



NFWF

Desert Tortoise Recovery Partnership

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FUNDING PARTNERS

- U.S. Marine Corps
- U.S. Department of War

ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) works with partners to foster sustainable and impactful conservation solutions so that people and nature thrive together. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest conservation foundation. Since its founding, NFWF has funded more than 23,900 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of more than \$12 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

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Mojave Desert tortoise

OVERVIEW

The Desert Tortoise Recovery Partnership (DTRP) was established in 2020 through a partnership between the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), U.S. Marine Corps (USMC), U.S. Army, Department of War (DOW), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to coordinate implementation of strategies and provide additional resources to address the pressing conservation needs of the Mojave desert tortoise in the West Mojave Desert of southeastern California. The DTRP was established as an effort of the Recovery and Sustainment Partnership (RASP), a joint initiative of the Department of War and the Department of the Interior to develop species conservation and recovery programs and provide increased flexibility for military missions.

To date, the DTRP has awarded 14 grants across four slates, investing nearly \$8.4 million and leveraging nearly \$7.7 million in matching contributions to generate a total, on-the-ground impact of roughly \$16.1 million.

NFWF, USMC and DOW announced a 2025-year round of funding for DTRP projects. Six new tortoise conservation grants totaling nearly \$2.2 million were awarded. The six awards announced leveraged more than \$1.9 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of nearly \$4.1 million.

Selected projects will produce measurable outcomes for threatened Mojave desert tortoise in California's West Mojave Desert. The projects will address the leading factors in Mojave desert tortoise decline such as habitat alteration and fragmentation, and tortoise mortality. The primary goal of this program is to marshal resources in a coordinated manner to work to recover the species by protecting Mojave desert tortoises from threats and restoring critical habitat.

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Mojave Desert

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals of the DTRP are laid out in the Mojave Desert Tortoise Recovery Implementation Plan and include:

- Improve native species habitat function and health for Mojave desert tortoise within defensible polygons or along closed OHV routes.
- Install, repair or enhance tortoise exclusion fencing along highways to reduce tortoise highway mortality
- Support ongoing and new Mojave desert tortoise monitoring and analysis, particularly for population demographics, to inform progress towards medium-term population objectives and inform conservation decision making
- Support efforts to obtain adult tortoises for progeny, captive-rearing of offspring, and reintroduction of young tortoises to appropriate locations that are sufficiently protected, maintained, and monitored to augment existing populations
- Acquire land from willing landowners or conservation easements within the focal areas, with priority given to inholdings that are strategically important for advancing restoration actions, which would connect multiple existing conservation lands within critical habitat areas, or which are particularly cost-effective
- Design and implement community outreach and education programs to promote Mojave desert tortoise awareness and reduce harmful human-tortoise interactions

PROGRAM OUTCOMES TO DATE

Collectively, the 14 DTRP projects aim to accomplish the following outcomes:

- 19 defensible restoration polygons established
- 50,368 acres protected within defensible polygons
- 9 acres of Mojave desert tortoise habitat restored
- 66 sites with vertical mulching conducted and/or physical barriers installed to discourage use of unauthorized OHV routes
- 213,835 people reached through outreach efforts
- 427 sites monitored for Mojave desert tortoise population
- 1,150 acres acquired in fee for habitat protection
- 3 pounds of native seed harvested for habitat restoration
- 2,000 seedlings propagated for habitat restoration
- 80 tortoises reared in headstarting programs
- 5 miles of highway exclusion fencing improved
- 5 miles of highway exclusion fencing installed
- 3 highway underpasses installed or improved for road crossing

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Tortoise crossing sign in the Mojave Desert

Advancing Recruitment and Translocation Strategies for Mojave Desert Tortoises (CA)

Grantee: Zoological Society of San Diego
 Grant Amount:.....\$491,600
 Matching Funds:.....\$643,100
 Total Project Amount:.....\$1,134,700
 Deploy accelerometer-enabled GPS units to detect wild nests of Mojave desert tortoises within a tortoise density hot spot in the Fremont-Kramer area of the West Mojave and headstart juveniles using indoor rearing. Project will produce robust juveniles for release, enhance survival, and test new tools to improve recruitment and recovery outcomes.

Implementing Route Closures and Restoration to Conserve Desert Tortoise Habitat (CA)

Grantee: Preservation Ranch
 Grant Amount:.....\$399,800
 Matching Funds:.....\$430,500
 Total Project Amount:.....\$830,300
 Implement targeted route closures, restoration and public engagement to reduce off-highway vehicle impacts on 15,275 acres of Mojave desert tortoise critical habitat in the Ord-Rodman East Focal Area. Project will improve habitat quality, support tortoise recovery, ensure long-term site protection, and collaborate and share data with partners.

Improving Fencing in the Fremont-Kramer Area to Reduce Desert Tortoise Highway Mortality (CA)

Grantee: Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee
 Grant Amount:.....\$303,400
 Matching Funds:.....\$52,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$355,400
 Install and improve desert tortoise road exclusion fencing in the Fremont-Kramer area to reduce Mojave desert tortoise road mortality, reduce risk of trapping small animals, and prevent trespass and vehicle impacts to adjoining desert tortoise habitat. Project will upgrade 5 miles of fencing per U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fencing standards and install 5 miles of fencing along Harper Lake Road in Hinkley, California.

Installing Exclusion Fencing to Reduce Desert Tortoise Highway Mortality near Barstow, California

Grantee: Desert Tortoise Council
 Grant Amount:.....\$308,400
 Matching Funds:.....\$0
 Total Project Amount:.....\$308,400
 Install desert tortoise highway exclusion fencing to reduce Mojave desert tortoise highway mortality along a high-priority section of federal highway. Project will obtain permits for and implement construction of 2.7 miles of exclusionary fencing along Interstate 40 east of Barstow, California.

Unifying Population and Landscape Ecology to Inform Mojave Desert Tortoise Conservation (CA)

Grantee: USGS Western Ecological Research Center
 Grant Amount:.....\$476,500
 Matching Funds:.....\$640,000
 Total Project Amount:.....\$1,116,500
 Apply a novel spatial capture-recapture (SCR) survey design across the Fremont-Kramer area to estimate Mojave desert tortoise density and distribution to inform future conservation activities. Project will identify where tortoises occur at high densities and assess the effects of habitat and landscape conditions on tortoise populations.

Using Outreach and Education to Protect Desert Tortoises and their Habitat in the West Mojave (CA)

Grantee: The Living Desert
 Grant Amount:.....\$195,000
 Matching Funds:.....\$180,300
 Total Project Amount:.....\$375,300
 Build awareness in the West Mojave through outreach and education to reduce human impacts to Mojave desert tortoises and their habitat. Project will reduce human-tortoise interactions like off-route off-highway vehicle recreation and improper trash disposal and produce measurable outcomes by improving coexistence with desert tortoise populations through strategic interventions.