

Summary
of
Desert Tortoise Recovery Actions
Northern Colorado Recovery Unit

November, 2002

Prepared for:
Desert Managers Group
222 East Main Street
Suite 215
Barstow, CA 92311



DESERT
MANAGERS GROUP

Prepared by:
Redlands Institute
University of Redlands
1200 East Colton Avenue
Duke Hall, Room 211
Redlands, CA 92373

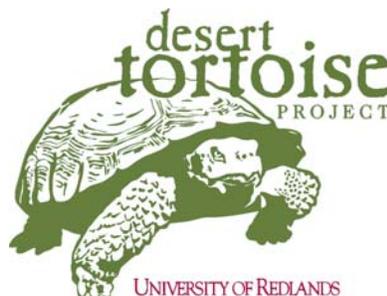


Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Recovery Action Summary.....	6-11
Appendix A: Contact Information.....	14-18
Appendix B: Glossary.....	20-21

List of Figures

Figure 1. Desert Tortoise Recovery Units in the Mojave Desert

Figure 2. Northern Colorado Recovery Unit

Recovery Task Summary – Redlands Institute Desert Tortoise Project

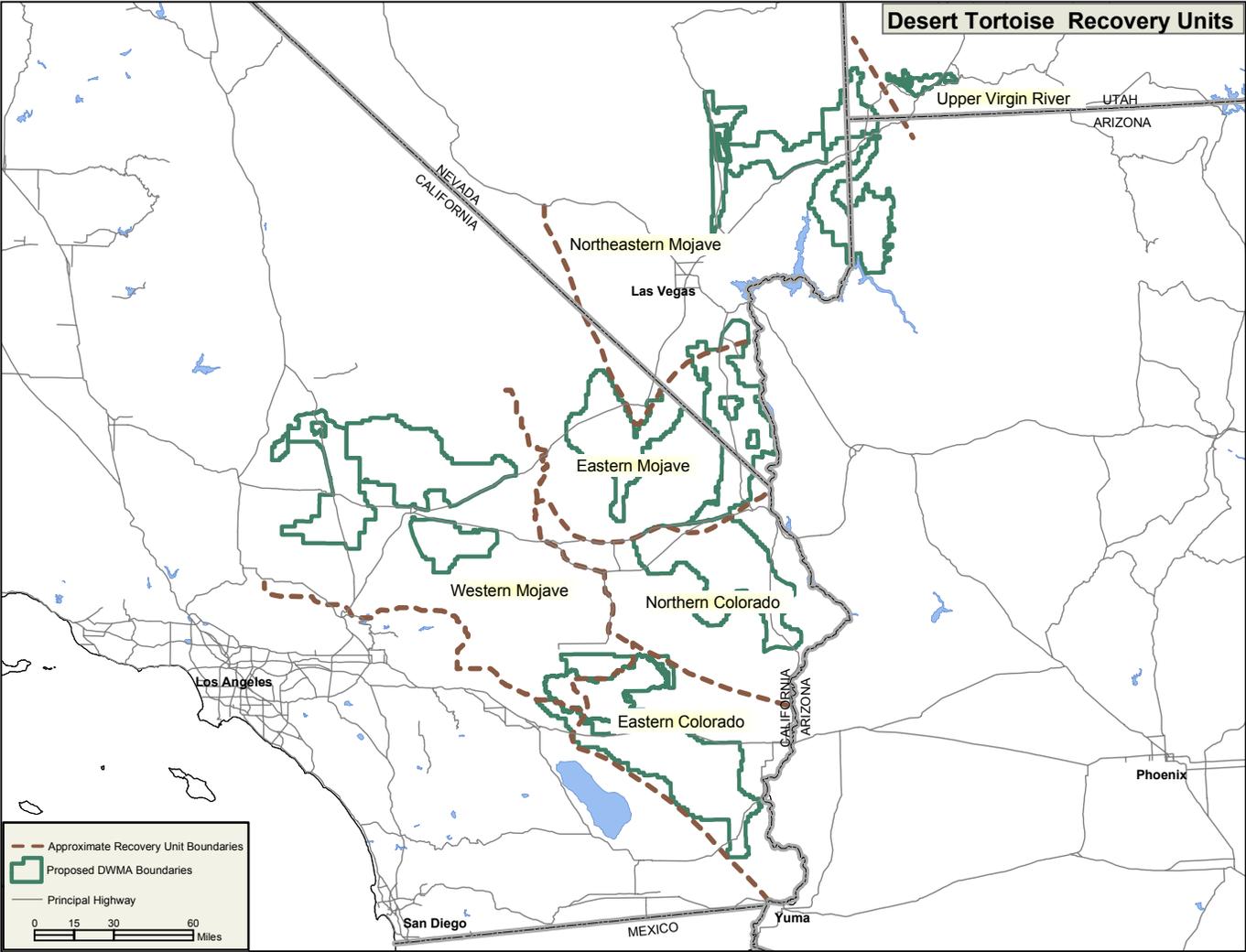


Figure 1. Desert Tortoise Recovery Units in the Mojave Desert.

Recovery Task Summary – Redlands Institute Desert Tortoise Project

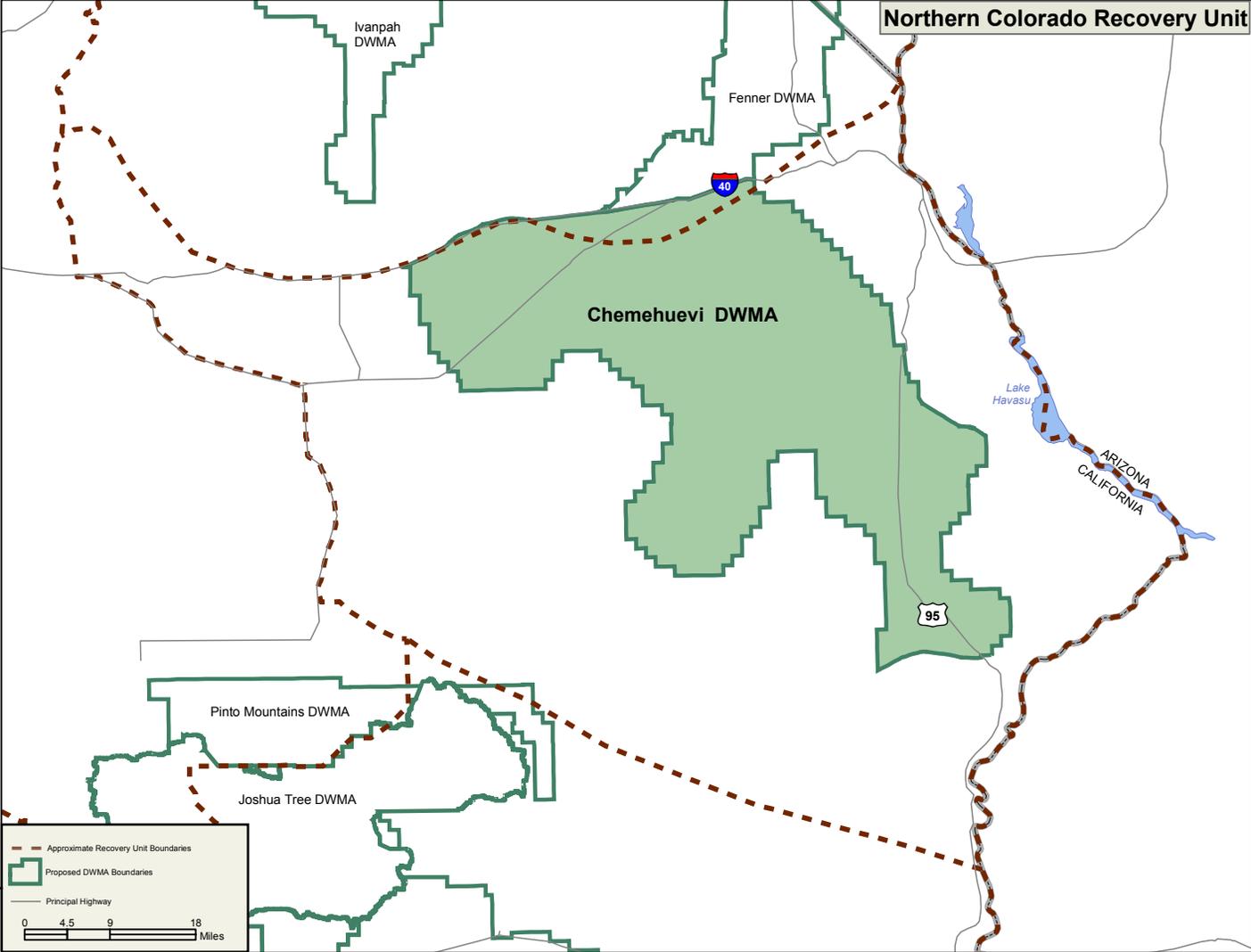


Figure 2. Northern Colorado Recovery Unit

Introduction

The following report provides a summary of completed and ongoing recovery, monitoring, and research actions for the desert tortoise, *Gopherus agassizii* in the Northern Colorado Recovery Unit. Information is summarized by each of the recovery actions identified in the Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan (USFWS, 1994). Information was obtained from surveys conducted in July 2002 of the land and resource agencies and entities responsible for desert tortoise recovery and management. The information provided within this document was taken directly from the survey responses. Where no answer was provided the corresponding cell was left blank. No attempt has been made to independently verify the accuracy and completeness of the information provided on the surveys. Contact information has been provided for the individuals who completed the questionnaire to aid in the evaluation of the information contained herein.

The information in this report will be used by the Desert Manager Group (DMG) and the Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group (MOG) to plan and manage an effective and coordinated recovery program for the desert tortoise. The report will be updated annually. Copies of these reports can be obtained from the DMG website at www.dmg.gov/documents.

Comments on the report are welcome and should be sent to:

Phil Medica, Desert Tortoise Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130
702-515-5245
phil_medica@fws.gov

Recovery Action Summary – Northern Colorado Recovery Unit

DWMA	Chemehuevi
Agency	California BLM
Recovery Action	
<p>Establish at least one desert wildlife management area of at least 1,000 square miles in each recovery unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In the California Desert Conservation Area Plan (CDCA Plan) of 1980 (see Map 5), desert tortoise crucial habitat was designated for a 692,000-acre area (about 450,000 acres in the Northern Colorado Recovery Unit) including all of Chemehuevi and Upper Ward Valleys. · In October 1992, the State Director signed the California Statewide Desert Tortoise Management Policy (Statewide Policy) designating a management area of desert tortoise Category I (620,100 ac.) and II (171,200 ac.) [BLM lands only]. The area includes all of Chemehuevi Valley and Upper Ward Valley. · In April 1993, the CDCA Plan was amended to include the designations specified in the Statewide Policy. · In February 2001, the Draft Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement was published. It proposed an area of environmental concern named the Chemehuevi Desert Wildlife Management Area (DWMA). The proposed DWMA includes 874,800 ac. of which 815,800 ac. (93%) are BLM and 59,000 ac. (7%) are State and private lands. All BLM lands in the DWMA are to be BLM Category I desert tortoise habitat. The Final Plan and EIS are to be released in July 2002.
<p>Secure habitat within desert wildlife management areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · About 99,300 acres of habitat in the proposed Chuckwalla DWMA ACEC have been acquired through purchase using Land and Water Conservation Funds. · About 640 acres of habitat in the proposed Chuckwalla DWMA ACEC have been acquired through purchase or donation using compensation funds. · Under the Statewide Tortoise Policy (Guideline 26), “No Category I habitat will be transferred out of public ownership.”
<p>Connect functional habitat within recovery units wherever enough extant desert tortoise habitat exists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC is contiguous (across Interstate Highway 40) with the Mojave National Preserve DWMA and the BLM’s Piute-Fenner DWMA ACEC in the Northern Mojave Recovery Unit. These two are then contiguous with the Piute-EI Dorado DWMA in Nevada. · The Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC is connected to the Chuckwalla DWMA ACEC in the Eastern Colorado Recovery Unit by a series of existing wilderness areas and proposed units of a Multi-species Wildlife Habitat Management Area.

Recovery Action Summary – Northern Colorado Recovery Unit

DWMA	Chemehuevi
Agency	California BLM
Recovery Action	
Number (or miles) of roads closed or rehabilitated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In 1994, Congress designated wilderness areas in the CDCA, of which 295,100 acres are in the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC. All routes are closed in wilderness. · In 2001, interim route designations were made on 359,093 acres of BLM land in the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA but outside of wilderness. Vehicle travel in this area is restricted to designated open routes. Washes in this area are open for travel only to the extent that a wash is designated as a route. · The Draft Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan proposes to maintain 734 miles of open routes within the proposed Chuckwalla DWMA ACEC and to close 31 miles of routes. In addition 95 miles of routes were identified as “non-route.” For most of the recovery unit, visitors can also drive in washes historically used by vehicles; however, the NECO Plan proposes a “washes closed zone” of 359,100 acres in the DWMA ACEC.
All competitive and organized events on designated roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Historically, the BLM has not authorized competitive events in the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC. · Under the Statewide Tortoise Policy (Guideline 11), “Competitive vehicle events in tortoise habitat will be allowed only within existing off-highway vehicle open (play) areas or on specific courses identified in the CDCA Plan.” · Organized dual-sport motorcycle trail rides are sometimes authorized under a programmatic biological opinion in tortoise habitat throughout the CDCA. All trail rides are on established routes. · Use of the 200-mile Johnson Valley-Parker Race Corridor has not been authorized since the 1980's. The Corridor passes through the southern edge of the Chemehuevi Critical habitat Unit. This Corridor will be the southern boundary of the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC.
Prohibit habitat destructive military maneuvers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Habitat destructive military maneuvers have not been authorized since 1980 in the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC. However, maneuvers could be considered subject to the 1 percent limit on new surface disturbance in the DWMA. With this limitation, it is unlikely that maneuvers would be allowed.

Recovery Action Summary – Northern Colorado Recovery Unit

DWMA	Chemehuevi
Agency	California BLM
Recovery Action	
<p>Prohibit clearing for agriculture, landfills, and any other surface disturbance that diminishes the capacity of the land to support desert tortoises, other wildlife, and native vegetation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · As proposed in the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan, habitat disturbing activities would be considered subject to the 1 percent limit on new surface disturbance in the DWMA. · Under the Statewide Tortoise Policy (Guideline 20), “Surface disturbing activities in Category I habitats will be restricted to those which cannot be relocated elsewhere.” · Under the Statewide Tortoise Policy (Guideline 21), “Surface disturbance to soil and vegetation will be minimized through mitigation measures in Category I and II habitats.” · Under the Statewide Tortoise Policy (Guideline 24), “Facilities and activities that concentrate visitors will be discouraged in and adjacent to Category I and II habitats.” · BLM policy prohibits landfills on public lands.
<p>Acres of grazing allotments (sheep and cattle) closed or bought out for conservation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan proposes to reduce the existing Lazy Daisy Cattle Allotment by 21,600 acres in the highest density tortoise habitat. The reduced Lazy Daisy Allotment will include 235,500 acres in the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC. Restrictions there will include 1) no grazing in the DWMA in the spring of years of low ephemeral forage, 2) no allocation of ephemeral forage, 3) no temporary allocation of additional perennial forage, 4) forage use limits, 5) termination of allotment at the request of the allottee [to accommodate a conservation buyout], and 6) terms and conditions of existing biological opinions. · An interim measure is currently in place that eliminates cattle grazing from March 1 to June 15 and September 7 to November 7 in most of critical habitat in the Lazy Daisy Cattle Allotment. · The Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan proposes to eliminate the Chemehuevi Cattle Allotment (137,300 ac.). The allotment is ephemeral only. It has not been grazed for over 10 years, and under interim restrictions no grazing may occur. Historically stocking rates were only about 25 head.
<p>Number of wild horses and burros removed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Under the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan, there will be no wild horse or burro herd management areas overlapping the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC; all burros are to be removed from the DWMA ACEC. · In 1984, 75 burros were removed from the Piute Mountain Herd Area, which is in the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC. The target population of 0 for the Herd Area has not yet been achieved; the estimated population is 36. · Between 1981-2002, 1,740 burros were removed from the Chemehuevi Herd Area. The target population of 150 burros has not yet been achieved; the current population estimate is 681 burros. This Herd Area is adjacent to the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC, and burros sometimes enter the proposed DWMA ACEC.

Recovery Action Summary – Northern Colorado Recovery Unit

DWMA	Chemehuevi
Agency	California BLM
Recovery Action	
Prohibit vegetation harvest, except by permit; collection of biological specimens, except by permit	· Under the CDCA Plan, harvesting of vegetation and biological specimens is allowed only by permit.
Number of illegal dumps cleaned up (and tons of trash removed, if this information is available)	· In 2002, an illegal dump was cleaned up at Essex (San Bernardino County) within the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC. · In 2002, illegal dumps were cleaned up at Amboy and Chambless (San Bernardino County) within the Northern Colorado Recovery Unit.
Prohibit deposition of captive or displaced desert tortoises or other animals, except under authorized translocation research projects	· Under the Statewide Tortoise Policy (Guideline 31), “All tortoise relocations will be conducted under experimental controls until adequate information is available to ensure that tortoises can be effectively and humanely relocated. Only wild tortoises will be considered for relocation.” [Local relocations to move tortoises out of harm’s way from a project is not considered a relocation for these purposes.]
Prohibit uncontrolled dogs out of vehicles	· No restrictions are in place.
Restrict establishment of new roads in desert wildlife management areas	· There are no specific restrictions on new roads. However, a new road would be subject to the 1 percent limit on new surface disturbance in the DWMA.
Number of acres or list of re-vegetation projects	· None, except for route rehab projects noted above.

Recovery Action Summary – Northern Colorado Recovery Unit

DWMA	Chemehuevi
Agency	California BLM
Recovery Action	
Location and miles of desert tortoise fencing installed (include number of culverts designed or suitable for desert tortoises)	· None.
Number of acres or list of re-vegetation projects	· None, except for route rehab projects noted above.
Sign and fence desert wildlife management areas as needed	· None.
Establish environmental education programs and facilities.	· The Statewide Tortoise Policy (1992) includes a detailed Public Education Program. It includes strategies with a total of 25 actions. Most of these have been implemented and many are on-going. The Public Education Program is reiterated in the proposed Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordinated Management Plan
Monitor desert tortoise populations within recovery units	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The Chemehuevi Wash Permanent Study Plot is in the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC. The plot was surveyed in 1979, 1981, 1988, 1992, and 1999. · The Upper Ward Valley Permanent Study Plots is also in the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC. The plot was surveyed in 1980, 1987, 1991, 1995, and 2002. · In the 1970's the BLM conducted surveys on 47 study plots. Fifteen were selected as permanent study plots, each to be surveyed every four years. In 1995, responsibility for these surveys was transferred to the NBS and subsequently USGS.
Initiate research necessary to monitor and guide recovery efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · In 1990, three new research (new total of four) positions were added to address tortoise conservation and management issues in the California Desert. In 1994 all four positions and funding support were transferred to NBS/USGS. · Research in the proposed Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC has centered on demographics (permanent study plot data); disease, especially shell diseases; and life history (associated with radioactive Waste site studies). Major researchers have included Berry and Karl.

Recovery Action Summary – Northern Colorado Recovery Unit

DWMA	Chemehuevi
Agency	California BLM
Recovery Action	
Activities associated with predator control	No predator control activities have occurred in the Chemehuevi DWMA ACEC. **
Limit firearm use to hunting of big game or upland game birds from September through February	

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Contact Information

Contact Information

NOMO

Roy C. Averill-Murray
Amphibians and Reptiles Program Manager
Arizona Game and Fish Department
2221 W Greenway Road
Phoenix, AZ 85023
Phone (602) 789-3505
Fax (602) 789-3926
rmurray@gf.state.az.us

Donald Copeland
Caltrans Biologist
California Department of Transportation
464 West 4th Street, 6th Floor, MS 822
San Bernardino, CA 92401
Phone (909) 383-5927
Fax (909) 383-6494
donald_copeland@dot.ca.gov

Mike Small
Wildlife Biologist
BLM – Arizona
Arizona Strip Field Office
Perashot National Monument
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, Utah 84790
Phone (435) 688-3224
Mike_Small@blm.gov

Jim Crisp
District Manager
BLM - Utah
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, Utah 84790
Phone (435) 688-3201

Tim Duck
BLM - Arizona
Tim_Duck@blm.gov

Linda Cardenas
BLM – Nevada
Las Vegas Field Office
4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive
Las Vegas, NV 89130
Phone (702) 515-5000
Fax (702) 515-5023

Contact Information

WEMO

Rhys M. Evans

Ecologist

MCAGCC 29Palms

NREA Division

Phone (760) 830-7396 x234 [DSN 230]

Fax (760) 830-5718

evansrm@29palms.usmc.mil

Thomas V. Mull

Environmental Manager

Edwards Air Force Base

TYBRIN Corporation

Conservation Support for AFFTC/EM

Edwards AFB CA

Phone (661) 277-1448;

DSN 527-1448

Fax (661) 277-6145

thomas.mull@edwards.af.mil

Manuel Joia, Jr.

Natural/Cultural Resources

Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow Environmental Division

Barstow, CA, 92311

Phone (760) 577-6111

Fax (760) 577-6256

JOIAM@barstow.usmc.mil

Michael J. Connor, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee

(including DTNA – Desert Tortoise Natural Area)

4067 Mission Inn Avenue

Riverside, CA 92501

Phone (909) 683-3872

Fax (909) 683-6949

<http://www.tortoise-tracks.org>

Donald Copeland

Caltrans Biologist

California Department of Transportation

464 West 4th Street, 6th Floor, MS 822

San Bernardino, CA 92401

Phone (909) 383-5927

Fax (909) 383-6494

donald_copeland@dot.ca.gov

Contact Information

WEMO

Rebecca Jones
Fish and Game California
36431 41st Street East
Palmdale, CA 93552
Phone (661) 285-5867
Fax (661) 285-5867
dfgpalm@mindspring.com

Clarence Everly
Expertise- MDEP, DOD Coordinator
Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program
222 E. Main Street, Suite 215
Barstow, CA 92311
Phone (760) 255-8896 MDEP
Fax (760) 256-6863
everlyc@mojavedata.gov

Larry Foreman
Expertise-District Biologist
BLM – California
BLM-Box Springs Station
6221 Box Springs Blvd
Riverside, CA 92507
Phone (909) 697-5387
lforeman@ca.blm.gov

Pedro Mazier Chavarria
Wildlife/Tortoise Biological Technician
Joshua Tree National Park
74485 National Park Dr.
Twentynine Palms, CA 92277
Phone (760) 367-5568
Pedro_Chavarria@nps.gov

John Hamill
California Desert Coordinator
USDoI
222 East Main Street, Suite 215
Barstow, CA 92311
Phone (760) 255-8888
Fax (760) 256-6863
john_hamill@dmg.gov

UPPER VIRGIN

Bill Mader
Administrator of the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve
Washington County
197 East Tabernacle
St. George, UT 84770
Phone (435) 634-5756
mader@infowest.com

Lori Rose
Biologist
Red Cliffs Desert Reserve
Washington County
197 East Tabernacle
St. George, UT 84770
Phone (435) 634-5759
lorirose@infowest.com

Jim Crisp
District Manager
BLM - Utah
345 East Riverside Drive
St. George, Utah 84790
Phone (435) 688-3201

Contact Information

EASTERN COLORADO

Larry Foreman

Expertise-District Biologist

BLM – California

BLM-Box Springs Station

6221 Box Springs Blvd

Riverside, CA 92507

Phone (909) 697-5387

lforeman@ca.blm.gov

Pedro Mazier Chavarria

Wildlife/Tortoise Biological Technician

Joshua Tree National Park

74485 National Park Dr.

Twentynine Palms, CA 92277

Phone (760) 367-5568

Pedro_Chavarria@nps.gov

Michael J. Connor, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee

(including DTNA – Desert Tortoise Natural Area)

4067 Mission Inn Avenue

Riverside, CA 92501

Phone (909) 683-3872

Fax (909) 683-6949

<http://www.tortoise-tracks.org>

NORTHERN COLORADO

Larry Foreman

Expertise-District Biologist

BLM – California

BLM-Box Springs Station

6221 Box Springs Blvd

Riverside, CA 92507

Phone (909) 697-5387

lforeman@ca.blm.gov

EMO

Larry Foreman

Expertise-District Biologist

BLM – California

BLM-Box Springs Station

6221 Box Springs Blvd

Riverside, CA 92507

Phone (909) 697-5387

lforeman@ca.blm.gov

Linda Cardenas

BLM – Nevada

Las Vegas Field Office

4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive

Las Vegas, NV 89130

Phone (702) 515-5000

Fax (702) 515-5023

Contact Information

EMO

Kitti Jensen

Wildlife Biologist

Mojave National Preserve

222 E. Main St., Suite 202

Barstow, CA 92311

Phone (760) 255-8865

Fax (760) 255-8828

kitty_jensen@nps.gov

APPENDIX B

Glossary

Glossary

Common Abbreviations

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
APHIS	Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CALTRANS	California Department of Transportation
CDCA	California Desert Conservation Area
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DEVA	Death Valley National Park
DFG	Department of Fish and Game
DTNA	Desert Tortoise Natural Area
DTPC	Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee
DWMA	Desert Wildlife Management Area
Edwards AFB	Edwards Air Force Base
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ELISA	Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay
FONSI	Finding Of No Significant Impact
GFD	Game and Fish Department
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Positioning System
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
INRMP	Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan
JOTR	Joshua Tree National Park
LAME	Lake Mead National Recreation Area
LDS	Line Distance Sampling
LVFO	Las Vegas Field Office
NA	Not Applicable
NBS	National Biological Survey
NECO	Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Planning Unit
NEPA	National Environmental Protection Agency
NTC Ft Irwin	National Training Center Fort Irwin
NPS	National Park Service
MCAGCC	Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center
MCLB	Marine Corps Logistics Base
MOJA	Mojave National Preserve
MSHCP	Multi-species Habitat Conservation Plan
UDWR	Utah Department of Wildlife Resources
UNLV	University of Nevada Las Vegas
URTD	Upper Respiratory Tract Disease
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
USMC	U.S. Marine Corps

OHV	Off-Highway Vehicle
ORV	Off-Road Vehicle
RMP	Resource Management Plan
SCA	Student Conservation Association