



Tortoise Tracks



The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Winter 2012 32:4

October 20, 2012: A Great Day at the DTRNA!

DTPC Fall Work Party

Article by Mary Kotschwar Logan, DTPC Preserve Manager & Conservation Coordinator

On the morning of October 20, 2012, 30 individuals passionate about the tortoise and desert conservation gathered for a day of stewardship at the [Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area](#) (DTRNA). It was a beautiful day - sunny, clear, and warm, but not too hot. We started by gathering at the interpretive kiosk for a brief presentation, during which the background and value of the DTRNA were introduced and volunteers described their own backgrounds and conservation interests. We were fortunate to have a diverse group, including DTPC Board members and long-time volunteers, new members with a love for the tortoise, local residents concerned about human impacts to the desert, a Bureau of Land Management biologist, and two [Student Conservation Association](#) (SCA) crews composed of 14 young men and women from around the coun-

try. The SCA crews had recently begun restoration work in Wilderness Areas managed by [Bureau of Land Management, Ridgecrest Field Office](#) and came ready to share their training in camouflage restoration of illegal off-road vehicle incursions.

After introductions, the group headed out to the DTPC-owned conservation lands in the Eastern Expansion Area of the DTRNA and divided into teams. Several volunteers joined each SCA crew, which immediately began assessing the incursions and planning their restoration strategies. To discourage continued use of the trails and encourage the recovery of desert plants, the group started by installing vertical mulches: dead limbs 'planted' into the ground to mimic desert shrubs. The mulches primarily serve as visual barriers and can help trap seeds and moisture, enhancing conditions for seed germination and growth of desert vegetation. The crews also raked and swept away vehicle tracks and picked up trash along the trails. The other volunteers divided into two teams to sign the perimeter of eight contiguous parcels of land with No Trespass signs. All of the teams worked incredibly hard through the morning and afternoon, and accomplished so much! Teams working with the SCA restoration crews camouflaged two off-road vehicle

One of the off-road vehicle routes targeted for camouflage restoration (Mary Logan)



(Continued on page 2)

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incursions, and the other groups installed 42 signs to completely mark the exterior borders of our properties in that area.

Towards the end of the afternoon, a small group headed back to the DTRNA Interpretive Center to fire up the grill and prepare some food. The BBQ was a welcomed sight to everyone after their efforts throughout the day and it was fun way to get to know people better. We hope to make the post-Work Party BBQ a tradition from now on!



The SCA crews began their work by assessing the incursions and planning their strategy (Shelley Ellis)

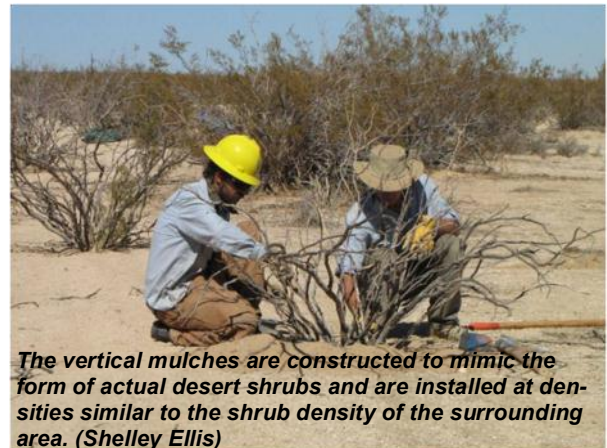
Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers who made the Fall Work Party a great success:

SCA crew leaders, Cat Ford and Will Hagen and crew members Jeffrey Havey, Sam Cox, Molly Dieterich, Matt Bemis, Liz Morrison, Zoe Bryant, Robin Sillars, Aurora Pinkey-Dubnis, Max Carter, Theodore King, Erica Mutschler Nielsen, and Charles Scirbona, BLM biologist Shelley Ellis, DTPC Board Members Chris Herbst, Mark Bratton, Jane McEwan, and Dave Zantiny, and other dedicated volunteers David Logan, Sid Silliman, Laura Mogg, Charlie Massieon, Bonny Ahern, Craig Bansmer, Ed Patrovsky, Jim Piercy, Chuck Hemingway, and Will Liebscher.

Thanks also to Bureau of Land Management Ridgecrest Field Office for sharing the services of their talented SCA crews for a day!



Bonny Ahern and an SCA crew member put the finishing touches on a vertical mulch constructed from dead creosote limbs. The structure will act as a visual and physical barrier to off-road vehicle trespass through DTPC conservation lands. (Shelley Ellis)



The vertical mulches are constructed to mimic the form of actual desert shrubs and are installed at densities similar to the shrub density of the surrounding area. (Shelley Ellis)



Ed Patrovsky and David and Mary Logan installing signs (photos by Mary Logan and Ed Patrovsky)



Will Liebscher and Sid Silliman assist SCA crew members install vertical mulching. (Shelley Ellis)



SCA crew member unloading dead limbs collected for mulching (Shelley Ellis)

Revisions to the DTPC Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

The DTPC Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws are currently being reviewed by the DTPC Board of Trustees, with updates likely to be proposed during calendar year 2013. The primary driver for the proposed changes is the taxonomic recognition of the new *Gopherus morafkai* species of desert tortoise. (Please see [Tortoise Tracks, Fall 2011, p. 6](#) or <http://vimeo.com/38397291> (video) for a complete description of the new species.)

As the current set of Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws were last updated in 1999, additional updates are being considered. Highlights of these potential updates are:

- Inclusion or exclusion of the new *Gopherus morafkai* species of desert tortoise
- Provisions for electronic communications and web-hosted board meetings
- Conversion to an organization with different membership types
- Conversion of trustees to directors

Proposed changes will be announced in upcoming *Tortoise Tracks* newsletters and posted on the DTPC's [web-site](#) for review. ***Please stay tuned!***

Open Positions on the DTPC Board of Trustees

If you have a deep concern for the continued preservation of the desert tortoise and its habitat and would like to do more to help promote the welfare of the Mojave Desert, contact Mary Kotschwar Logan at (951) 683-3872 or by email at dtpc@pacbell.net for details on becoming a DTPC Board Member.

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



Preserve Manager & Conservation Coordinator
Mary Kotschwar Logan

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



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The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Founded 1974

Board of Trustees

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The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee

Invites You to Join Us At Our

38th Annual Banquet and General Meeting

January 26, 2013

The DTPC's Annual Meeting and Banquet will be held Saturday, January 26, 2013 at The Palmdale Hotel, 300 W. Palmdale Blvd., Palmdale, California 93551 (661-273-1200). The afternoon Annual Meeting will feature a review of the Committee's ongoing programs and activities and plans for 2013. Speakers from a variety of agencies will give updates on important activities throughout southern California. During the banquet, **Dr. Kristin Berry** and **Mary Kotschwar Logan** will present new data and encouraging results from field studies at the DTRNA.

PROGRAM

- Annual Meeting 2:00 to 5:00 P.M.
- Social Mixer 5:00 to 6:00 P.M.
- Banquet Event 6:00 to 9:00 P.M.

To RSVP or For Additional Information Contact:

Mary Kotschwar Logan (951) 683-3872 or Email: dtpc@pacbell.net

\$ _____ Dinner Reservation \$35.00
 \$ _____ Optional tax-deductible donation
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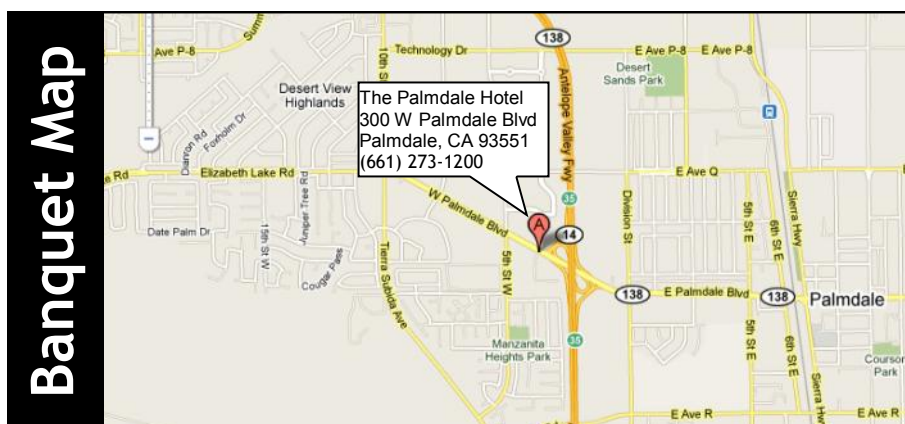
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DTPC Annual Banquet Speakers

The year 2012 has been one of especially good news for the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc. and for the [Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area](#) (DTRNA). We are fortunate to have two speakers for the Saturday night banquet sharing this good news. Both speakers will present new field data collected in 2011 and 2012. Under the direction of Preserve Manager **Mary Kotschwar Logan**, a study of Mohave ground squirrel occupancy of habitat was conducted within the fenced portion of the DTRNA, as well as in the eastern expansion lands. The study was remarkably effective, especially for a dry year. Using camera traps and methods adapted for the specific research needs of the DTPC Inc., we obtained thousands of digital images of desert animals, including the threatened Mohave ground squirrel. Mary will tell us about the findings and share a collection of the photographs in a presentation titled, "Caught on Camera." Last year, she and Freya Reder talked about preliminary work from walking observations. This year's presentation is a result of a more substantive survey with camera traps and transects covering extensive areas of land.



Dr. Kristin Berry will present the results of two research projects undertaken in 2011 and 2012. The first project was designed to compare the results of three different types of land management on desert tortoises and their habitats on ~100 square miles of lands. The three types of land were 1) the fenced DTRNA, 2) critical habitat for the desert tortoise on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management in the Rand Mountains and Fremont Valley, and 3) private lands in the western and eastern expansion lands adjacent to the DTRNA. Dr. Berry and her collaborators (Lisa Lyren, Tracy Bailey) found significant difference in densities of adult tortoises in the three different management areas. The DTRNA had significantly higher

densities than private lands or critical habitat. There are some sound data to support why tortoise densities differ and what can be done about it, all of which she will share. In addition, during 2012, Dr. Berry and the U.S. Geological Survey partnered with the DTPC Inc. to conduct a survey on a 3-square mile, long-term study plot centered on the interpretive center at the Natural Area. This plot includes lands within and outside the fenced Natural Area. This plot was first surveyed in 1979 and has been re-surveyed several times since, the last time being in 2002—10 years ago. Tim Shields led the field surveys and he has been with the project since its inception in 1979. The findings this year put a smile on all our faces—for the first time, the numbers were not on a decline. Substantially more tortoises were found on this large plot than in 2002! Good news indeed, just what we all need to hear, especially after all the efforts undertaken with our partners. Please join us to hear more about these studies.

*A Special
Message from
the DTPC
Preserve
Manager &
Conservation
Coordinator*



Dear Friends,

Thank you.

As 2012 comes to an end, I find myself spending many more hours in the office than in the field, writing reports for completed projects, keeping our on-going projects in motion, and preparing for 2013. I am the only year-round employee of the DTPC, so I work alone most of the time. These December days always offer something special though. Since our year-end summary letter went out, we have received over 150 new donations and I don't think I can fully articulate what they mean, but I will try. Most importantly, these contributions and those received throughout the year mean critical financial support for ongoing land acquisition, stewardship, research, and education projects that benefit the desert tortoise and other wildlife. They are also a testament of an active membership of hundreds of individuals who care. This is meaningful in itself. It is motivational to all of us (our Board of Directors, our Land Acquisition Specialist, our Naturalists, our partners and volunteers, and myself) to know that so many people support the work of the DTPC, and your dedication to desert conservation raises awareness among others. I am most often the individual opening the office mail and processing these contributions.

During the almost two years that I've been working here, I've come to recognize names and have a great appreciation for all of our donors, most of whom I've not had the opportunity to meet. There are those who give regularly throughout the year, those who surprise us with large contributions out of the blue, those who renew their memberships year after year like clockwork, and those who contribute what they can when it is possible. All contributions are important and your generosity inspires me, not only in my work with the DTPC, but also in other realms of my life. Thank you for the financial support you provide to our programs, but also for the encouragement your support provides to us. I hope I will have the chance to meet many more of you in the coming year!

Sincerely,

Mary Kotschwar Logan

The DTPC would like to thank the following volunteers:

*Jane McEwan
Mark Bratton
Dave Zantiny
Steve Ishii
Marlene Ishii
Chris Herbst
Bonny Ahern
Craig Bansmer
Tammy DeBolt
Tim DeBolt
Shelley Ellis
William Foster*

*Chuck Hemingway
Will Liebscher
David Logan
Charlie Massieon
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DTPC

4067 Mission Inn Avenue

Riverside, CA 92501

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:

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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/wptortoisetracks/become-a-member>



DTPC Calendar of Events

January 26, 2013: DTPC Annual Meeting & Banquet, Palmdale Hotel, Palmdale, CA

February 15-17, 2013: The 38th Annual Symposium of the Desert Tortoise Council will be held at Sam's Town in Las Vegas, Nevada. Visit DTC's website www.deserttortoise.org for registration information and details for this event.

March 2013: DTPC's Spring Work Party. Details coming soon.

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.



Tortoise Tracks

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Contact your human resources department to find out about your company's workplace giving program. To find out how your employer can host its own campaign, go to EarthShare's web site at: www.earthshare.org

The DTPC participates in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC # 71985)