



Tortoise Tracks



The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Winter 2016 36:4



LAND MANAGEMENT

Fall Work Party– A Story of Hard Work and Good Company!

- by Jill Estrada

On October 22, eighteen volunteers showed up to the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area to take part in the annual fall work party. Because much of the fence line of the DTRNA was installed almost 40 years ago, it requires a great deal of maintenance. Additionally, the area surrounding the DTRNA is known to be a dumping spot for trash. Due to these ongoing needs, the work party focused on tackling the two. Approximately 2,828 miles were driven by volunteers from the Los Angeles area as well as throughout Kern and San Bernardino counties. After greeting old friends and meeting new volunteers, everyone was divided to work on four separate projects. Two teams worked on the southern fence line of the DTRNA replacing property signs and

raven deterrent spikes that are installed on fence posts as well as removing trash. Another pair of teams tackled the same tasks in the Eastern Expansion Area. Overall, both the Toyota Tundra and Kia Rondo owned by the DTPC were filled with desert trash, all of which posed a threat to wildlife.



After the work party, twelve of the volunteers made their way to Red Rock Canyon State Park for a campout and a delicious potluck dinner. The next morning, fifteen volunteers headed to our Western Expansion Area to participate in land monitoring training, given by the amazing **Steve Ishii, Marlene Ishii, and Rachel Woodard.**



The large amount of people attending the monitoring training not only gave the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee an opportunity to have three groups of people exploring our properties, but also gave those taking the training more time to spend observing and learning about desert life during the fall months. Numerous signs of tortoises and kit fox were found, as well as several tarantulas and a rattlesnake. Finding these indicators of life on our property is a reminder of why we are protecting this land from human-related threats.



Restoration Project: An Update

The enormous process of protecting and restoring 2,700 acres of tortoise habitat in the Eastern and Western Expansion areas of the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area began this past October. Crews began working on the cumbersome tasks of surveying, fencing, and restoring the land. The surveyors first determined the exact property lines of our land and flagged our boundaries for the fencing crew to use during fence installation. The fencing crew then began installing fencing posts around the perimeter of the area. The restoration crew first worked on camouflaging unauthorized trails in late October and concluded with trash removal and weed abatement in mid-November. The fencing crew will continue installing the new fence line through the rest of the year.



Fence installation along southern border of Eastern Expansion Area

Approximately 1,009 acres are being protected in response to a mitigation agreement and partnership with 8minutenergy, a renewable energy company that has recently installed two large solar farms adjacent to the DTRNA. While typically, mitigation contracts are solely legally binding agreements, the DTPC and 8minutenergy have formed an amiable partnership in which conservation is the primary focus. Without any legal obligation, 8minutenergy has gone beyond the minimum mitigation requirements and are funding research to understand how the development and operations of solar farms affect adjacent lands. As neighbors, our two organizations are working together to protect nearby undeveloped land and to improve tortoise habitat. During a time when renewable energy development is a growing trend, partnerships between environmental organizations and renewable energy companies are crucial to fighting climate change while protecting critical habitat. We thank 8minutenergy for being a responsible solar company with a willingness to work with our mission and goals to help protect the desert tortoise. Additionally, we are looking forward to hearing a presentation on how the Springbok solar farms are running, to be given at our annual meeting in January.

Once the fencing is completed, the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee will monitor and manage the land into perpetuity. Both the eastern restoration area and western parcel will essentially become expansions of the current Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area boundary. Property signs as well as three informational kiosks explaining the restoration project and providing safe and responsible tips to OHV users will be installed on and nearby the fence line, ensuring that the public is made aware of the status of our land. The combination of the protective fence, boundary signs, informational kiosks along designated OHV routes, and the vertical mulching within the fence line will allow for native wildlife to return to the area. Monthly monitoring over the next year will allow us to make sure that the fencing stays intact and continues to protect the habitat.

Recent observations have been made of signs that wildlife species such as tortoises, kit foxes, Mojave ground squirrels, badgers, and coyotes have used the land in the past. Our restoration activities will encourage populations to return to the area and continue to actively inhabit land that we protect and manage.



Please join us for our Spring work party on Saturday, March 18 to install boundary signs and informational kiosks on and around the newly installed fence line. Without these, illegal trespassing is more likely to continue to occur.



Preserve Manager & Conservation Coordinator
Jillian Estrada

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www.tortoise-tracks.org

The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Founded 1974

Board of Directors

| | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
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Like our Page: www.Facebook.com/DTPC.inc

Please join us for the
42nd Annual Banquet and General Meeting
January 28, 2017

The DTPC's Annual Meeting and Banquet will be held Saturday, January 28, 2017 at **The Elks Club, 240 E Ave K, Lancaster, CA 93535**. The afternoon Annual Meeting will feature a review of the Committee's ongoing programs and activities and plans for 2017. Speakers from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and 8 Minute Energy Renewables will provide updates on important activities throughout southern California. The banquet speaker will be **Dr. Larry LaPre**, a well-known and highly admired wildlife biologist, whose presentation topic will be "Inconvenient Truths about Birds in the California Desert."

PROGRAM

- Annual Meeting 2:30 to 4:30 P.M.
- Social Mixer 5:00 to 6:00 P.M.
- Banquet 6:00 to 9:00 P.M.

To RSVP or For Additional Information Contact:

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

Please book hotel reservations in advance. Another large event will take place in the area on the same weekend

\$ _____ Dinner Reservation \$45.00

\$ _____ Optional tax-deductible donation

\$ _____ Total of my enclosed check

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ Email: _____

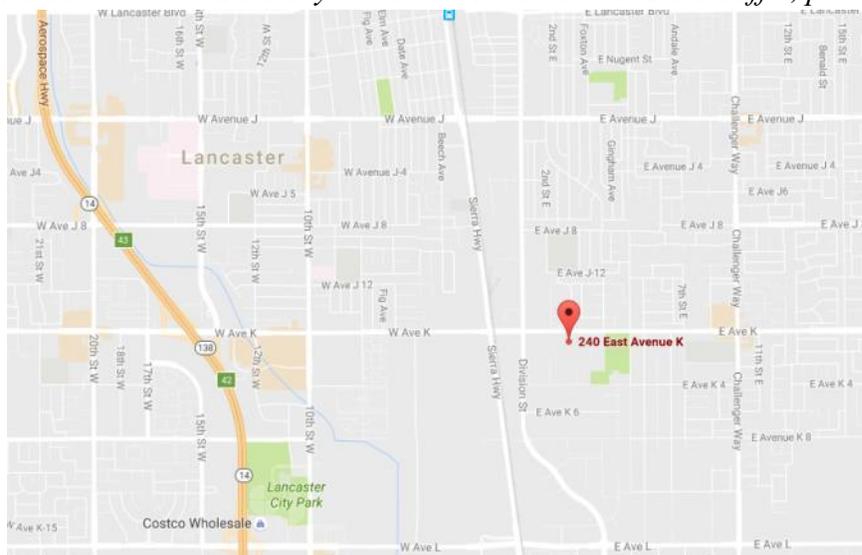
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Make check payable to: DTPC, 4067 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

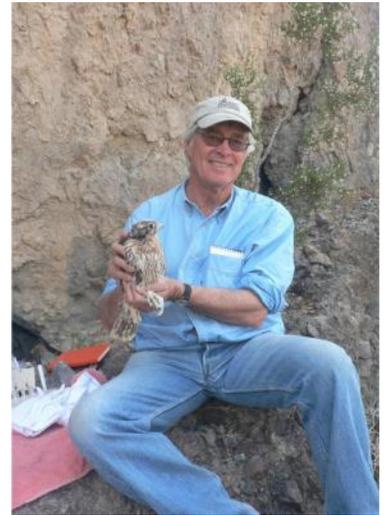
If you have any tortoise-related items that you would like to donate to our raffle, please contact us.



Larry LaPré, Wildlife Biologist, California Desert District, Bureau of Land Management

Larry LaPré received a PhD in biology from the University of California in 1979 and worked as a biological consultant for 19 years. In 1998, he enlisted in a one-year term position with the BLM which led to a permanent job as the District Wildlife Biologist. He worked at the BLM for seventeen years, retiring in 2015. A biologist for life, Larry's first love has always been birds. In the California desert, he has monitored golden eagle nests, performed raven nesting surveys, and banded prairie falcons.

Larry will speak at our annual banquet on January 28th on "Inconvenient Truths about Birds in the California Desert."



OUTREACH

Wildlife Conservation Network Expo

On October 8, DTTC preserve manager **Jill Estrada** and volunteer **Chris Herbst** attended the Wildlife Conservation Network Expo in San Francisco. This annual event brought together close to 60 organizations working to conserve endangered species around the world. More than 1,000 visitors from throughout the state attended to learn about the great work that is being done in the field of conservation. The event was a great opportunity for our organization to expand our outreach. We received hundreds of visitors to our table and were able to educate the public about the plight of desert tortoises and what we are doing to protect them.



Holiday Shopping



Looking for a last minute Christmas Present? Adopt a tortoise for that special someone and share a gift of conservation. For only \$50.00 adopters will receive a small plush tortoise, an adoption certificate, an 8x10 photo of the adopted tortoise, and a subscription to our e-newsletter. Adopting a tortoise is a great way of contributing to tortoise conservation and also makes a great gift for birthdays and holidays. Visit www.tortoise-tracks.org to submit your order.

Thank you to those of you who have asked to join our e-newsletter list. So far, 11% of our membership has decided to go green. Let's increase that number and reduce the amount of paper used to bring our updates to you. If you are interested in joining our e-newsletter subscription, please email dtpc@pacbell.net.

A lot of the land management we do could not be done without our dedicated volunteers. Tasks such as trash removal, fence surveying and repair, weed control, land monitoring, and outreach event attendance help us manage our land and gain more support. Here are a few upcoming opportunities that are in need of volunteers.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities:

March 18: Spring Work Party

A large group of volunteers is needed for one of our biggest stewardship events of the year. The work party will take place in the Eastern Expansion Area and will focus on installing boundary signs on the newly installed fence line. This is critical to dissuading the public to trespass onto our land. If you are willing and able to help install signs prior to the work party, please let us know.

March - May: Land Monitoring

For those who participated in the monitoring training during the Fall work party, here is your chance to use those skills! Spring is our monitoring season, and we will need help getting to all of our parcels of land. Please contact us with your availability.

April 29: Desert Tortoise Days

One to two people are needed to help represent the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee during California City's annual Desert Tortoise Days. This would consist of speaking to the public about our organization and inviting them to visit the DTRNA.

If you are interested in volunteering your time for any of these events, please email us at dtpc@pacbell.net

DTPC Calendar of Events & Volunteer Opportunities

- **January 28, 2017: Annual Banquet and General Meeting (Lancaster, CA)**
- **February 25-26, 2017: Desert Tortoise Council Symposium (Las Vegas, CA)**
- **March 13, 2017: Start of Naturalist Program (Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area)**
- **March 18, 2017: Spring Work Party (Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area)**
- **March 25, 2017: Naturalist Welcome Party (Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area)**
- **April 22, 2017: DTPC Board Meeting**
- **April 29, 2017: Desert Tortoise Days (California City, CA)**

The DTPC would like to thank the following volunteers for participating in the Fall Work Party and Monitoring Training:

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Bonny Ahern | Vincent LaVeque | Russell Skibsted |
| Craig Bansmer | Charlie Massien | Alexia Svjeda |
| Allan Eggleton | Laura Mogg | Nadia Svjeda |
| Chuck Hemingway | Karen Jefchak | Rachel Woodard |
| Marlene Ishii | Heather Ponok | Carrie Woods |
| Steve Ishii | Lisa Skibsted | Dave Zantiny |
| Joseph Lan | Michael Skibsted | |

DTPC MEMBERSHIP/CONTRIBUTION FORM

1. YES, I want to help save the threatened desert tortoise and its habitat! Here is my tax-deductible membership contribution of:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Benefactor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Family | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Patron/Corporate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Sponsor | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Life Membership |

2. My membership is current but here is an additional donation of \$ _____.
Please use it for:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fencing | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Acquisition | <input type="checkbox"/> Where Most Needed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

3. I'd like to help you grow the DTPC endowment. Please accept an additional donation of:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other \$ _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marketable Securities (Stock): Contact DTPC Finance Committee Chairperson, Greg Lathrop at 2redgrey@gmail.com or (415) 637-7187 for instruction | |

Let's get the endowment started!

- I would like my contribution to remain anonymous
 I would like to receive Tortoise Tracks electronically (please provide email address)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email Address: _____

Please make your check payable to DTPC and mail to:

Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee
4067 Mission Inn Ave.
Riverside, CA 92501.

Thank you.

*All contributors receive the Tortoise Tracks newsletter. The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee is an IRS recognized tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. All contributions and/or annual membership dues are fully tax-deductible. Contributor information is kept confidential and is not disclosed to third parties.

If you would like to renew your membership or donate online, please visit * www.tortoise-tracks.org *



Tortoise Tracks

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If you would prefer to receive an electronic copy, notify us
by email at DTPC@tortoise-tracks.org

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

