

Tortoise Tracks

The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee, Inc.

Winter 1998, 18:4

DR. PHIL LEITNER TO GIVE ANNUAL BANQUET PRESENTATION

The featured speaker at the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee's (DTPC) Annual Banquet in Victorville on January 23, 1999 will be Dr. Phil Leitner. He will give a slide-illustrated program, titled *The Mysterious Mohave Ground Squirrel*

Dr. Leitner conducted research on this rare species in the Coso region of the northern Mojave Desert for several years and has completed several major reports for the California Energy Commission, California Department of Fish and Game and the Department of the Navy at China Lake. He will tell us about the ecological requirements, food habits, the life cycle, and many other interesting and critical facets of the squirrel's life.

Dr. Leitner is the senior advisor to the DTPC on a new, three-year Mohave ground squirrel research project funded by the California Energy Commission and the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee.

Look for the banquet reservation form and further information on page 3.

Plan to attend the Annual Meeting beginning at 1:30 p.m., as well. Board Members and Staff will make reports on the Committee's on-going programs, successes and future plans. There's to be an important vote on the amended Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws and the election of three members to the Board of Trustees.

FEATURING VOLUNTEERS - FALL WORK PARTY

On Saturday, 7 November, thirteen volunteers gathered for the annual fall work party at the Desert Tortoise Natural Area. The group covered 19 miles of the boundary fence line in vehicles and on foot. Twenty-one signs were added or replaced; minor fence repairs made; old sign posts removed; trash collected and an inventory made for work to be done by BLM crews and by next Spring's work party volunteers. The team working the south boundary returned to the Interpretive Center (IC) with a truck load of trash including old tires; toilet seats and plastic bowling pins used for target practice; and a weather balloon. Trash remains a major problem along the south boundary of the DTNA. Also along the south boundary a recently deceased adult

tortoise and a raven-kill hatchling were found. Minor maintenance on the interpretive trails was done and an inventory of tasks for the IC area was made for next Spring's work party.

In the late afternoon everyone regrouped at the Interpretive Center. A caravan was formed and the group drove to the Blackwater Well Ranch site to camp overnight. The evening's cold and occasional sprinkles didn't dampen the group's energy or enthusiasm. Sunday morning's cool weather was perfect for the physical labor involved in the fire-prevention, weed clearing around the ranch site's structures. The work party broke into four groups, mid-morning. Three drove out to survey the Pilot Knob Allotment's far-flung range improvements and to generally enjoy the fall desert vistas. Karen Spangenberg stayed behind at the ranch to do some photo monitoring and to assist Sterling Kendrick, who arrived mid-morning, with much needed and continuing repair work on the windmill.

Many thanks to: Desert Survivors participants (who came from the SF Bay Area and Fresno) Warren Alksnis, Cassie Beals, Cindy and Ron Harton, David McMullen, Elliot Sowadsky and Eddie Sudol; DTPC members and volunteers Chuck Hemingway, Sterling Kendrick, Karen Spangenberg, Mary Shepherd, and Laura Stockton; and BLM staff Bob Parker and Joyce Schlachter.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CORPORATION JANUARY 23, 1999

The Board thanks each of you who responded so promptly to our mailing in October in which we requested payment of delinquent dues. As a result of your responses, the membership list has been updated. If you did not receive a mailing in October, your dues are up-to-date.

Three important issues will require a vote of the Membership at the Annual Meeting on January 23rd. They are Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation, changes to the Bylaws and election of three Trustees. We hope to see as many of you as possible at the meeting, but we know that everyone will not be able to attend. Therefore, absent members can vote by proxy. Members will be receiving another mailing in December that will include information on those three items along with a proxy form.

The Articles of Incorporation need to be changed because the DTPC has expanded its purposes since its inception in 1974. The amended Articles of Incorporation will fully qualify the DTPC for tax exemptions as a non-profit corporation. The Bylaws are also in need of changes to bring them in line with the amended Articles of Incorporation and provide for a more effective operation of the DTPC program. The December mailing will include copies of the proposed changes to the Articles of Incorporation and the Bylaws. In addition, a biography of each nominee to the Board of Trustees will be included.

If you have specific questions once you have all the materials in hand, please call the DTPC office at (951) 683-3872. Questions can be answered via e-mail by writing to dtpc@pacbell.net. **Return your proxy to assure a quorum at the Annual Meeting.**

DTPC HAS A WEB PAGE

The Board of Trustees is very excited to announce that the Committee now has a WEB site at:

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

Our designer and Webmaster, Michael J. Connor is doing a terrific job. The multi-page web site has information about the DTPC's history, goals and objectives, copies of newsletters and publications, a wonderful virtual tour of the Natural Area's interpretive trails, and a gift shop.

If you don't have a computer with internet-access, your local library probably does. Mike will be giving a demonstration at the Annual Banquet.

1999 DESERT TORTOISE COUNCIL SYMPOSIUM

The Desert Tortoise Council will hold its 24th Annual Symposium and Business Meeting March 5-7 in St. George, Utah. A number of field trips are scheduled for Monday, March 8.

For more information visit the Desert Tortoise Council web site at <http://www.deserttortoise.org>.

Contact Kristin Berry via voice mail (951-697-5361) or FAX (951-697-5299 *with cover sheet*) for information about submitting papers or posters.

The Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee

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