

The Desert Tortoise Council Newsletter Spring 1996

OUR 21st YEAR

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

21st SYMPOSIUM RECAP

The 21st Desert Tortoise Council Meeting and Symposium will be held on March 29-31, 1996, at Sam's Town in Las Vegas, Nevada. A field trip is scheduled for Monday, April 1, 1996, following the symposium. A special session on plants is planned to include cryptogams, native vs. exotic plants, restoration of native grasses and native annual herbs. Tortoise population sampling, ecosystem plans implementing the desert tortoise recovery plan, disease and health, culverts and highways, fire, demography, behavior, survivorship, ravens, and management topics are also planned.

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING: The 21st annual Desert Tortoise Council business meeting will be held on Saturday afternoon immediately following the last symposium session for the day. Among other annual business activities, officers will be nominated and elected for several positions..

PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS ANNOUNCED:

Along with our new prints and voting formats, we had a mix of old and new faces as winners. First Place winners won \$25.00 and Best of Show won an extra \$25.00.

Wild Tortoises: First, Nathan Moorhatch, Second, Tracy Goodlett, Third, Bob Furtek.

Captive Tortoises: First, Richard Marty, Second, William Watson, Third, Terry Christopher.

Other Desert Reptiles: First, Matt Brooks, Second, Tracy Goodlett, Third, Karen Spangenberg.

Desert Mammals: First, Valentine Lance, Second, Valentine Lance, Third, Karen Spangenberg.

Other Desert Wildlife: First, Paul Hamilton, Second, Matt Brooks, Third, Nathan Moorhatch.

Wild Desert Plants: First, Terry Christopher, Second, Bob Furtek, Third, Karen Spangenberg.

Desert Scenics: First, Karen Spangenberg, Second, Bob Furtek, Third, Karen Spangenberg.

Tortoise Conservation: First, Margaret Fusari, Second, Nathan Moorhatch, Third, Bob Furtek.

Best Of Show: Richard Marty's baby tortoise in shell.

Thanks to all who participated and get ready for next year!

1997 SYMPOSIUM NEWS:

The 1997 symposium will again be at Sam's Town. We have tentatively set April 4,5, and 6, 1997. We will inform you when these dates are firm. This locale was locked in in 1995. Look for a new environment in 1998..

VOLUNTEER SOUGHT FOR PROCEEDINGS -- DISTRIBUTION TO LIBRARIES

An important goal of the Desert Tortoise Council is to disseminate information and education opportunities on the desert tortoise to the public. To help facilitate this, the Council is seeking a volunteer to prepare a list of libraries, primarily within States occupied by wild desert tortoises both in the United States and Mexico. The volunteer would determine which may need sets of Desert Tortoise Council Proceedings and facilitate getting the proceedings to these institutions. If you would like to help, please contact the Council at (909) 383-7669.

PROCEEDINGS

The 1996 Desert Tortoise Council Symposium Proceedings are being edited by Breck Bartholomew. The proceedings are scheduled to be available at the 1997 symposium. As you may have noticed, our .

PROPOSED REVISION OF BYLAWS FOR COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP TERMS Section 3. Members shall pay the specified dues required of active members of the Council on a calendar year basis. Membership is to be renewed on the anniversary of application acceptance, i.e. when the Council received the first dues.

Membership extends from the date of dues payment until the Thursday prior to the Annual Symposium each year (generally on or about the end of March).

Memberships may be renewed any time prior to a symposium. No memberships will be pro-rated. Dues shall be \$12.00 per year for a general membership; \$8.00 for students; \$55.00 for societies, groups or clubs; \$50.00 for contributing; and \$300.00 for a lifetime membership. There will be no additional cost to those lifetime memberships applied for prior to March 19, 1988. Student memberships require the endorsement of their Advisor or Major Professor.

RESULTS OF 1996 SYMPOSIUM QUESTIONNAIRE RELEASED

We received an excellent response to the questionnaire at the 1996 Symposium. We will try to the maximum extent possible to respond to your input. The results are summarized below.

SUMMARY OF 1996 DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL SYMPOSIUM QUESTIONNAIRE

Length of the symposium: TOO SHORT-0, JUST RIGHT-47, TOO LONG-14, NO RESPONSE-3

Number of presentations: TOO FEW-3, JUST RIGHT-41, TOO MANY-13, NO RESPONSE-7

Length of presentations: TOO SHORT-12, JUST RIGHT-43, TOO LONG-12, NO RESPONSE-2

Time for questions: TOO SHORT-41, JUST RIGHT-19, TOO LONG-0, NO RESPONSE-4

Cost of registration: TOO LITTLE-0, JUST RIGHT-33, TOO MUCH-26, NO RESPONSE-5

Cost of banquet: TOO LITTLE-0, JUST RIGHT-32, TOO MUCH-21, NO RESPONSE-11

Length of banquet: TOO LONG-41, JUST RIGHT-5, DON'T CARE-7, NO RESPONSE-11

Cost of hotel rooms: OKAY-41, TOO MUCH-7, DON'T CARE-10, NO RESPONSE-6

Friday night social hour: BAD IDEA-1, DON'T CARE-18, GOOD IDEA-43, NO RESPONSE-2

Continental breakfasts: BAD IDEA-1, DON'T CARE-5, GOOD IDEA-57, NO RESPONSE-1

Council business meeting: when should it be held? FRIDAY-8, SATURDAY-11, SUNDAY-3, EARLIER IN DAY-2, MID-DAY-3, LATE IN DAY-11, NO RESPONSE-39

Do you prefer a meeting with everything under one roof (lodging, meeting room, banquet)? YES-51, NO-2, DON'T CARE-9, NO RESPONSE-2

If a substantial reduction in cost were involved, how would you feel about meeting at one place, like a university or museum, and finding lodging at another location? GREAT-36, NO-8, DON'T CARE-15, NO RESPONSE-5

RECOMMENDED SYMPOSIUM LOCATIONS:
Utah, Ridgecrest, Death Valley(3), Laughlin(2), Tucson(16), NOT Las Vegas(13), UCR(2), Mexico [incl. Hermosillo](4), California(2), Las Vegas(5), Cabo San Lucas, San Diego(2), El Centro, Joshua Tree, Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Barstow College, Phoenix Zoo, Moab, Asilomar, Mesquite, Palm Springs(5), Los Angeles, St. George(2), Phoenix(2), Grand Canyon, Albuquerque, Santa Fe, Yuma, Lake Havasu City, Arizona, Borrego Springs.

COMMENTS:

PHOTO CONTEST:

8X10, matted, require mounted voting was good. Don't have DTC keep all photos, will get better material that way. Why do they need prints? Describe photos that won (photographer, title, subject, not just #. No one knows what that is.

BANQUET:

Shorten it(3)
Start whole thing earlier(2)
Shorten Awards
Start dinner speaker earlier
Food poor for the money(4)
Do awards during the day or at mixer

RAFFLE/AUCTION

Started too late, went too long(5)
Better prizes, less junk(2)
Too much long-winded banter
Do during social hour
Auction is great fun

Lose \$ and interest when 75% of people leave PROGRAM

Do symposium during the week(4)

Advertise starting time on Friday

Good ending earlier on Sunday

Start 1:00 on Friday

Shorten day to 9-3

Good work keeping talks on time(2)

Not keeping to schedule(2)

Concurrent sessions would alleviate time problems(2)

Less 1/2 hour talks

Too many presenters talking through the Q & A period

Don't have session chair when only 1 speaker

Some introductions too lengthy (session and program chairs)(4)

Fewer presentations and 20 minutes to get Q & A time.

Many complex subjects demand greater than 12 minutes(2)

Do posters of non rigorous, less scientific stuff-- will free up more time(3)

Have student registration rate(4)

Talk on ESA/Regulatory/Recovery Plan changes

Registration cost greater than most national meetings which have more amenities and last longer. Greater cost than ESA meetings.

Peer reviewed proceedings a good idea(2)

Great having proceedings on time!

Room temperature too cold

Need place to take an outdoor walk

No more smoke filled (Casino) rooms(10)

Hotel worker opening door in front of room repeatedly was distracting

Entrance in back of room, not in front, side

No break Friday morning(2)

No hot water for Tea on Sunday

Get lapel microphone (wireless)(2)

Best symposium yet, and/or soil and vegetation excellent (8)

Increase in scope was great (2)

School kids were great idea(3)

Shorten soil/veg and have panel at end

Don't have so many "special" speakers

Have session on ideas for future research, observations, trends, anecdotes(2)

Need more management/practical conservation actions

No talks from agency heads

Special synthesis sessions would be good, i.e.. nutrition

"MOG"-type mgmt talks: put them all together, and they're too long

In organization, don't confuse science on a military base with mgmt on a military base.

Put all health together

Put poaching with management, not science

Some papers had no value

Great practical management/mitigation talks

Screen papers first- questioned relevancy "suspicious tire track" paper

EVALUATIONS RETURNED = 64; MEMBERSHIP: MEMBER-50,

NON-MEMBER-7, NO RESPONSE-7

DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FOR DISPLAYS, BROCHURES, OR EXHIBITS FEATURING THE DESERT TORTOISE

The Desert Tortoise Council has begun a program designed to further the exposure of people to the desert tortoise, its habitat, and issues surrounding its protection in the wild.

The Council recognizes that museums, zoological gardens, other educational institutions or groups, and agencies have unique capacities to capture imaginations and to enhance the knowledge of large numbers of people from varied walks of life.

The Desert Tortoise Council proposes to form partnerships with institutions desiring to develop means to improve the exposure and knowledge of desert tortoise issues to more people.

The geographic base of this program lies within the four States inhabited by the desert tortoise: Arizona, California, Nevada, and Utah.

The Desert Tortoise Council may make matching grants of up to \$1,000 to institutions that propose developing displays, brochures, or exhibits furthering the Council's goal: To assure the continued survival of viable populations of the desert tortoise, *Gopherus agassizii*, through its existing range. Projects should focus on ecology and natural history of the desert tortoise. However, the Council is most interested in projects that include information on threats to the tortoise and how people can protect the tortoise. Grants may vary in size based upon proposals and the

nature of other matching funding shown by the submitting institution. This program is available throughout the year, and proposals may be made at any time.

Proposals must include: Name of Institution; Name of primary contact; Address and phone number; Title and theme of project; Description of project as complete as possible; Funding structure and sources secured for the project; Schedule for project completion; Estimated life of the completed project; Means to guarantee the project's completion; and other salient points that may promote the value of the proposal, such as the number of visitors to the institution in the last year.

Submit proposals to:

Desert Tortoise Council
463 North Sierra Way
San Bernardino, California 92401 .

WEST MOJAVE PLAN NEWS

BLM is developing working groups to develop solutions for about 34 land issues that still need resolution. Many meetings are to occur in January and February. The Council and Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee are participating in as many of these as possible. Ones of primary interest are: Habitat protection, cattle grazing management prescriptions, competitive events/corridors, incidental take, no desert tortoise clearance areas, sheep grazing management prescriptions, Hatching and rearing, translocation, mitigation fees, cost of implementation and sources of funding. If you have any questions or wish to participate more in this pivotal plan, contact BLM at West Mojave Plan 222 East Main St., Suite 202, Barstow, CA 92311, or phone 619-255-8852.