of the Environmental Federation of California (EFC), an organization which serves as a "United Way" for over twenty national and state environmental groups in California. It is an important step in our effort to broaden support for the Committee's work. The EFC provides those who make donations through payroll deduction campaigns with the opportunity to contribute to a specific member organization or the EFC as a whole. In the past, such donors have not been able to contribute significantly to environmental protection, and the EFC's growth indicates it offers a much needed alternative.

As a member organization, the Committee will be responsible for making presentations to corporate and government employers who are not yet participants in the EFC campaign. You can help make our EFC membership a great success. Just let me know if you work for or have some other association with an employer who has a payroll-deduction fundraising campaign which does not yet include the EFC. That's all you

need to do. Then I can contact them immediately and arrange to make a presentation for the EFC campaign. Regardless of the outcome, it is also an excellent chance to spread the word about tortoise conservation. In addition to designated funds, the Committee will receive 100% of undesignated donations to the EFC from employers recruited by us.

Meanwhile, the Committee's land acquisition work continues, building on the accomplishments described elsewhere in this issue. By agreement with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), I have again provided their Natural Area land acquisition team of Rick Hewett and Bob Buell with a parcel master list for making landowner contacts. It provides complete information on dozens of targeted properties, compiled from the county assessor's records and other sources.

The Committee is also making its own direct purchases for the first time (excluding tax sales), coordinating our efforts with the Bureau of Land Management and TNC to expand the resources and personnel for acquisition, accelerating the process in important areas not previously targeted. We have just concluded our first negotiation successfully, and are in escrow for a forty acre parcel. We are following this with negotiations for nearly twenty small boundary parcels. Their location makes them much more important than their size would indicate, since their acquisition will lead to better management and protection of the entire Natural Area. Your support, together with corporate mitigation and state funds, makes this work possible.

I'll keep you posted on our progress.

Curtis Horton
Lifeline Fund Director
P.O. Box 70606
Pasadena, CA 91117
(818) 797-0739

OUR MEMBERS ARE SPECIAL PEOPLE

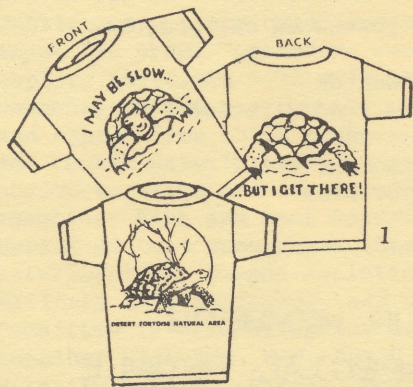
Your membership in the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee seems to become more important with each passing year. It is a reflection of your concern for the welfare of the tortoise, and it offers you one of the best means of staying informed during these crucial times. Dues, which are on a calendar year schedule, help to pay for your newsletter and administrative costs of running the organization. A membership form is included in this newsletter ... we're looking forward to hearing from you!

HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE PRODUCTS

| <p>T-SHIRTS</p> <p>100% POLYESTER-KOOL COTTON BLEND SCREENED DESIGNS</p> <p>#1. "I MAY BE SLOW... BUT I GET THERE" Design on front and back. One (1), yellow (Y), magenta (M) #2. "DESERT TORTOISE NATURAL AREA" In mint only, with multicolor design on front. CHILDREN'S SIZES S, M, L, \$6.00 MINT'S SIZES S, M, L, XL, \$8.00</p> <p>PATCHES / TIE TACS / PINS</p> <p>MULTI-COLOR TORTOISE DESIGN PATCH saw on patch 3 1/2 inch diameter \$2.85 each</p> <p>TIE TAC/PIN Enamel 3/4 inch diameter \$2.85 each</p> <p>WINDCHIMES</p> <p>CERAMIC, HANDMADE BROWN \$9.00</p> | <p>POSTCARDS & NOTE CARDS</p> <p>POSTER One Sheet Folk Art \$1.75 Desert Tortoise Natural Area, 1 Color Photo 17" x 26"</p> <p>NOTE CARDS (A) Tortoise & Hole 50c ea. or \$10.00 (B) Tortoise Photograph 75c ea. or \$15.00 (C) Scrambled Owl 25c ea. or \$5.00</p> <p>POSTCARDS (not shown) 10c ea. or \$1.00 Desert Animal & Plant Life, choice of 6 color photos</p> <p>BORDERED POSTCARDS (D & E) 25c ea. or \$5.00 Tortoise or Kid Faces (Faces not shown)</p> <p>PENDANT / BOLO</p> <p>HAND-MADE TORTOISE DESIGN</p> <p>CERAMIC & LEATHER BROWN \$2.70 each</p> | <p>ORDER FORM</p> <p>DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE, INC. P.O. BOX 453 RIDGECREST, CA 93556 (619) 377-4258</p> <p>T-SHIRTS</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Quantity</th> <th>Children's (C) or Adults (A)</th> <th>Size</th> <th>Color</th> <th>Charge</th> <th>Price</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>#1</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>(M) (Y)</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>#2</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>MINT ONLY</p> <p>POSTER AND NOTE CARDS</p> <p>POSTER One Sheet \$1.75 Folk Art \$1.75 Desert Tortoise Natural Area, 1 Color Photo 17" x 26"</p> <p>NOTE CARDS (A) Tortoise & Hole 50c ea. or \$10.00 (B) Tortoise Photograph 75c ea. or \$15.00 (C) Scrambled Owl 25c ea. or \$5.00</p> <p>POSTCARDS (not shown) 10c ea. or \$1.00 Desert Animal & Plant Life, choice of 6 color photos</p> <p>BORDERED POSTCARDS (D & E) 25c ea. or \$5.00 Tortoise or Kid Faces (Faces not shown)</p> <p>WINDCHIMES</p> <p>CERAMIC, HANDMADE BROWN \$9.00</p> <p>PENDANT / BOLO</p> <p>HAND-MADE TORTOISE DESIGN</p> <p>CERAMIC & LEATHER BROWN \$2.70 each</p> <p>MISCELLANEOUS</p> <p>PATCH TIE TAC/PIN BOLO PENDANT</p> <p>NAME _____ ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ PHONE _____ PRODUCTS ARE NOT TAX DEDUCTIBLE</p> | Quantity | Children's (C) or Adults (A) | Size | Color | Charge | Price | #1 | | | | (M) (Y) | | #2 | | | | | |
|---|---|--|----------|---------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|-------|----|--|--|--|---------|--|----|--|--|--|--|--|
| Quantity | Children's (C) or Adults (A) | Size | Color | Charge | Price | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| #1 | | | | (M) (Y) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| #2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

THINK TORTOISE while writing your holiday gift list. Take some stress out of your shopping and support the Committee at the same time...Our fundraising products are available by mail. See the enclosed brochure for a variety of items. Our elf is eagerly awaiting your order and will speed your packages on their way.



OR JUST FOR YOURSELF

This year we have two new colors in our T-shirt stock -- mint and magenta. Also available is a new tortoise post card with two tortoises -- an adult and a juvenile. Great for correspondence.

WHAT GOES UP
MUST COME DOWN

MASSIVE BALLOON RELEASES
ARE A POTENTIAL THREAT
TO TORTOISES
AND OTHER WILDLIFE

Betty Burge, biologist and desert tortoise specialist, writes from Las Vegas ...

During years of field work she has found numerous balloon remnants in the deserts of California, Nevada, and Arizona. Some are accompanied by the name and address of the school or library where released. Others may have been part of festive celebrations by businesses or organizations. The cards sometimes found with the balloons indicate that release sites were 100 to 200 miles from the collection site.

Balloon releases are not only a form of organized littering but may injure wildlife. For example, tortoises are potentially attracted to the colored rubber fragments which could cause obstruction if ingested. Tortoises do eat foreign objects ... Betty has found metal foil and glass chips in wild tortoise droppings.

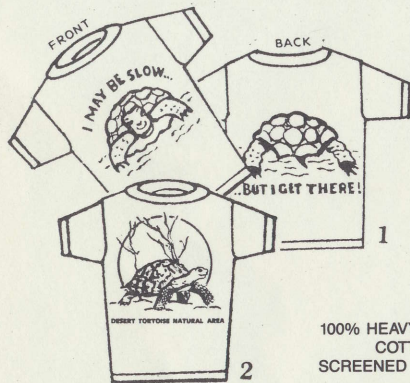
Consider the unlikely chance that a wild tortoise would become entangled in a rubber band caught in the mouth and around both forelegs, yet such was a case. Certainly the strings that become snagged among shrubs and are suspended a few inches from the ground between them are a more likely threat. In another instance, string caught around a tortoise's leg resulted in an eventual spontaneous amputation of the limb. Tortoises do not have the manipulative skills to free themselves by movements or nibbling, as rodents and rabbits might. Once caught, it would not be surprising if the tortoise were to become increasingly entangled. Birds may also be at risk.

By contacting teachers, various authorities, and organizations, and making them aware of the potential consequences of balloon releases, Betty's efforts to halt the releases are meeting with success.

*YET ANOTHER THREAT TO THE DESERT TORTOISE!
AND ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR EACH ONE OF US
TO BE INVOLVED...BY SPEAKING UP AND SHARING
BETTY'S MESSAGE WHEN WE HEAR OF BALLOON
RELEASES IN OUR OWN AREA.*

DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE PRODUCTS

T-SHIRTS



100% HEAVY-WEIGHT
COTTON SILK-
SCREENED DESIGNS

#1. "I MAY BE SLOW... BUT I GET THERE"

Design on front and back; blue (B), yellow (Y), magenta (M).

#2. "DESERT TORTOISE NATURAL AREA"

In mint only, with multicolor design on front.

CHILDREN'S SIZES S, M, L, \$6.60
ADULT'S SIZES S, M, L, XL, \$9.00

PATCHES / TIE TACS / PINS

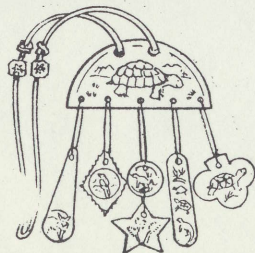
MULTI-COLOR TORTOISE DESIGN



PATCH
sew on patch
3 1/2 inch diameter
\$2.85 each

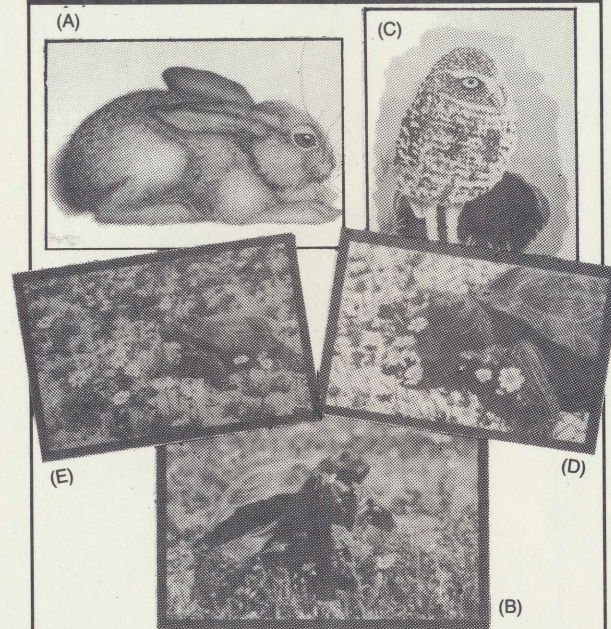
TIE TAC/PIN
Enamel
3/4 inch diameter
\$2.85 each

WINDCHIMES



CERAMIC,
HANDMADE
brown
\$9.00

POSTCARDS & NOTECARDS



POSTER (not shown) \$1.00
"Follow Me To... The Desert Tortoise Natural Area" Color Photo: 17" x 20"

NOTE CARDS: (A) Tortoise & Hare 60c ea. or 10/\$5.00
(B) Tortoise Photograph 75c ea. or 5/\$3.75
(C) Burrowing Owl 25c ea. or 10/\$2.00

POSTCARDS: (not shown) 15c ea. or 7/\$1.00
Desert Animal & Plant Life, choice of 6 color photos

BORDERED POSTCARDS: (D & E) 25c ea. or 5/\$1.00
Tortoise or Kit Foxes (Foxes not shown)

PENDANT / BOLO



HAND-MADE
TORTOISE DESIGN

CERAMIC &
LEATHER, brown
\$2.35 each

ORDER FORM

DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE, INC.
P.O. BOX 453 RIDGECREST, CA 93556
(619) 377-4258

T - SHIRTS

| Quantity | Children's (C) or Adults (A) | Size | Color Choice | | | Price |
|----------|---------------------------------|------|--------------|-----|-----|-------|
| | | | (B) | (Y) | (M) | |
| #1 | | | | | | |
| #2 | | | MINT ONLY | | | |

POSTER AND NOTE CARDS

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| POSTER | |
| NOTE CARD(S), Tortoise and Hare | (A) |
| NOTE CARD(S), Tortoise Photo | (B) |
| NOTE CARD(S), Owl | (C) |

POSTCARDS

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| POSTCARD, Burrowing Owls | |
| POSTCARD, Zebra-Tailed Lizard | |
| POSTCARD, Horned Lizard | |
| POSTCARD, Mohave Ground Squirrel | |
| POSTCARD, Pack Rat | |
| POSTCARD, Thistle Sage Flower | |

BORDERED POSTCARDS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----|
| POSTCARD, Tortoise, front view | (D) |
| POSTCARD, Tortoise large, side view | (E) |
| POSTCARD, Kit Foxes | |

WINDCHIMES

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| TORTOISE DESIGN, Brown | |
|------------------------|--|

MISCELLANEOUS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| PATCH | |
| TIE TAC/PIN | |
| BOLO | |
| PENDANT | |
| Total Amount | |
| California Residents add 6% Sales Tax | |
| Add 20% for Postage and Handling Fee | |
| TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED | |

PLEASE PRINT

| | | |
|---------|------------------------------------|-----|
| NAME | | |
| ADDRESS | | |
| CITY | STATE | ZIP |
| PHONE | PRODUCTS ARE NOT TAX-DEDUCTIBLE | |

DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE, INC.

P.O. BOX 453
RIDGECREST, CALIF. 93555

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL

Name _____ Date _____
(Please Print)

Address _____ Phone _____
(Street or P.O. Box)

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ New () Renewal ()

I (we) hereby apply for the following membership:

- GENERAL: () Individual Membership \$15.00 annually
 () Family Membership \$20.00 annually
 () Sponsor Membership \$30.00 annually
 () Benefactor Membership \$75.00 annually
 () Patron Membership \$100.00 annually

ORGANIZATION: () Organizations may join by paying the annual dues of any one of the above categories of General Membership.

ACTIVE: () Available to individuals who are willing to perform essential services in the furtherance of Committee objectives, such as by holding a chairmanship or a Board of Trustees position. Application for Active Membership must be made in writing and requires approval by the Board of Trustees.

ADDITIONAL DONATION OR DONATION ONLY

DONATION: () Enclosed is a tax-deductible donation of \$ _____.

FRONT LINE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN FOR DISEASE PREVENTION CONTRIBUTION FORM

Please find enclosed my special contribution for the Front Line Education Campaign for Disease Prevention:

() \$15 () \$25 () \$50 () \$100 () Other \$ _____

I understand my contribution is tax-deductible.

Name _____ Date _____
(Please Print)

Address _____ Phone _____
(Street or P.O. Box)

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

(Please make check payable to the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc., and mail to P.O. Box 453, Ridgecrest, CA 93556)

Thank You!

QUARANTINE CLOSES DESERT TORTOISE NATURAL AREA

Moving to respond to calls for further action to protect the desert tortoise in the face of the spreading disease epidemic and other threats, the U. S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced on September 12 that part of the Rand Plan critical tortoise habitat area would be quarantined for up to one year, beginning October 1. Public land in the quarantined area, which includes the Desert Tortoise Natural Area and an additional 12,700 acres adjoining it to the northeast, will be closed to public entrance without special permission from BLM.

"We are facing drastic declines in desert tortoise populations in this critical habitat area," explained BLM California Desert District Manager Gerald Hillier. "There are some indications that current activities within the area may be raising the level of stress in the tortoises, thus making them more susceptible to disease. Since there are so many unknowns right now regarding the upper respiratory disease syndrome, we are taking this unusual action on a temporary basis while we seek additional answers."

The quarantine was first proposed by the Rand Mountain/Fremont Valley Technical Review Team, whose members include Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee Trustee George Moncsko. By a unanimous vote of those present, including the off-road vehicle user representative, the Review Team recommended closure of the entire Rand management area, totalling about 65,700 acres. However, the partial quarantine put into effect by BLM leaves 28,000 acres of that area open to continued sheep grazing under previously established forage requirements. A small group of local woolgrowers has pressed BLM to keep this important tortoise habitat open to grazing.

"We reduced the area quarantined to allow a gradation from moderate use to no use. This will allow us to gather additional information about the potential impacts of various uses on tortoises. Since the disease appears to be spreading rapidly in the Desert Tortoise Natural Area, which has very little use, the stress experienced by these animals may be caused as much by the current 3-year drought as by other factors. Research and monitoring data collected across the Western Mojave should give us a clearer picture of impacts on the desert tortoise," Hillier stated.

*THE ACTION TAKEN IS A BUREAU DECISION
AND DOES NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE
COMMITTEE'S POSITION.*

Visitor use of the Natural Area, including its Interpretive Center, will not be allowed during the quarantine period. Activities sponsored by the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee at the Natural Area, including guided tours and work parties, may need to be modified to meet the new restrictions, or perhaps be cancelled. BLM policy is still being developed in this regard, and the next issue of Tortoise Tracks will report how the quarantine affects Committee activities you may be planning to participate in.

ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting and Banquet of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee is scheduled for January 20, 1990. Complete details and a reservation form will be included in the next issue of Tortoise Tracks.

LAND ACQUISITION IN THE DESERT TORTOISE NATURAL AREA

HISTORY AND PROGRESS TO SEPTEMBER 1989

Since 1976 the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee (DTPC) has been raising money from our membership, corporations, and the public at large for the purpose of buying the private lands inside the Desert Tortoise Natural Area (DTNA). Progress towards that goal has been substantial and this article is intended to bring our membership up to date on the present status of the land acquisitions.

In 1976 the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) increased the Natural Area to its present size of 39.5 sections, or square miles, that is some 25,290 acres, in response to strong public support. Of that, 8,860 acres were in private ownership. In that same year the DTPC associated itself with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) as a project committee to join forces in land acquisition. The DTPC took the lead in raising funds for land acquisition, and approximately \$250,000 was raised over the years for this. The TNC in turn provided the project their expertise in negotiation and purchase of the properties from the landowners and in holding the properties. The long term objective

is to sell or exchange these properties to a public agency, such as BLM, for long term preservation and management as desert tortoise habitat. If the lands are exchanged, the exchanged properties we receive will be sold and the money used for purchase of additional private lands in the Natural Area. If our property in the Natural Area is sold to a public agency, the money we receive will also be used to acquire additional private lands. Through this turnover of properties we will achieve the goal of acquiring all the remaining private lands in the Natural Area the fastest way possible.

There were early successes in acquiring private lands. In 1977 TNC acquired 160 acres in Section 36 (see the accompanying map for locations) and in the following year bought another 1280 acres from the Southern Pacific Company in Sections 25 and 35. Through a land exchange in 1980 the BLM acquired 1580 acres in Sections 15, 17, and 29. In 1981 TNC purchased another 40 acres in Sections 15 and 33. After that things slowed down quite a bit. We were not able to raise sufficient funds to maintain the earlier pace and the BLM was also unable to initiate further land exchanges. In 1984 TNC purchased 60 acres in Sections 15 and 27 and bought another 10 acres in Section 33 the following year. Also in 1984 the DTPC bought three 2.5 acre parcels in Section 5 (south end of DTNA) at a Kern County tax sale. The following table summarizes these land acquisitions along with those described further in this article.

Summary of Private Lands Acquired To Protect Desert Tortoise Habitat In The Desert Tortoise Natural Area

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Acres</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Acres</u> |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1977 | 160 | 1985 | 10 |
| 1978 | 1,280 | 1986 | 978 |
| 1980 | 1,580 | 1987 | 20 |
| 1981 | 40 | 1988 | 534 |
| 1984 | 68 | 1989 | 462 |

Total Lands Acquired: 5,132 Acres

After experiencing the slow acquisition pace of the early 80's, we realized that it would take an unacceptably long time to complete purchase of the in-holdings. In an executive level meeting with TNC, we agreed to renew our collective efforts at fund raising to regain the momentum of the earlier years. We had a big success in 1986 when the DTPC joined with TNC and the Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) to buy 948 acres in Sections 17, 18, and 23, the largest holding in single ownership. All the remaining parcels are much smaller. Also in 1986 we received two land gifts, a 10 acre parcel in Section 11, and a 20 acre parcel in Section 27. In a 1987 tax sale the DTPC bought another 20 acres in Section 36.

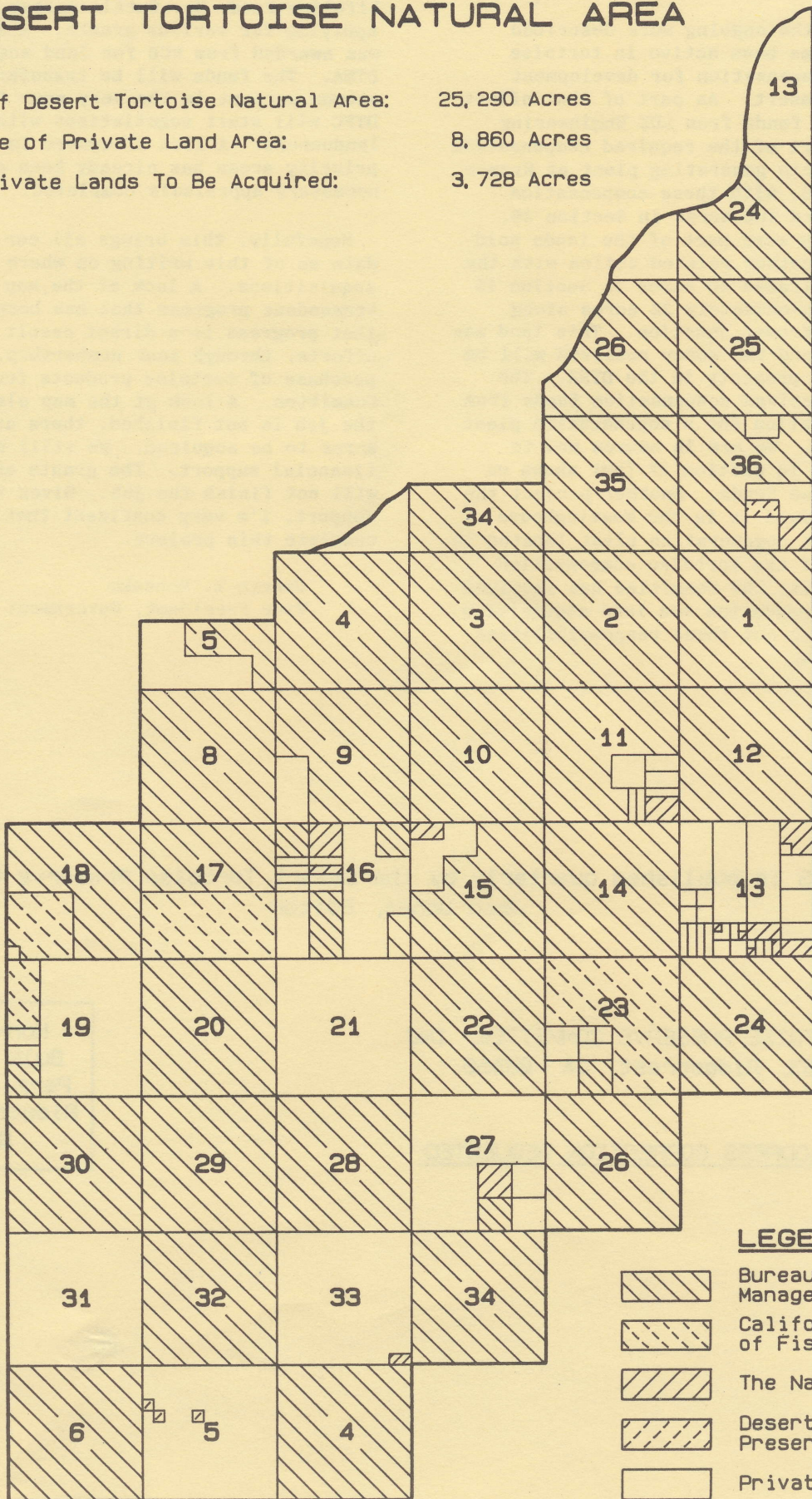
Good fortune continued to smile on the project. In 1987 a coalition of conservation organizations, including the Defenders of Wildlife, petitioned Congress for a Land and Water Conservation Fund appropriation for the BLM in fiscal year (FY) 1988. As you remember we had special mailings urging our membership to write letters to Congress supporting the request. Your efforts paid off when Congress appropriated \$600,000, of which \$500,000 was earmarked for the DTNA and the remainder went to the Chuckwalla Bench Area of Critical Environmental Concern. In FY89 through all the conservationists' efforts, Congress appropriated another \$2.3M for the two areas and the final funding request for FY90 is \$1.9M for tortoise habitat acquisition.

These Congressional funds are for a program of purchasing land from willing sellers. There is no condemnation of property. To carry out their program the BLM added realty experts to two offices and formed a coordinating group of all parties involved. This group, which is chaired by the BLM, consists of representatives from the Kern County Planning Department, California Department of Fish and Game, DTPC, and TNC. The intent is to coordinate our efforts, to avoid duplication, and to present a consistent picture to the landowners. To accomplish this goal, the project was divided into portions. The BLM took the lead on acquiring land parcels 40 acres in size and larger, while TNC and DTPC will concentrate on parcels 40 acres and smaller. The group felt this approach would make the best use of each organization's assets, and it is working out well.


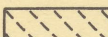
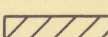
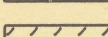
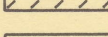
As was expected, it has taken some time for the BLM to acquire staff, prepare all the property owner data, prepare land appraisals, and contact the owners. They have made progress and in 1988 acquired 1560 acres from TNC in Sections 25, 35, and 36. TNC is using the money received from BLM to buy more land in the DTNA. The BLM also acquired 260 acres in Sections 11, 16, 23, and 36. In 1989 the BLM has so far acquired 117 acres in Sections 16, 19, and 27. In addition the BLM has found that many owners are not willing to sell their land. However some want to exchange their property for equal value land outside the DTNA. To meet this need, the BLM is starting a land exchange program, which is likely to show results in the coming year. The DTPC and TNC have continued to acquire the smaller parcels per our agreement. In 1988 TNC bought 40 acres in Section 16 and 74 acres in Section 19. As of September 1989, TNC has bought 80 acres of land in Sections 11, 13, and 16. In addition at a recent tax sale TNC was successful in bidding on 27 of 29 parcels offered, totaling 225 acres in many sections (not yet shown on the map).

THE DESERT TORTOISE NATURAL AREA

Total Size of Desert Tortoise Natural Area: 25,290 Acres
 Original Size of Private Land Area: 8,860 Acres
 Remaining Private Lands To Be Acquired: 3,728 Acres



LEGEND

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  California Department of Fish and Game
-  The Nature Conservancy
-  Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee
-  Private

Land Acquisition, cont.

In addition to the ongoing work described above, the DTPC has been active in tortoise mitigation and compensation for development projects in the desert. As part of that effort, the DTPC received funds from LUZ Engineering Corporation as part of the required compensation for a solar electric generating plant at Kramer Junction. In 1988, with those compensation funds TNC purchased 160 acres in Section 36, which subsequently were part of the lands sold to the BLM. In another related action with the LUZ project, TNC traded 40 acres in Section 15 to the BLM for approximately 22 acres along Highway 395 near Kramer Junction. This land was then sold to LUZ and the money received will be spent to buy more property in the DTNA. The Committee also received compensation funds from Kerr-McGee Corporation for a cogeneration plant in Searles Valley. We are in escrow now to purchase 40 acres in Section 27 (not shown on the map) with these funds. Another project the Committee is involved in is the Westinghouse Corporation Mojave cogeneration plant located in Boron. As part of the tortoise compensation requirements for it, the Committee has received funds for public education and land acquisition. We will be carrying out those responsibilities in the near future.

There is one further area where the DTPC has increased its role. As part of the DTPC Lifeline Fund, Mr. Curtis Horton has been applying for various grants. A \$100,000 grant was awarded from WCB for land acquisition in the DTNA. The funds will be transferred to an escrow account in the very near future and the DTPC will start negotiations with the landowners. A list of owners in the targeted priority areas has already been compiled and the necessary appraisals completed.

Hopefully, this brings all our members up to date as of this writing on where we stand in acquisitions. A look at the map shows the tremendous progress that has been made. Much of that progress is a direct result of your efforts, through your membership, donations, and purchase of tortoise products from the Committee. A look at the map also reveals that the job is not finished, there are still 3,728 acres to be acquired. We still need your financial support. The grants and BLM money will not finish the job. Given the past support, I'm very confident that we will complete this project.

George E. Moncsko
Vice President, Government Affairs

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