



THE DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER +++ FALL, 1979  
P.O.Box 453, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 + Vol. 1, #1 + Gloria Nowak, Editor

Beginning with this issue, the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee will send out a quarterly newsletter, consisting of a report on the progress we have made, related activities, future events, the problems we still face and the means for solving them. This will be distributed to the members of the Committee and to all friends of the desert tortoise who, because of their continued support of the project, deserve to be informed of its current status.

STATE OF THE PRESERVE REPORT: After nearly 5½ years of delays, setbacks of various kinds and opposition from special interest groups, we are happy to report some definite signs of progress at last. Visible even to the passer-by is the long-awaited interpretive display center, which should be completed by the time you read this. It is an L-shaped structure, somewhat modified from the original design by the Committee. It will feature artwork by Committee member Leo Nowak and other fine artists depicting the tortoise, its various activities and its life cycle; and an array of the principal plants, animals and birds of the area. Vandal-resistant Permaloy maps will be displayed and brochures will be on hand. Restrooms and a clearly defined parking area will soon be completed. Marked and identified loop nature trails will be in evidence, and here the handicapped nature lover has not been overlooked; for at least one trail will accommodate a wheelchair. We are told by BLM that all these things will be ready in time for the tour season next spring.

LAND ACQUISITION: There were originally 16 sections to be acquired. We first obtained 1,440 acres in the northeastern portion through the efforts of The Nature Conservancy. Then, as a result of a rather costly but necessary transaction with the San Diego Gas & Electric Co., BLM added 1,580 acres. In addition, new member Bill Reed of Red Mountain is trying to purchase land to exchange with BLM for the land occupied but not owned by the homeowners of Red Mountain. Through his real estate agent he has been approaching the landowners in Section 13, an area vital to the completion of the fence on the east side, and has already arranged a swap of 5.8 acres for a 6.1-acre parcel owned by him near Boron. However, despite all this, there remains a total of some 14 square miles which must still be acquired and much of it is subdivided among many landowners, which makes the task more costly and time-consuming. Moreover, since the Committee treasury was virtually wiped out by the earlier land purchases achieved by The Nature Conservancy, it is imperative that we rebuild it as quickly as possible through tax-deductible donations and the sale of our products, including some new ones.

PRODUCT DEPARTMENT REPORT: In addition to the T-shirts, wind chimes, pendants and bolo ties, we now have a do-it-yourself needlecraft project that comes in two versions. It consists of a sketch of a tortoise standing in front of a desert plant, in a suitable-for-framing 12" square. It's available in a needlepoint kit for \$13.95 and a crewel embroidery kit for \$8.50, with both prices including the California sales tax. Both kits include yarn, needle and instructions. Also, there are 2 new "donation" products. A half-moon

shaped decal for anything from a car bumper to a child's notebook sells for a \$1.00 donation. It has a tortoise silhouette on a gold background and a message to protect it. And, there are postcards with a color photo of a tortoise in a natural setting and a future choice of designs, for 25¢ each. Fold-over note cards with a full color drawing of a tortoise by a local artist will soon be available; price as yet undetermined.

**A WELL-DESERVED HONOR:** Dr. Kristin Berry, founder and chief advisor of the Committee, was a recipient of the American Motors Conservation Award for 1979. She was one of only 3 in California and 20 in the United States to receive this honor.

Dr. Berry's UC Extension class on the desert tortoise of last April was so well received that she will undoubtedly conduct another one next spring. We will provide the information about this later on.

**GUIDED TOURS:** Those interested in group tours next spring should write to Laura Stockton, c/o the Committee, giving about 2 months' notice. These are first-come first served and are conducted from late March through May, on weekends only. Groups should consist of 15-50 persons, including well-supervised children. Pets must be left at home.

**ANNUAL BANQUET:** All interested persons are invited to attend our yearly banquet-meeting, which will be held this year at the Antelope Valley Inn in Lancaster, on Saturday, January 19th; with the meeting at 2 PM and the dinner at 6. The dinner will be \$9.00 per person, which covers everything. The deadline for reservations is January 11th. In the winter issue of this newsletter you will receive an application blank for reservations, or you may write to Betty Forgey any time, c/o the Committee.

**NEW MEMBERS:** The Committee recently acquired Karen Foster of Boron, who is working on some important assignments in the Preserve area, and the aforementioned Bill Reed of Red Mountain. Welcome to both! We are always looking for sincere, dedicated people who would like to work with the Committee. Write to us for information or an application for membership.

Best of luck to you and the tortoises till next time!

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