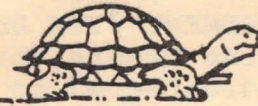


# TORTOISE T-R-A-C-K-S



THE DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER +++ FALL, 1985  
.O.Box 453, Ridgecrest, CA 93555 + Vol. 6, #1 + Gloria Nowak, Editor

FEDERAL LISTING OF THE DESERT TORTOISE AS THREATENED OR ENDANGERED: In mid-September, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service announced that federal listing of the desert tortoise is "warranted but precluded because of higher priorities." We hope that Fish & Wildlife Service employees will have the time to prepare a listing package for the tortoise soon. We will keep you informed of future developments.

INVITATION TO FENCE PARTY #4! Our next fence repair party is scheduled for November 16th and possibly 17th. We will meet at the DTNA kiosk at 9:00 AM on the 16th. If you would like to help, please bring heavy gloves and a pair of heavy duty pliers, if you have them. Otherwise, BLM will provide the necessary tools. Since we don't know at this point how many fence breaks need to be repaired, please come prepared to stay overnight and work on Sunday if you can. Be sure to bring drinking water, food and camping equipment. Four-wheel-drive vehicles are desirable but not required. We can carpool. Please let us know if you can come, and for which days. Call (619) 375-4812, (619) 327-7785 or (619) 377-4904. If you should happen to arrive late, look for a note in the visitor brochure box in the kiosk.

PLEASE PLAN TO COME TO OUR ANNUAL BANQUET! This year it will be on Saturday, January 18th at the Holiday Inn in Palmdale. The meeting will begin at 1:30, followed by dinner at 7:00 and the program at 8:00. As always, we will present an exciting and informative program related to our activities. Further details, directions and a reservation blank will appear in the winter issue. Be sure to mark your calendar!

SOME MESSAGES FROM OUR PRESIDENT: VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! There are some openings for those who would like to become active members and help us in our efforts to "promote the welfare of the desert tortoise". Some of these jobs require only a few days a year and others several days a month at most. It would depend on your interests and availability.

As you will read later in this newsletter, our signing of a cooperative management agreement with BLM will require us to perform specific tasks in the Natural Area. These include patrolling the fence and semi-annually looking for and reporting fence breaks. This is followed by a fence repair party (see above), for which more volunteers are needed. We also need those who wish to learn to give interpretive slide programs about the tortoise, and to serve as tour guides on the spring tours of the Natural Area.

In addition, we need volunteers who can attend turtle and tortoise shows for the Committee, sell products and distribute interpretive material. We would like people from many parts of the state, so that they can conveniently cover these shows. All of these above jobs can be done in as few or as many days as you are able to manage.

On a more regular basis, we need someone to handle the inventory and sale of our fund-raising products from the home. This includes ordering them and filling the mail orders. It's not an arduous task, but it is a vital one.

We also need someone willing to work on the Committee's interface with BLM, both in the Ridgecrest Area Office (which handles the DTNA) and to a lesser extent, the Riverside District Office. These positions would also mean attending the Committee meetings approximately every 6 weeks.

A project of the scope of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee has a great many needs. Only a few have been listed here. If you wish to help in any of these areas, write us at the above address...please help if you can!

AGREEMENT WITH BLM: This spring BLM started work on their 5-year update of the Desert Tortoise Natural Area Habitat Management Plan. The Committee volunteered to provide BLM with a draft plan for their use. Some of our members put in a lot of time to research and analyze the needs of the Natural Area, and produced a comprehensive draft "Combined Management Plan for the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area and Area of Critical Environmental Concern". This plan is over 40 pages in length and contains a management framework, a resource summary, current and potential impacts to the resource and all-important goals, planned actions and implementation. This plan was well received by BLM, and we now await their review and issuance of a Plan for Public Review. A big thanks and a "Well done!" to those who worked so hard on this.

Also, the Committee is in the final signature stage on another milestone in our efforts to manage the Natural Area in the best interests of the tortoise. We have completed negotiations on the agreement, and it should be in force by the time you read this. This agreement sets responsibilities for the DTPC and BLM in areas of input to BLM budget and personnel processes, land use proposals, land acquisition and tortoise population monitoring. Further, the agreement covers fence patrols and repairs, interpretive programs, trail guides and maintenance and interpretive area maintenance. Many of these items have been ongoing for years. However, this agreement formalizes our participation and aids communication and cooperation. We are very optimistic about these developments, and look forward to continuing cooperation with BLM on tortoise issues. Again, thanks to all those who helped in drafting and reviewing the agreement.

- G.E.M.

BETTY FORGEY RECEIVES CITIZENS AWARD FROM THE NATURE CONSERVANCY! Betty Forgey, a founding member of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee's Board of Trustees, received the Citizens Award from the Nature Conservancy in September, at the Conservancy's Annual Meeting, for her work with King Clone in Johnson Valley. Congratulations, Betty, for another job well done!

HOLIDAY TIME IS THE TIME TO REMEMBER OUR PRODUCTS! Need an extra gift for someone, or an unusual one for the person who "has everything"? Keep in mind our clever and original fund-raising products, with something for nearly everyone on your list. Send for our handy order forms and be sure to order early; delivery could take as long as three weeks. BEST HOLIDAY WISHES!!!

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