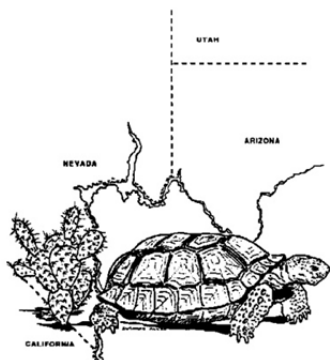


# THE DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

*Winter 2012-OUR 37<sup>th</sup> YEAR*

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



## INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER...

BOARD OF DIRECTORS.....	2
FROM THE EDITOR.....	2
ANNOUNCEMENTS.....	2
NEWS .....	4
MEETINGS .....	7
JOB OPPORTUNITIES .....	8
DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP.....	9

## 2012 DTC SYMPOSIUM

The program for the 37th Desert Tortoise Council Symposium is well developed, with a few slots remaining for oral presentations and several for the poster session. Dr. Robert Murphy, winner of the Robert C. Stebbins Research Award, will be giving the Keynote Address, on the desert tortoise species complex and the naming of the new tortoise. Dr. Elliott Jacobson, the winner of the Kristin H. Berry Annual Award, will be giving a plenary address, coupled with a special session in his honor on health, nutrition, and disease with both invited and contributed papers. Dr. Wade Sherbrooke, renowned expert on horned lizards has assembled the special Saturday morning session on horned lizards. Invited speakers for his session on horned lizards include geneticist Dr. Adam Leache from the University of Washington, Dr. Cameron Barrows from the University of California, Riverside, Dr. Andrew Suarez from the University of Illinois, Dr. Rose from the University of Arizona, and Dr. Kevin Young from Western Arizona College in Yuma. They will cover a wide variety of subjects including status, translocation, predation, and threats. Dr. Sherbrooke's books will be available and there will be a special time for signing.

Dr. Craig Stanford, author of the book, "The Last Tortoise: A Tale of Extinction in Our Lifetime," will share his writings at the Saturday evening dinner and program and will also sign his book. The Symposium will feature several sessions with oral papers on such topics as recovery efforts for



Elden Hughes and "Scottie"

Image © Alex Koester

From:

<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/dec/04/local/la-me-elden-hughes-20111205>

Agassiz's desert tortoise by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees; renewable energy projects; head starting of desert and bolson tortoises for long-term restoration efforts; effects of fire on tortoises and their habitat; translocation; and conservation and management. The poster session already has five entries on a wide variety of subjects ranging from winter activities to restoration of burned tortoise critical habitats.

In an effort to conserve time, money, and paper, we strongly encourage all of our members to receive the newsletter electronically rather than hardcopy.

Send your photos and any other updates to [sdaly@burnsmcd.com](mailto:sdaly@burnsmcd.com).

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Officers

Senior Co-Chair:	Maggie Fusari
Junior Co-Chair:	Dan Pearson
Co-Chair Elect:	Vacant
Past Co-Chair	Bruce Palmer
Recording Secretary:	Ed LaRue
Corresponding Secretary:	Tracy Bailey
Treasurer:	Mike Bailey

### Board Members

Board Member:	Kristin Berry
Board Member:	Rebecca Jones
Board Member:	Joe Probst
Board Member:	Sidney Silliman
Board Member:	Glenn Stewart
Board Member:	Peter Woodman

Newsletter:	Sean Daly
Website:	Michael Connor

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Since most of the newsletters are being received electronically, we would like to invite everyone to send us your photos. Have really great pictures of tortoises or other wildlife? Send them to us and we will put a few of them in the newsletter each issue. Any other updates or news items are welcome as well.

Please make sure you update your mailing and email addresses.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ADDRESS UPDATES!!!

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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## TWENTIETH ANNUAL INTRODUCTION TO DESERT TORTOISE SURVEYING, MONITORING, AND HANDLING TECHNIQUES WORKSHOP

**TWO WORKSHOPS**  
**NOVEMBER 5 & 6, 2012**  
**NOVEMBER 7 & 8**

The 2012 tortoise handling workshop will be held in Ridgecrest CA November 3-4 and probably also November 5-6. We will begin the 2012 invitation process in late July 2012. We are not accepting registrations or issuing invitations to register at this time but you can request your name be placed on our notification list by emailing to [tortoiseorg@gmail.com](mailto:tortoiseorg@gmail.com) with the subject line "2012 HANDLING WORKSHOP LIST" and your contact information. Please be sure we always have your correct email.

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## SYMPOSIUM PHOTO CONTEST

The Council sponsors the annual Photo Contest to honor and encourage our members to participate in educating the public through photography. Joe Probst is managing the 2012 Photo Contest.

## FORMAT

For 2012 the format is mounted print and digital photographs either in black and white or color (no slides). All prints/photos must be matted, NO GLASS FRAMES please. All prints/photos must be labeled with the following information placed on the back of the PRINT/PHOTO: Common and scientific name of subject; location; date photo was taken; contestant's name, addresses, and phone number; and entry category. No names on the front, please, but titles and date are OK. This year, the Council encourages contest entrants to also submit electronic copies (in jpg format) of their entries so that they can be posted on the website before the Symposium and we can show the winners at the Banquet. Please also indicate whether or not you would like to have your entries included at the Auction, with proceeds going to the DTC.

## AWARDS

Qualified winners will be awarded first, second, and third place in each of the eight categories.

First Place awards will be **\$75**.

Second Place will be **\$50**.

Third Place will be **\$25**.

The ninth category, Best of Show will receive **\$150**.

## CATEGORIES

1. WILD DESERT TORTOISES
2. CAPTIVE (PET) DESERT TORTOISES
3. OTHER DESERT REPTILES
4. DESERT MAMMALS
5. OTHER DESERT WILDLIFE
6. WILD DESERT PLANTS
7. DESERT SCENES
8. TORTOISE CONSERVATION; This category covers a range of subjects, but must depict activities or subject matter important to the perpetuation of the species. Examples are research, impacts (i.e., raven predation), improvements (i.e., fencing), and environmental education.

## OTHER RULES

**The contestant must be a registered attendee of the 2012 Symposium.** With the exception of Captive (Pet) Tortoises, all PRINTS/PHOTOS must be taken of WILD (i.e., unrestrained and photographed in its natural habitat) subjects occurring within the geographic range of the desert

tortoise. Each contestant may submit a maximum of two PRINTS/PHOTOS per category. Photos must have been taken by the contestant.

## SUBMISSION OF PRINTS/PHOTOS

PRINTS/PHOTOS must be available for viewing no later than 1:30 p.m. on Friday afternoon, February 17<sup>th</sup> 2012. You may either bring your photo and provide them to Joe Probst at the Symposium early on Friday or mail them to Joe Probst at:

36431 41<sup>st</sup> Street East, Palmdale, Ca. 93552.

PRINTS/PHOTOS must arrive at this address by Friday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2012. To ensure that your entries are posted on the website before the Symposium, submit electronic copies (in jpg format) to the DTC webmaster at [www.deserttortoise.org](http://www.deserttortoise.org).

## JUDGING

Photos will be judged at the Symposium by the attendees. Attendees will have a photo ballot in their registration packet. Each attendee may only vote once. Voting will be on Saturday until 3:00 p.m. Winners will be announced at the Banquet on Saturday night. PRINTS/PHOTOS will not be returned, except upon advance request, and will become the property of the Desert Tortoise Council. The Council shall have the right to use these photographs in its publications and educational programs, as well as to assign such permission to others, with full credit given to the photographer.

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## NOTICE OF REVISION OF COUNCIL BYLAWS

The Board of Directors has proposed a revision to the Council's Bylaws. The last revision of the Bylaws was approved in 2002, and numerous modifications have been proposed to better reflect the current operations of the Board of Directors and the Council. Major changes include: recognizing the current taxonomic status of the desert tortoise; specific reference to non-profit status; expansion of the objectives of the Council to include conservation issues in addition to the desert tortoise;

elimination of two elected officer position (Junior Co-chairperson and Products Manager) and the addition of a new officer (Membership Coordinator); providing more transparency of Board actions (notice of meetings and posting of meeting minutes); providing clarification on the responsibilities of officers and standing committees; and providing for the potential dissolution of the Council. The current Bylaws and proposed revisions are available for review and were posted on the Council website January 17 as required: <http://www.deserttortoise.org/dtc/bylaws.html> The membership is encouraged to attend the Annual Business Meeting on February 17 at 8:00 AM (prior to the opening session of the Annual Symposium) to comment and vote on acceptance of this revision of the Bylaws and receive various reports for discussion.

The updated bylaws are also provided with this newsletter.

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## NEWS

### 'EXTINCT' GIANT TORTOISE FOUND ON REMOTE ISLAND

A species of giant tortoise believed extinct for 150 years was actually just moved from its original home and now lives on the volcanic slopes of the northern shore of Isabela Island in the Galapagos archipelago.

A genetic analysis, published in the latest *Current Biology*, found that DNA footprints of the long lost tortoise species, *Chelonoidis elephantopus*, exist in the genomes of its hybrid offspring. These tortoises turn out to be a mix of *C. elephantopus* and another giant tortoise from the area, *C. becki*.

While researchers have yet to isolate a purebred *C. elephantopus* individual, such tortoises must exist, based on the DNA data. The study marks the first time that a species has been rediscovered by way of tracking the genetic footprints left in the genomes of its hybrid offspring.

"This work also underscores the importance of museum collections in facilitating new discoveries," co-author Ryan Garrick told Discovery News. "Here, we were able to extract DNA from tortoise bones that were collected many decades ago, and use this DNA to characterize the gene pool of purebred *C. elephantopus*."

Garrick is a former Yale postdoctoral researcher who is now an assistant professor at the University of Mississippi.

He and his colleagues visited Volcano Wolf on the northern tip of Isabela Island and took blood samples from more than 1600 tortoises. The scientists then compared them to a genetic database of living and extinct tortoise species.

The matching process detected the genetic signatures of "extinct" *C. elephantopus* in 84 of the Volcano Wolf tortoises, meaning one of their parents was a purebred member of the missing species.

In 30 cases, breeding took place within the last 15 years. Since the lifespan of the tortoises can exceed 100 years, there's a high probability that many purebreds are still alive.

The Galapagos tortoises are famous for their influence on Charles Darwin's ideas about evolution by natural selection. It's no wonder they captured his attention: individuals can weigh nearly 900 pounds and grow to almost 6 feet in length.

Click here for the rest of the original article:

<http://news.discovery.com/animals/tortoise-found-genetics-120109.html#mkcpgn=msn1>

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### IN MEMORIAM: JOSEPH THOMAS COLLINS (1939 - 2012)

It is with very heavy hearts that we report the passing of The Center for North American Herpetology Co-founder and Director Joseph T. Collins. Joe Collins suffered a massive coronary attack and died on 14 January 2012 in Florida. He



and his wife Suzanne were on their annual herpetofaunal expedition to the Florida panhandle and St. George Island. Joe was 72 years old.

Like so many of us, Joe turned a childhood passion into a lifelong career. His accomplishments are too vast for this brief note, and his influence on the lives of past, present, and future herpetologists is immeasurable. His comical subject lines for many of the daily CNAH notes announcements are a testament to Joe's quick-witted sense of humor. They will certainly be missed.

Plans for a memorial service have not yet been made. Details will be released in future announcements as they are received. To say that Joe will be sorely missed is an understatement. CNAH, The Kansas Herpetological Society, and the herpetological community in general have lost a great scientist, a bold leader, and a true friend. Rest in Peace Joe.

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## **HOLBROOK NORTH AMERICAN HERPETOLOGY ARTWORK ONLINE**

The New York Public Library has posted online all of the artwork from John Edward Holbrook's North American Herpetology. The artwork is for sale to those wishing to purchase a single rendering or the entire set. Go to:

<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/> and type in "North American Herpetology" to view the artwork of the Father of North American Herpetology. The names in the captions beneath each drawing are sometimes misplaced, but each piece of artwork displayed on the web site has the correct (for that time) scientific name as applied by Holbrook.

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## **COURT LETS PARK SERVICE DROP DESERT TORTOISE PROTECTIONS**

WASHINGTON - January 4 - A federal court has ruled that the National Park Service (NPS) does not have to protect non-game animals for the sake of the threatened desert tortoise in the Mojave

National Preserve, California. The decision means the NPS need not limit sport hunting for so-called "varmints," according to Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) which brought the suit.

Hunting of non-game animals, called "varmints," is permitted year-round without limit on the sprawling Mojave National Preserve, a tract the size of Delaware. While the threatened desert tortoise is protected by law from hunting it is often the victim of reckless discharge of firearms. In addition, carcasses left by hunters attract ravens, which prey on tortoises.

The December 28, 2011 court decision ended a decade-long effort to make NPS implement a critical provision of the agency's own 2000 General Management Plan (GMP) for the vast desert park. Back in 2002, PEER and other groups petitioned former Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton to adopt the NPS promise to limit sport hunting at the Preserve to big game animals and upland game birds only.

Ironically, limiting sport hunting, and therefore, the legal discharge of firearms, in the Preserve was not PEER's idea. It was an NPS decision. Back on September 21, 2001 former NPS Regional Director John Reynolds signed the Record of Decision for the Environmental Impact Statement on the Mojave GMP, which required that the NPS limit sport hunting in the Preserve. Reynolds adopted it despite opposition from California Fish and Game with only a minor modification to allow for rabbit hunting.

PEER and the other groups waited for the NPS to promulgate the special regulations. When the agency did not act, PEER and others filed a petition for rulemaking under the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) in June 2002. There was no response until finally April 7, 2004, when a top Interior official issued a written promise that the NPS would promulgate special regulations.

No regulations emerged, however. In April 2009, PEER wrote to the new Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar about the long-ignored petition. The

Secretary did not respond. The APA requires that agencies respond to petitions for rulemaking “in a timely fashion.” PEER concluded that an eight-year wait satisfied any reasonable test of “timely.” In July 2010 PEER filed an APA suit in federal court.

In October 2010, NPS Director Jon Jarvis finally acted by summarily denying the petition, deciding openly, for the first time, that he would NOT carry out the agency’s own decision to regulate sport hunting. Jarvis went further. He waived the requirement of NPS Management Policies that Mojave, like every other park in which Congress authorizes hunting, must adopt special regulations to govern and manage that hunting.

“We regret that we failed to convince the judge that this sudden reversal was an abuse of discretion,” stated PEER Senior Counsel Paula Dinerstein who argued the case. “PEER is not opposed to hunting as a legitimate recreational use of the Preserve, but hunting does not take precedence over all other park values including those of other park visitors who wish to experience the quiet of the Preserve without hunting for part of the year. We hope that someday more a thoughtful and caring Park Service steward will give the benefit of the doubt to park resources.”

By reversing the 2001 Bush administration decision to protect Preserve resources, Jarvis sets a standard lower than his predecessor Fran Mainella. In so doing, he disowned one of the most significant Mojave 2001 GMP decisions without any consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service. This was also Jarvis’ first waiver of NPS Management Policies, according to a PEER Freedom of Information inquiry.

Mojave is not the only park unit where Obama NPS officials have lowered protections adopted under Bush. At Big Cypress National Preserve in Florida, PEER is suing NPS over its decision to open previously protected tracts to 130 miles of trails for off-road vehicles.

“We are surprised that the present Park Service leadership is managing to make the Bush record look good,” Dinerstein concluded.

Click here to read the original article:  
<http://www.commondreams.org/newswire/2012/01/04>

Click here to view the court ruling:  
[http://peer.org/docs/nps/1\\_4\\_12\\_Mojave\\_tortoise\\_decision.pdf](http://peer.org/docs/nps/1_4_12_Mojave_tortoise_decision.pdf)

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## **ELDEN HUGHES DIES AT 80; LONGTIME SIERRA CLUB LEADER**

Elden Hughes, a crusader for wild places and a leader of the Sierra Club's battles to protect desert wilderness from development and abuse, has died. He was 80.

Hughes, who died of prostate cancer early Sunday at his home in Joshua Tree, Calif., was a visionary and inspirational figure who mentored generations of activists in fights to reduce the environmental damage of developments, including renewable energy projects on pristine landscapes and wildlife.

Hughes was among a dozen environmentalists invited to the White House in 1994 when President Clinton signed the landmark California Desert Protection Act, which created a new national park in the eastern Mojave Desert and elevated Death Valley and Joshua Tree from national monument to national park status.

The Sierra Club stalwart with gray hair and piercing blue eyes was accompanied by a dozen baby California desert tortoises he had used as calling cards to lobby hundreds of congressmen and senators.

"Elden and his wife, Patty, would walk into a congressional office and place those little critters down on a table," recalled fellow Sierra Club activist Jim Dodson. "Within seconds, staffers would be oohing and cooing over tortoises big as silver dollars and cute as buttons. Next thing you know, the boss would wander out of a back office wanting to know what the hubbub was about. It was hard to say no to Elden after that."

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), author of the final version of the protection act, said, "Hughes dedicated his life to the protection and revival of our great Mojave Desert and its tortoises. I'll never forget when he brought a couple of tortoises to a large constituent breakfast and the amazed and glowing faces of youngsters when he told them they live for decades. Elden led a huge citizen effort in 1993 to support my Desert Protection Act. We will pass the second Desert Protection Act, now pending in committee, in his honor. He will be greatly missed."

Click here to see the entire original article:  
<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/dec/04/local/la-me-elden-hughes-20111205>

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**MOJAVE DESERT LAND TRUST WORKING TO SECURE LAND FOR WILDLIFE CORRIDOR NEAR JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL PARK**

The Mojave Desert Land Trust, which in the past has engineered successful campaigns to protect lands for Joshua Tree National Park, is now embarking on a campaign to preserve a wildlife corridor important to the park.

The Joshua Tree North linkage area connects the ecosystems of Joshua Tree National Park with the Bartlett Mountains and the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base to the north.

To date, Mojave Desert Land Trust has invested \$2.8 million to preserve 2,126 acres in this wildlife corridor. Previous acquisitions include 639 acres adjacent to the national park known as Nolina Peak, 957 acres known as the Quail Mountain Project, and in December of 2011, the Land Trust acquired an additional 530 acres adjacent to Nolina Peak. The preservation of this linkage will support a diverse set of animals, dozens of large and small bird species, and the natural water drainage required to sustain their habitats as they travel to and from Joshua Tree.

Mojave Desert Land Trust has published a Wildlife Linkage brochure outlining the corridors in the Morongo Basin that can be downloaded from their web site. Residents and visitors can learn where these corridors are located, what to do and what not to do if you live within a linkage area, and answers to frequently asked questions about the topic.

The Joshua Tree North Wildlife Linkage provides habitats for animals such as the threatened desert tortoise, bobcat, golden eagle, fox and prairie falcons. It also provides residents and visitors to the Morongo Basin with a beautiful natural area to enjoy now and forever.

"On behalf of those who value open space conservation, it is essential that the National Park Service rely on partners in the conservation arena to assist with the protection of resources," said Joshua Tree Superintendent Mark Butler. "The Mojave Desert Land Trust is truly the American public's gold nugget in the desert."

The Land Trust has committed to raising \$1.75 million for The Linkage Campaign by reaching out to local communities, Land Trust members, and desert enthusiasts.

"With support from our community and conservation partners we've been able to preserve a significant portion of this wildlife corridor. In order to sustain these precious resources, we need to take it all the way," said Nancy Karl, the land trust's executive director. "Our goal is to preserve these dwindling habitats that sustain not only wildlife, but also sustain our much needed experience of nature. Protecting them today ensures that the beauty and quality of desert life will exist for generations to come. That's our goal. We hope those who love the desert will agree and support this effort by investing in the desert's future."

Click here to see the original article:  
<http://www.nationalparkstraveler.com/2012/01/mojave-desert-land-trust-working-secure-land-wildlife-corridor-near-joshua-tree-national-park9307>

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**MEETINGS**

## CONSERVATION AND BIOLOGY OF TORTOISES AND FRESHWATER TURTLES

The 10th Annual Symposium on the Conservation and Biology of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles will be held 16-19 August 2012 in Tucson, Arizona. The meeting is co-hosted by the Turtle Survival Alliance and the IUCN Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG).

The meeting, which has hosted an average of more than 200 attendees over the past six years, represents the largest gathering of non-marine turtle biologists in the world and provides an unmatched opportunity for networking and strategizing turtle conservation. Last year's conference was filled with presentations by biologists and conservationists from 13 countries covering 50+ species.

Visit <http://www.turtlesurvival.org> for more information.

ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS 12 MARCH 2012.

Contact Heather Lowe at [hlowe@turtlesurvival.org](mailto:hlowe@turtlesurvival.org) for more information.

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## JOB OPPORTUNITIES

### CURATORIAL ASSISTANT AT CHEADLE CENTER IN CALIFORNIA

The Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration at University of California, Santa Barbara has a grant-funded part time opening for a curatorial assistant to manage its herpetology, ornithology, and mammalogy collections. The collections consist of fluid-preserved specimens, frozen specimens, dry skins and skeletons, and whole mounts. The herpetology collection (over 13,000 specimens of amphibians, reptiles, and turtles), ornithology collection (4,730 specimens) and mammal collection (1,745 specimens) are strong regional collections used for research in evolution, ecology and biogeography. They are used

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

by academic personnel, both at UCSB and elsewhere, by environmental consultants, by the general public, and in our K-12 environmental education program. The curatorial assistant is responsible for day-to-day activities in the collection and reports to the CCBER Director and Faculty Curator.

Please see the full announcement at:

[www.jobs.ucsb.edu/applicants/Central?quickFind=185439](http://www.jobs.ucsb.edu/applicants/Central?quickFind=185439)

Laurie Hannah  
Librarian/Archivist & Digital Resources  
Coordinator Cheadle Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration Harder South, MS-9615  
University of California Santa Barbara, California  
93106-9615 hannah@ccber.ucsb.edu  
805-893-2506

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### Looking for a job?

Check out these websites for resources:

<http://parcplace.org/setup/job-listings.html>  
(herpetology)

<http://wfsc.tamu.edu/jobboard/>  
(wildlife and fisheries science)

<http://www.cnah.org/jobs.asp>  
(herpetology)

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DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP  
P.O. Box 1568  
Ridgecrest, CA 93556

Check one: \_\_\_\_\_ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/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 (**\$100.00** per year) \_\_\_\_\_ Lifetime (**\$500.00** or more)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Student (**\$20.00** per year- Requires endorsement of student's advisor or Major Professor)

Starting in 2012, the newsletter will only be distributed via electronic link to website.

Make check or money order payable to the Desert Tortoise Council  
and **send** with this application  
to: **Desert Tortoise Council,**  
**P.O. Box 1568**  
**Ridgecrest, CA 93556**

*The Desert Tortoise Council does not release its membership list*

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

# **Bylaws of the Desert Tortoise Council**

(Revisions of the Bylaws of 1976: March 30, 1996; March 21, 2002; and to be considered Feb 17, 2012)

## **Article I – Name**

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL.

## **Article II - Goal and Objectives**

Section 1. The goal of the Desert Tortoise Council (Council) is to assure the perpetual survival of viable populations of the desert tortoise in the wild. Desert tortoise, for the purpose of the Council, includes the tortoise species complex that occurs in the southwestern United States and in Mexico, currently referred to as *Gopherus agassizii* and *Gopherus morafkai*.

Section 2. The objectives of the Council are:

- a. To be organized and operated exclusively for charitable, education, and scientific purposes, and as such, it is the intent that the Council qualify under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as a tax-exempt organization;
- b. To serve in a professional advisory manner on matters involving management, conservation, and protection of desert tortoises and their habitats;
- c. To support, and be an advocate of, such measures as will contribute to ensuring the continued survival of desert tortoises and the maintenance of their habitats in a natural condition;
- d. To stimulate and encourage studies on the ecology, biology, management, and protection of desert tortoises;
- e. To serve as a clearinghouse of information among all agencies, organizations, and individuals engaged in work on desert tortoises, and to be an advocate of science-based management;
- f. To disseminate current information by holding symposia and workshops, and publishing proceedings of meetings and other papers, as appropriate;
- g. To maintain active public information and conservation education programs;
- h. To support conservation actions for the protection of other tortoises, turtles, and ecosystems, as appropriate; and
- i. To commend outstanding action and dedication by individuals and organizations promoting the goal and objectives of the Council.

## **Article III – Membership**

Section 1. Any person or organization with an interest in desert tortoises or desert tortoise conservation shall be eligible for membership in the Council upon application and payment of dues. No professional affiliation is required.

Section 2. The Board of Directors (Board) shall set the rates and categories of dues for membership, and members shall pay the specified dues required of active members of the Council.

Section 3. Complementary memberships of a specific duration may be granted at the discretion of the Board.

Section 4. Any membership may be terminated by resignation.

Section 5. The Board reserves the right to reject the application, or terminate the membership, of any party for cause, as long as such rejection is not in violation of any existing laws or rules affecting exempt organizations under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

## **Article IV - Board of Directors**

Section 1. The business of the Council shall be managed by the Board, which shall be composed of not less than eight or more than fifteen active members of the Council. Seven of the positions on the Board shall be the elected officers of the Council. The Chairperson shall be the presiding officer of the Board.

Section 2. Membership on the Board should reflect the diverse interests, background, geographic distribution, age, gender, and employment (e.g., federal and state agencies, educational institutions, and private firms and organizations) that are represented by the general membership of the Council, insofar as feasible.

Section 3. The Board shall meet a minimum of three times a year, and as needed. The Annual Business Meeting shall be held in conjunction with the Annual Symposium. Meetings of the Board shall be convened by the Chairperson or other elected officer as delegated by the Chairperson. The Board may make such rules and regulations concerning its meetings as it may deem necessary.

Section 4. Each member of the Board shall have one vote. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum. For the Board to take actions that require a vote, a minimum of thirty days notice of the meeting must be provided to all members of the Board. For a member of the Board to cast a vote, the member must be a participant in the discussion of that item, either in person or through various means of telecommunication. Members of the Board may recuse themselves from any deliberation or vote on decisions regarding individual issues or actions under consideration by the Board or the Council. The names of individuals who have recused themselves shall be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Section 5. Any action of the Board may be overridden by a two-thirds majority vote of the attending membership of the Council at the Annual Business Meeting or any Special Meeting convened in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws, with thirty days advance notice of the issue to the general membership. For such a vote to occur requires a minimum of twenty active Council members that includes at least a quorum of Board members and a minimum number of non-Board members equal to the quorum of the Board.

Section 6. The Board shall have control and management of the affairs and business of the Council. Expenditures of the funds of the Council shall be by approval of the Board based on a majority vote. The Board is authorized to act for the Council between Annual Business Meetings, and the Board shall report its actions taken during the previous year to the members of the Council at the Annual Business Meeting.

## **Article V - Membership of the Board of Directors**

Section 1. Chairperson. The Chairperson normally succeeds from the office of Chairperson-elect as a previously elected officer. If that does not happen, the Chairperson will be a newly elected officer. The Chairperson shall give general direction to, and shall preside at, meetings of the Board and the Council. The Chairperson shall provide a verbal summary and written report concerning the activities of the Council during the previous year to the general membership at the Annual Business Meeting, and optionally at the Annual Symposium. The Chairperson normally succeeds to the office of Past Chairperson.

Section 2. Chairperson-elect. The Chairperson-elect is an elected officer who shall assist the Chairperson in duties as needed, and shall chair the Nominating Committee. The Chairperson-elect normally succeeds to the office of Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson, or in the event of his/her inability to act, the Chairperson-elect shall assume the duties of the Chairperson.

Section 3. Past Chairperson. The Past Chairperson succeeds directly from the office of Chairperson as a previously elected officer. The Past Chairperson serves to ensure a smooth transition of responsibilities, and as requested by the Board.

Section 4. Recording Secretary. The Recording Secretary is an elected officer and shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Board, providing a review draft of meeting minutes to the members of the Board within forty-five days following the meeting. Upon approval of the meeting minutes by members of the Board, the final minutes shall be provided to the Corresponding Secretary for the current year's files within sixty days.

The Recording Secretary shall manage the balloting for the election of officers of the Council.

The Recording Secretary shall maintain archival files for the Council consisting of: Bylaws; minutes of all meetings; any correspondence pertinent to Council affairs; all correspondence sent by the Board; copies of all committee reports, newsletters, and publications by the Council; and any other material judged by the Board as pertinent.

Section 5. Corresponding Secretary. The Corresponding Secretary is an elected officer and shall issue notices of the Annual Business Meeting, Annual Symposium, and Special Meetings; distribute materials to the Council's membership and others; serve as chairperson of the Information and Outreach Committee and oversee production of the newsletter and website; and send responses to correspondence, with input by the Chairperson as appropriate. A written summary of the activities of the Corresponding Secretary shall be provided to the Chairperson for the Annual Business Meeting.

The Corresponding Secretary shall notify the Chairperson of all received correspondence in a timely fashion, as appropriate to the issue. An accounting of received and distributed correspondence shall be provided to the Board at each meeting.

The Corresponding Secretary shall compile files of the current year's documents and provide those to the Recording Secretary for the permanent record.

Section 6. Treasurer. The Treasurer is an elected officer who shall be responsible for receiving and distributing all funds of the Council, maintaining the Council's financial statements and records, and attending to all insurance, tax, and special filings of the Council. The Treasurer shall produce an annual budget for approval by the Board. A written audit of the Council's accounts for the past year, completed by the Audit Committee, shall be provided by the Treasurer as part of the annual Treasurer's written report provided to the Chairperson for the Annual Business Meeting.

Section 7. Membership Coordinator. The Membership Coordinator is an elected officer and shall serve as chairperson of the Membership Committee. A list of active members of the Council and current members of the Board shall be maintained in coordination with the Corresponding Secretary. A written summary of the activities of the Membership Coordinator, including the number of current members of the Council, and the names and offices of members of the Board, shall be provided to the Chairperson for the Annual Business Meeting.

Section 8. Board Member at Large. Board Members at Large are those serving on the Board who are not elected officers. Vacant Board Member at Large positions shall be filled by appointment with a majority vote of the Board.

Section 9. Terms of Office. All officers shall be elected at the Annual Business Meeting, and shall assume office at the close of the Annual Symposium held in conjunction with the Annual Business Meeting. If an officer is unable to complete his/her term of office, the Board may appoint a person to fill the vacated office until the next Annual Business Meeting. In the event that the Chairperson cannot fulfill his/her responsibilities, the Chairperson-elect normally shall succeed to that office, followed by Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Coordinator, and Past Chairperson, until the position can be filled by election. Persons serving as members of the Board, including elected officers, are subject to removal by a two-thirds vote of the Board for cause.

Chairperson. The office of Chairperson is held for one year, and normally succeeds directly from the position of Chairperson-elect.

Chairperson-elect. The position of Chairperson-elect shall be nominated and elected each year. That person is expected to serve the first year after election as Chairperson-elect and then succeed to the position of Chairperson, followed by one year in the position of Past Chairperson.

Past Chairperson. The position of Past Chairperson is held for one year following service in the office of Chairperson.

Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer. The Corresponding Secretary and Treasurer shall serve two-year terms, and shall be elected on even years. Either officer may be reelected.

Recording Secretary and Membership Coordinator. The Recording Secretary and Membership Coordinator shall serve two-year terms, and shall be elected on odd years. Either officer may be reelected.

Board Member at Large. Board Members at Large are non-elected positions of the Board, and shall be appointed for a term of three years. Board Members at Large may be reappointed.

Section 10. Elections. A slate of candidates for each vacant elective position of the Board shall be provided by the Nominating Committee for the Annual Business Meeting.

Floor nominations. Additional nominations from the floor may be placed on the Nominating Committee's slate during the Annual Business Meeting. Such nominees must be present and formally accept the nomination.

Balloting. When more than one person has been nominated for an office, written ballots shall be received from active Council members present at the Annual Business Meeting. Ballots shall be counted by the Recording Secretary and another Council member appointed by the Chairperson. Balloting for a single nominee for an office may be taken by a show of hands or indicated by voice.

If the Recording Secretary's office is being elected, the Corresponding Secretary shall manage the balloting.

Election. The nominee for an elected office receiving the majority of votes cast shall be declared elected by the Chairperson. If no nominee receives a majority of votes on the first ballot, a runoff between the two nominees who received the most votes shall be required.

## **Article VI – Committees**

Section 1. The Chairperson of the Board, with the concurrence of the Chairperson-elect, shall appoint chairpersons of standing and *ad hoc* committees. The chairperson of each committee shall appoint committee members with the concurrence of the Chairperson of the Board. The Chairperson of the Board is an ex-officio member of all committees. Generally, the chairperson of each committee should be a member of the Board in order to provide direct reporting on committee activities at each meeting of the Board. In all cases, a member of the Board shall serve on each committee. Authority of each committee to commit resources of the Council, to develop and distribute technical comment letters, and to establish position statements for the Council shall be delegated by the Board on a committee by committee basis, providing for full and open communication of each committee with the Board while facilitating timely action. Prior to the Annual Business Meeting, the chairperson of each committee shall provide a written report to the Chairperson of the Board, identifying the members of the committee and summarizing the activities of the committee during the previous year. Various committees may be established at the direction of the Board, including but not limited to those standing committees listed in the following sections.

Section 2. Annual Symposium Program Committee. The Annual Symposium Program Committee shall be composed of the committee chairperson and others, as appointed.



Obligation. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to develop an interesting, informative, and representative program for the Annual Symposium. The draft program agenda shall be provided to members of the Council at least thirty days in advance of the Annual Symposium.

Section 3. Local Host Committee. The Local Host Committee is intended to include persons that reside in or near the general location of the Annual Business Meeting and Annual Symposium. This committee shall work in conjunction with the Annual Symposium Program Committee, and the committee chairperson shall be a member of the Annual Symposium Program Committee.

Obligation. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to make all necessary arrangements for hosting the Annual Business Meeting and Annual Symposium. This committee shall support the solicitation of donations and fund raising activities at the Annual Symposium.

Section 4. Audit Committee. The Audit Committee shall be convened each year and include at least two active members of the Council who are not members of the Board, at least one of whom shall have experience in audit procedures and shall serve as committee chairperson. The audit may be conducted by a financial professional. The Treasurer shall assist the Audit Committee. The chairperson of the Audit Committee shall provide the audit report for acceptance by the Board.

Obligation. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to conduct an audit of the finances of the Council a minimum of once a year upon completion of the fiscal year and prior to the Annual Business Meeting, and at other times as directed by the Board.

Section 5. Awards Committee. The Awards Committee shall be composed of at least three active members of the Council.

Obligation. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to recommend to the Board a recipient of the Council's Annual Award. This award may be to a person or organization that has made a significant contribution to the conservation and/or knowledge of desert tortoises, or to achieving the goal and objectives of the Council. The Board may also establish other awards as deemed appropriate. Recommendations for recipients of awards shall be provided by the Awards Committee with input from the Council membership. All expenses shall have the prior approval of the Board.

Section 6. Ecosystems Advisory Committee. The Ecosystems Advisory Committee shall consist of active members who shall represent the Board in matters on the conservation of desert tortoises and their habitats, as appropriate.

Obligation. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to keep informed on the status of desert tortoise populations in California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and Mexico; keep current on developments that would affect the status of these populations; and review and provide comment on projects and issues that may affect desert tortoise populations. The Ecosystems Advisory Committee may prepare and submit formal correspondence, and provide comment on behalf of the Board and the Council, under the signature of the committee chairperson or other member of the Board designated by the committee chairperson with the concurrence of the Chairperson of the Board. The Board shall be informed of upcoming committee activities to the extent practicable; provide review and comment for committee correspondence as appropriate and as can be accommodated for timely submittal; and receive notification of final correspondence in a timely fashion, typically at the time that correspondence is submitted or at the next meeting of the Board.

Section 7. Information and Outreach Committee. The Information and Outreach Committee shall be chaired by the Corresponding Secretary, and include the webmaster and editor of the Council newsletter who shall oversee their respective publications.

Obligation. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to disperse information about desert tortoises and the Council; to oversee publications of the Board, including newsletter, website, and workshop/symposium materials; and make public contact for the purpose of publicity,

information, and education about desert tortoises and the Council. A newsletter for dissemination to the membership of the Council shall be distributed a minimum of twice each year.

Restriction. Publicity shall be restricted to Council actions, programs, awards, and announcements; general education and information about desert tortoises and their conservation; and other tortoise and turtle-related matters supported by the Board. At no time shall publicity be released that would discredit any person or organization, state agency, federal agency, or educational institution.

Section 8. Membership Committee. The Membership Committee shall be chaired by the Membership Coordinator.

Obligation. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to work with the Corresponding Secretary to maintain a list of past and active members of the Council; to work with the Nominating Committee to maintain a list of past and current members of the Board, including offices held and terms of service; to work with the Treasurer to account for payment of annual dues; and to endeavor to increase the membership of the Council.

Section 9. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be chaired by the Chairperson-elect.

Obligation. It shall be the responsibility of this committee to present to the Board a slate of candidates for each vacant elective position of Chairperson-elect, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and Membership Coordinator; and to identify potential candidates for vacant positions as Board Member at Large. Candidates for the Board should represent the diversity of the general membership of the Council, insofar as feasible. Prior approval shall be obtained from each candidate before their name is added to the slate of nominees.

## **Article VII – Meetings**

Section 1. Annual Business Meeting. The Annual Business Meeting of the Council shall be held yearly within the first quarter of the year at a place to be determined by the Board. The purpose of the Annual Business Meeting is to elect officers, receive reports, transact other business, and update the general membership of the Council on the activities of the Board. The Annual Symposium shall be held in conjunction with the Annual Business Meeting. The intent is that the venue for the Annual Business Meeting and Annual Symposium rotates within the geographic area defined by the general range of the desert tortoise. If the Annual Symposium is not held due to unforeseen circumstances, the Annual Business Meeting shall still be required.

Section 2. Annual Symposium. The Annual Symposium shall be convened each year in conjunction with the Annual Business Meeting for the purposes of disseminating scientific and conservation information regarding desert tortoises.

Section 3. Meetings of the Board. The Board shall meet a minimum of three times a year, and as needed to transact business necessary for maintenance of the Council. Meetings of the Board are open to the general membership, though general members do not vote on actions being considered by the Board. Notice of the date and location of meetings of the Board shall be available to the general membership a minimum of thirty days prior to the meeting, and such notice may be by postings on the Council website and/or newsletter. Active members of the Council may provide comment on specific issues, or offer topics for discussion, in coordination with the Chairperson. Participation by active members shall follow procedures as may be established by the Board (e.g., member comment agenda item; comment time limits; exclusion from executive session). Minutes of meetings of the Board shall be available to the general membership upon finalization of those meeting minutes, generally sixty days following the subsequent meeting of the Board, but no later than ten days prior to the Annual Business Meeting.

Section 4. Meeting Notices for the Annual Business Meeting and Annual Symposium. Members of the Council shall be notified at least ninety days prior to the Annual Business Meeting. Such notice may be by postings on the Council website and/or newsletter.

Section 5. Special Meetings. Special Meetings may be called as necessary by the Chairperson. Twenty or more active members of the Council may request a Special Meeting in writing to the Chairperson. A minimum of thirty days notice shall be provided to the membership of such a meeting.

#### **Article VIII – Finances**

Section 1. Finances. Funds of the Council shall be under the supervision of the Board and shall be managed by the Treasurer.

Section 2. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Council shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31.

Section 3. Funds. Funds shall be derived from dues, special assessments, work projects, workshops, products, auctions and raffles, contributions, and interest from Council investments.

Section 4. Disbursement. The Treasurer shall make no disbursement of funds of the Council without authorization of the Board. The Treasurer shall deposit all funds of the Council in a federally insured bank or financial institution approved by the Board in a timely manner and in the name of the Council. The Treasurer shall balance the accounts at the end of each fiscal year and his/her written report shall reflect any adjustments as required by the annual audit.

Section 5. Audit. An audit of the financial status of the Council shall be made by the Audit Committee at least once a year at the end of the fiscal year and prior to the Annual Business Meeting, and at other times as directed by the Board.

#### **Article IX – Dissolution**

Section 1. In the event of the dissolution of the Council, the Board shall, after paying or making provisions for the payment of all liabilities of the Council, dispose of all assets, accrued funds, and other properties of the Council to an organization that qualifies as exempt under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) and is dedicated to conservation consistent with the goal and objectives of the Council. It is the intent of the Council that these assets would be held by the receiving organization for up to five years from the date of dissolution of the Council. If the Council may be reestablished within this five-year timeframe, these assets would be redistributed back to the Council. If the Council does not reform within five years, all assets shall become the property of the receiving organization with the intent that these assets would be used to benefit the conservation of desert tortoises and their habitats, insofar as feasible. As of this time, the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee Inc., Riverside, California, is identified as the receiving organization upon dissolution of the Council.

#### **Article X - Parliamentary Authority**

Section 1. Robert's Rules of Order, as revised, shall govern the proceedings of the Council and the Board, subject to the special rules that have been or may be adopted by the Board and the Council.

Section 2. Bylaws. The Bylaws may be amended or revised at the Annual Business Meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of the active members of the Council present. Notice of proposed amendments or revisions shall be provided to members of the Council at least thirty days in advance of the Annual Business Meeting, and such notice may be by postings on the Council website and/or newsletter.