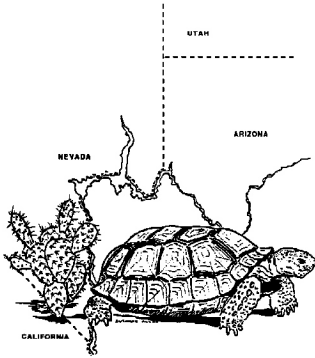


THE DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



FALL 2007
OUR 32nd YEAR

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

16th ANNUAL SURVEYING, MONITORING, AND HANDLING TECHNIQUES WORKSHOP

November 3-4, 2007, Ridgecrest, California

The 16th Annual Surveying, Monitoring, and Handling Techniques Workshop is scheduled for November 3 and 4, 2007 at the Carriage Inn in Ridgecrest, California. **The workshop is full!** We will be sending out registration material August 5th via e-mail, with the cost of the workshop being \$275.00. If you are on the list to attend and do not receive the registration link by August 6, please contact us. You will have three weeks to send in your registration and full payment. After that, we will be contacting people on the waiting list. If you would like to be placed on the waiting list, please contact Tracy or Mike Bailey at tracy.bailey@mchsi.com.

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 assist with obtaining the permits.

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, Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Fish and Game, and Arizona Game and Fish Department. Last minute registrations at Ridgecrest will not be accepted, as we are a nonprofit organization trying to make the registration process fair and easy for everyone involved.

WORKSHOP SPONSORSHIP

We would like to take this opportunity to invite you to consider a donation to the Desert Tortoise Council. This one-time donation will go directly to defraying the costs of the 16th Annual Desert Tortoise Council Handling Workshop to be held in Ridgecrest, California on November 3 and 4, 2007. The Council will publish your name or the name of your organization on the front of the handbook that will be given to each of the attendees (anticipated being 100 to 120 people). Donations will also be recognized by emcee Ed

LaRue, throughout the weekend at appropriate times. Finally, the DTC will publish a list of donors in an upcoming newsletter.

Suggested donations for the following items include:

- \$100 General contribution toward printing costs of the handbook
- \$250 Sponsorship to defray costs of invited speakers
- \$500 Sponsorship in support of continental breakfasts and refreshment breaks

Any other amount of donation you would like to provide will be accepted gratefully.

Our Treasurer will provide you with appropriate documentation for your records. Please refer all correspondence to Tracy Bailey (760-608-0794; tracy.bailey@mchsi.com) and **make checks payable to "Desert Tortoise Council."** To ensure that you are acknowledged, we must receive your check by October 19, 2007. Donations may be received after that time but could not be acknowledged on the official handbook. Notice would instead be published in an upcoming newsletter.

Your address: (show your name or company name as you would like it to appear)

Phone Number:

Please send this information to: Tracy Bailey as soon as possible to 619 Pinon Court, Ridgecrest, CA 93555. On behalf of the Desert Tortoise Council, thank you for your support.

2008 ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM LAS VEGAS

The Desert Tortoise Council Symposium will be held in Las Vegas in 2008. Sam's Town will be hosting the event from February 22 to 25, 2008.

www.deserttortoise.org

We will make available many of the details on this upcoming symposium in the winter newsletter.

Registration fee structure has changed. The fee structure makes it even more attractive to members, and to register early. A choice for spouse registration includes breakfasts, socials, and one session. A registration form is below.

Sam's Town has reserved a block of rooms from February 21 to 25, 2008. The room rate is \$45 for Thursday and Sunday, and \$99.99 a night for Friday and Saturday. Reservation information will be posted on our web page when we receive it and in future newsletters. Refer to the Sam's Town web page for additional information:

<http://www.samstownlv.com/main.cfm>

and information on Las Vegas can be found at:

<http://www.visitlasvegas.com/vegas/>

Both individual or group donations for the symposium are greatly appreciated and can be made by contacting Bob Turner, local host chair, at KKBK@cox.net.

REGISTRATION INSIDE THIS ISSUE

You must register to attend. Preregistration as a member is the best value. The deadline for early registration is January 15, 2008.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The call for papers is in this issue. Please consider presenting a paper if you have significant information on the conservation or ecology of the desert tortoise. The deadline for abstract submittal is **December 1, 2007.**

HOLD THE DATE

The Desert Tortoise Council is evaluating the possibility of holding a mini-workshop in conjunction with the upcoming Symposium at Sam's Town in Las Vegas. This workshop would be a one day event tentatively scheduled for **February 21, 2008** at Sam's Town in Las Vegas. While still in the design stage, the workshop will be structured to augment the material covered at the annual training workshop that the Council holds in Ridgecrest. Details concerning this workshop will be forthcoming and will be distributed in the next issue of the Newsletter and on the DTC web site. Stay tuned for more information.

FUTURE ANNUAL SYMPOSIA

The symposium's location for 2009 will be the Dixie Center in St. George, Utah.

<http://www.dixiecenter.com/index.html>

Suggestions or bids for future symposia locations and venues will be gratefully accepted.

PRICES

The Desert Tortoise Council has raised its prices for the Symposium and for membership to bring fees and costs in line. The Council has strived to keep costs to members and Symposium participants as low as possible; however income must be balanced against expenses, and symposium attendees expect certain things. Symposium costs have risen for food, travel, and expenses of speakers, as well as conservation and education efforts (e.g., bringing speakers from Mexico).

MAGGIE FUSARI HEADS TO MEXICO!

Dr. Fusari, currently with the University of California's Natural Reserve system at Santa Cruz, will be joining the Peace Corps! She will be working in Mexico. Mexico has a new and different arrangement with Peace Corps for technical advisors for business development and for SEMARNAT (Secretario del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales). She will be working for SEMARNAT on natural reserve management. She leaves to train in Querétaro on October 1 and then will be posted, probably to a regional office in central or southern Mexico. She says she will be back with us in 2010!

THE CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL

Senior Co-Chair	Dan Pearson
Junior Co-Chair	Pete Woodman
Co-Chair Elect	Doug Duncan
Recording Secretary	Lori Rose
Corresponding Secretary	Pat von Helf
Treasurer	Mike Bailey
Products Manager	Tom Egan
Immediate Past Co-Chair	Pete Woodman
Board Member	Tracy Bailey
Board Member	Kristin Berry
Board Member	Becky Jones
Board Member	Cari Ronning
Board Member	Glenn Stewart
Board Member	Bob Turner
Membership	Mike Bailey
Newsletter Editor	Doug Duncan
Webmaster	Michael Connor



REGISTRATION FORM

Desert Tortoise Council 32nd Annual Meeting and Symposium February 22-25, 2008

Return to
Desert Tortoise Council
P.O. Box 331
Tucson, AZ 85702-331

Please complete a SEPARATE form for each attendee.
Please print or type

Name: _____ **Organization:** _____
(First, Last) (Name to be used on ID badge)

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

E-mail: _____ **Daytime Phone:** _____ **Fax:** _____

SYMPOSIUM FEES

		ENTER AMOUNT
Member Registration	\$150.00 (\$200.00 if postmarked after 1/21/2008)	_____
Student Member Registration	\$60.00 (verification required) (\$85.00 if postmarked after 1/21/2008)	_____
Non-member Registration	\$200.00 (\$250.00 if postmarked after 1/21/2008)	_____
One-day Registration	\$100 (\$140 if postmarked after 1/21/2008)	_____
Spouse (inc. breakfasts/socials)	\$50	_____
Regular Membership Dues	\$30.00 (see dues schedule in newsletter)	_____
Vendors	\$100.00 goods, minimum	_____
Raffle Ticket(s)	@ \$1.00 each	_____

TOTAL ENCLOSED _____

Make check payable to **Desert Tortoise Council**
Only checks or fully executed purchase orders are accepted

Monday Field Trip

I would like to attend one of several Monday, February 25, 2008, field trips

Yes: _____ No: _____

www.deserttortoise.org

CALL FOR PAPERS AND POSTERS

33rd ANNUAL MEETING AND SYMPOSIUM

Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, February 22-25, 2008

The Desert Tortoise Council will host its Thirty-third Annual Symposium on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, February 22 to 25, 2008 at Sam's Town, Las Vegas, Nevada. **Titles and abstracts for sessions or contributed papers and posters are hereby invited.** The Council welcomes pertinent papers on turtle and tortoise biology and conservation.

Please return the form below with abstract by **December 1, 2007** (*The form below must be submitted by December 1, 2007*).

Abstracts

Content: They should be substantive, focused on findings and implications of findings (not methods). Abstracts for 15 minute papers should be limited to 250 words (body, not title and addresses) and double-spaced. Capitalize and center the title; underneath the title, list and center all authors (include first names) with affiliations and addresses. Italicize all scientific names and statistical notations. Authors need to follow the [Guidelines for Authors](#).

Submission: Send a virus-free file by e-mail or on a 3.5 inch disk (WordPerfect 9.0 or Word 2000 for Windows, or more recent versions) by surface mail. ALL e-mail transmissions must include all the information requested below, including author's address, phone, e-mail address, and fax numbers. E-mail transmissions must include the abstract as an attachment in WordPerfect 9.0 or Word 2000 (or more recent versions), not in the body of the text. The Program Chair must be informed immediately if a cancellation or substitution is necessary.

Papers

Speakers: should be prepared to give professional papers. Most papers will be scheduled at 15-minute intervals (12 minutes for presentation, three minutes for questions), unless other arrangements are made.

Featured Speakers: The Keynote and Invited or Featured Speakers will be allotted additional time, to be arranged with the Program Chair.

Posters

Posters will be displayed throughout the meeting. Poster presentations may be offered at specific times. If you have questions about your paper or need assistance, please contact the Program Chair, Dr. Kristin Berry, at the address below.

Information should be exact, because the program copy will be prepared from this sheet. If your title and the speaker list are tentative, say so.

Paper _____ Student Paper _____ Poster _____

Author(s) and Affiliations(s). Indicate speaker with an asterisk _____

Title of Paper _____

Address of Speaker _____

Work phone _____ Home phone _____ E-mail _____

Special needs (e.g., AV equipment): _____ Time: _____

Submission

Mail to: Dr. Kristin H. Berry, Program Chair; USGS; 22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553. E-mail to: kristin_berry@usgs.gov and to fldhcky@cox.net (send copies to both).

www.deserttortoise.org

CONSERVATION NEWS

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UPCOMING MEETINGS

Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Recovery Plan Revision Timeline

October 16, 2007: Regional workshop at the University of Redlands for non-government stakeholder input.

October 18, 2007: Regional workshop in Las Vegas for non-government stakeholder input.

End of October 2007: Draft recovery plan submitted to California-Nevada Operations Office, USFWS, for review.

Judge Orders Stay to Protect Public Lands From Increased Cattle Grazing in Desert Tortoise Habitat

BARSTOW, Calif.— A judge agreed with conservation groups October 1 and ordered the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to hold off on its decision to increase cattle grazing on 136,167 acres of public land. In the Mojave Desert, the Ord Mountain Allotment includes 101,033 acres of designated critical habitat for the desert tortoise, within a Desert Wildlife Management Area. The Bureau is supposed to manage these areas to protect threatened desert tortoises and other imperiled animals and plants.

In his decision, Administrative Law Judge Harvey C. Sweitzer agreed with the conservation groups that the BLMs decision to increase the number of cattle authorized was invalid. The agency had failed to provide a rational basis for an increase in grazing above its own estimates of the carrying capacity of the allotment.

“The Bureau of Land Management cannot continue to make decisions regarding grazing that

fail to take into account the true impacts to our public lands and the California state reptile, the desert tortoise,” said Ileene Anderson, a biologist with the Center for Biological Diversity. “And Judge Sweitzer recognized that.”

“Cattle-grazing impacts desert tortoises in many ways. Cattle may trample tortoises, their eggs and their burrows, compete for important food plants, degrade the habitat and promote the spread of weeds and nonnative vegetation” said Dr. Michael J. Connor, California science director at the Western Watersheds Project. He added, “The decision to allow increased grazing on this allotment is particularly bad because not only will it increase the number of cattle that would be grazing in desert tortoise habitat but it also includes provisions to concentrate those cattle in the most sensitive critical habitat areas on the east side of the allotment in dry years, the very years when the tortoises are most at risk.”

The appeal of the agency’s decision was brought by Western Watersheds Project, Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, Desert Survivors, and Natural Resources Defense Council. The conservation groups demand the government complete rangeland health surveys and other assessments needed for a full and informed environmental review that is required by law.

BLM California Desert District Advisory Council Nominations

The Bureau of Land Management's California Desert District is soliciting nominations for five southern Californians to serve on its District Advisory Council for the 2008-2010 three-year term, which would begin January 1, 2008.

The five positions to be filled include one representative each for non-renewable resources, recreation interests, wildlife interests, and two public-at-large representatives.

Anyone can nominate qualified persons in any of the categories. Nominations must be submitted by Saturday, October 30, 2007, to the California Desert District Manager, BLM, California Desert District Office, 22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553.

Each nomination must include the name of the nominee, work and home addresses, and telephone numbers, a biographical sketch including the nominees work, applicable outside interests, and public service records. The nominee also must specify the category of interest he or she is best qualified to represent and offer advice and counsel to the BLM.

All nominations must include letters of reference from represented interests, organizations, or elected officials. Nominees will be evaluated based on their education, training, and knowledge of BLM, the California Desert District, and the issues involving BLM-administered public lands within southern California.

BLM also tries to balance the council geographically, recommending appointment of qualified representatives from areas throughout the California Desert District. The district covers portions of eight counties, and includes 10.7 million acres of public land in the California Desert Conservation Area and 300,000 acres of scattered parcels in San Diego, western Riverside, western San Bernardino, Orange, and Los Angeles counties.

Council members are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, and serve without compensation except for reimbursement of travel expenditures incurred in the course of their duties. Council members serve three-year terms and may be nominated for reappointment to serve a second three-year term.

For more information or to request a nomination form contact Stephen Razo at 951-697-5217.

DESERT TORTOISE LINE DISTANCE SAMPLING DATABASE

The Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Recovery Plan (USFWS 1994) requires monitoring of desert tortoises to assess changes in status with the best available data. For a variety of reasons, Line Distance Sampling (LDS; Buckland et al., 2001, Introduction to Distance Sampling, Oxford University Press) has been chosen as the standard method for conducting range-wide monitoring of tortoises in the Mojave Desert. LDS uses the distances objects (tortoises) are found from the center of a transect to estimate a detection function. The detection function provides an estimate of the number of objects found on the transect, and by assuming that all objects at the center of the transect (on or very near the line) are found, provides an estimate, with confidence limits, of the total population density.

The data sets found on <http://www.deserttortoise.gov/lds/ldsindex.php> were generated from data collected in the LDS monitoring program and includes: 1. all monitoring data; 2. all transect start points generated; 3. actual transect locations and paths; 4. data collected relative to the transect path and length; 5. data collected relative to both live and dead tortoises encountered on the transect; 6. data collected on various habitat or threat variables along the transect. Observations of focal tortoises - tortoises equipped with radio transmitters used to determine the fraction of the population available for sampling - are also included. Developed by the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program, in cooperation with the USFWS, Redlands University, and the Desert Managers Group. The MDEP website is a DOD computer system, please read the privacy and security act statement before proceeding.

ANNOUNCEMENT
DAVID J. MORAFKA MEMORIAL
RESEARCH AWARD

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 monetary award to help support research that contributes to the understanding, management and conservation of tortoises of the genus *Gopherus* in the southwestern United States and Mexico: *G. agassizii*, *G. berlandieri* and *G. flavomarginatus*.

Award Amount: \$2,000 to be awarded at the Desert Tortoise Council's Annual Symposium, depending on the availability of funding and an appropriate recipient.

Eligibility: Applicants must be associated with a recognized institution (e.g., university, museum, government agency, non-governmental organization) and may be graduate students, post-doctoral students, or other researchers. They must agree to present a report on the results of the research in which award funds were used at a future symposium of the Desert Tortoise Council.

Evaluation Criteria: Applications will be evaluated on the basis of the potential of the research to contribute to the biological knowledge of one or more of the above gopher tortoise species, and to their management and conservation. Important considerations are the significance and originality of the research problem, design of sampling and analysis, preliminary data supporting the feasibility of the research, and the likelihood of successful completion and publication.

Application Procedure:

1. Obtain an application form from the DTC website (www.deserttortoise.org) or print out the form from an e-mail notification.

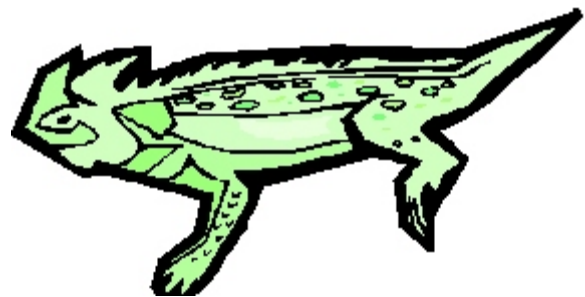
2. Provide all information requested on the application, including a description of the research project in no more than 1,200 words.

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

4. Completed application materials must be submitted by **December 1, 2007** to the **Desert Tortoise Council, P. O. Box 3273, Beaumont, CA 92223**.

5. A research award recipient will be selected by a committee of gopher tortoise biologists appointed by the Desert Tortoise Council Board of Directors.

6. The research award recipient will be notified of their selection by **February 1, 2008** and the award will be presented at the 2008 Desert Tortoise Council Symposium.



**DAVID J. MORAFKA MEMORIAL RESEARCH AWARD
2008 APPLICATION FORM**

(APPLICATION DUE **DECEMBER 1, 2007**)

INSTRUCTIONS: Please provide all specific information requested below within the spaces allotted. Type font should be no smaller than 10 point. Applications not adhering to these guidelines may be rejected. Award will be announced by February 1, 2008.

APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name:

Home Mailing Address:

E-mail Address:

Institution or Organization:

Department (if applicable):

Name of Research Advisor, Supervisor or Colleague:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

RESEARCH INFORMATION

Title of research project:

Location(s) where research will be conducted:

Permits held or expected to be obtained for the research:

If selected to receive the award, would you agree to report on the research at a Desert Tortoise Council Symposium?

Enclose three letters of recommendation, as per instructions in the announcement, and mail application to the **Desert Tortoise Council, P. O. Box 3273, Beaumont, CA 92223.**

RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

In no more than 1,200 words, describe the objectives and/or hypotheses, methods, and experimental design, and any preliminary data supporting the feasibility of the project. Also, describe how the award would benefit the project, and clearly indicate how the research would contribute to the biological knowledge, management, and conservation of one or more gopher tortoise species in the southwestern United States and Mexico. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

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

Check one: Membership Application: Membership Renewal Change of Address

DATE: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____
NAME: _____ PHONE: _____
(Please Print) (Include Area Code)

ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

Regular (\$30.00 per year) _____ Organization (\$125.00 per year)
 Contributing (min \$100.00 per year) _____ Lifetime (\$300 or more)
 Student (\$20.00 per year- Requires endorsement of student's advisor or Major Professor)

NEWSLETTER FORMAT:

Mailed paper copy Pdf file via e-mail E-mail notice for web page viewing

**Make check or money order payable to the Desert Tortoise Council
and send with this application**

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

The Desert Tortoise Council does not release its membership list

www.deserttortoise.org