



The TORTOISE BURROW

Newsletter of the
Gopher Tortoise Council

www.gophertortoisecouncil.org

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ALABAMA FLORIDA GEORGIA LOUISIANA MISSISSIPPI SOUTH CAROLINA



JOHN JENSEN

Notes from a Co-chair: The Annual Meeting

About this time last year I gladly agreed to serve as a Co-chair for the Gopher Tortoise Council, an organization I have supported, participated in, and thoroughly enjoyed being a part of during the past ten years. At the first GTC meeting I attended, I remember asking Craig Guyer (then GTC Co-chair), "What do you get for becoming a member of the Gopher Tortoise Council?" I can't remember all the good stuff he started with, but I'll never forget how he jokingly ended it, "...and eventually someone will pressure you to become a Co-chair." Well, I guess my time has come, and I look forward to both the challenges and the opportunities.

Meeting Information

As the junior Co-chair, my duty thus far has been planning and preparing to host the annual meeting, which will take place 15-17 October at Jekyll Island, Georgia. The island itself is a state park, but not your average one. Thirty percent of the land base is developed, some of which includes residential neighborhoods, but by law 70 percent must remain in natural condition. The diverse island has extensive beaches, Spanish moss-draped live oaks, a restored National Historic Landmark district, miles of biking trails, and much more to enjoy. But don't get too distracted by the island because we have an fantastic meeting agenda.

Friday

This will be a special symposium entitled *Moving Wildlife in the Name of Conservation* and will include presentations from 15 speakers on a vari-

ety of relocation, translocation, repatriation, and head-starting programs involving a diversity of fauna and even flora. This first day will wrap up with a panel discussion on the future of relocation and repatriation efforts in conserving Coastal Plain wildlife, with an emphasis on herpetofauna.

Saturday

This will be our "main" meeting and will include many talks on our flagship species, the gopher tortoise, with a few other topics of interest mixed in. Be sure to check out the detailed agenda on the next page. Details and updates will be available on the website.

Sunday

Don't zip home right after the meeting; consider one of the two field trips still available (sorry--the popular St. Catherine's Island trip filled up quickly). Dirk Stevenson will host a tour of outstanding herp habitats on Fort Stewart Army Reserve, and I will be leading a canoe/kayak trip through the prairies of Okefenokee Swamp.

Again, I look forward to my continued role as Co-chair and I hope to see many of you at the upcoming meeting.

The 2004 meeting agenda and registration form is available on the website at www.gophertortoisecouncil.org.

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA TOPICS

See website for times and updates.

Registration form was printed in last issue, and is available on the website.

Friday, October 15 – Special Topic: Moving Wildlife in the Name of Conservation

Eastern Indigo Snake Propagation and Restocking Attempts by the Alabama Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit – Dan Speake, Auburn University

Planning for Species Reintroductions: Some Examples Involving Large Mammals – Reed Noss, University of Central Florida

St. Catherines Island Gopher Tortoise Translocation Project 1994-2004: An Overview – Terry Norton, Wildlife Conservation Society

Translocation as a Tool for Managing Raptor Populations in Georgia – Jim Ozier, Georgia DNR

Translocation as a Conservation Tool: Repatriation of Gopher Tortoises to a Formerly Occupied Site – Tracey Tuberville, UGA Savannah River Ecology Laboratory

A Halfway House for Wayward Tortoises – Donna Wear, Augusta State University

Translocation Successes with Red-cockaded Woodpeckers – Roy Delotelle, Delotelle and Guthrie, Inc.

Conceptualizing a Global, Multi-faceted Conservation Plan for Tortoises and Freshwater Turtles – Kurt Buhlmann, UGA Savannah River Ecology Laboratory

An Experimental Head-Start/Release Program for Bog Turtles In Tennessee: Is it Working? – Bern Tryon, Knoxville Zoological Gardens

Experimental Management, Captive Breeding, and Translocation of Corn Snake, Northern Pine Snake, Timber Rattlesnake, and Eastern Tiger Salamander in the New Jersey Pine Barrens – Robert Zappalorti, Herpetological Associates, Inc.

Radio Telemetry Monitoring of Translocated vs. Resident Gopher Tortoises on Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida - Rebecca Smith, The Dynamac Corporation

Head-starting and Translocation of Gopher Frogs in Mississippi - Michael Sisson, Mississippi Museum of Natural Science

Gopher Tortoise Relocations in the Federally Listed Range – Will McDearman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Ecosystem Restoration Challenges of the Longleaf Pine Native Ground Cover - Kay Kirkman, J. W. Jones Ecological Research Center

Private Landowner's Participation in Gopher Tortoise Conservation – M.C. Davis, Nokuse Plantation

PANEL DISCUSSION – The Future of Relocation and Repatriation Efforts in Conserving Coastal Plain Herpetofauna Moderator: Joe Mitchell, University of Richmond

Evening Social

Saturday, October 16

Effects of Gopher Tortoise Relocation on Upper Respiratory Disease – Paula Kahn, Auburn University

Proposed Application of Automated Technology to Monitor the Activity and Movement Patterns of Translocated Desert Tortoises in the Mojave Desert, CA - Andrew Walde, Charis Corporation

Saving Populations or Wasting Individuals? A Population-level Life History Approach to Relocations - David Pike, Towson University

A Successful Method for Relocation of Gopher Tortoises and Possibly Other Reptiles - Ray Ashton, Ashton Biodiversity Research and Preservation Institute

The Future of the Upland Snake Conservation Initiative - Jeff Holmes, Conservation Southeast

Gopher Tortoise Hatching Success in DeSoto National Forest is Influenced by Egg Quality and the Nest Environment - Krista Noel, University of Southern Mississippi

Health Status of Gopher Tortoise Populations Within the Wekiva River Basin, Florida - Boyd Blihovde, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Sandhill Conservation: An Avian Perspective – Ray Chandler, Georgia Southern University

Georgia Plume Response to Dormant Season Fire – Paul Phillips, Georgia Southern University

A Summary of “The Gopher Tortoise: A Species in Decline” Gopher Tortoise Council Slide Show Project – Laura Wewerka, Lee County Parks and Recreation

Roger Conant: Herpetologist, Educator, Mentor – Joe Mitchell, University of Richmond

The Gopher Tortoise Council's Visiting Southeast Asian Turtle Researcher Project (2002-2004) - George Heinrich, Heinrich Ecological Services

A Day in the Life of a Female Gopher Tortoise: A Two-year Study of Home Range and its Relationship to Reproduction and Habitat Characteristics – Maggie Mitchell, Georgia Southern University

Studies on the Reproductive Biology of the Galapagos Tortoise, Plus Observations on Marine and Land Iguanas – David Rostal, Georgia Southern University

Comparison of Gopher Tortoise Populations at Two Differently Managed Sites in Coastal South Carolina: Home Range and Activity Patterns - Stephen Bennett, South Carolina DNR

Health Assessment in the Eastern Indigo Snake in Southeastern Georgia: Preliminary Findings – Terry Norton, Wildlife Conservation Society

Factors Effecting Degree of Burrow Collapse and Resulting Tortoise Self Excavation – Richard Beauman, Auburn University

Physiological Effects of Burrow Collapse on Gopher Tortoises: Changes in Stress and Immune Responses – Mary Mendonça, Auburn University

Critter Cam Technology for Gopher Tortoises: Some Interesting Behavioral Observations from a Population in the Fall Line Sandhills of Georgia - Sean Graham and Jimmy James Tull, Georgia State University

Awards, Announcements

Low Country Boil and Social – South Dunes Picnic Area

Silent Auction Items Needed

At each annual meeting the Silent Auction is held to raise funds for various GTC activities. Myra Noss has volunteered to coordinate the upcoming auction at Jekyll Island. This year 100 percent of the proceeds will go to fund the GTC's new Environmental Education Mini-grants. These grants support environmental educators, and the first one will be awarded at the annual meeting. Items donated last year included trips, lodge/bed-and-breakfast stays, books, turtle carvings, and tee-shirts. This is also a great opportunity to expose your art or craft, book, or product. Maybe you know others who could contribute--use your imagination. If you have items to contribute, please contact Myra at 407-971-9503 or at noss_m@bellsouth.net.

Lodging Options for the Annual Meeting

Meeting site hotel:

Oceanside Inn and Suites (912) 635-2211

Selected other hotels on Jekyll Island:

Days Inn and Suites (888) 635-3003 0 **Holiday Inn** (800) 753-5955

Hotels along Interstate 95 at Exit 29 (Jekyll exit):

Super 8 (912) 265-0008 **Microtel Inn and Suites** (912) 261-0118 **Daystop** (912) 267-0949

Convenient hotel in nearby Brunswick:

Days Inn (800) 329-7466

Camping: A nice campground with 206 campsites (from tent to full hook-up RV sites), restrooms, showers, laundry, bike rental, etc. is a short drive or bike ride from the meeting site. For reservations call: 866-658-3021 or 912-635-3021/5098/5099, or email: campground@jekyllisland.com.

Join the Gopher Tortoise Council

Student- \$15

Regular- \$25

Contributor- \$40

Corporation/Society- \$50

Sustaining- \$75

Life- \$300 (one time payment)

Make checks payable to
the Gopher Tortoise Council and send to:
GOPHER TORTOISE COUNCIL
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Fall Annual Meeting

26th Annual Meeting of the Gopher Tortoise Council

October 15-17, 2004

Oceanside Inn and Suites, on the beach at Jekyll Island, Georgia

Details inside and on the website: www.gophertortoisecouncil.org



The Gopher Tortoise Council is a nonprofit and tax-exempt organization under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). ID #59-2010727

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