



**DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL**

3807 Sierra Highway #6-4514

Acton, CA 93510

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

[eac@deserttortoise.org](mailto:eac@deserttortoise.org)

**Via email only**

13 September 2022

Attn: Bureau of Land Management  
Southern Nevada District Office  
4701 North Torrey Pines Drive  
Las Vegas, NV 89130  
[BLM\\_NV\\_SNDO\\_RestorationMap@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_NV_SNDO_RestorationMap@blm.gov)

RE: BLM Southern Nevada District Office Mapping Restoration Opportunities

Dear Bureau of Land Management,

The Desert Tortoise Council (Council) is a non-profit organization comprised of hundreds of professionals and laypersons who share a common concern for wild desert tortoises and a commitment to advancing the public's understanding of desert tortoise species. Established in 1975 to promote conservation of tortoises in the deserts of the southwestern United States and Mexico, the Council routinely provides information and other forms of assistance to individuals, organizations, and regulatory agencies on matters potentially affecting desert tortoises within their geographic ranges.

As of June 2022, our mailing address has changed to:

Desert Tortoise Council  
3807 Sierra Highway #6-4514  
Acton, CA 93510

Our email address has not changed. Both addresses are provided above in our letterhead for your use when providing future correspondence to us. We appreciate that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) contacted the Council via an email dated August 17, 2022, which informed us of the upcoming webinar. Unfortunately, none of our Board members was able to attend the webinar on August 31, 2022. As such, we are unfamiliar with the scope and methodologies associated with the proposed project. Even so, we are very interested in the formulation and progress of this effort, so we are submitting this very brief letter to make the following points:

- We ask that the Desert Tortoise Council be identified as an Affected Interest for this and all other projects funded, authorized, or carried out by the BLM that may affect species of desert tortoises, and that any subsequent environmental documentation for this project is provided to us at the contact information listed above.

- In choosing areas subject to future restoration activities, we strongly recommend that the BLM incorporate the best available science to achieve success. We suggest that research conducted by U.S. Geological Survey (e.g., see studies by Todd Esque and Leslie DeFalco), among others, inform the restoration methodologies that are ultimately implemented. Abella and Berry (2016) is a great resource for restoration best management practices in arid environments, especially tortoise habitats.

- Given our mission, we ask that the BLM prioritize areas that it manages for tortoise conservation and recovery. Such areas include lands within designated critical habitat (USFWS 1994a), recovery units (USFWS 1994b, 2011), Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), and other important tortoise conservation areas, such as linkages, corridors, and areas where recent tortoise translocations have occurred.

Respectfully,



Edward L. LaRue, Jr., M.S.  
Desert Tortoise Council, Ecosystems Advisory Committee, Chairperson

P.S. Although we did register with the ESRI to access the ArcGIS Story Maps tool at <https://tinyurl.com/VPMSNDORestorationMap>, we received an error message saying the page could not be accessed.

### Literature Cited

Abella S.R. and K.H. Berry. 2016. Enhancing and restoring habitat for the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management 7(1):xx-xx; e1944-687X. doi: 10.3996/052015-JFWM-046.

[USFWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1994a. Endangered and threatened wildlife and plants; determination of critical habitat for the Mojave population of the desert tortoise. Federal Register 55(26):5820-5866. Washington, D.C.

[USFWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1994b. Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Recovery Plan. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, OR. Pp. 73, plus appendices.

[USFWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2011. Revised recovery plan for the Mojave population of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*). U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Southwest Region, Sacramento, California. 222 pp.