Desert Tortoise Information & Education Program (DTIEP)

What is it?

- A 2-yr grant funded program run by The Living Desert
  - National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)
  - BLM & USFWS helped TLD secured the grant
  - Dates of grant: Jan. 2017 through Mar. 2019

- Dr. James Danoff-Burg
  Director of Conservation

- Sarah Greely
  Desert Tortoise
  Conservation Coordinator

Raven Focus is Key

- What people know:
  - Desert tortoise numbers are low – Threatened Species
  - Habitat loss and fragmentation are big issues

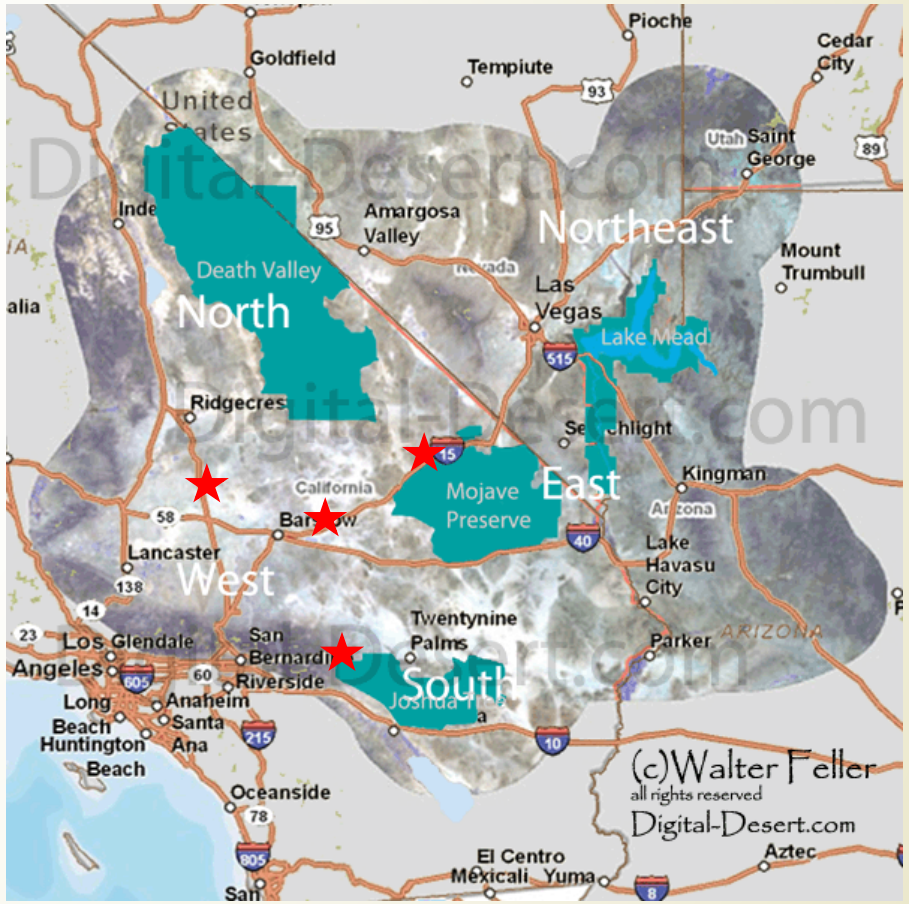
- What people don't know:
  - Ravens = major issue for desert tortoise
    - Migratory to resident bird
    - Populations ⬆ 700% between 1969 & 2004
    - It's because of us
    - Ravens are a major predator of juvenile tortoises

So How Is This New?

- A major focus of this grant is a call to action
- How are we doing this?
- Healthy Desert Education Project Campaign 2018
  - Cord Media (PR firm) - design and create campaign
  - Appeal to wide range of people, eye-catching, hook curiosity

Healthy Desert Education Project Campaign

- Southern California Edison Grant = $20,000
  - Funding for 4 billboards (design by Cord Media)



Anticipated Locations of Billboards

Goals of the NFWF Program

Goal #1

- Increase environmental awareness in local students and educators
  - Tortoise Trunks (updated to Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS))
  - Mojave Maxine Emergence Contest
  - Online curriculum

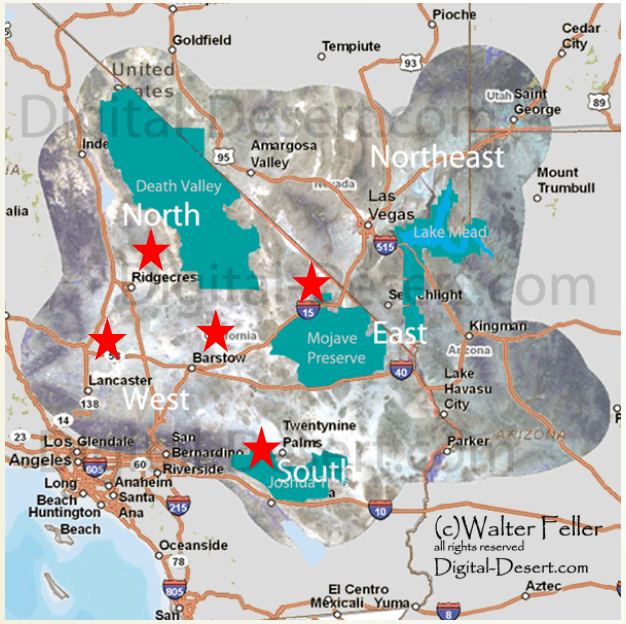
Goal #1 Focus: Increasing Tortoise Trunk Use

- Trunks have been around for a while
- Why are they not used?
  - Teachers don't know they exist
  - Teachers don't have time
    - To learn the trunks
    - To pick up and drop off the trunks
- How can we fix this?
  - Take the program to them
  - Focus the message
  - Make more trunks = more accessible/more locations
  - Put curriculum online with tutorial videos

Teachers are very busy!

New Approach w/Schools

- Aim to increase trunk use by:
  - Contacting schools in desert tortoise habitat/areas and bring trunks to them
  - Tara Callaway helped prioritize areas of focus
  - **<u>Target particular grades where trunks & NGSS align well</u>**
    - Kindergarten, 4th grade, and 7th grade



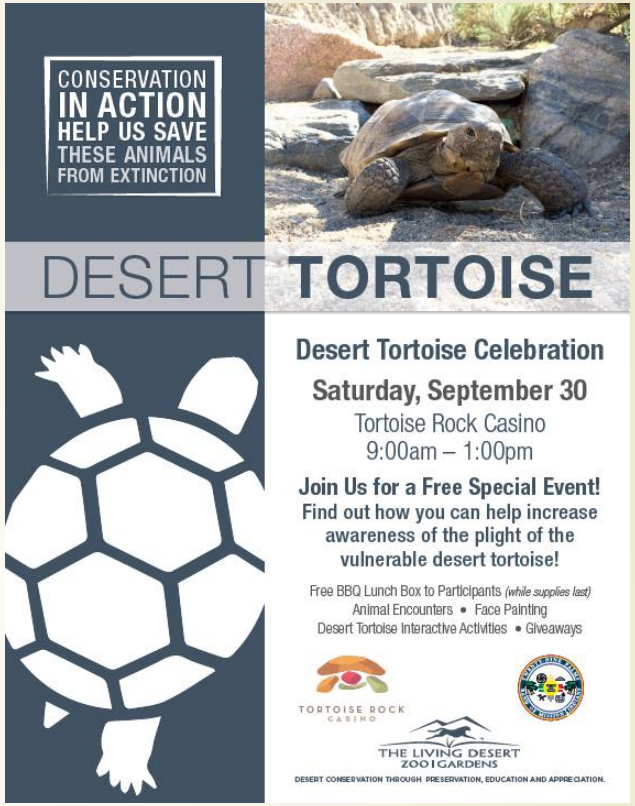
1. Barstow
2. California City/Mojave
3. Baker
4. Yucca Valley
5. Ridgecrest
6. Needles
7. Lancaster
8. Victorville
9. 29 Palms
10. Palmdale
11. Death Valley
12. San Bernardino

Call to Action

- In the past – general tortoise conservation mixed wit Mojave Maxine
- New focus = behavior change
  - Healthy Desert Education Project Campaign
  - Teach students and schools how they can help
  - Get them actively involved – call to action
  - Cover Your Trash
  - Maxine will also promote campaign

Goal #2

- Increase environmental awareness of CA desert residents and visitors
  - General public
  - Businesses
  - Interest groups (Off-highway vehicle groups)
  - Tools:
    - Public events
    - Brochures
    - Citizen Science Projects
    - Social Media
    - Mojave Maxine
    - Billboards & Stickers = call to action



Citizen Science Project @SRSJM National Monument w/BLM

Reaching Interest Groups w/Partners

- OHV sector is important
  - Instead of starting from scratch. . . Seek partnerships with experienced folks
  - Cody Hanford - Transition Habitat Conservancy
  - Difficult group to reach
  - Per Cody: money best spent on increased law enforcement & arming sheriffs/rangers, etc. with stickers, brochures, info, etc.

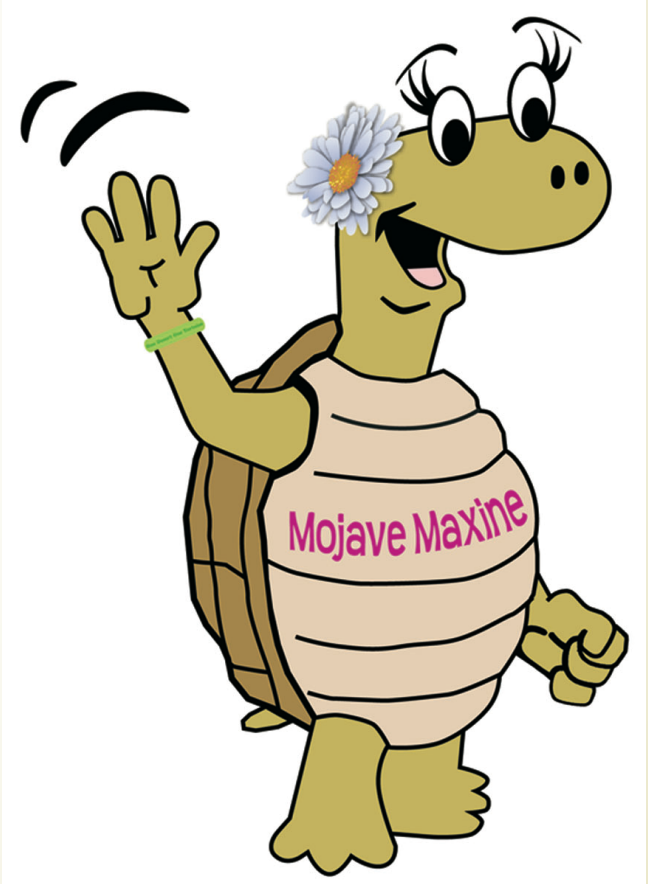
- OHV Annual Event:
  - Transition Habitat Conservancy & The Living Desert
  - Feb. 16-17 – President's Day Weekend Campout
    - Stickers
    - Games
    - Food
    - Tortoise Trunks

Goal #3

- Gain cooperative partnerships with local communities to reduce subsidies
- Partners thus far:
  - Tim Shields – HardShell Labs – Techno-torts
  - Coalition for a Balanced Environment
  - Transition Habitat Conservancy
  - 29 Palms Band of Mission Indians
  - Joshua Tree National Park
- Seeking more partners:
  - Chamber of Commerce Meetings
  - Burrtec through TLD

Goal #4

- Increase social media presence about desert tortoises and raven issues & how people can help
  - FaceBook
    - TLD has over 30K followers
    - Maxine posts on TLD's page now
  - Twitter
  - Instagram
  - YouTube
    - Create instructional videos for tortoise trunks



Thanks for the support

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Desert conservation through preservation, education and appreciation.