Twenty-eighth Desert Tortoise Council Fall Course
Introduction to Desert Tortoises and Field Techniques
Pinnacles Room at the Kerr McGee Center, 100 W. California Ave., Ridgecrest, CA

2019 Syllabus

First Day (Saturday November 2)

7:00 to 8:00     Check-in
8:00 to 8:05     Welcome (Maggie Fusari)
8:05 to 8:15     Notes (Ed LaRue)
8:15 to 8:30     The Three Species of Desert Tortoise, *Gopherus agassizii*, *G. morafkai*, and *G. evgoodei* (Dr. Kristin Berry)
8:30 to 10:00    General Overview of Mojave Desert Tortoises (Dr. Kristin Berry)
10:00 to 10:30   Break
10:30 to 11:05   Threats to Tortoises (Dr. Michael Tuma)
11:05 to 11:50   Field Evaluations of Desert Tortoises for Health and Disease; Effects of Diseases on Populations (Dr. Kristin Berry)
11:50 to 12:35   Finding Tortoises and Distinguishing One Type of Sign from Another (Peter Woodman)
12:35 to 12:55   Instructions for outdoor session (Ed LaRue)
12:55 to 1:30    Lunch provided – special time with Kristin Berry
1:30 to 2:00     Travel to Outdoor Field Session #1
2:00 to 4:30     Outdoor Field Session #1

Finding tortoises and sign - Demonstrations; Field identification of burrows, scat, carcasses; Transecting tips.
7:00 to 9:00     Ask It Basket session (Ed LaRue, with Maggie Fusari and all available speakers)

Second Day (Sunday November 3) (STANDARD TIME TODAY – FALL BACK)

8:00 to 8:05     Announcements (Ed LaRue)
8:05 to 8:25     Bureau of Land Management (Caroline Woods)
8:25 to 8:45     U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Ray Bransfield)
8:45 to 9:05     California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Becky Jones)
9:05 to 9:20     Overview of the Permitting Processes (Becky Jones)
9:20 to 9:30     Questions for Agency Personnel
9:30 to 10:00    Break
10:00 to 11:00   Tortoise Field Surveys, Data Collection, and Interpretation (Dr. Alice Karl)
11:00 to 11:30   Resource Monitoring on Construction Projects (Ed La Rue)
11:30 to 11:45   Instructions for the final outdoor session with data collection (Maggie Fusari)
11:45 to 1:00    Lunch (on your own) and travel to field site for Outdoor Session #2
1:00 to 4:00     Outdoor field session #2, completion of surveys, completing a good datasheet.

Plot surveying and final paperwork - end time depends on your transecting time.

Schedule is subject to change as needed by circumstances.

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1 This course focuses on the Mojave Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) in the Mojave Desert. Techniques will be different for the Sonoran Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus morafkai*) in Arizona due to differences in behavior and habitat.