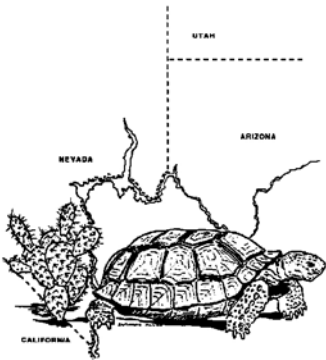


THE DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2008-OUR 33rd YEAR

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



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VENTURE TO A NEW VENUE

2009 SYMPOSIUM IN MESQUITE, NEVADA

Have you ever wondered what the northern edge of the Mojave looks like, where creosote mingles with pinyon juniper and caliche caves are replaced by deep rock burrows of sandstone and basalt? Have busy work schedules and traditional Symposium venues limited your explorations of tortoise habitat to the southern and western portion of the range? No more excuses!

The upcoming DTC 2009 Symposium will be held February 19-22 at the Casa Blanca Resort & Casino in Mesquite, Nevada!

Okay, so you heard we were going to St. George in 2009. Well we still are...there will be field trips to the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve, only a short 30 minute drive from Mesquite. The Beaver Dam Slope is even closer. Bring your hiking shoes, your biking shoes, and plan to spend an extra day getting intimate with red dirt.

Preliminary Planning Info. Mesquite is only one hour north of Las Vegas on I-15. For those flying into Vegas, a reliable and convenient door-to-door shuttle provides round-trip service between the airport and the Casa Blanca for \$75.00 (mesquitebusco.com or 1-888-855-4bus phone reservations). Of course, rental cars are also available.



R.I.P. Mojave Max

Rates at the Casa Blanca, if reserved before January 19, 2009, will be affordable! Wed-Thurs nights are \$49.98 and Fri-Sat nights are \$64.98. Rates are for a standard room, per night and are subject to nine percent (9%) room tax.

Day time temperatures in late February can easily reach the mid 60's, while nights may dip to the mid 30's. It may not be warm enough to jump in the Casa Blanca's famous waterfall and pool, but it is perfect for getting outdoors. The Casa Blanca makes it easy to get out for fresh air and fun. For an alternative lunch break, grab some friends for a game of sand volleyball in the court located by the pool. Doors in the convention area open to the large outdoor space. <http://www.casablancaresort.com/>

Field trips on Thursday! To better accommodate work week schedules, we are trying something different by holding field trips on Thursday before the symposium starts. We are organizing a great selection of trips to tortoise habitat...some by foot, some by bike, some by vehicle. Sign up for field trips will be on a space-available basis. Stay tuned for more info this fall!

Great Program! We are putting together a fantastic program!

More fun for the Family! Zion National Park is only 1½ hours from Mesquite if you and your family are looking for a mid winter getaway. Snow Canyon State Park is even closer, and is a good place for little ones to play in open sand dunes. Awesome golf can be found right in Mesquite or in St. George, just 30 minutes north. For those looking for a relaxing break from hectic home life, the Casa Blanca has a nice spa facility right on site (casablancaresort.com).

Mark Your Calendar! Make sure to set aside February 19-22, 2009 for the 34th Annual Desert Tortoise Council Symposium. You won't want to miss this one!

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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.

Also, if you have moved or have a new email, please make sure you update your mailing and email addresses.

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.

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.

Desert Tortoise Council soon accepting credit cards

The Desert Tortoise Council will soon be accepting credit card payments (MasterCard and Visa only at this time) on our website, www.deserttortoise.org. You will be able to pay your membership dues and purchase a copy of the Proceedings on CD.

If you have any comments/suggestions, please email Tracy Bailey at tracy.bailey@mchsi.com

17th ANNUAL HANDLING WORKSHOP UPDATE

The October 25-26, 2008 is Workshop **FULL**.

To join the waiting list, please e-mail tracy.bailey@mchsi.com

The Desert Tortoise Council Tortoise Handling Workshops are held once a year in the fall. The Desert Tortoise Council's 2-day workshops are structured to provide information on the handling, monitoring, surveying and biology of desert tortoises.

Instructors include: Desert Tortoise Council officers, public and private sector biologists, and personnel from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

The Desert Tortoise Council 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.

Registration notices will be sent via e-mail at the beginning of August to those who are already on the list to attend. The Workshop will be held at the Spring Hill Suites Marriott, Ridgecrest, CA. Please continue to visit www.deserttortoise.org for the agenda and other notices.

NEWS

BLM to Continue Accepting Solar Energy Applications

In response to public interest in solar energy development, the Bureau of Land Management is announcing that it plans to continue accepting applications for future potential solar development on the public lands. The BLM will process these applications, while continuing to identify issues during public scoping currently underway for the programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS).

“We heard the concerns expressed during the scoping period about waiting to consider new applications,” said BLM Director James Caswell, “and we are taking action. By continuing to accept and process new applications for solar energy projects, we will aggressively help meet growing interest in renewable energy sources, while ensuring environmental protections.”

The BLM had previously advised that it was temporarily suspending acceptance of new solar applications pending completion of the PEIS, while the agency processed the 125 applications previously received. With today's announcement, the BLM will now accept additional applications for solar energy projects and process them with the 125 already submitted.

The public scoping period for the programmatic EIS continues through July 15, 2008. During this time, the public may continue to comment on the scope of the PEIS either online through the online comment form at <http://solareis.anl.gov/involve/comments> or by mail to Solar Energy PEIS Scoping, Argonne National Laboratory, 9700 S. Cass Ave. – EVS/900, Argonne IL 60439. Three public scoping meetings remain, July 8 in Tucson, Arizona; July 9 in San Luis Obispo, California; and July 10 in El Centro, California. Details about meeting locations are available on the project website, <http://solareis.anl.gov/involve/pubschedule/index.cfm>.

“The BLM has a longstanding commitment to advancing renewable energy development,” added Caswell. In 2005 the BLM completed a PEIS for wind energy development on public lands and recently published for public comment a Draft PEIS on geothermal energy development. These efforts and the current solar energy initiative will facilitate opportunities for renewable energy development on the public lands.

The BLM manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

[See the original BLM article here...](#)

Lawsuit Filed to Stop Army Relocation Project From Killing More Desert Tortoises

LOS ANGELES, CA — The Center for Biological Diversity and Desert Survivors filed suit

Wednesday in federal court against two government agencies over the relocation of hundreds of desert tortoises and transfer of land-management authority from the Army to the Bureau of Land Management without required environmental review.

"It's time to overhaul Fort Irwin's disastrous tortoise relocation program," said Ilene Anderson, a biologist with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Though we can't stop the Fort's expansion, we can ensure that the relocation of these rare animals is done right. With the severity of the impacts to tortoises from the expansion, it's imperative that the Army's mitigation be as successful as possible."

Despite the potential to drive the tortoise closer to extinction, in 2001 Congress authorized Fort Irwin to expand into some of the best desert tortoise habitat remaining in the western Mojave desert. As partial mitigation, in March the Army moved more than 770 tortoises from one expansion area onto lands acquired by the Army and now managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The new lands, however, provide much lower-quality habitat and contain pockets of diseased tortoises.

Desert tortoise relocation has never been attempted on such a large scale, and this spring's relocated tortoises suffered devastating initial mortality from predators: within days more than 20 tortoises had been killed by coyotes. Healthy tortoises were also moved into areas where diseased tortoises live, which is in direct conflict with the recommendation of epidemiologists. The lands into which the tortoises were moved are far poorer habitat because of numerous roads, illegal off-road vehicle routes, houses, illegal dumping, and mines. (This is why the area currently supports low numbers of existing desert tortoise, some of which are diseased.) Subsequent phases of the relocation effort will involve over 1,000 tortoises, although the relocation sites have yet to be identified.

"Moving healthy tortoises into low-quality habitat that contains diseased tortoises is a recipe for disaster," said Anderson. "And protection from predators is essential based on the last relocation's tragedy."

Having survived over 1 million years in California's deserts, desert tortoise numbers are now crashing. The crash is due to numerous factors including disease, habitat degradation, crushing by vehicles, military and suburban development, and predation by animals. Because of its dwindling numbers, the desert tortoise, which is California's official state reptile, is now protected under both federal and state endangered species acts.

Recently, population genetics studies have identified the desert tortoise in the west Mojave desert, including those at Fort Irwin, as distinctly different from its relatives to the north, east, and south. This finding sheds new light on why increased conservation and relocation success are more important than ever for the Fort Irwin relocation.

"The relocation plan could be much improved by reducing the number of tortoises being moved, making sure only healthy tortoises are moved into healthy populations, and improving the habitat quality in the relocation area by making it a tortoise preserve," suggested Anderson, "where there are a minimal number of roads, no off-road vehicles, dumping, or mining allowed, coupled with strict enforcement."

Contact Info: Ileene Anderson (323)490-0223

Potential Funding Opportunity

SOPTOM is a non-profit NGO actively involved in the conservation of tortoises and turtles, especially that of *Testudo hermanni hermanni* (Gmelin, 1789). In our research centre, we promote the use of scientific knowledge and methods to develop and improve management and restoration actions for this species. Our programmes cover censuses and monitoring to conservation genetics, parasitology and animal behaviour. We have the opportunity to work both in the wild, being based locally within the distribution area of the species, and also in captivity thanks to our rescue and education centre.

Starting in 2009, for about 5 years, we will benefit from important funding (FEDER and LIFE European Funding Programmes) and we would like to take this as a great opportunity to develop sound scientific research programmes related to the conservation of this species and of its habitats. If you are a researcher or a student interested in conservation biology, we would like to invite you to apply for collaboration/partnership for research projects, mostly in fields like ethology and behavioural ecology, but also in habitat management and classical ecology. Some aspects related to sociology and education could also be of interest. We will have opportunities to provide stipends, research grants for students and also research contracts/jobs for limited duration.

Questions that should be addressed can cover a wide range of topics as long as they impact directly on the conservation of the species through enhanced knowledge of its needs, requirements or constraints, or improved management practises and guidelines.

For instance:

- Does access to water affect habitat use (locomotion, activity rate) and increase fitness (summer survival, growth, decreased availability to predator)?
- Is the Hermann's tortoise a true generalist-opportunist or does it need to eat some special plants or items to ensure/increase its fitness?
- How does habitat microstructure affects locomotion, mating opportunities and home range size?
- What are the effects of land-clearing (prevention of fires) on habitat use?
- Are edges important habitats for tortoises of a mere bias in detectability?
- What are the factors causing use of burrows and under-rock cavities? Opportunity or real choice?
- Habitat preference and requirements by juveniles.
- Eggs as a major or opportunistic food source for boars and stone martens ?.

- Is the very strong phylopatry of adult tortoises due to an imprinting phenomenon when subadults ?
- Influence of olfaction in homing behaviour, mate search, and food choice.
- Resident vs transient: what are the causes?
- Characteristics of hibernating sites, of nesting places (successful and unsuccessful)
- Survival of intergrades (*Testudo hermanni hermanni* x *T.h. boettgeri*) in the wild and in captivity?
- Locomotion following translocation, homing behaviour and phylopatry... how can we improve translocation procedures?
- Effects of regular handling on detectability (trap-shyness)
- Changes in color patterns with age, establishing identification methods using biometry
- Mate choice, sperm competition and sperm storage
- Corridor design and habitat management to promote colonisation and defragmentation
- Signals causing flee or increased locomotion
 - Can we develop tools to prevent accidents with machines?
- And so on...

To apply, please contact Barbara Livoreil, scientific officer, at Blivoreil@aol.com for more details. Please mention "TORTOISE RESEARCH PROJECT" in the Subject of your mail. Having some experience (and publications) in one of the field mentioned above is a plus but you may also be willing to propose any subject for which you are an expert. Deadline for application is December 2008, 1st, although the quickest you mail will be, the more chances and time we have to develop a good contract.

Many thanks for your interest!

Tortoises Push Casino Grand Opening Back

TWENTYNINE PALMS — Discovery of tortoises on the 160-acre site of the NŶwŶ Casino and RV

Resort has likely pushed back the opening of that casino 30 to 60 days.

That is the word from Rod Wilson, spokesman for the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, which has proposed building the casino and RV park on reservation land south and east of the intersection of Adobe Road and Baseline Road.

Discovery of the endangered species, Wilson said, required the tribe to add to its already extensive environmental assessment for the project.

He said Tuesday, July 15 that sometime next week the tribe is expected to have a finalized version of a wildlife habitat conservation plan, not only for desert tortoises but for any other endangered animals and plants found at the site.

Protocols for tortoises, he said, will include the placement of fencing to protect the animals and establishment of a location on the 160-acre site for tortoises that have to be relocated because of construction.

The protocol, he said, is based on one created by Copper Mountain College in Joshua Tree for its construction plans.

"That is really kind of the model for the tribe," he said. "That will be the final component of the environmental assessment, then the environmental assessment can be approved."

After that happens, Wilson said, the tribe will send biologists to the site to identify where tortoise fencing will be required.

"We're getting closer," he said. "We will be able to break ground. Certainly the tribe is going to be well prepared for whatever happens, make sure it is all handled properly."

He said the added planning has likely moved the casino's planned opening date, which had been set for the beginning of April of next year, back 30 to 60 days.

“As soon as we know when the groundbreaking will be we will have a firm opening date,” he said. “We are getting close.”

[See the original Desert Trail article here...](#)

Desert Tortoise Mojave Max dies at Red Rock Habitat

Mojave Max, the desert tortoise whose emergence from his burrow was a closely watched harbinger of spring's arrival in Southern Nevada, died of natural causes Monday, a Bureau of Land Management spokeswoman said.

The tortoise's age was estimated at 65.

During the past nine years, Clark County students have predicted the date when Max would awaken from his winter slumber, which is called brumation, the reptilian form of hibernation. Ground temperature contributes to the tortoise's emergence from his underground refuge.

As Southern Nevada's answer to Punxsutawney Phil, Max's decision to emerge from his burrow at the Red Rock Canyon Visitor Center to seek the sun was always greeted with fanfare. The event would draw thousands of valley students to research tortoises and temperatures of the Mojave Desert.

Max usually would get his first peek of springtime sunlight around mid-March.

Desert tortoises can live up to 80 years in the wild and up to 100 years in captivity.

Max's successor has not been named.

[See the original Las Vegas Review Journal story](#)

City Land Transfer Connected to Conservation

The City of Mesquite gets nearly 5,000 acres of land; Gold Butte receives National Conservation Area protection.

That's the package Nevada congressman Jon Porter's pending bill would deliver to the city. The bill would allow the city to acquire 4,900 acres of public land, but the city would be responsible for implementing a conservation element.

The city needed a partner to help with the conservation element. In stepped the Friends of Gold Butte and the Nevada Wilderness Coalition.

"There's only been one conservation proposal, but it's not formal," said Matt Leffingwell, Porter's Washington D.C. press secretary. "It was made by the Nevada Wilderness Coalition and Friends of Gold Butte. The proposal was to make Gold Butte a National Conservation Area (NCA). It's only in the preliminary phase of discussions right now."

Leffingwell called the proposal "a starting point" and said discussions would address "stakeholders' concerns." Porter's staff will conduct meetings with the city, Clark County, Bunkerville and Moapa Valley town advisory boards and Las Vegas during Congress' next recess.

"I'm just hoping — if it comes about — for public input," said Mayor Susan Holecheck. "The conservation element proposal helps define the management plan. We need to get the local governments included in forming the management plan."

John Wallin, director of Nevada Wilderness Coalition, said an NCA with wilderness was the best way to ensure the broader public is included management plan.

"The management plan won't be done in the cursory way the (BLM) transportation environmental assessment (EA) went down," Wallin said. "We're proposing a three-year scoping plan for the NCA to get as much input as possible as we did with other NCAs in Nevada. The three-

year dialogue gives time for legitimate conflicts to be discussed. It prevents rumors from persisting. We believe in the needs of the local entities, and we support spelling out in the legislation that the BLM should hold meetings in all local communities to ensure the broadest possible participation."

Friends of Gold Butte and the Nevada Wilderness Coalition are proposing that the NCA cover all of the existing Gold Butte Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The designation of the ACEC includes:

Gold Butte, Part A, 186,909 acres for critical desert tortoise habitat.

Gold Butte, Part B, 119,097 acres for cultural resources, scenic, wildlife habitat and sensitive species.

Gold Butte, Part C, 38,431 acres for wildlife habitat, scenic and botanical resources.

These ACECs are home to many cultural resources such as petroglyphs and agave roasting pits, natural hazards such as Devil's Throat, and important habitat for the Las Vegas bear poppy and the desert tortoise, among many others.

The BLM's Las Vegas field office finalized the Resource Management Plan for its district in 1998. The plan designated the Gold Butte ACEC and several other ACECs in northeast Clark County. Recently, the BLM acted on a federal directive to make its ACEC road designation plan more consistent. BLM changed the plan from "interim" to "redesignation," but the plan still calls for closure of 94 miles of ACEC roads while leaving 812 miles open in northeast Clark County.

"Gold Butte is so unique, and the threats to the area so immediate, that we believe the time to act is now," Wallin said. "The Transportation EA calls for closing some roads, and leaving some roads open that we think might be better closed. That said, we have proposed an NCA with wilderness that leaves every existing road open, even some that the BLM advocate closing. We have also reduced the wilderness portion of our proposal by 80,000 acres.

We're willing to compromise on this because the cultural and biological resources of the area need protection now. An NCA and wilderness will get the agency the resources to do a better job."

While Nevada Wilderness Coalition's NCA proposal doesn't currently include a visitors' center, it does call for interpretive signage.

"If you give people the right information, very few people willingly ignore the information. In the absence of that, people will do bad things, but they're in the minority. The proposal is a unique way to address issues and assure plenty of input," said Wallin.

"Congressman Porter's office is extremely sensitive how this rolls out. The challenge for us is that some have called us out in public about being 'sneaky.' What we are doing is respecting Congressman Porter's request to let he and his staff talk to local stakeholders, and to let him share the proposal with those folks."

[See the rest of the Desert Valley Times article here](#)

BLM Announces Revisions to Handbook Designed to Make Environmental Reviews More Efficient

The Bureau of Land Management today announced new guidance designed to make its environmental reviews more effective and efficient.

The BLM published in the *Federal Register* a notice announcing the availability of the revised version of its handbook guiding implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA Handbook provides instructions, procedures, and examples for complying with the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations and the Department of the Interior's Departmental Manual guidance for implementing NEPA.

The objectives of the NEPA Handbook are to establish systematic practices for integrating NEPA into the planning and decision making processes

used by the BLM, and to promote efficiency in the preparation and documentation of NEPA compliance. The NEPA Handbook is intended for use by BLM managers, field staff, and other personnel for oversight and compliance with NEPA within their program areas.

The NEPA Handbook was last revised in 1988. The current version is the result of nearly two years of work by a diverse team of BLM specialists who drafted the revised NEPA Handbook based on changes in Departmental Manual guidance regarding implementation of NEPA for public land management.

Revisions to the 1988 NEPA Handbook were designed to support decision making by BLM staff, as well as to avoid redundant or unnecessary documentation. Key changes in the new version include guidance on cumulative effects analysis; definition of issues requiring analysis; clarification of the meaning of “significant” effects; and discussion of public involvement requirements for environmental assessments and other proceedings.

In today’s notice, the BLM invites the public to share comments on the NEPA Handbook, though a formal comment period on the document was not opened.

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 mandates that every Federal agency prepare a detailed statement of the effects of “major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.” The NEPA process is intended to help public officials make decisions that are based on an understanding of environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore, and enhance the environment.

In August 2007, the BLM published a set of revisions to the Department of the Interior’s Departmental Manual, which guides the BLM’s implementation of NEPA. The revisions to the Departmental Manual have also been incorporated into the NEPA handbook.

The BLM manages more land – 258 million surface acres – than any other Federal agency. Most of this

public land is located in 12 Western States, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, and cultural resources on the public lands.

[See the original BLM release here...](#)

The Southwest Desert's Real Estate Boom

From California to Arizona, demand for sites for solar power projects has ignited a land grab.

Doug Buchanan grins with relief when he sees the carcasses. He has just driven up a steep dirt road onto a vast, sunbaked mesa overlooking the Mojave Desert in western Nevada. There, a few feet from the trail, lie the corpses of two steers. A raven perches on one, the only object more than three feet above the ground on this pancake-flat plateau. Cattle, dead or alive, qualify as good news in Buchanan's line of work. If cattle are present, that means grazing is permitted, and that in turn means that this land is most likely not protected habitat for the desert tortoise.

Buchanan, 53, is scouting sites for a solar power company called BrightSource Energy, an Oakland-based startup backed by Google ([GOOG](#), [Fortune 500](#)) and Morgan Stanley ([MS](#), [Fortune 500](#)). The blunt, fifth-generation Californian, who used to survey the same area for natural-gas power sites, knows that the presence of an endangered species such as the tortoise could derail BrightSource's plans to build a multibillion-dollar solar energy plant on the mesa.

BrightSource badly wants these 20 square miles of federal land on what is called Mormon Mesa. The company was in such a hurry to stake its claim with

the U.S. Bureau of Land Management that it applied for a lease sight unseen. That's an expensive gamble for a startup, given that application fees alone run in the six figures. "I usually like to go out and kick the tires before filing a claim," Buchanan says, "but there's a lot of competitive pressure these days to move fast."

That's putting it mildly. A solar land rush is rolling across the desert Southwest. Goldman Sachs, utilities PG&E and FPL, Silicon Valley startups, Israeli and German solar firms, Chevron, speculators - all are scrambling to lock up hundreds of thousands of acres of long-worthless land now coveted as sites for solar power plants.

[See the entire CNN article here...](#)

RELATED MEETINGS

The Turtle Survival Alliance will host the 6th Annual Symposium on Conservation and Biology of Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles

Announcement and Call for Papers

17 – 20 September 2008, Tucson, Arizona

Joint Annual meeting of the Turtle Survival Alliance and IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group

The Turtle Survival Alliance (TSA) and the IUCN/SSC Tortoise and Freshwater Turtle Specialist Group (TFTSG) are pleased to announce the dates of their joint Symposium, Wednesday - Saturday September 17 - 20, 2008 in Tucson, Arizona. This is the 6th annual conference hosted by the TSA, and has become the largest gathering of non-marine turtle biologists and captive breeding specialists in the world.

Tucson is in the Sonoran Desert, an absolutely stunning location with rich cactus forest, rolling hills and awe-inspiring mountains. It is home of the giant saguaro cactus, an iconic symbolic of the American West. This time of year rewards travelers

with dry days in the 70s and 80s and nights in the 40s or 50s. The summer rainfall is just finishing, and the desert should be particularly beautiful. The Sonoran Desert harbors 60 mammal species, 350 bird species, 20 amphibian species, 100+ reptile species, 30 native fish species, and more than 2000 native plant species. Hiking, bird watching, museums, and great dining are all within easy access of Tucson. The city is bordered north and south by Saguaro National Park.

Conference planning is still underway, but rest assured that we are working hard to keep costs down while improving the quality of your conference. Based on the recent survey results, this year's conference will feature hands-on demonstrations and workshops, concurrent sessions including a full day captive husbandry symposium, and more time for socializing. Post workshop field trips are also being planned. Once again, we are grateful for the generous support of our conference title sponsor, ZooMed. This promises to be a major international conference, with over 70 presentations, another exciting and memorable icebreaker (Wed evening, 17 Sept), Mexican dinner with Live Auction (Friday, 19 Sept) and the Banquet and Award Presentation (Saturday, 20 Sept). For the third year the TSA and TFTSG will present the Behler Turtle Conservation Award, and Chelonian Research Foundation will sponsor the annual award for best student papers and posters.

Hotel and registration information will be posted by late April on our web site at www.turtlesurvival.org

Call for Papers

The following symposia will be featured and others will be added later:

- Veterinary topics: Sam Rivera (SRivera@zoatlanta.org) and Greg Fleming (greg.fleming@disney.com), chairs.

- Field Conservation Programs: Rick Hudson (RHudson@fortworthzoo.org), chair.

- Reintroduction and Recovery Programs: Rick Hudson, chair

www.deserttortoise.org

•Husbandry: Paul van der Schouw (chelidman@tampabay.rr.com), Cord Offerman (puravida@gvvc.com), Dwight Lawson (DLawson@zooatlanta.org), and Cris Hagen (hagen@srel.edu), chairs.

•TCF-funded projects: Anders Rhodin (RhodinCRF@aol.com) and Hugh Quinn (DoubleHQ@aol.com), chairs

•Turtle Conservation and Research in the Southwest: Brian Horne, chair. (BHorne@sandiegozoo.org)

Those interested in speaking or presenting a poster should contact Conference Program Chairman Don Boyer (DBoyer@sandiegozoo.org) or one of the session chairs listed above.

The deadline to submit proposals for presentations is June 30th 2008. Please include: (1) title, (2) authors (indicate presenting author) with addresses, (3) a brief abstract (not to exceed 250 words), (4) preference for Oral or Poster presentation, and (5) indicate if you are a Student (or within one year of finishing your studies). Student presentations are only eligible for awards if the student is sole or senior author. Submit to the Program Chair, Don Boyer (DBoyer@sandiegozoo.org). Presenters will be notified of the status of their proposed presentation by July 30th 2008. Extended abstracts will be requested for publication in the conference proceedings later in the year. Presentations will be 15 minutes in length including introduction and questions. Microsoft PowerPoint is preferred, but presenters with slides will be accommodated.

This year's poster session will be coordinated by Beth Walton. Those interested in presenting a poster should contact her for details (walton.beth@yahoo.com).

Vendor booths are available for \$250 and those interested in vendor space, or in sponsoring a particular event or speaker, should contact Conference Chairman Lonnie McCaskill (Lonnie.McCaskill@disney.com) for more information.

Announcement and Call for Papers

When: October 3 and 4, 2008

Where; Oceanside Inn and Suites, Jekyll Island, Georgia

Please join us for the Annual meeting of the Gopher Tortoise Council at Jekyll Island, Georgia. The meeting will feature a special session on Friday of presentations on Wildlife and Ecosystem Health, with confirmed presentations by Elliot Jacobson, Sonya Hernandez Divers, Charles Innis, Steven H. Divers, Terry Norton, John Maerz, Scott Connelly, Nancy Stedman, Lori Wendland, Matt Aresco, Kimberely Andrews, and Greg Lewbart. Saturday the scientific program continues with contributed presentations and posters on any topic relating to the Gopher Tortoise and the longleaf pine ecosystem.

There will be plenty of time for relaxing and socializing, and enjoying good food and drink at a Low Country Boil Friday night and a Barbecue Saturday night. Also, a tour of the Georgia Sea Turtle Center will be offered Friday evening.

For more information and registration information, please visit the Gopher Tortoise Council's website at

<http://www.gophertortoisecouncil.org/events.php>

Margaret S. Gunzburger, PhD
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Bruce, Florida 32455
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JOINT MEETING OF ICTHYOLOGISTS AND HERPETOLOGISTS

We cordially invite you to the Joint Meeting of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists (JMIH), taking

www.deserttortoise.org

place at the Hilton Portland & Executive Tower in downtown Portland, Oregon, 22-27 July 2009. The 2009 JMIH includes the 25th annual meeting of the American Elasmobranch Society, the 52nd annual meeting of the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles, the 67th annual meeting of the Herpetologists' League, and the 89th annual meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists. This conference will also include the Early Life History Section of the American Fisheries Society, participation by the Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biologists, and the inaugural meeting of Herpetological Conservation and Biology.

Meeting Hosts

- USGS Forest and Rangeland Ecosystem Science Center
- Portland State University
- United States Forest Service
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Washington State University
- Oregon State University

22-27 July 2009
Hilton Portland & Executive Tower
921 SW Sixth Avenue
Portland, OR 97204-1296
Phone: 503-220-2563

More information available at:
<http://www.dce.ksu.edu/conf/jointmeeting/>

JOB OPENINGS

CHELONIAN CURATOR/ANIMAL CARE MANAGER

A curator and animal care manager is needed for a turtle and tortoise conservation center in southern California. The center currently houses over 300 animals of 25 species from around the world, and is actively breeding only sensitive species. The utmost effort is given to provide the animals with conditions as similar as possible to those of their

native habitats. Currently, the center is involved in preserving and protecting threatened turtle/tortoise habitat in the wild.

Qualifications include:

Advanced knowledge of tortoise and turtle biology and care.

Organizational skills.

Good communication skills.

Responsibilities include:

Animal care and monitoring.

Daily recordkeeping of the status and welfare of the animals.

Facility maintenance and operations.

Overseeing research projects.

Database and website maintenance.

Management of staff.

General administrative duties.

In addition to the daily maintenance and care of the animals and the facility operations, the manager will be responsible for overseeing research projects that are supported by the center. There also is the opportunity to conduct research and produce publications, which is encouraged by the center.

To apply, by email only please, send a cover letter and CV to rodriguesm@behlerconservation.org

DESERT TORTOISE TECHNICIANS NEEDED

Where: Mojave Desert, California

Description: Biological field technicians needed to conduct radio tracking for transmittered Desert Tortoises in the western Mojave Desert. Project is associated with a large-scale translocation effort. Technicians will need to attend a 1 to 2 day training session prior to beginning work. Training will enable personnel to use radio-tracking equipment, identify Desert Tortoise sign, learn searching protocols, and data entry procedures. Upon successful completion of training, technicians will work with several other personnel to locate translocated, resident, and control animals. While radio tracking will continue into the fall, there will

also be the opportunity to conduct Desert Tortoise surveys on a separate project. In addition to radio tracking, we will also be conducting large scale perennial vegetation surveys to assess habitat use. Work will be conducted in remote desert areas, some of which will be in steep, mountainous terrain. Standard work period will be 6 days on, 1 day off, generally 10 hour days. This is an excellent opportunity to improve or learn many wildlife skills, get to know the Mojave Desert, and work with an amazing species.

Qualifications: Applicants need to be self-sufficient in the field. Primitive camping, at times without phone service or facilities required. Must have 4WD or high-clearance (at a minimum) vehicle and personal camping gear. All work and base camp will be roughly 20 miles from Barstow, California. Experience with radio tracking, GPS, data entry onto PDA's preferred but not necessary. Most important, is that people are willing to learn correct field and data entry techniques, endure the heat, and keep a positive fun attitude.

Salary: \$25/hour, no per diem, government mileage when on site.

Date to Apply: Immediately; work begins immediately continuing to approximately 10 November 2008.

Contact: Send resume with contact info and references to Andrew Walde at tortoise_trackers@yahoo.com

Nominations for the \$100.00 award are open to any KHS member enrolled in an accredited educational institution. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of potential for contributing to the science of herpetology. Students from grade school through university are eligible. Self-nomination is encouraged.

If self-nominated, a letter of reference from an academician is required. Nominations should include typewritten details of the nominee's qualifications, plus name and address of the nominee and nominator.

Nominations should include, but are not limited to, academic record, herpetological activities, and future plans in herpetology. Academic record should address schools attended and an indication of academic performance in each (e.g., grade point average, teacher evaluations, courses completed, etc.). Herpetological activities should include a brief narrative that details experiences and activities that demonstrate a long-term interest in herpetology, and documents accomplishments in herpetological study. Future plans in herpetology should include a statement, not to exceed one-page, written by the student about his/her future interests and plans.

Applicants may include an optional appendix with photographs, awards, newspaper articles, reports written by the student, or other documents relevant to herpetological activities.

Nominations should be sent to the KHS Awards Committee Chair, and must be postmarked by 15 September. The scholarship winner will be announced at the KHS annual meeting in November. New applications will be accepted after 1 January of the following year.

<http://www.cnah.org/khs/>

SCHOLARSHIPS / AWARDS

Howard Kay Gloyd-Edward Harrison Taylor Scholarship

The Kansas Herpetological Society (KHS) annually grants a scholarship named for Howard K. Gloyd and Edward H. Taylor, two distinguished Kansas herpetologists.

www.deserttortoise.org

Desert Tortoise Council Membership
P.O. Box 331
Tucson, AZ 85702

Check one: _____ MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL _____ CHANGE OF ADDRESS

DATE: _____ EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

(Please Print)

(Include Area Code)

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

_____ Regular (**\$30.00** per year) _____ Organization (**\$125.00** per year)

_____ Contributing (**\$100.00** per year) _____ Lifetime (**\$300.00** or more)

_____ Student (**\$20.00** per year- Requires endorsement of student's advisor or Major Professor)

NEWSLETTER FORMAT:

_____ Pdf file via e-mail _____ E-mail notice for web page viewing _____ Hardcopy

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

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

The Desert Tortoise Council does not release its membership list