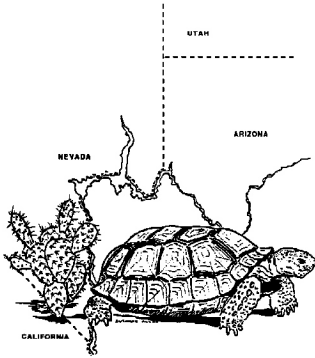


# THE DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2007  
OUR 32<sup>nd</sup> YEAR

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

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## 2007 ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM RECAP

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Desert Tortoise Council Symposium was held February 23 through 26, 2007 in Las Vegas. The Keynote address, which kick-started the sessions, was given by Professors Michael Manfredo and Tara Teel from Colorado State University. Their joint presentation, titled A Foundation for Conflict: Wildlife Values in the West, was a collaborative regional effort and has implications for future wildlife management in the West. Their talk sparked lively debate at the first session and afterwards.

Dr. James Juvik returned this year to give a Saturday evening presentation on The Diverse Tortoise Fauna of Hyper-arid Southern Namibia: Emerging Conservation Opportunities at the Meta-landscape Scale with Ross Keister. Their presentation covered a recent trip to the region and a focus on multi-species conservation efforts. Also on Saturday evening were the DTC awards (below), mixer, buffet, and the almost-world famous raffle and auction. Special thanks to Ray Butler for continuing his extra-special handing of the raffle and auction. Probably the most popular items were the Don Julio special rare tequila

(again, thanks Senor Murphy!), and the men's turtle boxers.

Paper sessions included these topics: Gila monsters and their parallels with desert tortoises, recovery planning, tortoise ecology and behavior, government agency and non-governmental organization reports, headstarting, and fire in the Mojave Desert. Kitty Jensen, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and formerly with the National Park Service at the Mojave National Preserve, finished the paper sessions with an overview of turtles in Borneo.

The symposium wrapped up on Monday, with field trips to the Large-Scale Translocation Site south of Las Vegas, and the Arrow Canyon Burn Complex north of Las Vegas. There were about 12 individuals that went to the Large Scale Translocation Site near Jean, NV. Phil Medica explained the development, need for the site, and the subsequent translocation of about 6,000 tortoises since 1997. The group walked around the site for about two hours, observed two live tortoises in burrows, and one carcass. Some of the participants were not familiar with the

Mojave Desert so they had plenty of questions about vegetation and animals.

The program and abstracts can be found on our web page at:

<http://www.deserttortoise.org/symposium/2007/program.pdf>

<http://www.deserttortoise.org/abstract/abstracts/2007/2007abstracts.pdf>

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### Desert Tortoise Council Awards

Annual	<b>Daniel C. Pearson</b>
Special	<b>Dr. Ken Nagy</b>
Special	<b>Dr. Brian T. Henen</b>
Special	<b>Scott Hillard</b>
Special	<b>Rhys Evans</b>
Special	<b>William Quillman</b>
Special	<b>Mark Hagen</b>
Service	<b>Michael P. Coffeen</b>

Dan Pearson's Annual Award was in recognition of his retirement after 28 years of outstanding work with Southern California Edison where, as Senior Biologist, he spearheaded an Endangered Species Alert Program (large field notebook published in 1989) and followed up with a major collaborative effort as a senior editor of the beautiful guide to California's endangered wildlife species (Life on the Edge, 1994); his many years of service to the DTC, returning last year for a second go-around as a Co-chairperson; and his ability to get SCE funding for desert tortoise conservation. In addition, Dan was the 2007 recipient of the Western Section of The Wildlife Society's most prestigious award, the Raymond F. Dasmann Award for Wildlife Professional of the Year.

The six special awards were given in recognition of the continuing efforts by these individuals to follow up on David Morafka's farsighted headstart project for juvenile desert tortoises on

the Forth Irwin Army Training Center in the Mojave Desert near Barstow, California.

Of course, Mike Coffeen's service award was in recognition of his retirement after many years of service to the DTC, especially as Treasurer.

This year, for the first time, first and second place awards were given for student papers. The first place award of \$500 went to Erin Zylstra of the University of Arizona, Tucson, for her paper Comparing Strategies for Monitoring Sonoran Desert Tortoises. Erin's work is under the direction of Dr. Robert J. Steidl. She also won the best student paper award and the David J. Morafka Memorial Scholarship last year for this work. The second place award of \$200 went to Jon R. Davis of Arizona State University, Tempe, for his paper Dealing with Drought in the Sonoran Desert: The Gila Monster's Perspective. Jon's work is under the direction of Dr. Dale F. DeNardo.

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### Vendors and Exhibitors

#### Center for Biological Diversity

Lisa Belenky; 1095 Market Street, Suite 511,  
San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 436-9682  
x307; Fax (415) 436-9683;

<http://www.biologicaldiversity.org>  
[lbelenky@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:lbelenky@biologicaldiversity.org)

#### Cricket Science

**Robert Anderson**; 1611 Shane Drive,  
Pocatello, ID 83204; (208) 233-5313;  
Fax: (208) 232-5548

<http://www.cricketscience.com>  
[Robert@cricketscience.com](mailto:Robert@cricketscience.com)

#### Desert Tortoise Council

**Doug Duncan and Pat von Helf**; P.O. Box  
3273 Beaumont, CA 92223;

<http://www.deserttortoise.org>

**Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee**  
**Mark Bratton, Stephanie Pappas, and**  
**Mark Massar**; 4067 Mission Inn Avenue,  
Riverside, CA 92501; (955) 683-DTPC;

Fax: (951) 683-6949;

<http://www.tortoise-tracks.org>  
[dtpc@pacbell.net](mailto:dtpc@pacbell.net)

**H.A.B.I.T. Research Ltd.**

**John Joynt**; 692 Sumas Street, Victoria, BC  
V8T 4S6, Canada; (250)381-9425

<http://www.habitresearch.com>  
[john@habitresearch.com](mailto:john@habitresearch.com)

**International Chelonian Conservation: The**  
**John L. Behler Chelonian Conservation**  
**Center**

**Thomas E. Leuteriz**

**Pill Bug Press (Thunder Tortoise Trilogy)**

**Jay B. Winderman**; 1868 Bridgeport Avenue,  
Claremont, CA 91711; (909) 624-9985

**Steven Logsdon Gallery**

**Stevan Logsdon**; P.O. Box 4070, Silver City,  
NM 88062; (505) 388-4263;

[logsdon\\_johnson@zianet.com](mailto:logsdon_johnson@zianet.com)

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## FUTURE ANNUAL SYMPOSIA

The symposium in 2008 will be held in Las Vegas, and in St. George in 2009. Suggestions on locations after then will be gladly accepted by the DTC Board.

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## ADDRESS CHANGES

Please renew your addresses, including e-mail. Every time we e-mail newsletters, 10 to 20 percent of the e-mail addresses we have are bad.

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## 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	Mike Coffeen
Board Member	Becky Jones
Board Member	Cari Ronning
Board Member	Glenn Stewart
Board Member	Bob Turner

Membership

[Pat von Helf](#)

Newsletter Editor

[Doug Duncan](#)

Webmaster

[Michael Connor](#)

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## 16<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL SURVEYING, MONITORING, AND HANDLING TECHNIQUES WORKSHOP

The next workshop is scheduled for November 3 and 4, 2007 in Ridgecrest, CA. Space is limited to 120 people! If you'd like to be placed on the list to attend or if you'd like to make a donation toward the workshop, please e-mail: [tracy.bailey@mchsi.com](mailto:tracy.bailey@mchsi.com). Registration information will be sent out via e-mail in mid-August to those registered. The cost of the workshop is \$250.00.

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.

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## CONSERVATION NEWS



### **BLM and Forest Service Announce 2007 Federal Grazing Fee**

The federal grazing fee for Western public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service will be \$1.35 per animal unit month (AUM) in 2007, down from \$1.56 in 2006. The newly adjusted fee, determined by a congressional formula and effective on March 1, applies to nearly 18,000 grazing permits and leases administered by the BLM and more than 8,000 permits administered by the Forest Service.

The formula used for calculating the grazing fee, established by Congress in the 1978 Public Rangelands Improvement Act, has continued under a presidential Executive Order issued in 1986. Under that order, the grazing fee cannot fall below \$1.35 per AUM, and any increase or decrease cannot exceed 25 percent of the previous year's level. An Animal Unit Month is the amount of forage needed to sustain one cow and her calf, one horse, or five sheep or goats for a month.

The annually adjusted grazing fee is computed by using a 1966 base value of \$1.23 per AUM for livestock grazing on public lands in Western states. The figure is then adjusted according to three factors - current private grazing land lease rates, beef cattle prices, and the cost of livestock production. Based on this formula, the 2007 fee declined primarily because of an increase in production prices. The new low rate, the lowest allowed by law, is to offset higher fuel costs to

ranchers. Already substantially below what is charged for private land grazing, it now costs more to feed a parakeet than to keep a cow at the federal range trough.

The \$1.35 per AUM grazing fee applies to 16 Western states on public lands administered by the BLM and the Forest Service. The states are Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The Forest Service applies different grazing fees to national grasslands and to lands under its management in the Eastern and Midwestern states and parts of Texas.

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### **Wildlife Values Report**

Here is the link for the report which was the basis for this year's symposium keynote address, given by Professors Michael Manfredo and Tara Teel from Colorado State University. The report is about wildlife values in the West.

[http://www.warnercnr.colostate.edu/NRRT/hdnr/Wildlife\\_Values\\_in\\_the\\_West\\_Final\\_Regional\\_Report\\_9-05.pdf](http://www.warnercnr.colostate.edu/NRRT/hdnr/Wildlife_Values_in_the_West_Final_Regional_Report_9-05.pdf)

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### **Congress Takes Up Whistleblower Reform**

Strengthening whistleblower protections ranks high on the new Congress' agenda. Bipartisan legislation by Representative Henry Waxman unanimously cleared his House Committee on Oversight and Government in the first month of the session. Dubbed the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act of 2007, the bill would significantly expand the scope of disclosures that federal civil servants can make with a legal defense against reprisal.

The bill would also provide new procedural remedies to federal whistleblowers, including access to federal court. A key section of the bill in which PEER collaborated extends whistleblower protection to federal scientists who report data manipulation or suppression.

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, March 27, 2007, Carol Goldberg (202) 265-7337

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## **Endangered Species Act**

### Regulatory Changes

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is preparing a wide-ranging set of regulations which substantially weaken the federal Endangered Species Act, according to internal documents released by Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) and the Center for Biological Diversity. The administration is picking up where Rep. Richard Pombo left off with a sweeping effort to weaken the Endangered Species Act. The draft regulatory changes, leaked to the press on 27 March, would also limit the number of species eligible for listing and restrict extinction analyses to 20 years or 10 generations, rather than the 50 to 100 year range FWS currently employs.

“These draft regulations slash the Endangered Species Act from head to toe,” said Kieran Suckling, policy director of the Center for Biological Diversity. “They undermine every aspect of law – recovery, listing, preventing extinction, critical habitat, federal oversight and habitat conservation plans – all of it is gutted.”

“I will vigorously oppose any weakening of the Endangered Species Act, which has saved the American bald eagle and which is now playing a role in saving the polar bear,” said Sen. Barbara Boxer, chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee “That type of

dismantling of the [Endangered Species Act], that was attempted in the past and sounds like is being attempted in a backdoor fashion by this administration, needs to stop.” Representative Nick Rahall (D-WV), chair of the House Natural Resources Committee.

Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne reaffirmed the Department’s intent to overhaul ESA during a recent Congressional hearing. It’s not surprising that the Administration is trying again to weaken endangered species protections. However, it is surprising that they are trying to claim that the American public supports weakening environmental protections. Despite strong support for endangered species protections as evidenced by tens of thousands of comments in the Administration’s Cooperative Conservation Listening Sessions, Kempthorne has stated that he is acting on behalf of the majority of people who want changes to the Endangered Species Act.

The 117 page memo outlines the Interior Department’s draft proposed regulations that would undermine Endangered Species Act protections. The draft regulations could:

- \* Severely limit the listing of new endangered species;
- \* Restrict habitat protections against disturbance, pesticides, exotic species, and disease;
- \* Allow destruction of all restored habitat within critical habitat areas;
- \* Allow projects to proceed that have been determined to threaten species with extinction;
- \* Remove recovery as a protection standard;
- \* Allow states to veto endangered species releases;
- \* Allow states to take over virtually all aspects of the Endangered Species Act without the necessary funding or experience.



“Kicking responsibility for endangered species protection to the states will make it nearly impossible to restore national oversight when states fail to protect endangered species,” stated Southwest PEER Director Daniel R. Patterson. “State biologists will be under enormous political pressure to accommodate development interests while lacking, in many cases, even rudimentary legal protection to defend scientific concerns about species survival.” “Although states are key conservation partners, the reason we have a national act is that leaving species protection to the states was a recipe for extinctions,” Patterson concluded.

The draft regulations are being circulated for final inter-agency review and are expected to be formally unveiled later this spring. Congress could also proscribe or limit Bush administration proposals through the appropriations process.

[Read the side-by-side comparison \(prepared by PEER and CBD\) of current regulations versus Bush plan](#)

[View the plan to delegate more ESA authority to the states](#)

[Look at plans to rewrite future status definition and consultation rules](#)

[See proposed ESA listing changes](#)

[Scan proposed permit regulations](#)

[Track the timetable for “issues to deal with”](#)

#### Significant portion of the range

The leaked draft ESA regulatory changes come on the heels of the 16 March publication of a new Administration interpretation of the ESA phrase that defines an endangered species as one “in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.” This new interpretation limits the application of ESA

protection to the current range of a species, rather than the (usually much larger) historical range used to determine ESA listings in the past.

Although the ESA does not explicitly mention historical range, it is impossible to determine whether the current distribution and population size of a species is sufficient to ensure the species’ survival without taking into account the historic distribution of the species. Ignoring the historical range of species could make it easier to deny endangered species listings and may even promote the intentional killing of at-risk species; once individuals are removed from an area, the area is no longer part of the current range, and so intentional removals would avoid potential ESA conflicts.

What may seem like simple word-smithing could have a significant impact on protections for our nation’s endangered species. A version of former Representative Richard Pombo’s “Extinction Bill” included a very similar provision which would have required that a species be imperiled “throughout all of its current range” before being listed. As the administration has done with similar policies that may be viewed unfavorably by the public, the policy was announced late on a Friday afternoon without a press release, announcement, or the opportunity for public comment.

Courts have consistently ruled against the Bush Administration’s interpretation that a species must be in danger of extinction throughout all of its range to warrant listing under the ESA and this new interpretation is seen by many groups as an attempt to bolster the Administration’s position in court. The interpretation was outlined in a memorandum to the FWS Director and published on the Interior Department [website](#).

#### Financial incentives

In a positive development for conservation, private landowners could receive financial

incentives to protect endangered species on their land if a newly introduced bipartisan bill wins approval in Congress. The majority of endangered and threatened species in the U.S. are found on private land, so this incentives bill provides immense opportunity for increased endangered species conservation.

Introduced in the Senate by Sens. Mike Crapo and Blanche Lincoln and in the House by Reps. Mike Thompson and Don Young, The Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2007 would provide beneficial tax treatment to private landowners willing to participate in species recovery or habitat restoration actions. The bill would result in changes to the tax code and not to the underlying Endangered Species Act.

Sources: Center for Biological Diversity, Department of the Interior Office of the Solicitor, E&E Publishing, LLC (E&E News PM, E&ETV OnPoint, Greenwire, Land Letter), The Endangered Species Coalition, MSNBC, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility

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### **Draft Environmental Assessment for Proposed Raven Management Released for Public Review**

A draft environmental assessment (EA) proposing methods to reduce raven predation on the desert tortoise and other reptiles and mammals throughout the deserts of southern California has been released for public review and comment by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The EA proposes five alternatives that provide a full range of possible levels of raven management to protect the desert tortoise, a Federal and State-listed threatened species. The proposed alternatives include both non-lethal and lethal techniques in conjunction with the most effective and humane methods available to deter or remove ravens responsible for predation of juvenile tortoises. The alternatives were

developed in consideration of public comments suggesting methods to reduce raven predation.

Public comments must be postmarked by May 7, 2007, which will conclude the 30-day public comment period. Submit written comments to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Raven Management Environmental Assessment, c/o Judy Hohman, Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B; Ventura, CA 93003. Comments may be submitted by email to: [FW8drafravenea@fws.gov](mailto:FW8drafravenea@fws.gov) with subject indicating Raven Management, or by fax to (805) 644-3958. Faxed copies should also be mailed.

The EA is available online at [www.fws.gov/ventura](http://www.fws.gov/ventura). Copies of the EA also are available upon request at public libraries in the California desert and by calling the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Ventura Office (805) 644-1766; 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, CA 93003.

Among the five proposed alternatives, the Service's preferred alternative is to identify ravens that are preying on, or attempting to prey on desert tortoises, and either shoot, poison, or trap the birds. The preferred alternative would also reduce human-constructed nest sites and human sources of food and water for ravens.

Non-lethal techniques may encompass any of the following: reduce human food subsidies, reduce the availability of carcasses of road-killed animals along highways in desert tortoise habitat, remove raven nests outside the nesting season within two miles of tortoise management areas, and reduce potential nesting sites (telephone poles, etc.) in tortoise habitat. Lethal techniques could include shooting, trapping, and poisoning. Another lethal method is to humanely euthanize young ravens and eggs found in nests of adults that have been removed.

The Service has been cooperatively working with the Desert Managers Group (DMG) in the development of the EA. The DMG is a

consortium of county, State, Federal, and military agencies that manage Federal and State lands in southern California.

Raven populations in some areas of the California desert have increased more than 700 percent between 1969 and 2004. Monitoring indicates raven predation has had extensive impacts on juvenile tortoise populations at various locations throughout the desert, greatly reducing the number of young tortoises surviving to adulthood.

The proposed raven management program would reduce raven predation on hatchling and juvenile tortoises, which would increase their survivorship and recruitment into the reproductive population and ultimately help promote population stabilization and recovery. The goal is not to eliminate ravens from the region, but to restore a balanced predator-prey relationship.

DMG members cooperating with the Service in the development of the EA include the National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Edwards Air Force Base, the Marine Corps bases at Barstow and Twenty-nine Palms, the Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake, and the National Training Center at Fort Irwin. The Service is the lead agency for the proposed raven management program. Based on public comments received on the alternatives, the Service will select an alternative that can help to protect the desert tortoise from further decline resulting from raven predation.

[Click here to read the draft environmental assessment](#)

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### **US Department of the Interior Putting Politics over Science**

An investigation has found that a top Interior Department official put politics over science and overruled agency scientists in decisions affecting

endangered species protection. The Department of Interior's Inspector General release a report this week that stated that Julie MacDonald, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, violated federal rules when she sent internal agency documents to industry lobbyists. MacDonald, who has no biological training, rode roughshod over numerous decisions by agency scientists concerning protection of the nation's endangered species.

According to the report, numerous former and current high level staff of the Fish and Wildlife Service stated that MacDonald's interference in scientific decisions concerning endangered species was pervasive, aggressive, designed to limit protection and exposed the agency to litigation over poorly supported and politically motivated decisions. The former director of endangered species, for example, concluded that MacDonald "regularly bypassed managers to speak directly with field staff, often intimidating and bullying them into producing documents that had the desired effect" and that "the overall effect was to minimize the Endangered Species Act as much as possible or ensnare it in court litigation, which often happened."

The Bush administration has listed fewer species under the Endangered Species Act than any other administration since the law was enacted in 1973, to date only listing 57 species compared to 512 under the Clinton administration and 234 under the first Bush administration. The second Bush administration has listed so few species in part because it has been denying species protection at record rates. Of all the endangered species listing decisions made under the present administration, 52 percent denied protection as compared to only 13 percent during the last six years of the Clinton administration. Meanwhile, nearly 300 species languish on the candidate list without protection.

Representative Nick Rahall, chair of the House Natural Resource Committee, has said that he



will hold hearings to conduct "a sweeping review on whether politics infiltrated decisions governing" endangered species, according to an article in the New York Times. A copy of the Inspector General's report is available at:

[http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/swcbd/programs/esa/pdfs/DOI-IG-Report\\_JM.pdf](http://www.biologicaldiversity.org/swcbd/programs/esa/pdfs/DOI-IG-Report_JM.pdf)

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### **Support Strong Endangered Species Protection**

Please join the millions of American's who care about endangered species by helping to demonstrate the broad public support for Endangered Species Act protections. Please consider submitting a letter to the editor of your local paper to raise awareness about this issue.

Write a letter to your local paper to show that Americans care about protecting our nation's last remaining wildlife and disappearing wild lands. You can find a sample letter at:

[www.stopextinction.org/DOI\\_LTEs](http://www.stopextinction.org/DOI_LTEs)

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### **Celebrate Endangered Species Day!**

Last year, thousands of people throughout the country participated in Endangered Species Day—with zoo and park events, endangered species habitat tours, classroom presentations, and various other activities. With your involvement, this year's Endangered Species Day on May 18, 2007 will be an even greater success.

Endangered Species Day provides an opportunity for schools, libraries, museums, zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens, agencies, businesses, and community groups to educate the public about the importance of protecting endangered species and highlight everyday actions that individuals and groups can take to help protect our nation's endangered species. Thirty-six events were held

across the country last year to celebrate the first annual Endangered Species Day. The Endangered Species Coalition and partners are planning events and activities for May 18, 2007.

Last year, the United States Senate unanimously passed a resolution supporting Endangered Species Day. This year, Senator Diane Feinstein has again agreed to sponsor the Endangered Species Day resolution. Please help us make the second annual Endangered Species Day more successful by contacting your Senators and asking them to cosponsor the resolution.

For more information, visit :

[www.stopextinction.org/endangeredspeciesday](http://www.stopextinction.org/endangeredspeciesday)

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### **RACHEL CARSON CENTENARY**

As a young child, Carson's consuming passions were exploring the forests and streams surrounding her hillside home near the Allegheny River in Pennsylvania and her writing. She was first published at age 10 in a children's magazine dedicated to young writers. In 1925, Carson entered Pennsylvania College for Women as an English major determined to become a writer, but switched to biology midway through her studies.

Her first experience with the ocean came during a summer fellowship at the U.S. Marine Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Upon graduation from Pennsylvania College, she was awarded a scholarship to complete graduate work in biology at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland, an enormous accomplishment for a woman in 1929.

Carson's distinction in writing and biology led to a job with the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries (now the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) in 1935. She created a series of 7-minute radio spots on marine life called Romance Under the Waters.

[www.deserttortoise.org](http://www.deserttortoise.org)

Meanwhile, she continued to submit writings on conservation and nature to newspapers and magazines, urging people to regulate the “forces of destruction” and consider always the welfare of the “fish as well as that of the fisherman.” During her free time, Carson wrote books about her government research. Her first book, titled Under the Sea-Wind was published in 1941, and highlighted her unique ability to present deeply intricate scientific material in clear poetic language that captivated readers and sparked their interest in the natural world. During her 15-year career with the Service, she wrote numerous pamphlets and bulletins on conservation, one of the most well-known a series called Conservation in Action – devoted to exploring wildlife and ecology on national wildlife refuges.

Carson’s second book, The Sea Around Us, was published in 1951 and remained on the New York Time’s best-seller list for **81 weeks**. The success of her second book prompted Carson to resign her position with the Service in 1952 to devote all her time to writing. The Sea Around Us along with The Edge of the Sea, a third book published in 1956, provided a new perspective on conservation to concerned environmentalists.

But it was her final book, **Silent Spring**, published in 1962, which awakened society to an awareness of its responsibility to other forms of life. Carson had long been aware of the dangers of chemical pesticides but was also aware of the controversy within the agricultural community which depended on pesticide use to increase crop production. She had long hoped someone else would publish an expose’ on DDT but eventually realized that only she had the background as well as the economic freedom to do it.

Silent Spring provoked a firestorm of controversy as well as personal attacks on Carson’s professional integrity. The pesticide industry mounted a massive campaign to discredit Carson even though she did not urge the complete banning of pesticides but called for research to be

done to ensure pesticides were safe and alternatives to dangerous chemicals like DDT could be found. The federal government, however, ordered a complete review of pesticide policy and Carson was asked to testify before a Congressional committee. As a direct result of that review, DDT was banned. With the publication of Silent Spring, Carson is credited with launching the contemporary environmental movement and awakening concern by Americans about the environment.

Carson once said that “man’s endeavors to control nature by his powers to alter and to destroy would inevitably evolve into a war against himself, a war he would lose unless he came to terms with nature.” She died from cancer in 1964 at the age of 57. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service named one of its refuges near Carson’s summer home on the coast of Maine as the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge in 1969 to honor the memory of this extraordinary woman.

What can you do in honor of Rachel Carson?

- Go outside and explore the wonders of our natural world at a National Wildlife Refuge, a local park or even your own backyard.
- Volunteer with a local conservation organization to help conserve wildlife habitat.
- Read one of Carson’s books and pass the conservation message along to a friend or family member.
- Explore a career in natural resources or wildlife conservation.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is creating resources and tools to help you build on Rachel Carson’s legacy and instill a sense of environmental stewardship in a new generation of conservationists.

For more information, please visit <http://www.fws.gov/rachelcarson> in the coming months.

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**2007 SW PARC  
FIRST ANNUAL REGIONAL  
MEETING**

**Albuquerque, NM, May 31- June 2, 2007**

This meeting is for anyone interested in reptile or amphibian conservation in the southwestern PARC region, which includes California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma. Individuals involved in SW PARC include representatives from state and federal agencies, tribes, conservation organizations, museums, pet trade industry, nature centers, zoos, universities, herpetological organizations, research laboratories, forest industries, environmental consultants, and the power industry.

This meeting will provide the opportunity for the southwest region to identify its priorities and activities regarding herpetofaunal conservation challenges. Meeting topics include:

- \* State wildlife action plans;
- \* Habitat management guidelines;
- \* Wild fires, grazing and invasive species;
- \* Off highway vehicle use on public lands and trail development;
- \* Reptile collection and pet trade;
- \* Mining;
- \* Water development;
- \* Development/population and urban growth, habitat fragmentation, edge effects and BLM land sales; and
- \* Any topic affecting reptile and/or amphibian conservation in the southwest region of the USA.

**Call for Posters and Abstract  
Submittal Instructions**

SWPARC is soliciting posters addressing any topic related to herpetological conservation in the American Southwest. Space may be limited for posters, so acceptance will be based on the order that poster abstracts are received. Everyone submitting an abstract is expected to register for the meeting. Oral presentations are by invitation only. Submit the poster abstract to Larry Jones at: [ljones02@fs.fed.us](mailto:ljones02@fs.fed.us) by **30 April 2007**. Additional details can be found at:

[http://chelydra.unm.edu/swparc/2007\\_meeting/Call\\_For\\_Posters.pdf](http://chelydra.unm.edu/swparc/2007_meeting/Call_For_Posters.pdf)

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**PATAGONIA'S ENVIRONMENTAL  
GRANTS PROGRAM**

Patagonia (<http://www.patagonia.com>), the outdoor clothing and gear company, provides support for environmental work through grants to nonprofit organizations.

Patagonia funds only environmental work, and is most interested in making grants to organizations that identify and work on the root causes of problems and that approach issues with a commitment to long-term change. The company funds work that is action-oriented; builds public involvement and support; is strategic in its targeting and goals; focuses on root causes; accomplishes specific goals and objectives that can be effectively measured; and takes place in countries where Patagonia has retail stores or an international office.

The company does not fund organizations without 501(c)(3) status or a comparable fiscal sponsor; general environmental education efforts; land acquisition, land trusts, or conservation easements; research (unless it is in direct support

of a developed plan for specific action to alleviate an environmental problem); environmental conferences; endowment funds; or political campaigns.

Most grants are in the range of \$3,000 to \$8,000. Patagonia accepts proposals for programs that fit its grant guidelines during the months of April or August. Only one proposal from an organization will be considered per year.

Please note that organizations based in a community in which Patagonia has a retail store or an international office should submit their request to the store. Retail store applications are accepted year-round.

Visit the Patagonia Web site for complete program information and grant application procedures. Application deadlines are: April 30, 2007 and August 31, 2007.

<http://www.patagonia.com/web/us/patagonia.go?assetid=2942>

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**The Wildlife Society  
14th Annual Conference  
Tucson, Arizona  
September 22-26, 2007**

The TWS annual conference provides excellent continuing education and networking opportunities. It is well attended by wildlife professionals from a variety of disciplines and employers (federal, state/provincial, university, nongovernmental organization, and corporate/consulting) and by wildlife students. If you haven't yet attended a TWS annual conference, make 2007 the year you take this step to expand your professional growth. If you are a conference regular, we look forward to seeing you again!

The Program Committee is pleased to announce an exciting preliminary program of workshops, symposia, panel discussions, a round table, a special poster session, and contributed paper and poster sessions for the Tucson conference. Check The Wildlife Society website link below to view the complete session list.

Plenary

- Across the borderline: challenges and opportunities for North American wildlife conservation

Round table session

- Sharing free wildlife and habitat data online: the good, bad, and ugly

Panel discussions

- Don't fence me out: bears, jaguars, and pronghorn
- Security barriers, stewardship, and conservation of wildlife along the us-mexico borderlands region
- New U.S. Forest Service national planning regulations: implications and opportunities for wildlife resources

Workshops

- Using arcgis to design and evaluate wildlife corridors
- Estimation of population change from count data
- Introduction to modern methods for analyzing capture-recapture data
- Tucson, Arizona: laboratory for urban wildlife research
- Landing a wildlife job: a primer to success
- Landscape scripting language (lsl): a spatial modeling system
- Conservation genetics for wildlife biologists and managers

Special poster session

- Spatial tools in conservation planning

### Symposia

- Bald eagles in the southwest: conservation and management in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Conservation of biodiversity through actions to benefit North America's high priority landbirds
- Biological responses to rapid climate change within species, communities, and ecoregions
- Ecology and management of desert quails
- Detecting, measuring, managing, and preventing diseases affecting wildlife
- Biometrics in wildlife: past, present, and future
- Environmental contaminants: trans-boundary and international issues Affecting wildlife
- Furbearer management
- Wildlife and wind energy development
- Role of intensively-managed forests in wildlife and habitat conservation
- Binational solutions to conservation challenges along the US-Mexico border
- Conservation of amphibians on managed landscapes
- What are cumulative effects?
- Forest inventory and analysis contributions to wildlife habitat assessments
- Towards a steady state economy: implications for sustainability and wildlife conservation
- Wildlife reintroduction: integrating population recovery and wildlife science
- Communicating with the public through multiple media
- Social aspects of wolf management in North America

### Contributed papers and posters

- Conservation and management of birds
- Ecology and habitat relationships of birds
- Population dynamics of birds
- Conservation and management of mammals
- Ecology and habitat relationships of mammals
- Population dynamics of mammals
- Reptiles and amphibians
- Biometrics

- Conservation of communities, ecosystems, and landscapes
- Human dimensions, conservation education, and conservation policy
- Wildlife damage management
- Wildlife diseases and toxicology
- New technology and applications

Tucson is a great destination for a conference. In the heart of the Sonoran Desert, Tucson is in easy reach of many outstanding natural areas. The Arizona Chapter is working hard to prepare for your arrival. It will be an experience you won't soon forget.

See you in Tucson!

<http://www.wildlife.org/conference/index.cfm>

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## **INAUGURAL ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF SCIENCE AND MULTI-SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLANS MAY 15 AND 16, 2007**

This two-day symposium is organized by the Center for Conservation Biology of the University of California, Riverside (UC Riverside) and the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority and will be held at UC Riverside's Palm Desert Campus.

General symposium information can be found at:

<http://www.ccb.ucr.edu/symposium/index.html>

We look forward to a diversity of posters, as the information will contribute to our general discussions. Posters will be displayed during the entire meeting, with time for viewing during a poster session. Please send your poster title(s) to Cecelia Morentin at [cecelias@ucr.edu](mailto:cecelias@ucr.edu) no later than Monday, April, 30, 2007. If you would like



your poster abstract published on the web site, please send your abstract (300-500 words) with your name(s) and address(es) and contact information.

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**RECOVERY PLAN REVISION  
TIMELINE - DESERT TORTOISE  
RECOVERY OFFICE  
15 MARCH, 2007**

- December 2006 - February 2007: DTRO works with Redlands Institute (RI) to compile current regional threat/management information.
- January 2007: MOG met to review strategy.
- February 2007: SAC reviewed draft recovery criteria and preliminary habitat models and spatial analyses.
- March 2007: California Recovery Planning Workgroup meeting to review threat and management data.
- March 2007: Arizona-Nevada-Utah Recovery Planning Workgroup to review threat and management data.
- March 2007: USGS and University of Nevada, Reno, complete habitat model and range-wide monitoring spatial analysis.
- March - April 2007: SAC revises draft recovery criteria and recovery units.
- April 24-25, 2007: California Recovery Planning Workgroup meeting at the University of Redlands to develop regional recovery action plans.
- Early May 2007: Arizona-Nevada-Utah Recovery Planning Workgroup meeting in Las Vegas to develop regional recovery action plans, with support from RI.
- May 2007: SAC reviews recovery actions and provides research priorities.
- May-June 2007: DTRO compiles information into draft recovery plan. Regional recovery action plans modified, as necessary, to conform to draft recovery units.

- June-July 2007: Regional workshops for non-government stakeholder input (including open forum with SAC and MOG).
- August-September 2007: DTRO revises draft recovery plan based on SAC and stakeholder input.
- September 2007: Draft recovery plan submitted to California-Nevada Operations Office, FWS, for review.

[http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert%5Ftortoise/dtro\\_revision\\_timeline.html](http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert%5Ftortoise/dtro_revision_timeline.html)

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**GOPHER TORTOISE  
MANAGEMENT PLAN  
COMMENTS**

*Editors note - We came across this recently, and thought it might provoke some thought or discussion among our members. The Council does not endorse the comments. These comments were made in response to the Gopher Tortoise management plan. Though the gopher tortoise lives in a very different ecosystem than the desert tortoise, many of the conservation challenges are similar. Also, the Gopher Tortoise Council was formed at almost the same time as the Desert Tortoise Council, and has similar goals and objectives. Many of our members are practicing biologists, and frequently struggle conserve ecosystems and their parts in the face of a legalistic free-market society. Really, it all boils down to the number of people on the planet. Reprinted by permission.*

**From Ronnie Hawkins**

Hello--

I think it's important for someone to take the kind of stand I am taking here, and some of you might want to know about it. As a philosophy professor who has also had an excellent education in the

biological sciences, I think our society is on the verge of necessary paradigm change, from a narrowly anthropocentric and often very selfishly individualistic point of view to a biocentric perspective that values “all” life on the planet and seeks to restore the balance of lifeforms before the biosphere and all the diverse ecosystems it comprises are pushed into another state, one that may not be very hospitable to many of its extant species, our own included, as a result of mindlessly pursued human activities that are obviously not sustainable. Since my own involvement with the gopher tortoise has been lifelong, I feel impelled to take this opportunity to start modeling a biocentric position with respect to this issue, in hopes that others may generally follow suit in their own chosen ways. The tortoise is a wonderful animal for raising public consciousness about all the ethical and ecological concerns that we need to address--let's hope we can ultimately arrive at a "plan" for the tortoise that will be good for all.

### **Comments on the Draft Gopher Tortoise Management Plan**

Before I comment directly on the Plan, I would like to make a few general comments about the processes that I see going on all around me here in central Florida, and indeed, on a global scale. We humans are engaged in all sorts of frenetic activities that we know are not sustainable, and the best-educated ones among us, who have a responsibility to wake up the rest of the populace to the folly of continuing along on this trajectory, simply have not been doing their jobs. When I read in the Orlando Sentinel the headline “Counties look to rivers to slake thirst for lush lawns, tap water” (March 21), for example, I am astonished that the many scientists employed by the St. Johns River Water Management District just fall in line with trying to meet projected demand instead of standing up to self-serving politicians and an ignorant public and explaining that their desire for lush lawns is an unrealistic pipe dream that cannot and should not be pursued

at the expense of further depleting the ground- and surface waters of the ecosystems of our region. What is the matter here? Do they really care so little about the natural world that they are supposed to be protecting, or is it that they are so terribly timid and self-effacing that they cannot bring themselves to challenge the comfort zone of people who truly do not know or do not care about life on the planet or in our state? Whatever it is, it’s gone on too long, far too long. We don’t need any more regulation—what we need is a change of direction. Now.

And that’s my basic response to the Draft Gopher Tortoise Management Plan also. We don’t need to manage gopher tortoises—they would do just fine if we humans would leave them alone. What we need to manage are our own activities, which continue to destroy, degrade, pollute, fragment and otherwise disrupt natural land communities at an ever-increasing rate, while everyone plays a game of charades, pretending as though a few rule changes could make it all okay while, in actuality, we are giving in like a bunch of cowards to the supposed power of development money at every turn. Well, intelligent human beings do not have to act like this. We can educate our unruly populace—in fact, I think they’re begging for us to do it—and we can turn the tide, if only we would find the courage to try it.

Now, about the Plan; I will try to keep my comments brief. First, as I responded previously, there is a fatal flaw at the heart of this draft: we must not, in this time of ethical free-fall at many levels, put a price on the head of each gopher tortoise. That’s a sure way to bring about a massive slaughter of tortoises before anybody can inventory them. I’m sorry, revising this central feature will entail revising quite a bit of the present structure of the Plan, but that’s too bad—if the idea is to protect the remaining tortoises we have left, we must not build in something that will doom them from the start.

Instead of paying dollars for tortoises, let the developers pay for the privilege of destroying Florida upland habitat—no one's making any more of it, after all, it isn't growing by a single acre, even though our very imprecise use of the English language may tend to fool some people in this regard. And mitigation by agreeing not to destroy a natural community somewhere else does not increase the total amount of habitat we have left, either. Let's be honest—there's a little game going on, something like the Monopoly board game, according to rules set up several centuries ago, whereby we continue to agree that certain individuals who have accumulated a certain quantity of symbolic placeholders—we call them dollars at present—are allowed to completely alter the nature of living landscapes, with no thought given to the effects of this alteration on the organisms within or around them—humans included. This way of constructing our social reality cannot be sustained on into the future, therefore it has to change, and it will. The only question is how much destruction is going to occur before it does. And during the time it is allowed to continue, the developers and landowners who are causing it are going to have to pay ever more dearly for doing it, until it does come to a halt. Because ultimately our own survival, as human members of the life community, depends on the destruction ending, and also because what we are doing to other forms of life, as this destructive process continues, is grossly unethical.

And I want to reinforce our continuing to protect individual tortoises, including the small numbers that may be in the way of individuals building single-family homes. Recognizing the value of other life is essential to learning to live as a plain member and citizen of the Earth community, and if we humans don't attain this sort of ethical realization very soon, all talk of any populations having conservation value is a waste of time. As people who move into Florida habitats learn about and come to respect the gopher tortoises that share the land with them, they will become

more aware of all the other ecological relationships that revolve around the tortoise and its burrow, and they will increasingly appreciate the uplands—and perhaps be less intent on converting them into lush lawns. And, as people come to coexist with tortoises, those tortoises can themselves continue to reproduce—as they did in my own backyard when I was a child.

As far as ending incidental take and moving to requiring relocation of all tortoises to be impacted by land alterations—ethically this is a must, as long as the habitat destruction itself is allowed to go on. I know from experience that relocations can be successful, that there are many large parcels of public land whose mandated restoration should and must include the restoration of substantial, extant tortoise populations along with longleaf pines and wiregrass to the low-diversity pastures that currently cover them, and that the veterinarians who have worked most closely with URTD in tortoises support relocations, which can be done carefully and with scientific oversight. Also from my own experience, I know that penning or soft release for some period of months on the recipient site will increase the likelihood of relocatees remaining on site, and also that fairly small habitat islands—5 to 15 acres, the size of larger retention areas—can maintain viable tortoise populations if this method is employed, and if the local human residents are educated to appreciate and protect the animals. And yes, I do see quite a bit of conservation value in keeping these few, scattered adult tortoises alive, if only waiting for the day when our precariously supported human society finally crashes and they can once again find each other and begin repopulating their species.

Thank you for taking my comments into consideration.

**Ronnie Hawkins**

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Desert Tortoise Council  
c/o Doug Duncan  
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