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# Tortoise Tracks

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The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Winter 2005 25:4

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Last Rays Of Summer...  
Young adult male Desert Tortoise spreads his  
limbs to take full advantage of the late fall sun.  
Desert Tortoise Natural Area, October 21,  
2005.

Photograph by Michael J. Connor



Dr. Bob Murphy

Dr. Murphy, seen here on a field trip to the  
Sonoran Desert, will talk on "*Conservation and  
the genetics of the desert tortoise: Do they  
combine, or recombine?*" at the DTPC's Annual  
Banquet.

## DR. BOB MURPHY TO BE THE FEATURED SPEAKER AT THE DTPC'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING & BANQUET

The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee's Annual Meeting and Banquet will be held Saturday, January 28, 2006 at the Ramada Inn, 300 West Palmdale Boulevard, Palmdale, California.

The afternoon Annual General Meeting will begin at 2 p.m. and will feature reviews of the Committee's ongoing programs and activities by board members and staff, and plans for 2006.

The evening activities will begin with a "no host" social hour at 5 p.m. followed by the Banquet. Banquet activities will include award presentations

and what should be a fascinating and exciting talk on Desert Tortoise genetics and conservation given by Dr. Bob Murphy. Bob will be flying in from Ontario Canada where he is Senior Curator, Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, Royal Ontario Museum.

Dr. Murphy will be reviewing his recent and ongoing work on the genetics of the Desert Tortoise. His studies encompass both a population wide and local approaches. A brief biography is given below. His recent abstracts of presentations at the 2005

Desert Tortoise Council Symposium “**Who’s Your Daddy, Little Tortoise?**” and “**Progress in Defining the Desert Tortoise, *Gopherus agassizii***” are available on the Council’s Website.

A reservation form for the Annual Meeting and Banquet is included with this newsletter and is also available on the DTPC Website at <http://www.tortoise-tracks.org>.

## Dr. Robert Murphy

Senior Curator, Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, Royal Ontario Museum

### Biography

Dr. Murphy is Senior Curator for the Centre for Biodiversity and Conservation Biology in the Department of Natural History at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) and Professor of Zoology at the University of Toronto. He received a Ph.D. (1982) in biology from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Dr. Murphy’s early work concentrated on the evolutionary genetics of reptiles from Baja California, Mexico. His was the first study to examine the genetic consequences of plate tectonics.

Dr. Bob, as he prefers to be addressed formally, undertook postdoctoral studies at UCLA Medical School in flow cytometry and the diagnosis of forms of cancer, as well as the conservation genetics of fishes. He has worked at the ROM since 1984. His interests concentrate on the development of molecular technologies for documenting genetic diversity, conservation genetics, and the genealogical relationships of species. He has collected amphibians and reptiles in diverse foreign places such as Australia, Mexico, Russia, the Republic of Georgia, Armenia, China, and Vietnam, building up the worlds largest collection of tissue samples for genetic research. Dr. Bob initiated the ROM’s involvement and commitment to working on the biodiversity crisis in Vietnam which has resulted in significant national and international exposure for the ROM, Ontario, and Canada alike including both printed and audiovisual media features.

Dr. Bob’s involvement with the genetics of desert tortoises started about 10 years ago in association with Dr. David Morafka. Bob is the author of more than 150 academic research papers, and the ROM’s most frequently cited life scientist as listed in Science Citation Index. He is committed to the ROM’s display of living organisms discovered by ROM researchers, and to their conservation through research, education and captive propagation.

Dr. Bob lives with his wife Chunmei, a Senior Telecommunications Analyst at the Bank of Montreal, and their children Julie and Michael in Toronto.

### RECENT SUPPORTERS & LIFE MEMBERS

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<http://www.tortoise-tracks.org>

### The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc. Founded 1974

Executive Director  
**Michael J. Connor, Ph.D.**

#### Board of Trustees

President	<b>Mark Hagan</b>
Vice President	<b>Stephanie Pappas</b>
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## **DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE**

### **MEMBERSHIP/DONOR FORM**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Individual membership \$ 15 annually [ ]
- Family membership \$ 20 annually [ ]
- Sponsor membership \$ 30 annually [ ]
- Benefactor membership \$ 75 annually [ ]
- Patron membership \$100 annually [ ]
- Life \$500 [ ]

Membership Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Additional Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**DONATION ONLY**  
 Enclosed is my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to **DTPC** and mail to:  
**DTPC**  
 4067 Mission Inn Avenue  
 Riverside, CA 92501

The DTPC is an IRS recognized tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation. All contributions above the basic \$15 annual membership dues are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

All contributors receive the quarterly newsletter *Tortoise Tracks*.

Membership and donor information are kept confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties.

**I WANT TO VOLUNTEER**

My area of interest/expertise is:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

My e-mail address is:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## **FALL WORK PARTY**



The DTPC's Fall Work Party was the first weekend in November. It was Indian Summer in the Mojave Desert and a glorious weekend for the 14 attendees who contributed over 224 hours of their time to help at the DTNA and at the Pilot Knob grazing allotment.

Tasks accomplished at the DTNA included re-erecting three signs at the DTNA entrance that had been uprooted and vandalized the previous week, trash pick up, and fence maintenance. As can be seen in the accompanying photographs, the signs at the DTNA entrance are heavy duty signs placed some distance apart. The damage that was done to them was clearly a deliberate act of vandalism and not accidental. DTPC is working with the BLM to reduce future incidents of vandalism.

Tasks accomplished at Pilot Knob included clean up of the cabin site, removal of nonnative trees, clean up of the windmill site, and rocking in trails. The Blackwater Well windmill was stolen this summer, necessitating the site clean up.

### **Spring Work Party April 1-2, 2006**

If you are interested in joining the work party on one or both days, please register by calling Michael Connor at (951) 683-3872 or sending an e-mail to <dtpc@pacbell.net>.

Visit: the DTPC Website for more information:  
<http://www.tortoise-tracks.org>

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# Tortoise Tracks

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THE DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE  
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Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee's  
Spring Work Party  
April 1-2, 2006

Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee's  
Annual general Meeting & Banquet  
January 28, 2006

DTPC CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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