



Tortoise Tracks



The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Spring 2012 32:1

THE 37TH ANNUAL DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE BANQUET

Article Written by Mark Bratton
Pictures by Marlene Ishii



On January 28, 2012 the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee hosted their Annual Meeting and Banquet held at the Palmdale Hotel in Palmdale, California.

The annual meeting included presentations by several agencies including USGS, Joshua Tree National Park, Living Desert/Desert Managers Group, the Bureau of Land Management (California Desert District, Needles Field Office, and the Ridgecrest Field Office). The DTPC presented the Treasurer's Report and donations by the Board of Trustees Treasurer, Laura Stockton; an overview of recent land acquisition and mitigation by Jun Lee with Lee Law Firm; and the Year in Review by Mary Kotschwar, the DTPC's Preserve Manager & Conservation Coordinator.

This year's Annual Banquet was different than the prior years by including two presentations. The first presentation was given by **Dr. Kristin Berry** with the United States Geological Survey on Solving Mysteries to Name the New Desert Tortoise. The talk centered on new genetic data indicating that the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) is actually two different species. The new desert tortoise species is named *Gopherus morafkai* and is primarily located east of the Colorado River in Arizona and into Mexico (a video of Dr. Berry's presentation can be found on DTPC's Facebook page www.facebook.com/DTPC.inc).

The second presentation was by **Freya Reder**, DTPC's 2011 Naturalist and **Mary Kotschwar**, the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee Preserve Manager. Their presentation focused on Freya's observations over the 2011 Naturalist Season. Freya shared some of her excellent photos of the elusive Mohave ground squirrel (a video of Freya and Mary's presentation can be found on DTPC's Facebook page www.facebook.com/DTPC.inc).

Prior to the talks on the new Desert Tortoise species and the Mohave ground squirrel, the annual awards were presented. **Inga Swearingen**, a graduate student with Green Mountain College, was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for her work on the 2011 Naturalist Report and the development of educational materials for the Responsible Recreation Education Program. **Chuck Hemingway**, a longtime volunteer for the DTPC, was awarded a special book on cactus for his ongoing support of patrolling and maintaining the area on and around the DTRNA. Chuck also provides support to researchers, naturalists and the Preserve Manager at the DTRNA.



Mary Shepherd, another DTPC volunteer, received a large photo plaque of an adult tortoise for her support at the first work parties, editing earlier editions of the DTPC's

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Newsletter, *Tortoise Tracks*, and fundraising. Mary's recent contribution was creating, donating and selling Geocaching Path Tags for the DTPC (you can purchase these Path Tags at the DTPC's website, www.tortoise-tracks.org, under *DTPC Merchandise*). **Glen Baumbach**, an Advanced Placement Environmental Science teacher at Lancaster High School, received a small photo plaque of a juvenile tortoise for his involvement at DTPC's Work Parties over several years. Glen has coordinated and supervised his AP Environmental Science students while participating at Spring and Fall work parties at the DTRNA (Lancaster High School students and Glen Baumbach's involvement at the Fall Work Party was highlighted in *Tortoise Tracks* Winter 2011 Edition located at <http://www.tortoise-tracks.org/ttwinter2011.pdf>).



Denise LaBerteaux and Bruce Garlinger was awarded a large photo plaque of the Mohave ground squirrel for their ongoing support in weed management and financial contributions. Their most recent contribution was Denise's discovery of the Barstow Woolly Sunflower at the DTRNA (Denise's discovery is featured

in the article "A Small but Significant Find" in the Summer 2011 edition of *Tortoise Tracks* at <http://www.tortoise-tracks.org/ttsummer2011.pdf>).



Laura Mogg and Charlie Massieon received a large photo plaque of an adult tortoise for their support of the Preserve Manager, Naturalist, and other volunteers at the DTRNA. Laura and Charlie also volunteer at DTPC work parties and revegetation projects. Finally, **Terry Springfield** received a large photo plaque of an adult tortoise for his assistance to Jun Lee of Lee Law Firm with complicated land acquisition efforts for the DTPC for over 20 years.

Throughout the evening, banquet attendees participated in a raffle which included several beautiful donations from the DTPC members.

The DTPC would like to thank all of its Members and Volunteers for their hard work and support. If you are interested in becoming a DTPC Member, volunteering your time, or making a donation, please visit the DTPC's website (www.tortoise-tracks.org) for more information.



Farewell to a Friend

Article by Laura Stockton



Longtime educator and DTPC supporter, **Dr. Alan Lee Baldwin**, died Dec. 24, 2011 at the age of 86. An Illinois native, he graduated from Stanford University in 1946 with a BA in Social Science and a Doctorate in Law in 1950. Alan obtained his teaching credential at San Jose State College and an MS in Science Education at Ohio State University.

Alan was drafted in 1942 and served in the U.S. Army until 1946. During his service he remained in the U.S. as a student in engineering, pre-medicine and finally in medical school. He served as a medical corpsman at Walter Reed Hospital.

When discharged from the Army, Alan returned to Stanford University to complete his degrees. He obtained a Law Degree to complete his goal to hold a political office and advocating for a responsible government. Alan also received a teaching credential for pursuing his career as a teacher.

Two unsuccessful campaigns for the California State Assembly convinced him that he could make a greater contribution in education. After student teaching at McKinley Intermediate School in Redwood City, CA, Alan joined the staff at McKinley School and remained with that school district for 42 years before retiring.

Alan was concerned with the lack of science education at the junior high level. To become more qualified to provide quality science in his curriculum, he pursued a MS degree in Science Education at Ohio State University. His science curriculum included a yearly student camping trip to Death Valley. Parents and other adult chaperons provided transportation and meal preparation, among other contributions, toward the great

success of these annual desert trips.

Alan met **Dr. Kristin Berry** at a seminar that she presented and became fascinated by the plight of the Desert Tortoise. He became an active supporter of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee by presenting slide programs, doing fundraising and bringing his students to the DTRNA. His yearly desert camping trips now included the Maturango Museum and the DTRNA. The week trip would start at Death Valley and end at the DTRNA. Another group of students would then join Alan and his team at the DTRNA and end their week trip at Death Valley. DTPC tour guides would take the first group out on the DTRNA during the morning and the second group out in the afternoon. Alan coordinated and led approximately 50 of these week-long desert camping trips that involved 35 students and 15 adults in 12-14 vehicles and a trailer for gear. He estimated that volunteers, including his wife, **Marcia**, prepared and consumed over 7,875 meals during these trips.

For DTPC volunteer tour guides, working with Alan's students were some of the most interesting and rewarding field experiences. Alan and his students validated our work in that he found that the group that started the week trip at the DTRNA got a great deal more out of the trip experience than the group ending the week at the DTRNA.

Dr. B, as Alan was called by his students, was a quintessential student, always learning and strongly believing that learning is fun and is fundamental to the well-being of everyone. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Marcia, a son, 3 daughters, 9 grandchildren, and a great-grandson. He is also survived by many friends, colleagues and students whose lives have been enriched by his dedication, advocacy, enthusiasm, and friendship.



Source for text: Marcia Baldwin

Source for photo: Palo Alto online

DTPC Spring Work Party

Article by Mary Kotschwar



The intrepid Work Partiers: Chuck Hemingway, Dave Zantiny, Steve Ishii, Mary Kotschwar, Allan Eggleton, Kai Sawicki, Chris DeBolt, Marlene Ishii, Richard Kettler, Carrie Woods, Lisa Sandoval, Pat Sorensen, Freeman Baldwin, Shelley Ellis, Mark Bratton, Hitomi Baldwin, Jane McEwan, Chris Herbst, David Logan, Ed Patrovsky, Jen Welling, and the Boy Scouts of Troop 413 (Samuel, Thomas, James, Daniel, Adam, Clinton, and Nathan). Laura Stockton and Jaymes Gordon not pictured. (Photo by Steve Ishii)

A huge thank you to everyone who attended the DTPC's Annual Spring Work Party—it was a productive and fun day!

On the morning of March 10, 2012, thirty people gathered at the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area and volunteered their time, tools, and labor to help with valuable stewardship projects. Most of the work this spring occurred in and around the Interpretive Center, as we prepared for this year's Naturalist Season. We profited from the warm and sunny weather to accomplish a lot and enjoy the surroundings. Collectively, we set up the exhibit trailer at the Interpretive Center, cleaned the educational kiosk, replaced 38 aging trail posts on the Discovery Loop, installed a new entrance sign, relocated a large informational panel, assessed trail condition and educational stations on the Animal and Plant Loops, replaced 11 faded or stolen signs along the DTRNA southern fence line, installed 10 new boundary signs in the Eastern Expansion Area, and prepared an additional 30 sign posts for use. It was a good day for wildlife sightings, too. At least two groups saw desert

tortoises and one group saw a Mohave ground squirrel. We are very grateful for everyone's hard work and enthusiasm.



Lisa Sandoval, Jen Welling, and Shelley Ellis (shown here) joined DTPC President, Jane McEwan, in hiking the Animal Loop and Plant Loop trails to evaluate their condition and accuracy. (Photo by Jane McEwan)

Bureau of Land Management biologists, Carrie Woods and Shelley Ellis, and volunteer Bob Parker, from the Ridgecrest Field Office, delivered and set-up the exhibit trailer (on left), now open at the DTRNA from 8 AM – 5 PM daily. The Discovery Center motor-coach (on right) was set up the previous day by volunteer Chuck Hemingway and Naturalist Ed Patrovsky. (Photo by Jaymes Gordon)



Thanks also to [Tread Lightly!](#) for providing a stewardship grant for this event. With these funds, the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee was able to obtain three sign and trail marker installation tools for this event and future efforts, as well as refreshments for our volunteers.



Horned lizard observed by the volunteers at the DTRNA. (Photo by Steve Ishii)

Mary Kotschwar and Chris DeBolt installing a Private Property sign along the exterior boundary of DTPC-owned properties in the unfenced Eastern Expansion Area of the DTRNA. (Photo by Jaymes Gordon)



Three desert tortoises were observed during the Work Party. The male in the top photo found in the Eastern Expansion Area by a group installing signs (Photo by Jaymes Gordon); the male in the bottom photo was found near the Interpretive Center in the company of a female tortoise (Photo by Bob Parker).



Siblings James, Jen, and Daniel Welling joined the group. All are involved in Scout groups in California City. (Photo by Jane McEwan)



One of the Mohave ground squirrels observed by volunteers during the work party. (Photo by Steve Ishii)



Hitomi Baldwin, Kai Sawicki, Daniel Welling and a Boy Scouts volunteer using teamwork to install signs along the DTRNA boundary fence



Go to <http://vimeo.com/38711950> to view a video of the volunteers replacing a boundary fence sign or visit DTPC's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/DTPC.inc).



DTPC Preserve and Office Manager, Mary Kotschwar, providing an overview of the DTRNA and the planned stewardship activities to volunteers.



Photo by Freya Reder

The Tortoise and the Air



Article featured in LightHawk's Newsletter "WayPoint" - January 2012 - Issue 60

The desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), the state reptile of California, is a resourceful, wrinkled-face creature that members of the Desert Tortoise Preservation Committee (DTPC) spend their weekends protecting. Out in the brown expanses of California's northwest Mojave Desert, what others perceive as miles of desolate wasteland, volunteers like DTPC's **Steve Ishii** see abundance and beauty. "My wife and I love exploring new places," said Ishii. "The first time we visited the desert, we saw a tortoise which was a rare sight. We love animals, so getting to see that first one, we were both hooked." In this arid environment, the spunky desert tortoise digs its own water bowls in the ground to collect rainwater. In the spring, it munches on tender flowers - like coreopsis, snake's head and wide-bannered lupine - to survive months of food scarcity.

Volunteer pilot **Jo Duffy** (Santa Barbara, CA) worked to secure clearance from Edwards AFB prior to the first of two flights that enabled Steve Ishii and his wife **Marlene** to gather over 1500 aerial images of remote tortoise habitat. The Ishiis were also able to monitor areas where off-highway vehicle (OHV) are destroying fragile habitat and investigate vandalism such as fence-cutting. "Our flight was very fruitful... as we were able to survey almost 60 square miles of land, located in two different counties, much of which is only accessible on foot," said Steve Ishii.

To read the entire article, visit <http://www.lighthawk.org/waypoint.html>

Calling All Volunteers!

Looking to get involved? We have diverse volunteer opportunities in several locations:

→ **STEWARDSHIP**

Sign installation, parcel monitoring, and invasive plant species management.
(Kern, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties)

→ **EDUCATION**

Presentations to school and community groups, representing the DTPC at out-reach events, creation and distribution of materials.
(throughout Southern California)

→ **RESEARCH**

Wildlife photo classification and data entry.
(DTRNA, DTPC Office in Riverside, CA)

→ **OFFICE SUPPORT**

Preparation of mailings, merchandise orders, and office organization
(Riverside, CA)

If you would like more information about one of the listed opportunities or have other project ideas, please contact Mary Kotschwar at (951) 683-3872 or dtpc@pacbell.net.



*Examples of wildlife photos taken by remote-sensing trail cameras that need to be classified and organized.
From left to right: black-tailed hare, Mohave ground squirrel, kit fox, and white-tailed antelope squirrel.*



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



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The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Founded 1974

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Special thanks to the following:DTPC Calendar of EventsMarch 31, 2012DTPC Board Meeting
Riverside, CAJune 10, 2012DTPC Board Meeting
Ridgecrest, CAOctober 2012Fall Work Party:
Details coming soon

Dr. Kristin Berry
Jane McEwan
Laura Stockton
Mark Bratton
Steve & Marlene Ishii
Dave Zantiny
Christ Herbst
Chuck Hemingway
Richard Anderson
Freeman & Hitomi Baldwin
Colleen Bare
Jack Craig
Allan Eggleton
Shelley Ellis

Jaymes Gordon
Richard Kettler
Justin Lilly
David Logan
Bob Parker
Freya Reder
Mary Shepherd
Lisa Sandoval
Pat Sorensen
Inga Swearingson
Carrie Woods
Chris DeBolt
Kai Sawicki
James, Jen, & Daniel Welling

Photo by Freya Reder

More information for each event can be found by calling (951) 683-3872 or sending an email to dtpc@pacbell.net. Additional information can be found on the DTPC's website www.tortoise-tracks.org and Facebook www.facebook.com/dtpc.inc.

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The DTPC is an IRS recognized tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation (tax ID 23-7413415). 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:

For more information on becoming a DTPC member, you can also contact us at (951) 683-3872 or visit our website at: <http://www.tortoise-tracks.org/dtpc/member.html>



Tortoise Tracks

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by email at dtpc@pacbell.net.



**When visiting the desert, always remember to
check under your vehicle for wildlife.**



Photo by Jane McEwan