

Tortoise Tracks

The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Summer 2014 34:2

Volunteers make a difference at the DTPC Spring Work Party!

Article by Mary Logan



Collected trash awaiting pick up.



Clean up crew perched on the rocks.

Twenty-six volunteers arrived at the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area (DTRNA) on the morning of April 5 for the DTPC's annual Spring Work Party. They were met with a beautiful day and plenty to do! After introductions and a brief orientation to the area and the tasks at hand, the group divided into teams and caravanned to the different work sites. Most of the volunteers headed straight to Section 13, a square mile of land just inside the eastern boundary of the DTRNA. Due to a high percentage of private in-holdings in this area, Section 13 was originally included as an unfenced 'keyhole' section when the DTRNA fence was installed. After acquiring more of the private inholdings and some of the land directly east of the area, the DTPC was able to fence off the eastern boundary of the section in 2007. When the fence went up, some debris from previous camping, dumping, and target shooting remained inside. Our volunteers set about restoring the area to more natural conditions.



Teamwork! Lancaster High School students join their teacher, Glen Baumbach in removing old fencing posts.

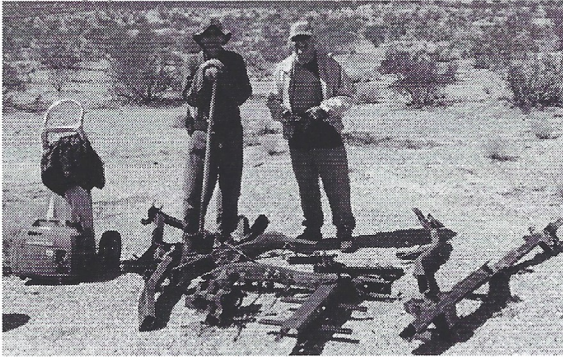
A group of six students from **Lancaster High School** with three teachers joined **Steve & Marlene Ishii** in removing some of the redundant fencing within the new fence line. Working together, the crew made quick work of 200 yards of fence and rolled it up for re-use in other areas. Upon completing this task, the group joined another crew removing trash from old camp and dump sites, scouring the area for large and small trash items. One of the more involved tasks of the day was removal of an old abandoned truck cab and chassis, much too heavy for removal in one piece. **Will Liebscher** brought out a Sawzall and generator and was able to cut these large items into pieces that could be carried to the trucks and hauled to the dump. These car parts and other scraps amounted to 760 lbs. of scrap metal removed from the area!

In the tradition of DTPC Fence Parties of old, another volunteer crew led by **Chuck Hemingway** performed fence repairs along the boundary of the DTRNA. This work, which is performed year-round as needed, is essential to preserving the integrity of a structure that has effectively prevented sheep grazing and vehicle use within the DTRNA for over thirty years.

At the end of the day, several volunteers caravanned across



(Continued from page 1)



Will and John after making clean work of the chassis with the Sawzall.

Cuddeback Dry Lake and up to the Crawford Cabin site to camp. We enjoyed a starry night, good food, and good company. The next morning, **Steve Ishii** led a land monitoring training session for 11 other volunteers to familiarize everyone with the purposes and protocols for DTPC property monitoring. After the orientation, the group divided into two teams to monitor the northern and southern portions of a beautiful 640 acre property just north of Grass Valley Wilderness and abutting the Black Hills. Volunteers recorded and photo-documented observations of wildlife and vege-

tation, as well as any potential management issues. We were pleased to find the site relatively undisturbed and filled with beautiful spring wildflowers. We were fortunate to be joined by two experienced field biologists: **Denise LaBerteaux** who expanded our known plant inventory considerably, and **Bruce Garinger**, who provided a list of all the bird species seen and heard at the site. It was a wonderful learning experience for everyone!

Thank you to all of our incredible volunteers: **Chuck Hemingway, Dave Zantiny, David Logan, Mark Bratton, Laura Stockton, Bob Parker, Allan Eggleton, Sarah Motevalli, Steve & Marlene Ishii, Kolene Dearmore, Viki Haghani, Leah Madison, Ashley Martinez, Nadire Bringas, Kimberly To, Brian McCormick, Bryan Nolasco, Laura Booth, Glen Baumbach, Steve Bergeron, Louise Raczka, Will Liebscher, John Przybyszewski, John Krafczyk, Frank Beard, Denise LaBerteaux, and Bruce Garinger.** Thank you also to **Bonny Ahern** and **Craig Bansmer** who did much of the pre-Work Party scouting to help us plan the event!



Preserve Manager & Conservation Coordinator
Mary Logan

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



Become a fan by clicking "Like" on our Page
<http://www.Facebook.com/DTPC.inc>

The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Founded 1974

Board of Directors

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| President | Ron Berger |
| Vice President | Open |
| Treasurer | Laura Stockton |
| Recording Secretary | Rachel Woodard |
| Board Member | Kristin Berry, Ph.D. |
| Board Member | Greg Lathrop |
| Board Member | Freya Reder |
| Board Member | Bob Wood |
| Board Member | Dave Zantiny |



Farewell to Founding Member Beverly Steveson 1922-2014

Bev was born on May 17, 1922, in Grants Pass, OR and passed on May 9, 2014 in Livingston, MT. Her love of nature and the outdoors began at an early age with hiking, swimming, and biking. While still in high school, she joined a group that pedaled single geared bicycles across the USA from Oregon to New York for the 1939 World's Fair.

Bev earned a teaching credential from the University of Oregon. Always a strong swimmer, she worked as a lifeguard during high school and college summer vacations. She taught at the University before taking a high school teaching and coaching job in Pendleton, OR.

After moving to Bakersfield, CA in 1960, Bev honed her photography skills. She had an adventurous spirit and was a lifelong world traveler, documenting her adventures in the Americas, Africa, Australia, the Arctic and the Antarctic with award winning photographs. One dramatic winter adventure involved camping out in the barn of homesteaders at Lonesome Lake, Canada at 30° below zero to photograph Trumpeter Swans. She shared her adventures with friends, community groups and students through slide programs and displays of photos that she printed herself. Bev also used her photographic skills to promote conservation efforts including designating wilderness areas in the Sierras, establishing the Desert Tortoise Natural Area in California and protecting Mono Lake. She won the Ansel Adams Award for Conservation Photography in 1972. For many years she provided the cover photos for the Sierra Club Kern Kaweah Chapter's monthly newsletter.

A founding member of the DTPC, Bev was actively involved in many aspects of DTPC efforts from 1973-1997. She used her expert photography skills by photographing desert habitat and wildlife. These outstanding photos were used for educational displays, slide programs and for fundraising notecards and postcards. The DTNA photo monitoring program was developed and implemented by Bev. She was a favorite among the tour guides that led tours at the DTNA; volunteered during many work parties; helped with patrolling the boundary fence; and assisted with some of the first Desert Tortoise surveys on the permanent study plots at the DTNA.

The Mojave Desert was one of Bev's favorite places and she enjoyed exploring it and sharing it with others. She planned annual camping events called "Search and Share" where the participants explored and learned about the natural and cultural history of special desert locations.

In the early 80's she further shared her interest in and concern for the desert and desert wildlife by designing and doing much of the landscaping of the Desert Tortoise Exhibit at the California Living Museum (CALM) in Bakersfield. Bev continued to help maintain it weekly for several years.

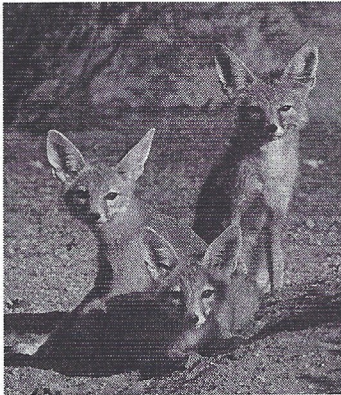
In the mid 70's Bev leased a cabin in the Inyo National Forest near Mammoth Lakes. For a number of years her cabin served as the Eastern Sierra base for hiking and riding adventures and for conservation efforts for Bev and her friends. Her photos of the area were used in several editions of the guidebook, *Mammoth*

(Continued on page 4)

It was impossible not to like Bev. Her natural friendliness and her longstanding love of the desert made her a perfect ambassador for the DTPC in its early days. My very first contact with the DTPC was in 1980 on a tour of the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area led by Bev Steveson and Laura Stockton. It's no exaggeration to say that I become an environmentalist that day! Along with Laura, Bev spent many years sharing her knowledge of the desert and the desert tortoise with countless visitors to the DTRNA. She was also instrumental in carrying DTPC's message to urban audiences through her beautiful wildlife photography. Everything she did conveyed a deep, sincere connection to the land. To watch Bev in action was to get a true sense of what grassroots environmental stewardship is all about. She will be greatly missed but her photography will be a lasting reminder of the tremendous impact of her life.

- Roger Dale

(Continued from page 3)



Desert kit foxes photographed by Bev

Bev's support and generosity in the early years of the DTPC were critical to growth and development of the organization—to generating public interest, education, and fund-raising. She leaves a wonderful legacy with her photographs of desert tortoises, kit foxes, and burrowing owls. She caught the spirit of the animals. Bev was a very special person, one who cast light and beauty on those around her. I think of her often.

- Kristin Berry

Lakes Sierra.

At 56 she got her pilot's license. She flew, often taking friends, over the desert and mountains of California and even up to see Mt. Saint Helens after it erupted.

In 1991 Bev moved to Livingston, Montana where she could pursue her passion for wildlife photography in her own back yard. After moving to MT she returned to CA during the spring for a number of years to visit the desert and Sierras and to be involved in DTPC activities. One of her last contributions was to assist with the 1997 Desert Tortoise survey at the Interpretive Center Plot.

Inspired by the enthusiasm of her Montana friends, Bev took up horseback riding at nearly 75 years of age and enjoyed exploring the surrounding mountains from this new vantage point. Bev's involvement with her new endeavor quickly became all consuming, as was typical. She even built an indoor arena for use during the months when outdoor riding was difficult. She stated that "I'm too old to wait for good weather!" Bev's Barn, as the arena is known, remains a well-used community resource. Bev herself learned to barrel race in the arena and celebrated her 80th birthday by competing in a barrel race on her mule.

In quieter moments, reading was prominent in Bev's life, and she shared the importance of books with her daughter, Linda. Bev taught herself to transcribe books for the blind into Braille and also volunteered as a program coordinator for Braille Center in Bakersfield CA. In Livingston, the Livingston-Park County Public Library expansion project became an important cause for Bev.

Bev touched the lives of many during her long life. Her enthusiasm, generosity and commitment to the environment have inspired many of us and will be missed. She chose these words for her headstone:

*Don't weep at my grave, for I am not there.
I've a date with a butterfly to dance in the air.....*

Donations may be made in her memory to [Friends of the Livingston-Park County Library](#) or to the [Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee](#) (www.tortoise-tracks.org)

Goodbye to dedicated DTPC member, Arthur Lillund, 1937–2014

Arthur Lee Lillund, age 76, resident of Bishop for 41 years, born in Michigan on August 2, 1937, passed away on March 29, 2014 at the Bishop Care Center.

"I was born, I lived, I died, Goodbye." Arthur worked as a dispatcher for the California Highway Patrol for 35 years. He was a member of Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care, and the Manny Stein Club. Arthur had a love and hobby of collecting snakes.

Arthur was a very kind and dedicated member of the DTPC. His regular contributions have greatly supported DTPC programs and operations over the past 10 years. He was an active supporter of many other good causes and played a vital role in [Eastern Sierra Wildlife Care](#), a wildlife rehabilitation and education organization. He will be missed.

DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE
4067 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

Contact: Ron Berger
Phone: 951-683-3872

For Immediate Release

June 30, 2014

**DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE NAMES DR. MOSHEH WOLF
PRESERVE MANAGER AND CONSERVATION COORDINATOR**

(Riverside, CA)--- The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc. (DTPC), co-manager with the Bureau of Land Management of the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area (DTRNA), today announced that Dr. Mosheh Wolf, will assume the position of Preserve Manager and Conservation Coordinator, effective on August 12, 2014. Dr. Wolf will replace Mary Kotschwar Logan, who is leaving to pursue other interests.

Dr. Wolf earned his BSc Biology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel in 1988, his MSc (Cum Laude) in Environmental Biology, from the same institution in 1993, and his Ph.D in Animal Biology from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2003. Most recently, he has been a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Urban Planning and Policy at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Ron Berger, DTPC President, said that Dr. Wolf would focus on raising the necessary capital and expanding the DTRNA and other preserves to help insure the preservation and continued viability of the dwindling population in the wild of Agassiz's Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), as well as the Mohave Ground Squirrel and other species unique to the California desert.

"The DTPC Board is very excited that Dr. Wolf will be joining us in this important role at this pivotal point in protecting the native habitat of the Desert Tortoise," Berger said. "We wish Mary Kotschwar Logan the best of success in the future, thank her for the excellent work she did while at DTPC, and are grateful for her support during the transition to Dr. Wolf. We hope she will continue to remain involved with DTPC on the many projects of interest to her," Berger said.

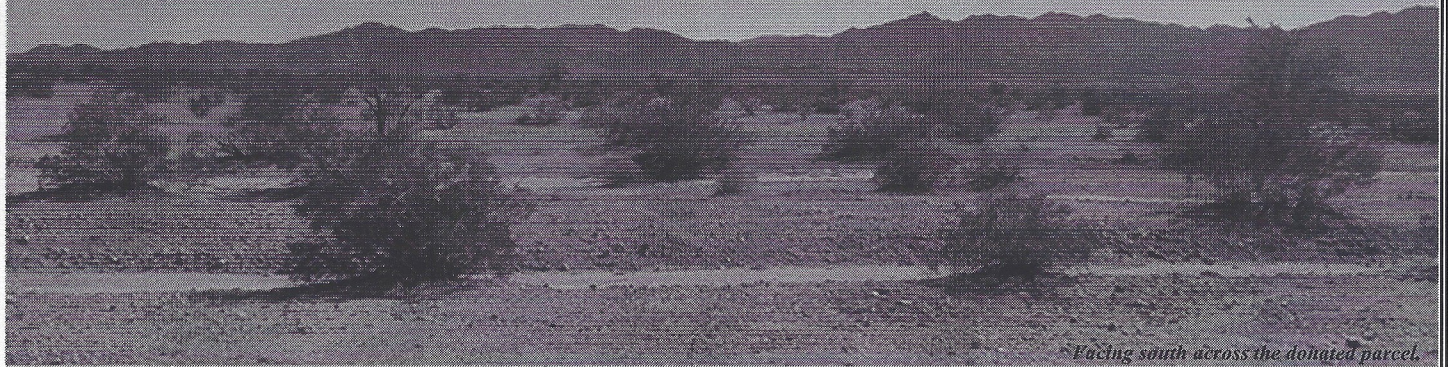
###

The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc. (DTPC) was founded in 1974 to (a) promote the welfare of the California State Reptile, the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), in its native wild state in the southwestern United States; (b) establish and/or assist in establishment of Preserves for the desert tortoise in locations within the southwestern United States where there are habitats and ecosystems which support it; (c) provide information, education and research regarding ecosystems critical to the desert tortoise and to associated animal and plant species that may be included in these ecosystems; (d) develop and implement management programs for preserves, including other land associated with any preserve, to protect the desert tortoise and the biodiversity of the ecosystems in which it lives; and to (e) foster and publicize the issues for these preserves for selected forms of recreation, education, conservations and research.

While the primary focus of the DTPC has been the conservation of the desert tortoise, the organization has expanded its habitat acquisition and management efforts to protect plant and animal species that occur within the natural ecosystems of the tortoise. Since 1990, the DTPC has acquired and managed habitat for the conservation of Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*) and burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), and to preserve desert washes. The DTPC sponsors on-going research efforts on various wildlife species and plant communities inside and outside the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area (DTRNA), as well as evaluations of the effectiveness of conservation measures, such as protective fencing and habitat restoration. The DTPC also conducts educational programs, including co-sponsoring a Naturalist at the DTRNA during spring visitation season, outreach presentations and events throughout southern California, and the creation and installation of multi-media educational displays at desert access areas.

Additional Information: Please visit us at www.tortoise-tracks.org.

20 Acres Donated for Desert Tortoise Conservation



Facing south across the donated parcel.

The DTPC would like to thank **Dennis, Larry, Alice, and Norman Clark** for donating their family's 20 acre property, located near Desert Center in Riverside County, California. **Alice Clark Schmidt** writes that her grandfather, **George Eltiste**, a long time citrus farmer and resident of Indio, purchased the property many decades ago. The family grew up visiting the desert area, learning a great deal about desert living and the critters that call it home—specifically the desert tortoise. Her family has fond memories of their time in the desert and thought it might be fitting to donate the land to an organization helping to preserve the area and its native flora and fauna.

DTPC Preserve Manager, **Mary Logan**, and volunteers **Steve Ishii, Bonny Ahern, and Craig Bansmer** conducted baseline monitoring of the parcel in November 2013. The property is undeveloped Sonoran creosote bush scrub and desert dry wash woodland. While walking through the property, the team of monitors located a few potential desert tortoise burrows and an active burrow with recent tortoise tracks in the nearby wash. The parcel is a wonderful addition to the DTPC's Chuckwalla Preserve Complex.

DTPC Calendar of Events

September 6, 2014: DTPC Board of Directors Meeting, Riverside, CA

October 25 - 26, 2014: DTPC Fall Work Party, Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area

December 6, 2014: DTPC Board of Directors Meeting, Riverside, CA

The DTPC would like to thank the following volunteers:

Chuck Hemingway	Laura Booth	Denise LaBerteaux	Louise Raczka
Laura Stockton	Mark Bratton	Will Liebscher	Kimberly To
Dave Zantiny	Nadire Bringas	Leah Madison	Charlie Massieon
David Logan	Kolene Dearmore	Ashley Martinez	Ron Berger
Bonny Ahern	Allan Eggleton	Brian McCormick	Rachel Woodard
Glen Baumbach	Bruce Garlinger	Sarah Motevalli	Kristin Berry
Craig Bansmer	Viki Haghani	Bryan Nolasco	Greg Lathrop
Frank Bedard	Steve & Marlene Ishii	Bob Parker	Freya Reder
Steve Bergeron	John Krafczyk	John Przybyszewski	Robert Wood

More information for each event can be found by calling (951) 683-3872 or sending an email to dtpc@pacbell.net.

For Immediate Release, March 31, 2014

Contacts: Lisa Belenky, Center for Biological Diversity, (415) 385-5694, lbelenky@biologicaldiversity.org
Karen Schambach, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, (530) 305-0503
Terry Frewin, Sierra Club, (805) 966-3754

Lawsuit Launched Over BLM's Failure to Report Threats to Desert Tortoise, Other Imperiled Species in California Deserts

San Francisco— Environmental groups filed a notice of intent to sue the U.S. Bureau of Land Management today for failing for seven years to report impacts to the desert tortoise and similarly threatened and endangered species from off-road vehicles, cattle grazing and other activities in California's deserts.

The Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility and Desert Survivors recently learned that the BLM has failed to submit annual reports to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for years despite legal obligations to do so under the Endangered Species Act — a failure that puts imperiled species at risk.

"The Bureau of Land Management has shrugged off its duty to report impacts of grazing and off-road vehicle use on protected species on our public lands," said Lisa Belenky, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity. "BLM says it's committed to conserving species and habitats in California deserts — yet it has failed to comply with even the most basic requirements for management of desert tortoises and other rare and vulnerable wildlife."

The BLM is required to monitor impacts to threatened and endangered species and their habitats and report those impacts — such as the number of animals injured and killed — to the Fish and Wildlife Service annually. Its purview includes activities carried out under numerous plan amendments (the West Mojave Plan, Northern and Eastern Colorado Plan, Northern and Eastern Mojave Plan and Coachella Valley Plan, for instance). The Bureau was expressly required to develop new monitoring protocols, but has apparently failed to develop or implement monitoring plans that track effects of activities like off-road vehicle use and grazing on endangered and threatened species like the desert tortoise, Peninsular bighorn sheep and Lane Mountain milk vetch.

Without the required monitoring and reporting, neither agency can know how many threatened and endangered species are being harmed by various activities or what steps might be taken to reduce that harm. Without monitoring and reporting, vulnerable species could be pushed closer to extinction.

"Without accurate monitoring results and reporting, there is no way to evaluate the harm to endangered species that is occurring and therefore no way to modify activities to decrease harm," said Karen Schambach of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility.

"Seven years of impacts, absent monitoring and changes in management, could doom critically endangered species," said Terry Frewin of the Sierra Club. "The BLM's abdication of legal requirements and Fish and Wildlife Service's neglect of enforcement is setting up a crisis for these species already teetering on the brink of extinction."

Learn more about the Center's Public Lands program.

The Center for Biological Diversity is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 675,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.



Tortoise Tracks

THE DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE
4067 MISSION INN AVENUE
RIVERSIDE, CALIFORNIA 92501

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
RIVERSIDE, CA
PERMIT NO. 3216

Address Service Requested



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.

DESERT TORTOISE PRESERVE COMMITTEE, INC.

MEMBERSHIP/DONOR FORM

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____

DATE _____
RENEWAL
NEW

Individual membership \$ 20 annually []
Family membership \$ 30 annually []
Sponsor membership \$ 50 annually []
Benefactor membership \$ 75 annually []
Patron membership \$100 annually []
Corporate membership \$100 annually []
Life \$500

Membership Dues \$ _____
Additional Donation \$ _____
Total Enclosed \$ _____

DONATION ONLY
Enclosed is my donation of \$ _____

Please make checks payable to DTPC and mail to:
DTPC, 4067 Mission Inn Avenue, Riverside, CA 92501

The DTPC is an IRS recognized tax-exempt 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation (tax ID 23-7413415). All contributions are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

All contributors receive the quarterly newsletter *Tortoise Tracks*.

Membership and donor information are kept confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties.

I WANT TO VOLUNTEER

My area of interest/expertise is:

My E-mail address is: