



Fall 2017
Edition 37:3

Tortoise Tracks

Newsletter

© Sharon Schafer



Male tortoises fighting at the DTRNA in April, 2017

LAND MANAGEMENT

Funding Success for DTRNA Expansion Areas!

As the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee continues the restoration project which began last fall, we are now preparing for another busy fall season. We are excited to announce that we have recently been awarded three more grants which will cover most of the costs of fence installation and restoration activities on approximately 950 acres of additional tortoise habitat adjacent to the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area. These areas show very good potential for accommodating healthy populations of desert species, once the effects of recent sheep grazing and OHV recreation have been reversed. Similar to the project we began last year, we will fence off these areas to prevent future trespass and will begin the slow process of restoration which will include installing vertical mulching, removing invasive plant species, and removing trash.

These restoration projects are a small part of our goal of expanding the protected area available for desert tortoises. As demand for exploitation of the desert increases, there is no doubt that habitat loss will continue to grow. Restoring and protecting these areas and the many others we are working to acquire will give the desert tortoise population room to grow and will allow for connectivity between local populations. As we continue to acquire and protect more habitat, we will also continue to seek funding for more restoration and protective measures.

While these grants will cover a large portion of the costs for fencing and restoration, the Desert Tortoise

(Continued on page 2)



Tortoise burrow and habitat on one of three project sites



Preserve Committee must cover the remaining balance. These programs and the work that we do protecting the desert tortoise is made possible with donations from DTPC supporters like you.



Captive Tortoises Abound!

Every year we receive hundreds of phone calls and emails from members of the public, looking to re-home their pet tortoises, found tortoises, and recent hatchlings. While the DTPC works hard to protect wild populations of desert tortoises, we unfortunately do not have the capacity to re-home or take in captive or found tortoises. We work with the amazing non-profit California Turtle & Tortoise Club, who do a wonderful job of taking in captive turtles and tortoises and finding them new homes. While they put in their best effort to re-home every animal, they are constantly overwhelmed by the number of adult and baby tortoises that are in need of new homes each year. Because captive tortoises cannot be introduced to the wild, the captive population continues to grow and the number of turtles and tortoises in need of homes continues to grow with it. Currently, there is no definitive way of reducing the number of captive turtles and tortoises and no one wants the situation to reach the need for methods such as euthanasia, as is the case with other species kept as pets. One way to combat the problem is by reducing the amount of captive tortoises that are bred. Many do not realize that laws prohibit the captive breeding of desert tortoises; a law that is in place to help prevent the captive population from growing beyond the capacity of captive facilities. If you are the owner of multiple tortoises, please do your part by keeping them separate. While tortoise hatchlings are irresistibly cute, they add to an already abundant population of tortoises seeking new homes. If you would like to adopt a turtle or tortoise, please visit www.tortoise.org for more information.



To sponsor a wild tortoise, visit www.tortoise-tracks.org and view "Adopt a tortoise" under "Get Involved". You can also choose other ways to support the DTPC.





Dedicated to the recovery and conservation of the Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and other rare and endangered species inhabiting the Mojave and western Sonoran deserts.

**The
Desert Tortoise
Preserve Committee, Inc.**

Founded 1974

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Tortoise Tracks is published
four times a year.

Land Monitoring

The spring season had us out monitoring our land, observing the areas for flora and fauna, and signs of trespass or damage. The abundant bloom of wild-flowers and variety of lively animals presented a beautiful atmosphere for monitoring and exploring. While a significant portion of land was monitored this past spring, we have much left to do during the fall season, once the heat begins to fade. If you would like to join us for a trip or two, please contact us.



Welcome Andrew Yost!

The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee would like to welcome Andrew Yost, a resident of California City. Andrew learned of the DTPC and our need for volunteers while attending the Desert Tortoise Days event in California City earlier this year. Since then, Andrew has offered to help monitor our fencing along the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area and expansion areas for any signs of damage or trespass. The DTPC manages and maintains close to 50 miles of fencing in this area and because DTPC staff cannot be on-site at all times, Andrew's work is incredibly important. Keeping the fence line free of damage and intentional cuts prevents trespass onto the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area and many of the activities which threaten the desert tortoise and its habitat.



Of course, Andrew cannot monitor the large amount of fencing on his own. If you would like to help out, please contact us at dtpc@pacbell.net or by calling the office at (951) 683- 3872.

EVENTS

Wildlife Conservation Network Expo

Last year, the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee attended the WCN expo for the first time. This expo brings together dozens of global conservation organizations as well as visitors from all of the state and county to present and discuss conservation actions throughout the world. The expo allowed us to broaden the geographic scope of our on-site outreach and to teach Bay area locals about conservation that is happening right in their own state. The expo received over a thousand attendees and our booth gained a lot of attention from visitors who unfortunately were not aware of the plight of the desert tortoise.

This year we will once again attend the expo, exhibiting the threats to the desert ecosystem and how we are working to mitigate them. If you are interested in attending this exciting event, visit <https://wildnet.org/>



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www.tortoise-tracks.org

Expansion of Outreach/Education Program Continues

The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee fully believes that in order to create change and boost support for desert tortoise conservation, public awareness and education are fundamental. Over the past year and a half we have begun ramping up our efforts to reach out to various communities and provide the most recent information about the status of desert tortoise populations and the threats which they face. Our presentations and booths primarily focus on threats and what we are doing to mitigate threats, however the information is adapted to the audience and special requests. Our staff and volunteers will continue providing educational presentations to schools, local communities, and nature-based groups and promoting awareness about the desert tortoise and its habitat.

If you are interested in hosting a presentation about the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, or are interested in becoming part of our education team, contact us as dtpc@pacbell.net or (951)683-3872.

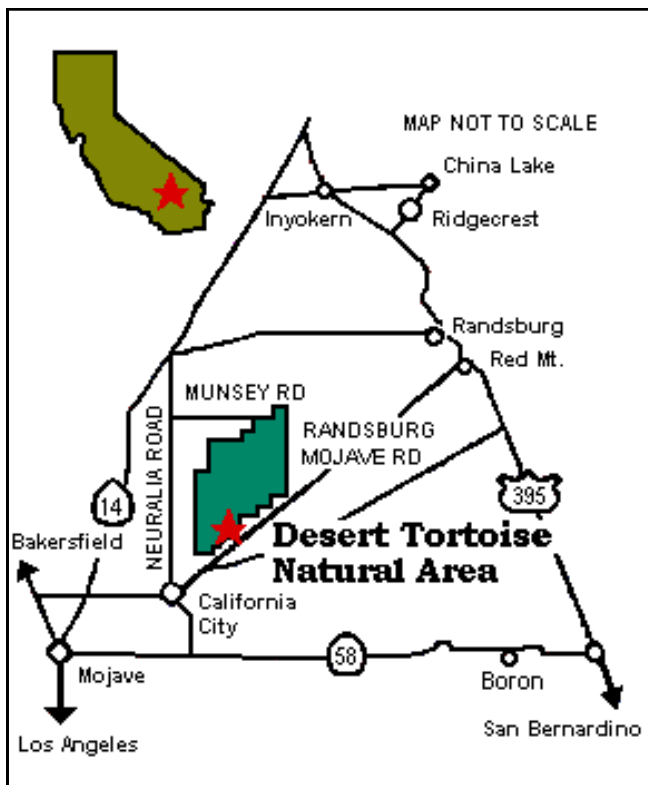
Please join us for the **Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee Annual Fall Work Party**



**Saturday, October 21
from 9am to 2pm
at the
Desert Tortoise Research
Natural Area**
in coordination with BLM
National Public Lands Day

50 volunteers needed

(Sunday work is TBD
depending on availability of volunteers)



Help out with valuable
stewardship projects, while
learning more about the
desert ecosystem and
enjoying the outdoors!

Please RSVP to this event by calling
(951) 683-3872 or 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:

DTRNA Check-In:

We are looking for a volunteer to travel to the DTRNA interpretive center once every other week to refill brochures and trail guides. Brochures and trail guides will be provided.

Fence Monitoring:

The DTPC is seeking able-bodied volunteers to help monitor the almost 50 miles of fencing that surrounds the DTRNA and adjacent properties. Monitoring would consist of driving as well as hiking and repairing any damage to the fence.

Land Monitoring:

The DTPC is obligated to visit and monitor more than 6,000 acres of land each year. We are looking for trained or untrained volunteers to help visit these parcels which are scattered throughout Kern, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties. Land monitoring will resume this fall once temperatures decline.

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



Our electronic newsletter is growing in popularity and we want to see it continue to grow! One added benefit of receiving the e-newsletter is that it is provided in color and is received sooner than those that are mailed. If you would like to be added to our e-newsletter list, please email us at dtpc@pacbell.net.

DTPC Calendar of Events & Volunteer Opportunities

- September 30 — Board Meeting (Riverside)
- October 14 — Wildlife Conservation Network Expo (San Francisco)
- October 21 — Fall Work Party (DTRNA)
- January 27 — Annual Meeting & Banquet (Lancaster)



The DTPC would like to thank the following people for their support:

Craig Bansmer

Pony Espresso—in memory of Kelly
Simmons

Kathern Lara—in memory of Kelly

Simmons

Turtle & Tortoise Care Society

Carrie Woods

Andrew Yost

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:

- ☐ \$20 Individual
☐ \$30 Family
☐ \$50 Sponsor

- ☐ \$75 Benefactor
☐ \$100 Patron/Corporate
☐ \$500 Life Membership

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

- ☐ Fencing ☐ Land Acquisition ☐ Where Most Needed
☐ Other:_____

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

- ☐ \$250 ☐ \$2,500
☐ \$500 ☐ \$5,000
☐ \$1,000 ☐ Other \$_____
☐ Marketable Securities (Stock): Contact DTPC Finance Committee Chairperson,
 Greg Lathrop at 2redgrey@gmail.com or (415) 637-7187 for instruction

Let's grow the endowment!

- ☐ 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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by email at DTPC@tortoise-tracks.org

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

