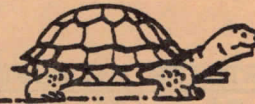


TORTOISE T-R-A-C-K-S



THE DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER +++ SUMMER/FALL, 1984
P.O.Box 453, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 + Vol. 4,#4; 5,#1 + Gloria Nowak, Editor

First, we must apologize for the fact that there was no summer newsletter, because circumstances made it advisable to omit it.

THANKS TO ALL WHO CAME TO THE FENCE PARTY #2! On April 20th and 21st, a group of Committee members and others finished the repair work which was begun on the last weekend in February. This included the last of the 41 fence breaks which were discovered by Steve Smith of the Ridgecrest BLM office. Working under Steve's capable direction were Mary and Mike Shepherd, Ron and Mary Ann Henry, George Moncsko, Carol Panlaqui and Laura Stockton, with a guest from Australia. The fact that this must be an ongoing project was demonstrated by the discovery, Sunday on the way home, of a fresh break where the fence had just been mended the day before!

Tentative plans were made at that time to survey the fence again in late October, prior to a third fence party proposed for some time in November. In the future, the Committee plans to schedule these repair sessions twice a year. Hopefully, the need for this can be reduced to once a year. Again, a belated word of thanks to all who participated in this vital endeavor.

PLEASE COME TO THE FENCE PARTY #3! Another outing with BLM to repair DTNA fence breaks is now scheduled for Sunday, November 18th. The meeting place will be the Interpretive Center at 9:00 AM. Unless there is a rash of fence cutting or breaking down, or a major flood, the Committee expects to complete the mending in one day. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are preferred for actual repair work, so interested parties can plan to carpool as necessary. Please bring lunch, drinking water, a hat, heavy gloves and if possible, wire clippers. BLM will provide all the rest of the necessary equipment.

If you would like to participate in this effort, please notify Carol Panlaqui at 229 N. Brady, Ridgecrest, CA 93555; or call her after 5:00 PM at (619) 375-4812. Do this as soon as possible, as only 6 or 8 people are needed; and be sure to give her your phone number in case of a last minute cancellation due to inclement weather.

PLAN NOW TO COME TO OUR ANNUAL BANQUET The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee annual banquet-meeting will be on Saturday, January 26, 1985 at Hodel's Buffet in Bakersfield. As always, we will present an interesting and informative program. Further information and a reservation blank will appear in the winter issue. Mark your calendar now!

WHEN YOU THINK OF CHRISTMAS, THINK OF OUR PRODUCTS! It's the time of year to plan your holiday buying, so remember that our unique fund-raising products make memorable gifts for nearly everyone on your list. These include our famous T-shirts in all sizes and a choice of 2 tortoise designs; tortoise or bird wind chimes; tortoise-design needlecraft kits, pendants and bolo ties; and posters, note cards and postcards with beautiful color photos of tortoises and other animal and plant life. In addition to these, we are pleased to announce a brand new postcard with an appealing photo of a group of the elusive kit foxes. Send for our convenient order forms and be sure to place your order early, so as to allow adequate time for delivery. Remember that when you purchase our products you are ultimately buying land to protect the tortoises.

DESERT TORTOISE PROPOSED FOR ENDANGERED LISTING On September 11th, the Defenders of Wildlife, the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Environmental Defense Fund petitioned the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) to list the desert tortoise as an endangered species throughout its remaining range in southeastern California, Arizona and southern Nevada.

Justification for the listing is based on the 838-page report, The Status of the Desert Tortoise (Gopherus agassizii) in the United States. This comprehensive report documents the drastic reduction of desert tortoise range and population densities to the point that if present land use patterns continue, the survival of the tortoise is questionable. As stated in the petition: The tortoise has declined and continues to decline as a result of human activities. Collecting and vandalism result in direct losses to tortoise populations. Habitat loss and killing result from grazing, cactus rustling, fires, careless recreational use, off-road vehicle (ORV) use, mining and energy-related development, military installations and maneuvers, urbanization, agricultural development, road and highway construction, and construction of utility and transmission corridors.

The petition identifies this as a federal concern and problem by making the following points:

1. Approximately 70% of the remaining desert tortoise habitat is under federal ownership.

2. State regulations in California and Nevada prohibit collecting of tortoises (collecting is still legal in Arizona), but there are no State regulations to deal with habitat loss.

3. No federal or State agency has addressed the cumulative impact of current land uses on the desert tortoise and its ecosystem. The petition concludes that, "...federal listing is essential to initiate meaningful protection and recovery efforts."

The endangered listing would be invaluable to our efforts toward a complete and protected natural area by requiring stricter management standards and by possibly opening new funding sources. Many of the human impacts on the tortoise, both direct and to its habitat, still threaten the desert tortoise on the DTNA.

The need for public input will occur later in the listing process, at which time you will be asked for your support.

- L.A.S.

DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE, INC.
P. O. Box 453, Ridgecrest, CA 93555

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Non-Profit
Bulk Mailing
Permit #76
Ridgecrest, CA
93555

Laura Stockton
6201 Wible Rd., #66
Bakersfield, CA 93309