



THE DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2005
OUR 31ST YEAR

Our Goal: To assure the continued survival of viable populations of the desert tortoise throughout its range.

DTC'S HANDLING, MONITORING & SURVEYING WORKSHOP

October 22-23, 2005, Ridgecrest, California

The Desert Tortoise Council Workshops are held once a year in the fall. Our next workshop is scheduled for October 22 to 23, 2005, in Ridgecrest, California.

The Desert Tortoise Council's two-day workshops are structured to provide information on the handling, monitoring, surveying, and biology of desert tortoises. Instructors include: Desert Tortoise Council officers, public and private sector biologists, and personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), and Arizona Game and Fish Department.

The DTC Tortoise Handling Workshops are recognized by the USFWS and CDFG, but a certificate of attendance and participation **does not guarantee** a USFWS or CDFG permit. However, completion of the Workshop should help with the permitting process.

If you would like to attend, please contact us via e-mail at Bailey0714@earthlink.net. THE WORKSHOP IS FULL. We will now be taking names for the waiting list. **THERE WILL BE ABSOLUTELY NO WALK-INS AT REGISTRATION.** You need to be registered before you make the trip to Ridgecrest. Remember, we are a nonprofit organization that is trying to make the registration process fair and easy for everyone involved.

TANYA (BRIDGES) EGAN

Tanya (Bridges) Egan, member of the Desert Tortoise Council, wildlife biologist, and desert tortoise lover, passed away Monday, July 11 after a courageous 3-year battle with lymphoma. She leaves her husband Tom Egan (also a DTC member), and her two daughters, Kynna and Kiley, brother Brian and his wife Jen, her parents, Roy Jr., and Benita Bridges; her grandparents, Roy Sr. and Elizabeth Bridges, many cousins, in-laws, and friends. In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Desert Tortoise Council and the Lymphoma Research Foundation of America.

www.deserttortoise.org

MEDIA REQUEST

Ky Plaskon, Reporter with Nevada Public Radio is looking for audio referred to in the 1976 proceedings of the Desert Tortoise Council. The presentation was by Robert Patterson and referenced vocalizations of the desert tortoise. He would like to contact Mr. Patterson or someone who can provide audio of the tortoise's vocalizations.

Can anyone help? This could be good publicity for the desert tortoise. **He is on a deadline.** His contact information is below.

Ky Plaskon, Reporter
News 88.9 KNPR
Nevada Public Radio
Office: 702-258-9895 x 130
Cell: 702-612-6144
Fax: 702-258-5646

31ST ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM IN TUCSON IN 2006

The Annual Symposium will return to Tucson for the 31st meeting. The dates are Thursday February 17 through Monday, February 20. The 2006 Symposium will be held at the Radisson Hotel City Center, downtown, 15 minutes from the airport, and 0.1 miles from Interstate 10. Tucson is also an easy 2-hour drive from the Phoenix airport.

Hotel information can be found at:
<http://radisson.com/tucsonaz>
and information on Tucson can be found at:
<http://www.visittucson.org>

The Current Board of Directors of the Desert Tortoise Council

Senior Co-Chair	Doug Duncan
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Webmaster	Michael Connor

NEW DTC ADDRESS

The DTC has a new address. All mail correspondence should be sent to this address:

Desert Tortoise Council
P.O. Box 3273
Beaumont, CA 92223

FUTURE ANNUAL SYMPOSIA

The symposia location for 2007 and beyond has not been set. Suggestions or bids for future symposia locations and venues will be gratefully accepted. The Board of Directors is researching several locations: Palm Springs, Las Vegas, St. George, and Laughlin.

DAVID J. MORAFKA MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

In honor and memory of Dr. David J. Morafka, distinguished herpetologist and authority on North American gopher tortoises, the Desert Tortoise Council, with the aid of several donors, has established a scholarship to help support graduate student research that contributes to the understanding, management, and conservation of the desert tortoise, *Gopherus agassizii*.

The scholarship amount of \$2,000 will be awarded at the Desert Tortoise Council's Annual Symposium, depending on the availability of funding and an appropriate recipient.

To be eligible, applicants must be graduate students enrolled in a Master's or Doctoral program at an accredited university. They must agree to present a report on the results of the research in which scholarship funds were used at a future symposium of the Desert Tortoise Council.

Applications will be evaluated on the potential of the research to contribute to the biological knowledge of the desert tortoise, and to its management and conservation. Essential conditions are the importance and originality of the research problem, design of sampling and analysis, preliminary data supporting the feasibility of the research, and the likelihood of success.

Application Procedure:

1. Download an application form. <http://deserttortoise.org/awards/morafkascholarship.pdf>
2. Provide all information requested on the application, including a description of the research project in no more than 1,200 words.

3. Applications must be accompanied by three letters of recommendation, one of which must be from the applicant's major professor or research advisor. The letters must be in sealed envelopes addressed to the "Morafka Scholarship Selection Committee" with the recommenders' signatures across the flaps.

4. Completed application materials must be submitted by **November 1, 2005**, to the Desert Tortoise Council, P.O. Box 3273, Beaumont, CA 92223.

5. A scholarship recipient will be selected by a committee of Desert Tortoise biologists appointed by the Desert Tortoise Council Board of Directors.

6. The scholarship recipient will be notified of their award by February 1, 2006, and the award will be presented at the 2006 Desert Tortoise Council Symposium.

WIGWAM CREEK TORTOISE PRESERVE

Wigwam Creek is a middle school in the Litchfield Elementary School District (Phoenix). The science teacher, Jonathan Schmadeke, helped students design and construct a habitat for desert tortoises with the help of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The preserve was made possible by donations from local area businesses, non-profit organizations, and the student council. Mr. Schmadeke and various 7th and 8th grade students donated their time and talents to design, plan and construct the tortoise habitat.

At this time, the preserve is home to three desert tortoises. Two of the tortoises were adopted from Arizona Game and Fish. The

Jordan family donated the third baby tortoise. More information can be found at this link: <http://www.lesd.k12.az.us/WC/Schmadeke/Labs/Tortoise/Tortoise%20Preserve.htm>

CONSERVATION NEWS

* * * * *

BLM Publishes Final Environmental Impact Study on Changes to Grazing Regulations

NOTE: Parenthetical, italicized inserts are by the newsletter editor. Italicized text is from an original draft of the final environmental impact statement, which is on Al Franken's web page (*among others*) as a guest blog at: <http://shows.airamericaradio.com/alfrankenshow/blog/344228>

The BLM announced the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) to support amendments of the regulations governing grazing administration. The analysis provided in the FEIS is intended to inform the public of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on the human environment of the proposed action and each alternative.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement is available for review through July 18, 2005. Copies of the FEIS are available at BLM State Offices in 10 western states and the BLM Washington DC office. If you have Internet access, you can download the FEIS by going to <http://www.blm.gov/grazing> and follow the directions found at there.

During the nine years since implementation of the 1995 grazing reforms, a number of concerns have been raised regarding grazing

management. BLM's stated purpose of the rule making is to address a variety of the issues related to the current regulatory scheme without altering the fundamental structure of the grazing regulations. In other words, BLM claims to be adjusting rather than conducting a major overhaul of the grazing regulations (*then why an EIS?*)

The key amendments of the regulations governing grazing administration are intended to:

- make clear that BLM managers will document their consideration of the relevant social, cultural, and economic consequences of decisions affecting grazing, consistent with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (*this is new?*); *In terms of improving working relationships with permittees and lessees, explicitly stating and emphasizing in the grazing regulations that the economic, social, and cultural elements are considered when making grazing decisions will tend to emphasize these considerations over natural resources, such as wildlife and special status species.*
- allow the BLM and a grazing permittee to share title of certain permanent range projects, such as a fence, well, or pipeline, if they are constructed under what is known as a Cooperative Range Improvement Agreement; *Range project ownership has significant meaning with respect to a livestock operator's right to be there. That is, ownership of water or range projects gives the livestock operator the right to be there, and any change in that right results in a "take." "Take" results in the permittee either being allowed to graze regardless of range condition and thus*

adversely impacting wildlife resources or the permittee must be compensated. In the cases of Hage v. United States, 35 Fed. Cl. 147, 180 (1996) and Hage v. United States, 42 Fed. Cl. 249 (1998), the court held that the operator indeed had ownership of water rights and therefore the right to graze to utilize that water. Therefore, by establishing ownership of water or range projects, the livestock operator will have the right to graze, and this greatly diminishes the ability of the BLM to regulate grazing. It will also create long-term impacts to wildlife resources. Allowing permittees joint ownership of the vegetation on public lands would give them ownership and, therefore, a right to "take" that vegetation regardless of adverse impacts to wildlife resources.

- phase in livestock grazing decreases and increases of more than 10 percent over a five-year period unless a livestock operator agrees to a shorter period, or unless a quicker phase-in is necessary under existing law to protect the land's resources;
Amending when BLM will make changes in grazing management when land health standards are not met, from the present requirement of the next grazing season to 24 months, and that any adjustment in active use in excess of 10% must be implemented over a 5-year period, could have significant and long-term adverse effects upon wildlife resources and biological biodiversity. This could be especially problematic for many of the special status species on public lands, especially plants.
- expand the definition of "grazing preference" to include an amount of forage on public lands attached to a

rancher's private "base" property, which can be land or water (*see above note*); require both standards assessments and monitoring of resource conditions to support BLM evaluations of whether an allotment is meeting rangeland health standards;

Grazing decisions would require not only a land health assessment, but also monitoring data, usually a minimum of two to three years. BLM, in fact, lacks sufficient funding and staffing to perform adequate monitoring.

- allow up to 24 months, instead of before the start of the next grazing season, for the BLM to analyze and formulate an appropriate course of action that will correct a grazing allotment's failure to meet rangeland health standards;
- remove the current three- consecutive-year limit on temporary non-use of a grazing permit by allowing livestock operators to apply for non-use for up to one year at a time, whether for conservation or business purposes, with no limit on the number of consecutive years;
- eliminate, in compliance with Federal court rulings, existing regulatory provisions that allow the BLM to issue long-term "conservation use" permits;
- make clear how the BLM will authorize grazing if a BLM decision affecting a grazing permit is "stayed" (postponed) pending administrative appeal;
Staying decisions before resolving an appeal will have significant adverse impacts upon such listed species as Lahontan cutthroat trout, desert tortoise, southwestern willow flycatcher, Bell's vireo, and countless other threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate plant species.
- clarify that if a livestock operator is convicted of violating a Federal, State,

or other law, and if the violation occurs while he is engaged in grazing-related activities, the BLM may take action against his grazing permit or lease only if the violation occurred on the BLM-managed allotment where the operator is authorized to graze;

- improve efficiency in the BLM's management of public lands grazing by focusing the role of the interested public on planning decisions and reports that influence daily management, rather than on daily management decisions themselves;
The requirement for the BLM to cooperate with State, local, or county established grazing boards in reviewing range projects and allotment management plans on public lands will result in giving grazing permittees greater access to the decision making process at the expense of conservation groups.
- provide greater flexibility to the Federal government to negotiate with cooperators and States when developing stock water and acquiring livestock water rights by removing the current requirement that the BLM seek ownership of these rights where allowed by state law;
- clarify that a biological assessment of the BLM, prepared in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, is not a decision of the Bureau and therefore is not subject to protests and appeals (*a good thing!*);
- and increase certain service fees to reflect more accurately the cost of grazing administration.

Federal Register: June 17, 2005; Volume 70 (116):35299-35300.

World-renowned Scientists Caution Senate on Endangered Species Protection

Endangered Species Act Called "Most Important" Tool Against Extinction

Led by Harvard University's E. O. Wilson, 10 prominent scientists in biology and other environmental fields today called on the U. S. Senate to strengthen the Endangered Species Act, rather than heed industry calls to weaken it, to help stem a worldwide mass extinction crisis. Today's letter stands in stark contrast to a report by House Resources Committee Chairman Richard Pombo opposing the Act, noting instead the law's success as an "alarm system" and bulwark against the finality of extinction. The letter can be found at: <http://www.saveesa.org/letter.pdf>

"The Endangered Species Act represents our nation's most determined effort to take responsibility for preserving its precious biological diversity. By offering strict federal protections to the species that are included on the list, the government has drawn a line which it will not allow human pressures to cross over. That line is extinction," the letter reads. "In both its scope and its irreversibility, extinction is the most frightening, most conclusive word in our language. When a species has been declared extinct, not only have all its individuals died, but the possibility of any such individuals ever existing again has been foreclosed. The variety of life with which we share the earth is sadly in rapid decline. Life is grounded in biological diversity, and the fate of this diversity, which created and sustains us, is now in our hands."

The new report prepared for Chairman Pombo by his staff criticized rates of species recovery under the Act, but failed to note that the Endangered Species Act has been a

phenomenal success at its primary purpose, the prevention of extinction. Of the more than 1,800 species under the Act's protections, only nine have been declared extinct, a 99 percent success rate. The Pombo report also fails to highlight chronic under funding of recovery programs by Congress and rampant political manipulation of the Act's implementation over the past four years that has devastated morale within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"We hope Congressman Pombo is serious about improving Congress' record on recovery, because we join him in looking for ways to get species that are in trouble out of the Act's emergency room and back to good health" said Rodger Schlickeisen, President of Defenders of Wildlife. "But he needs to recognize that before you can recover a species, you must keep it from tumbling over the final brink to extinction, and that's the Act's most important function, at which it has been extremely successful."

The letter is signed by E.O. Wilson (Harvard University), Jared Diamond (UCLA), Paul R. Ehrlich (Stanford University), Howard Mooney (Stanford University), Stuart Pimm (Duke University), David Simberloff (University of Tennessee), Peter Raven (Missouri Botanical Gardens & University of Missouri), Gordon Orians (University of Washington), David Wilcove (Princeton University), and James T. Carlton (Williams College-Mystic Seaport).

**Former Fish & Wildlife Director
Warns Senate Against Weakening
Species Protection**

Clark Says Act Has Rescued Hundreds of
Species from Extinction

Defenders of Wildlife Executive Vice President Jamie Rappaport Clark told the U.S. Senate on May 19, 2005, that the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has prevented hundreds of species from tipping over the brink to extinction and that

political interference in the Act's implementation has wrecked morale within the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an agency she once headed. Clark's testimony before the Senate Fisheries, Wildlife, and Water Subcommittee noted that of more than 1,800 species that have been under the Act's protection, only nine have been declared extinct, a phenomenal 99 percent success rate.

"The Act's opponents have it exactly backwards. The Endangered Species Act is the alarm bell, not the cause of the emergency," Clark said. "When that alarm sounds, it means we are driving species toward extinction, increasing the risk to the web of life, and therefore to ourselves."

Clark noted that the ESA is the nation's primary tool to address the growing extinction crisis that virtually all professional biologists warn has begun. She pointed to a letter to the Subcommittee leadership yesterday from E. O. Wilson of Harvard and nine other prominent scientists that outlined the magnitude of the problem. While mammals get the most attention, everything is affected: fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects, and plants as well. By Duke University professor Stuart Pimm's count, for example, 11 percent of birds, or 1,100 species out of the world's nearly 10,000, teeter on the edge of extinction; some of these 1,100 are not expected to live far into this century.

"When the nation rejoiced last month at the return of the Ivory-billed woodpecker, Interior Secretary Norton said that we rarely have a second chance to save wildlife from extinction. But the Endangered Species Act is all about first chances to do that, about preventing wildlife extinction now, just in case nature is out of miracles," Clark said.

She testified to the Act's tremendous record of stemming the tide of extinction, while noting a number of things it was never designed to do. The Endangered Species Act was never intended to prevent species from becoming

threatened or endangered; that is the job of "other conservation laws" those that protect our water, air, and land. The Endangered Species Act is meant to prevent extinction when we have failed at-risk species by not passing, not enforcing, not implementing, or not funding those other measures."

She also noted that the Act is still assisting at-risk species, despite pervasive political interference over the past four years with the science and implementation of the Act, and that this interference has devastated morale within the Fish and Wildlife Service.

"Never have I seen so many decisions overturned, so much scientific advice ignored, and so much intrusion into the daily work of rank and file Fish and Wildlife Service professionals as I do today, all by political appointees," she testified. "I worked side-by-side with these dedicated, professional people for many years. I know how much they are struggling, how frustrated they are because they can't do their jobs. They tell me. I talk with these folks and a picture emerges of an agency under siege from within, an agency, created and designed to protect our nation's wildlife heritage, now seemingly more concerned with protecting the interests of those for whom wildlife and habitat are obstacles to be overcome on the way to a bigger bottom line."

Clark noted a number of areas in which positive improvements could be made to the Act, so that it can work better for all stakeholders. But she cautioned against efforts to undermine the Act under the rhetoric of "reform." She noted moves to destroy the nation's ability to protect habitat for species at risk, as laid out in a bill last year by Rep. Dennis Cardoza, or to subject scientific work within the Act to explicit political oversight, as envisioned in legislation in the last Congress by Rep. Greg Walden and Senator Gordon Smith.

Paper published in BioScience on the effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act

An analysis of the conservation status of 1,095 species that have been protected under the U. S. Endangered Species Act (ESA) indicates that those that have been given more protection under the act are more likely to be improving and less likely to be declining than species given less protection. The study, [The Effectiveness of the Endangered Species Act: A Quantitative Analysis](#), by Martin F. J. Taylor, Kieran F. Suckling, and Jeffrey J. Rachlinski, affirms the effectiveness of some controversial aspects of the act for conservation. The results could inform various efforts now under way in Congress to amend the act.

The study finds that the longer species were listed under the act, the more likely they were to be improving in status and the less likely to be declining, suggesting ESA conservation measures act cumulatively over time. Separately, species for which "critical habitat" had been designated for two or more years appeared more likely to be improving and less likely to be declining than species that did not have critical habitat for at least two years. Likewise, species that had recovery plans for two or more years appeared more likely to be improving and less likely to be declining than others, and species with dedicated recovery plans appeared to fare better than species protected by multi-species recovery plans. Other protections afforded by the ESA, such as protection of individual animals from unregulated "take," also had apparently beneficial effects on species' conservation status. The benefits of ESA protections did not appear to favor animals over plants. Taylor and his coauthors urge that the \$153 million estimated cost to complete work on the backlog of ESA listings and critical habitat designations be fully funded, and endorse a recommendation that the recovery program budget be increased by \$300 million.

The study is described in detail in the April 2005 issue of BioScience, the monthly journal

of the American Institute of Biological Sciences.

“Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed. It is a many faceted treasure, of value to scholars, scientists, and nature lovers alike, and it forms a vital part of the heritage we all share as Americans.”

President Richard Nixon, on signing the Endangered Species Act

Editors note: *One of the Endangered Species Act reform proposals would lessen protection for species listed as threatened. The Mojave population of the desert tortoise is listed under the ESA as a threatened species.*

Inaugural Issue of the Army's Threatened and Endangered Species Research Update Newsletter

This newsletter contains a compilation of the Army's ongoing threatened and endangered species research program. Through this semiannual newsletter, the Army wishes to inform the many persons in the Department of Defense who have endangered species management responsibilities about research progress addressing these species issues.

The first issue contains an overview of the Army's threatened and endangered species research program, a short synopsis of several ongoing research efforts (*including one on the desert tortoise*), and a list of publications that have either been released since initiation of the research program, or that will be released in the near future (and how to secure copies of these reports).

The initial mailing list consisted of those land managers who administer lands inhabited by the Army's high priority listed species (*including desert tortoise*); but they expanded the mailing list to include others who

might benefit from the ongoing research investment.

Steve Hodapp, Program Manager, Army Threatened and Endangered Species Research Program, (217) 373-7228, (217) 373-7266 (fax)

steve.e.hodapp@erdc.usace.army.mil

CALL FOR PAPERS!

A session on "Ecology and Management of Wildlife in the Desert Ecosystem" is planned for the 2006 Annual Meeting of the Western Section of The Wildlife Society (session title is subject to change). The meeting will be held February 7 to 11, 2006, in Sacramento (TENTATIVE session date is Friday, Feb. 10). They expect to offer a diverse selection of papers from the Mojave, Sonoran, and Great Basin Deserts. The session may be either a full or half day, depending upon number and quality of abstracts submitted.

TWS-West meetings in Sacramento tend to attract large audiences (more than 900 in 2001), so this will be an excellent opportunity to publicize results of research and management actions on desert tortoises and their management to a larger, more general audience. All presenters will be eligible to publish in the 2006 Transactions, which are peer reviewed and published annually by the Western Section. As a membership benefit, all members of the Western Section receive a copy and page charges are waived if you publish in the Transactions. Papers are due by 1 May, 2006, and manuscript guidelines are posted on the Section's web site at: www.tws-west.org.

Potential speakers are requested at this time. Students welcome! TWS-West will strive to have an assortment of papers from different habitats, species groups, and methodologies. Ideally, the Mojave, Sonoran, and Great Basin Ecosystems will all be represented. Not too

many birds, not too many mammals, not too much from any region. Presentations should feature "state of the art" techniques, significant ecological findings, sustainable resource management, and more. For this particular session, presentations are limited to those projects that were (or are being) conducted in the deserts of the Western U.S. Several other sessions will be available for papers on other subjects (a Call for Papers will be available, check <http://www.tws-west.org/> in September).

If you're interested in presenting a 20-minute paper to an audience of professional wildlife biologists, please submit name, affiliation, phone, e-mail, proposed title, and a brief explanation of the project (an abstract is absolutely fine, and will eventually be required). Also, discuss, if you know, whether you intend to use PowerPoint, 35-mm slides, or another type of presentation. Initial submission must be via e-mail or fax, only (fax requires a complete cover sheet).

FIRST CUT-OFF DATE: Friday, 2 September, 2005.

Need additional information? Or submit above info to:

Session Chairs:

Rhys Evans	Amy Fesnock
U.S. Marine Corps, Joshua Tree National Park	
Twentynine Palms, CA	
(760) 830-7396 x234	(760) 367-5578
Fax: (760) 830-5718	
rhyse@adelphia.net	amy.fesnock@nps.gov

**Desert Tortoise Finds Home in the
Lonely Triangle**

By Sylvia Renfro

“Once the last individual of a race of living things breathes no more, another heaven and earth must pass away before such a one can be seen again.” William Beebe

For 200 million years desert tortoises have lumbered across the earth. The ancient reptiles are uniquely adapted to thrive in one of North America’s most inhospitable environments – the Sonoran and Mojave Deserts of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and Mexico.

Extremes of temperature, drought, flashfloods, sandstorms, and alkaline soil? No problem. The tortoise burrows to escape inclement weather; holds water in its bladder, then reabsorbs the liquid during dry spells; feasts on wild flowers and grasses during the spring and summer; and hibernates in the winter.

It seems Mother Nature has prepared the tortoise for any hardship or hazard. Well, all but one -- the encroachment of man.

Early this spring, Lorissa Longfellow and I set out on a daylong journey into the heart of the Mojave National Preserve. Lorissa is a professional photographer who specializes in images of ghost towns, national parks of the Southwest, and man-made objects reclaimed by nature. I’m a newly published author whose first book is set in the preserve.

Located east of Barstow and west of Needles, the preserve is enclosed in the triangle formed by I-40, I-15, and the Nevada State line, hence its nickname, “The Lonely Triangle.” It is home to an incredible variety of desert plants and animals, including the reclusive desert tortoise.

Our first stop was the visitor center at Hole in the Wall, where we chatted with Ranger Chris Burns and picked up some literature about the preserve. A current issue of their newsletter offered these tips to park visitors concerning desert tortoises.

1. Do not pick up or harass a tortoise: observe it from a distance. Tortoises store water in their bladders and can reabsorb the liquid during a drought. When frightened,



they frequently empty their bladders. Loss of this important water source can be fatal.

2. Check under your vehicle before driving away. Tortoises enjoy the shade under your car on a hot day.

3. Observe posted speed limits, and be especially watchful during and after rainstorms, when tortoises often enter roadways to drink from puddles.

4. Keep vehicles on established roads only. Vehicles can crush tortoise burrows, killing the tortoises and eggs within.

Although turtles and tortoises are the world's oldest living reptiles, they've run into tough times recently. As more people trade city life for the fresh air and wide-open spaces of the desert, places like the Mojave National Preserve have become increasingly important to the survival of desert tortoises, as well as many other unique species of animals.

From Hole in the Wall, Lorissa and I drove to the newly renovated Kelso Depot. The long abandoned Union Pacific Railroad depot will find new life as a museum and information center in fall 2005, when the park service holds a grand reopening.

It's a short jaunt to Kelso Dunes from the depot and surrounding Kelso ghost town. The dunes are known for their booming effect, created when polished grains of quartz slide over the surface. The low rumbling sound has been compared to kettle drums or bumblebees.

Our last stop was Nipton, California, home of the Nipton Trading Post and Hotel Nipton,

where silent film star Clara Bow was a regular guest.

During our East Mojave journey, we ran into rain, hail, snow, and sunshine, but not a single desert tortoise. Although it was an early for wildflowers and tortoises, a day in the preserve is always an adventure.

All photos of the Mojave National Preserve courtesy of Lorissa Longfellow of Lorissa J. Design. She can be contacted at lorissajphoto@yahoo.com.

Those interested in more information about the Mojave National Preserve can visit their website at www.nps.gov/moja.

Editors Note: *Sylvia Renfro's novel, Poppy's Place is available online at Avalon Books, Amazon or Barnes and Noble. The heroine in "Poppy's Place" is the adoption officer for a fictional group called The Friends of the Desert Tortoise. Sylvia can be reached at her website, www.sylviarenfro.com.*



ADVERTISING GUIDELINES

This newsletter includes the first advertisement in recent memory. It is DTC policy that appropriate advertising be accepted for the newsletter. If anyone is interested in advertising in the DTC newsletter, please contact the newsletter editor.

**Mathaga Safaris
presents herp-
centric wildlife
watching tours in
big five country!
Join us as we
search for
amphibians and
reptiles amidst
cape buffalo,
hippos, and lions!**



**Our 2005 trip is
scheduled for
December 1-10. Please
allow two days on both
sides of these dates for
travel. Costs for the
trip are \$2500 +
Airfare (roughly
\$1500). Price includes
all ground
transportation,
lodging, meals, and
park entrance fees.
Availability is limited
to 6 people. Please
contact us for
information!
mathagasaf@lantic.net
driedle@azgfd.gov**

**Herpetologist Daren Riedle and
Mathaga Safaris owner Danie
Malan will lead this herp trip
through the Lowveld and Highveld
of South Africa. You will fly into
Johannesburg, then travel by car
to the high elevation grasslands of
the Drakensberg Mountains and
the Potberg Conservation Area.
From there we travel north to the
banks of the Olifants River,
adjacent to Kruger National Park.
In addition to herping, day trips
into Kruger, Khamai Snake Park
and the Blyde River Canyon are
also scheduled.**

*Daren is a DTC member
and has presented
several papers at the
DTC Annual Symposium.*

**NO
TRIANGULATION
REQUIRED!**

GPS DATA SENT REAL-TIME VIA VHF

- Bundled GPS data Downloads.
- GPS data for your study animal transmitted
- Up to 100,000 data events stored.
- FCC narrow band compliant.
- 20 km to OSPREY receiver.
- HR2600 Full featured data/telemetry receiver,
Better than -150dBm over 2 or 4 MHz bandwidth.

692 Sumas Street, Victoria, BC, Canada V8T 4S6 Tel: 250-381-9425
Toll Free: 1-866-863-5155 info@habitresearch.com www.habitresearch.com

Desert Tortoise Council
c/o Doug Duncan
P.O. Box 331
Tucson, AZ 85702

Check one: _____ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL _____ CHANGE OF ADDRESS
DATE: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____
NAME: _____ PHONE: _____
(Please Print) *(Include Area Code)*
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

_____ Regular (**\$15.00** per year) _____ Organization (\$55.00 per year)
_____ Contributing (\$50.00 per year) _____ Lifetime (\$300 or more)
_____ Student (**\$10.00** per year- Requires endorsement of student's advisor or Major Professor)

NEWSLETTER FORMAT:

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