



SONORAN DESERT TORTOISE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICE ANNUAL SURVEY

Conservation District _____ For Calendar Year _____

Land User Name _____ Date _____ Acres Managed _____

This is a proactive and voluntary approach by the Arizona ranching industry, Conservation Districts and agencies, to conserve the Sonoran Desert Tortoise and its habitat. This voluntary annual survey has been developed to facilitate reporting of conservation measures being implemented by livestock ranches in Sonoran Desert Tortoise habitat. Your participation is needed to help provide assurances that Arizona’s ranchers intend to continue to support the long-term survival of the Sonoran Desert Tortoise. See <http://aznrzd.org/publications/> for more details.

Please email your report to aznrzd@gmail.com

Key habitats features: Rocky slopes and bajadas of Mojave or Sonoran deserts scrub. Shelter sites: burrows and shelter clusters, rock crevices, loose soil to excavate (usually shallow) shelters below rocks and boulders, live or dead shrubs used for temporary protection or short-term hibernation, woodrat middens, incised washes with soils suitable for burrows. Other features include concentrations of high PEP plants, unfragmented travel corridors, rocks and soil with surface depressions that hold water.

I: Please answer the following questions	Yes	No	NA
Have Sonoran Desert Tortoises been sighted on your operation this calendar year?			
Were any of the Tortoises tagged?			
Have Sonoran Desert Tortoises been sighted on your operation in the prior 2 years?			
Tortoises found on a road were gently picked up, carried level to the ground, and moved to the side of the road in the same direction it was headed.			
II: Soil and Vegetation Disturbing Activities	Yes	No	NA
Conservation practices or other improvements that required ground or vegetation disturbance were installed during 2015. (If NO, go to Section III)			
A permit was obtained from the Arizona Game and Fish Department prior to construction to facilitate temporary possession of tortoises.			
A pre-construction survey for Sonoran Desert Tortoise was completed.			
Tortoises found during a pre-construction survey were moved within 48 hours prior to construction. Temperatures were below 105 F. Separate disposable gloves were used for each tortoise. Tortoises were kept parallel to the ground moved quickly, and placed in a shady location within ½ mile.			
Tortoises found during construction were allowed to move off the site prior to resuming work or were moved using the above protocols.			
Arizona Game and Fish removed tortoises found areas with permanent habitat loss or where construction during active periods exceeded one week duration.			
Conservation practice construction and/or mechanical land treatment was conducted from November - February or May - June.			
Established trails, roadways and channel crossings were used for transporting supplies, materials, feed, water, livestock etc. for the projects.			
Off road mechanized travel was limited to the amount necessary to complete the job.			
To the extent possible, equipment was cleaned before entering and leaving the project site			



to avoid transporting seed or plant material.			
Soil and vegetation disturbance was limited the only the amount necessary (50 ft. around structures, 25 ft. max width for fence building.			
Stream bank and channel modification was avoided.			
Brush piles were left in place as a tortoise cover site.			
Brush piles were immediately burned before tortoise were able to occupy them.			
Hand tools were used for brush clearing within 100 feet of shelter sites to minimize human interaction and soil disturbance			
Holes and trenches were filled immediately, or dirt plugs or escape ramps were provided for tortoise escape until trenches were closed.			
Seeding with native species was done on disturbed areas.			
Seeding with weed free, non-native, non-invasive short lived species such as barley or oats was done where needed to provide immediate cover.			
Non-native invasive species are being controlled on any disturbed areas by hand grubbing or herbicide. Herbicide application follows label requirements and FWS recommended protection measures for pesticides.			
Vehicle, human, and livestock access to treated areas is controlled to ensure maximum conservation practice benefits.			
Woven fence wire not used or the bottom was placed 6 inches above ground. Bottom standard fence wire was placed at least 12 inches above ground.			
Tortoise friendly cattle guards were installed.			
Practices installed in stream channels were installed in a manner that prevents debris buildup or changes in topography that would create a barrier to tortoise or other wildlife movement. Pipelines installed across streams are below scour level or above 100 year floodplain to avoid debris capture.			
III: Grazing Management	Yes	No	NA
Grazing management plan (allotment plan, conservation plan, CRM plan, etc) includes best management practices for Sonoran Desert Tortoise			
Sound grazing management was applied to ensure good plant productivity, health, and diversity.			
The grazing rotation is designed to be flexible and adjust to changes in precipitation, forage production and other monitoring information.			
Non-motorized methods were used to herd livestock.			
Supplements, salt and temporary water was put on previously disturbed areas, and away from key habitat features.			
Livestock imported from areas with non-native feed were impounded for 48 hours to reduce non-native plant introduction.			
Weed free hay and supplements was used to prevent non-native plant introduction.			
Corrals and other livestock concentration areas installed away from key habitat features.			
IV: Monitoring	Yes	No	NA
Monitoring sites are located away from key habitat features			
Vehicles and horses were kept away from key habitat features and were removed upon completion of monitoring.			
Low stakes or rock monuments were used to mark monitoring sites to prevent creating livestock concentration points			
Soil pits were filled immediately. If left open for a period of time, they were barricaded, or escape ramps were provided			
V: Trash Cleanup	Yes	No	NA
Illegally dumped landscape plant material was removed			
VI: Predator Control	Yes	No	NA
Steel traps, snare traps, and poison was not used to control predators.			
Where poison was needed to control predators, label requirements were followed.			
VII: Other Notes and Observations			