

# Tortoise Tracks

Newsletter

Save  
the  
Dates!

## Fall Work Party October 19, 2019

In coordination with BLM participate in stewardship projects, land monitoring and enjoy our desert ecosystem! Camping and star gazing optional.

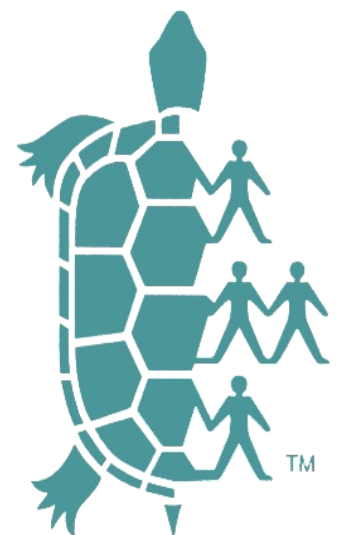
More details inside



## DTPC 45th Annual Celebration March 29, 2020

Join us in celebrating 45 years of desert tortoise conservation and stewardship!

This celebration and welcome event will feature guided tours of the DTRNA, activities for all ages and much more!



Desert Tortoise  
Preserve Committee, Inc.

More details to come

# Join us for our annual fall work party! Saturday October 19, 2019

In coordination with BLM participate in stewardship projects, land monitoring and enjoy our desert ecosystem!



Projects include:

- Reseeding and other restoration efforts
  - Invasive species removal
  - Sign and fence repair
- Trash clean up at the DTRNA
- Land monitoring and field research
  - Kid friendly activities

T-shirts, snacks and a bbq will be provided! Project work will begin at 8:30 am. Camping both Friday and Saturday nights is optional. For those interested, land monitoring and projects will continue through Sunday.

**Please RSVP by emailing [dtpc@pacbell.net](mailto:dtpc@pacbell.net) or call us at (951)-683-3872. Additional details on the schedule, location, what to bring and other information will be provided upon RSVP receipt.**

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Our fall work party is a featured event celebrating 25 years of the California Desert Protection Act. To celebrate this anniversary, the beauty and diversity of the desert, events will be taking place in September, October, and November throughout the region.

To learn more about the initiative or find more events visit: [www.desertlands.org/25years](http://www.desertlands.org/25years)

Connecting, Protecting, & Respecting

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## Volunteer Information Forms

We are updating our volunteer database and would like to hear from you! We have new volunteer information forms to get to know our volunteers, areas of interest and availability. If you are an active or current volunteer or would like to get involved, please contact us. We are seeking volunteers to assist with field tasks including land monitoring, fence repair and research; office needs, such as data organization and administrative tasks; and outreach including developing activities and on-site outreach events. Please contact us at [dtpc@pacbell.net](mailto:dtpc@pacbell.net) for more information.



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

**Board of Directors**

President	Ron Berger
Vice President	Bob Wood
Treasurer	Laura Stockton
Recording Secretary	Rachel Woodard
Board Member	Kristin Berry, Ph.D.
Board Member	Greg Lathrop
Board Member	Larry Nelson
Board Member	Dave Zantiny

**Preserve Manager &  
Conservation Coordinator**  
Brittany Slabach, Ph.D.

**Director of Land Acquisition**  
Jun Lee

Telephone: (951) 683-3872  
Fax: (951) 683-6949  
Email: [dtpc@pacbell.net](mailto:dtpc@pacbell.net)  
[www.tortoise-tracks.org](http://www.tortoise-tracks.org)



Tortoise Tracks is published  
four times a year.

## Land Monitors Needed - Help Us Manage Our Lands!

A primary goal of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc. (DTPC) is to acquire, protect, and restore lands to support the recovery of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and other species inhabiting our desert ecosystems. Currently, the DTPC owns and manages over 30,000 acres throughout the Mojave Desert including the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area. An important part of ongoing management efforts and stewardship requirements for mitigation lands is annual monitoring. This monitoring seeks to document habitat type, species presence, trespass evidence and any significant changes to the property over a period of observation points. Prior to acquiring new properties, we also conduct baseline monitoring to inspect initial conditions of the property, flora and fauna present and any existing and potential issues. Land monitoring is a critical part of our continued land management and restoration efforts as it provides an indication of biodiversity present and habitat viability. We are currently seeking land monitors to assist with our annual monitoring efforts. Most monitoring occurs during cooler months (October – April) and can occur during weekdays or weekends. If you are interested in becoming a qualified land monitor or learning more about the process, please contact Dr. Slabach at [dtpc@pacbell.net](mailto:dtpc@pacbell.net)



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## Meet a Director: Dr. Kristin Berry

Dr. Kristin Berry is a founding, and continuing, board member of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee and one of three founding members of the Desert Tortoise Council. She received her B.A. in biology from Stanford University, her M.A. in biology from UCLA and her Ph.D. in zoology from UC Berkeley. Dr. Berry has been an employee with the Department of the Interior since 1976 and is currently a Supervisory Research Wildlife



Photo provided by Dr. Berry

Biologist with U.S. Geological Survey, a position she has held since 1997. Her advocacy for the desert tortoise and desert ecosystems was instrumental in establishing the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area. She conducts research on wildlife, especially tortoises, and plants. Her research includes studies on behavior, restoration, and disease ecology. Dr. Berry says that her great joys in life include "...studying tortoises and writing papers about tortoises; visiting the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area especially in winter and spring; attending board meetings; and spending time with members of the board and members of the DTPC. Some very fine people!"

## Dr. Kristin Berry Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award



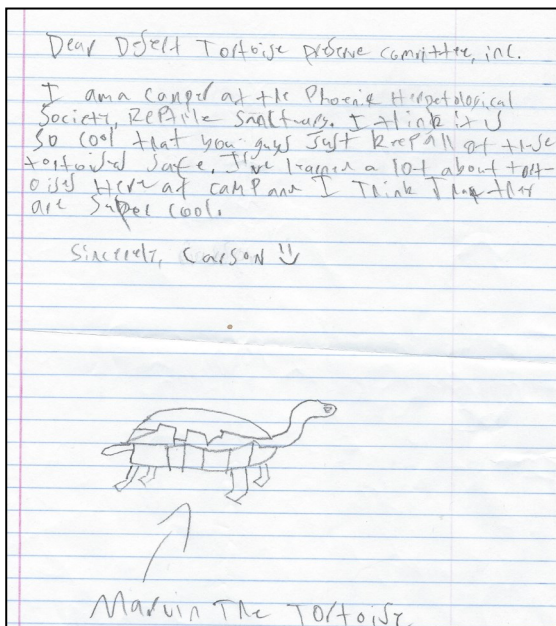
Dr. Kristin Berry and Dr. Anders Rhodin.  
Photo provided by Craig Stanfod

Dr. Kristin Berry, founding and current board member of the DTPC, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on the Conservation and Biology of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles on August 7<sup>th</sup> in Tucson, Arizona. The award was presented by Dr. Anders Rhodin, founder and director of the Chelonian Research Foundation. Collaborator and friend of Dr. Berry's, Dr. Taylor Edwards of University of Arizona Genetics Core provided the introduction describing Dr. Berry as persistent, comprehensive in her work (publishing over 80 research papers), collaborative, professional and a pioneer. Excerpts from the introduction are provided below.

“Many in the conservation community consider Dr. Berry to be the authority on *Gopherus agassizii* [Agassiz's desert tortoise]. She is arguably its most persistent advocate as her efforts have kept the plight of desert tortoises

in the public eye for almost 50 years. Her career post graduate school has [been] almost entirely with the federal government; first employed by the Bureau of Land Management and since 1997...as a research biologist/ecologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. While still in [graduate] school...Dr. Berry was one of the [three] founders of the [Desert Tortoise] recovery group, later to become the Desert Tortoise Council...Already ahead of her time, in 1974, Dr. Berry, along with a group of concerned scientists, helped designate public land in the northwestern Mojave for the Desert Tortoise Natural Area. Land purchased and restored specifically for desert tortoises and their environment through the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee...[Dr. Berry] has not only contributed great scientific knowledge, but also effective conservation, the preservation of land, legal protection, and the changes in policy.”

Dr. Berry and DTPC President Ron Berger both attended the symposium. They presented a talk entitled “Protection and Recovery of Agassiz's Desert Tortoise at the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area and Adjacent Critical Habitat”.



### Letter from a future scientist!

Students attending the Phoenix Herpetological Sanctuary Summer Camp wrote letters thanking various organizations for their work in stewardship, wildlife health and conservation. The DTPC received a wonderful letter (left) from future scientist, Carson. Carson wrote:

Dear Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.,  
I am a camper at the Phoenix Herpetological Society Reptile Sanctuary. I think it is so cool that you guys just keep all of these tortoises safe. I've learned a lot about tortoises here at camp and  
I think they are super cool.  
Sincerely,  
Carson

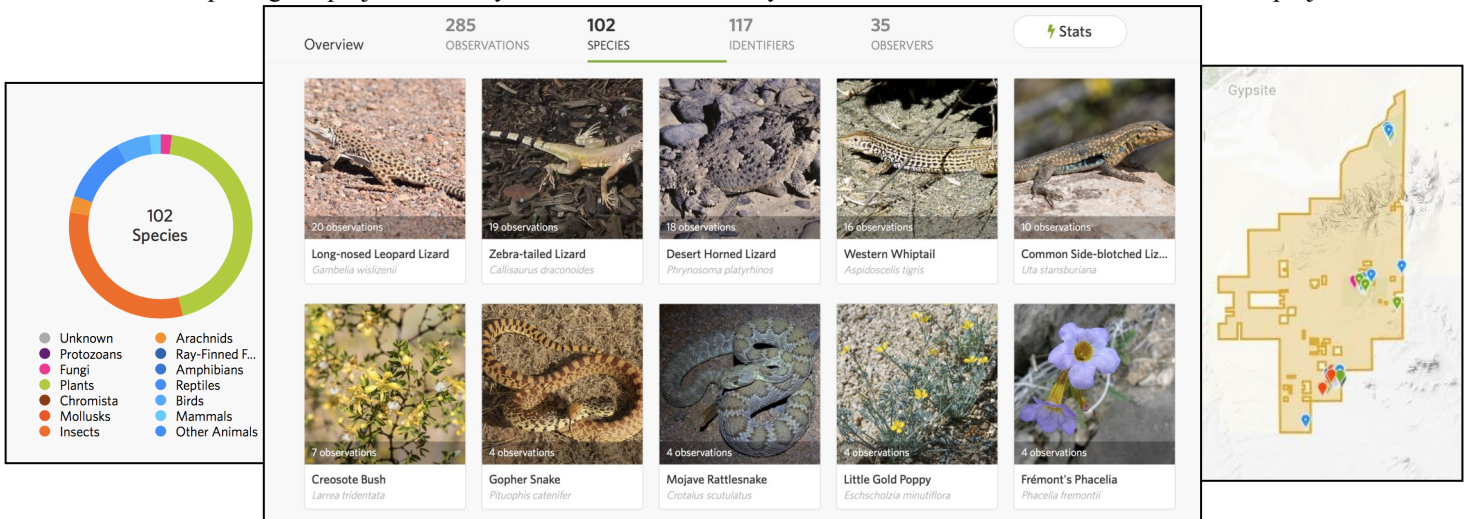
Carson letter's was complete with a drawing of a tortoise named Marvin. We love hearing from all of our supporters, especially future conservationists!

## Outreach News

### Be a Citizen Scientist at the DTRNA!

We have created a community science project aimed at cataloguing the biodiversity of the flora and fauna at the DTRNA through the iNaturalist platform. iNaturalist is an online community where people share information about biodiversity they observe and help each other to learn more about nature. Anyone can use the service to store their observations of nature and participate in citizen science projects across the globe. The goal of our project is to create a digital database of species presence and distribution. This catalog will act as a digital field guide for visitors to the DTRNA, aid in outreach and research programs, and further highlight the beauty of our desert ecosystems. iNaturalist users have made over 200 identifications of over 100 species during their visits to the DTRNA! Our Preserve Manager, Naturalists, and volunteers will be assisting with identifications when possible. Please be mindful of wildlife and keep a minimum distance of 20 feet at all times. More information about the project and biodiversity observed so far can be found at: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/citizen-science-at-the-dtrna>

Visualizations depicting the project summary to date, total biodiversity observed, and observation locations from the project website.



**The iNaturalist Platform:** iNaturalist is available as a free application for cellular devices or through the website iNaturalist.org. The goal of iNaturalist is to connect people to nature while generating scientifically valuable biodiversity data. Anyone can be an observer by uploading a picture of an organism (fauna or flora) they have observed! Date, time of the observation and location is automatically included in your observation if location services are activated on your device. Location information can also be added manually via the application or on the website. Observers can suggest an identification or crowdsource identifications by sharing it with the community. Projects are used to pool observations from across users providing important biodiversity information. For example, California Fish and Wildlife has several projects aimed at obtaining information on species of concern in California. Projects are also a great tool for classroom use or outreach events, such as a bioblitz or natural history day by allowing only members of the project to share their observations.

Both the website (pictured left) and the cellular application (pictured right) offer the ability to upload and organize observations, add additional information, view projects, and communicate with other naturalists.

## Calling all educators!



Welcome back to a new school year! Did you know we are happy to dispatch our Preserve Manager or a longtime volunteer for outreach programs in the classroom or other events? With the start of a new school year please contact us if you would like a desert outreach program as part of your schedule. We are happy to partner with you to develop a program that fits your needs.

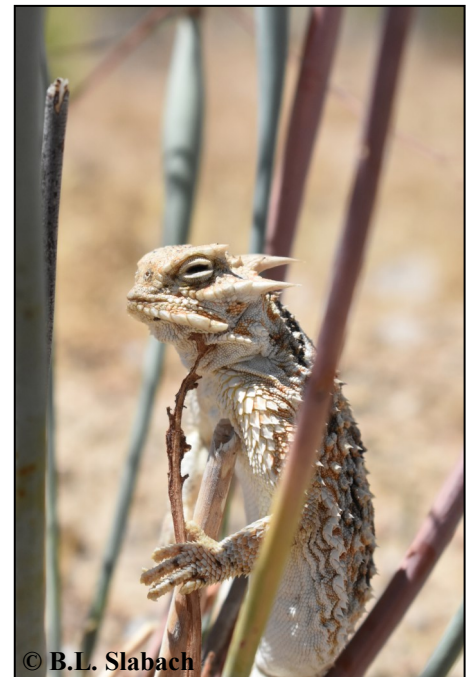
We are updating and creating new outreach materials focused on the desert tortoise and our desert ecosystem to be available as an addendum to our outreach programs or additional tools to incorporate into lessons or daily activities. We would love to know what types of activities and information would be helpful!

Contact our Preserve Manager, Dr. Slabach, with suggestions or inquiries for outreach events. Please direct all outreach inquiries to [dtpc.tortoise.tracks@gmail.com](mailto:dtpc.tortoise.tracks@gmail.com) or call our office at (951) - 683-3872.

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## Natural History Notes - Desert Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma platyrhinos*)

The desert horned lizard is the most common horned lizard found in western deserts consisting of two subspecies. The Northern (*P.p. platyrhinos*) inhabits the Great Basin Desert, whereas the southern (*P. p. calidarium*) is found in the Mojave and Sonoran Deserts, including portions of northern Baja. This species is characterized by its blunt-nose (platyrhinos translates to ‘flat nose’ in Greek) and horns that are longer than they are wide at the base of the head. These insectivores (organism that feeds mainly on insects) can be active year-round but are most active from April to July. They hibernate in loose soils to avoid extreme cold and heat but are commonly found basking in the sun. Their flat body surface provides ample sun contact and they will orient their body to maximize sun exposure – such as the lizard pictured. Females are larger than males and the breeding season occurs from April to July. Females lay 1-2 clutches of 7-13 eggs. Hatchlings emerge late July to September and are only 1” – 2” in length! Their coloration acts as a defense mechanism helping them to blend into their environment and prevent predation. When visiting the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area or a desert near you, be sure to keep look out for these splendid lizards!



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## Other News

### DTPC Email Compromise - a note from our Preserve Manager

On July 30, 2019 our email account was compromised resulting in a phishing email being sent to all email contacts. This email had the subject title "Urgent...Brittany L. Slabach" and content regarding a Gamestop gift card for a nephew. I don't even have a nephew! Given our very alert and wonderful supporters we were able to correct the issue quickly and efficiently. Our sincerest apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused. If you do notice any other fishy activity or subject matter (non-tortoise related) from our email, please do not hesitate to contact us at the office: 951-683-3872. We are continuing to monitor our email and take any steps necessary to further secure it.

## 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"/> \$25 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Benefactor       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Family     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Patron/Corporate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 Sponsor    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 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 \$_____ |

- Marketable Securities (Stock): Contact DTPC Finance Committee Chairperson, Greg Lathrop at [2redgrey@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.tortoise-tracks.org) \*



# Tortoise Tracks

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Thank you for being a member

**Membership expiration date:**



When you shop @AmazonSmile, Amazon will make a donation to Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee Inc.



[www.Facebook.com/DTPC.inc](http://www.Facebook.com/DTPC.inc)



Electronic copies of *Tortoise Tracks* are in **COLOR!**  
If you would prefer to receive an electronic copy, notify us by email at [dtpc@pacbell.net](mailto:dtpc@pacbell.net)

## Calendar of Events

- October 12, 2019 – DTPC Board meeting
- **October 19 & 20, 2019 – Fall work party!**
- October 26, 2019 - Red Rock Canyon 25 Years of Desert Conservation Event
- November 2 & 3, 2019 – Desert Tortoise Council Introduction to Desert Tortoise & Field Techniques Course is being held in Ridgecrest. For more information visit [www.deserttortoise.org](http://www.deserttortoise.org)
- January 25, 2020 – DTPC Board Meeting
- March 28, 2020 – Luncheon for Members, DTPC Board and Annual Meeting in Lancaster
- **March 29, 2020 – DTPC 45th Anniversary Celebration!**

Celebrate 45 years of tortoise conservation and stewardship with us at the DTRNA!  
More information to follow.

# GO GREEN

Receive our newsletter electronically! Electronic newsletters are received in color and 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](mailto:dtpc@pacbell.net).