

# Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners

*“Doing More with Less: NGO  
Partnerships and the Preservation  
Of Desert Tortoises”*

Kobbe Shaw, Tortoise Group



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# TORTOISE GROUP

*"To Educate and Advocate for the Protection and Well-being of the Desert Tortoise."*



# About Us



**Tortoise Group was founded in the early 1970's**

and was incorporated as a fully-functional non-profit organization in 1982.

## **Volunteer Management**

Is Tortoise Group's main focus. We work with three areas of emphasis: 1) Adoption, 2) Conservation, and 3) Education

**We partner with over 20 different local and national groups**

Including the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Department of Wildlife, USGS, and the Clark County Desert Conservation Program.

**Over 700 members and over 150 dedicated volunteers**

# Tortoise Group Volunteers



## Intensive training:

Master Workshop Training once per year

One-to-one partnerships and volunteer management

## Statewide effort:

15 person cohort in Reno/Sparks

Ely, Winnemucca, Pahrump, etc



# Captive Tortoise Management



1. Burgeoning problem in urban areas of the Mojave Desert
2. 2018 pet tortoise survey indicates 160,000 captive desert tortoises in Clark County, NV
3. No public space to house/separate abandoned tortoises
4. Over 1,000 tortoises/year abandoned in Clark County since 2011
5. Importance of keeping tortoises separated
6. Humane and healthy solutions (adoptions, custodian-custodian transfers)
7. Education (STEM classes for grade school ongoing)

**“Keep wild tortoises wild, keep captive tortoises captive.”**

# Tortoise Group Solutions



1. Education and Outreach
2. Northern Nevada Captive Adoptions
3. Formal Adoption Process
4. Hotline (custodian-custodian transfers)
5. Emergency Habitat in Clark County
6. Captive Tortoise Sterilizations

**“Keep wild tortoises wild, keep captive tortoises captive.”**

# Adoption Program



**Unwanted, surrendered, and abandoned captive desert tortoises literally have no place to go.**

**Releasing captive desert tortoises into the wild can transfer diseases, genetic mutations, and rob wild tortoise populations of their natural resources such as food and water.**

**The only option for these tortoises is rehoming.**

# Wild Conservation Partnerships



1. “Jelly-Roll” project (Nat’l Park Service, USGS)
2. Northern Nevada Volunteer-sharing
3. “Road Warrior” project (NDOT, NDOW, USFWS)
4. Tortoise Telemetry (NDOW)
5. “Mojave Max” education partnership (DCP)
6. Captive Tortoise pick-up service
7. Juvenile translocation efforts

**“Keep wild tortoises wild, keep captive tortoises captive.”**



# NDOW Tortoise Telemetry



On-going project at Calico Basin  
Red Rock



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# Wild Conservation with Juveniles



Partnership with Lake Mead Nat'l Rec Area, NPS, BLM, USGS

Juveniles vetted by USGS, raised to appropriate size, released in designated Areas

“Jelly-Rolling”

**“Keep wild tortoises wild, keep captive tortoises captive.”**



# Jelly Rolling with USGS, BLM, NPS



Innovative way to move large quantities of plants

Remote desert locations



**“Keep wild tortoises wild, keep captive tortoises captive.”**

# Burned Area Restoration Project



USGS/TG released 67 juvies  
September 2018

Burned area restoration, using  
“Jelly-rolled” plants



**“Keep wild tortoises wild, keep captive tortoises captive.”**

And for the “Ahhh” moment.....



**“Keep wild tortoises wild, keep captive tortoises captive.”**

# Tortoise Group Volunteers!!!



Volunteers are the lifeblood of Tortoise Group. The desert tortoise is our number one priority, but our number one human priority is our volunteers.

## THANK YOU!!!

Tortoise Group a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that educates and advocates for the protection and well-being of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*).