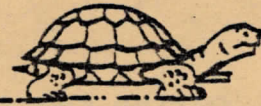


TORTOISE T-R-A-C-K-S



THE DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER + SPRING, 1981
P.O.Box 453, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 + Vol. 2, #3 + Gloria Nowak, Editor

The tortoises are out of hibernation, and it's time for us to come out of our own burrows to learn more about them and what their current status is throughout the southwest. As you can see from the attached registration forms, there are two very special events coming up which will help you accomplish both of these worthwhile objectives.

"FIELD STUDY OF THE DESERT TORTOISE: An exploration of the western Mojave Desert and its ecosystem" is the title of a two-day course taught by Dr. Kristin Berry; jointly sponsored by UC Santa Barbara Extension and the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee; at the California City Community Center the weekend of April 25-26. Enrollment deadline is April 15, and the fee is \$58 credit and \$53 non-credit. The course provides an intensive overview of life in the area, with emphasis on the natural history of the tortoise and other animal and plant species. For those seeking credit, 1.5 units are available.

THE DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL 6TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM: Holiday Inn, Riverside, California, March 28-29; followed by a field trip on March 30 to the western Mojave Desert, including the Desert Tortoise Natural Area. This Symposium is a must for all those interested in the latest information on tortoise populations in the southwest. We hope for a large turnout for all this, including the banquet at which there will be a speaker. The banquet reservation deadline is March 18.

1981 DTPC OFFICERS: President, Betty Forgey; Vice President, Laura Stockton; Recording Secretary, Rose Certini; Treasurer, Shirley Moncsko; Corresponding Secretary, Gloria Nowak.

A WORD OF THANKS: To Milton Rosenau for his contribution of \$504.49; and to Ron and Mary Ann Henry, Louise Spetnagel and Patrick A. Doheny; each for a gift of \$100.00. Also, to all who attended our annual banquet!

BLM DESERT PLAN: We promised to keep you informed of developments concerning this, but at the moment nothing is absolutely conclusive. The Plan was signed on Dec. 19, 1980; and the details were to be finalized by the end of January; but they are not known to us at this writing. As soon as definite information is available, we will pass it along to you.

STATE LANDS COMMISSION RULES AGAINST THE DESERT TORTOISE: In August of 1976, Great Western Cities, Inc. (GWC) applied to the State Lands Commission for the relinquishment of State held surface entry rights for 15,000 acres of California City Second Community. This action, required by the State Realty Board and a 1973 Court ruling, would clear title for the acreage, the majority of which has been parceled and sold by GWC. The Second Community not only contains a sizable tortoise population, but directly borders 4 miles of the eastern boundary of the Desert Tortoise Natural Area.

The mineral evaluation by the Commission indicated nothing of commercial value. The Commission attempted to relinquish the surface entry rights with a negative declaration in July, 1978. The Department of Fish & Game and the Bureau of Land Management opposed the negative declaration as inappropriate with regard to Mohave ground squirrel and desert tortoise populations.

During the fall of 1979 WESTEC Services, Inc. was hired to prepare the Environmental Impact Report. WESTEC solicited preliminary comments from various agencies and organizations, including the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, the Desert Tortoise Council and The Nature Conservancy. The solicitation letter also stated that a copy of the draft EIR would be sent to each for review.

The EIR was released in June, 1980. Neither the Committee, the Council nor the Conservancy received copies until a phone request was made a few days before the deadline. Nor did any of them receive notice of the July 8 public hearing in California City. Comments of selected organizations and agencies can be summarized as follows:

1. DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE requested a 2 to 3 mile buffer area and a physical barrier between the Natural Area and 2nd Community.

2. DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL requested a 3 mile buffer area and a physical barrier on the boundary.

3. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, RIDGECREST AREA OFFICE suggested no dogs within 3 miles of the Natural Area, no construction within 1 mile and a physical barrier.

4. DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME stated that due to wildlife damage, the State should retain surface entry rights.

During early August, a representative of BLM, Bakersfield District Office met with the Commission regarding mitigation. Apparently an agreement was reached on the possibility of GWC deeding Section 18 to the Bureau along the common boundary of the Natural Area and the 2nd Community. The Bureau could then use this section for exchange for private lands within the Natural Area.

The Finalizing Addendum to the EIR was sent in Sept., 1980, with notice of a Sept. 24 Commission hearing on the matter. The hearing was postponed until Oct. 30. The Commission voted to relinquish the surface entry rights with a less than token measure to protect wildlife. The only mitigation required was that Great Western Cities would deed Section 18 to the Bureau. While this may help in acquiring an additional 640 acres of private holdings within the Natural Area, it does nothing to protect the Natural Area wildlife from the residential dogs, children and vehicles in the development. Nothing will be done to save the tortoise population and habitat in the 48 sq. mile 2nd Community. Even the mitigation measures proposed by GWC in its EIR comments were more substantial than this!

These procedures and subsequent contacts with the Commission through the office of Assemblyman Phil Wyman indicate that the process was incompetently handled and very "shady". We have obtained legal advice and have been told that there is little chance of successful legal challenge at this point. However, the same mineral right situation applies to the California City 3rd Community, which GWC plans to put before the Commission in mid 1981. Although it is not immediately adjacent to the Natural Area, many tortoises will be killed. Further, with enough outrage and concern about both the 2nd and 3rd Communities, we may be able to pressure the Commission to insure protection of the Natural Area before relinquishing further mineral entry rights. The Committee will closely follow the process of the 3rd Community application, and will be requesting your letters of concern at the proper time...

BEST WISHES to you and the tortoises till next time!

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA EXTENSION

SANTA BARBARA

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2116-24th St., Suite #1
Bakersfield, Ca. 93301

PLEASE POST

To enroll, call
(805) 327-2227

Field Study of the Desert

Tortoise: An Exploration of the Western Mojave Desert and Its Ecosystem

EDP 04004 — X402 (1.5) (Environmental Studies)

An overview of life in the creosote and joshua tree communities of the western Mojave Desert with emphasis on the desert tortoise, a threatened species. Lectures and field work on the tortoise, rare Mojave ground squirrel, desert kit fox and other species as well as an introduction to plant life will be covered. Topics will include concepts of rare, threatened and endangered species; politics of conservation of potentially threatened species; and problems of land use management (off-road vehicles, grazing, etc.). Class includes classroom slide-lectures and guest speakers with major emphasis on the field trip study.

NOTE: In cooperation with the Desert Tortoise Committee, Inc. Fee does not include food or lodging. A packet containing information on how to dress, what to bring, camping and motel accommodations will be sent to each enrollee. Only registered students may participate. Participants will be responsible for making their own travel, camping or motel arrangements.

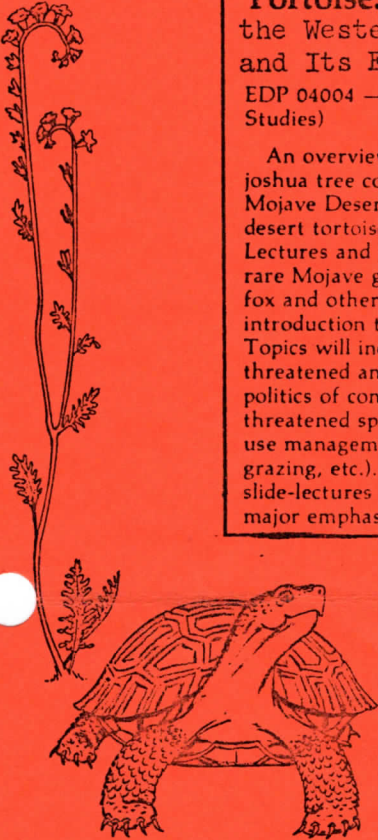
Enrollment deadline is Apr. 15.
Enrollment is limited.

KRISTIN M. BERRY, Ph.D., Research, Inventory & Studies Coordinator, California Desert Program, Bureau of Land Management, Riverside

• Sat. 8am-4pm, 7-9pm, Sun. 8am-12 noon; April 25 & 26; Community Center, 10400 Heather Blvd., California City; \$58 credit/\$53 non-credit

Recommended references: "Desert Wildflowers," Edmund C. Jaeger, or "California Desert Wildflowers," Philip A. Munz; "A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians," Robert C. Stebbins; "A Field Guide to Western Birds," Roger T. Peterson. Bring to class if available.

SUGGESTED OPTIONAL READINGS FOR THOSE UNFAMILIAR WITH THE DESERT: "The California Deserts"; "Desert Wildlife"; and "The North American Deserts"; by Edmund Jaeger, Stanford University Press.



Enrollment Application

Mail to: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA EXTENSION, Santa Barbara, CA 93106

Phone: (805) 961-3231

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO: The Regents of the University of California

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First Name and Middle Initial

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State

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Course No. and Title	Teacher	EDP No.	CR	NC	Fee
X402 Field Study of the Desert Tortoise	Berry	01410104	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$58
			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$53

VISA _____

If using VISA or MASTERCARD give Account Number

MC _____

Expiration Date

Signature if using Credit Card

The University of California complies with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681-1688), and Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 793 and 794). The University does not discriminate in its policies, procedures, or practices on the basis of race, sex, or handicap. The University, in compliance with the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 and Section 402 of the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of their age or because they are disabled veterans or veterans of the Vietnam War. The University also complies with the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Act of 1974, the Uniformed Services for Veterans Health Care Act of 1988, and the National Defense Authorization Act of 1991. The purpose of this form is to register for University Extension courses and to permit correspondence with the University and the State and Federal governments and the applicant as required by law. Furnishing all information requested on this form, with the exception of the Social Security Number, is mandatory (Federal Privacy Act of 1974). The official responsible for maintaining the requested information is: Director, University Extension, Union Hall 1833, UCSB.