



This is a reproduction of a previous Gopher Tortoise Council newsletter. This document has been altered from its original presentation so that information, news, and notable content can be preserved. Formatting, spelling, and grammar have been maintained to the extent possible. If possible, original images from the document have been included in these reproductions. The current and recent newsletters of the Gopher Tortoise Council, *The Tortoise Burrow*, can be found on the Council's website [here](#). Personal information, such as addresses and phone numbers have been redacted from this document.

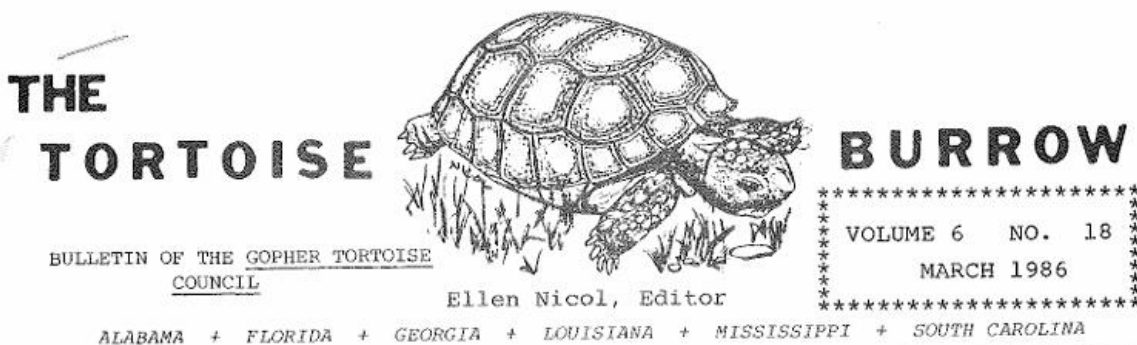


Image: Original artwork and letterhead for the newsletter of the Gopher Tortoise Council

HERE IT IS!! EARLY NOTICE OF GTC 1986 ANNUAL MEETING DATE AND LOCATION!!

Where: Wekiwa Springs State Park, Apopka, Florida (just north of Orlando).

When: November 7 – 9, 1986. More details coming in June or September issues of TTB, but meanwhile, mark the date on your calendar.

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FSM NINTH ALL FLORIDA HERPETOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

Just announced: April 12-13 at Florida State Museum, sponsored by the Gainesville Herpetological Society and FSM. Registration 8-9 AM on the 12th, with presentations until 4:30 PM, then banquet at the Wildlife Research Center. Sunday morning 9 – 12, choice of two tours, Arthur Jones' Jumbolair in Anthony, or Ordway Nature Preserve in Gainesville. Sunday afternoon's plans call for a herp show (live exhibits). At the door, registration fee is \$7.00, but pre-registration is \$5.00, which includes banquet. Conference alone is \$4.00. Program and

registration forms not available at press time, but you may mail checks to Ms. Marilyn Whetzel, Dept. of Interpretation, Florida State Museum, Museum Road, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW GTC CO-CHAIRMAN

Term: 1985 to 1987 Mrs. Terry Ann Linley (formerly Osterman)
#####, Vero Beach, FL 32962 ###-###-####

Terry Ann Linley was born in Pensacola, Florida on 28 June 1955. She received her B.S. degree in Zoology at the University of Central Florida in 1977 and is currently finishing her Master's degree (Zoology) under the direction of Dr. Henry Mushinsky at the University of South Florida.

Her research interests have always been directed toward turtles and tortoises. As an undergraduate, Terry worked for three summers with Dr. Lew Ehrhart on a sea turtle tagging project at the Merritt Island National Wildlife Refuge. Her Master's research concerns the energetics of reproduction in the gopher tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*).

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POSSESSION OF TORTOISES IN FLORIDA: A CLASSIFICATION

An article in the previous issue of this newsletter (December 1985) "The Miracle of Life" by J. M. Floyd, raised the thorny issue of the applicability of Florida's tortoise possession regulations to the captive, though perhaps temporary, care of gopher tortoises. Mr. Don Wood, Endangered Species Coordinator for the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, asked me to clarify the matter for GTC members.

As all regular readers of THE TORTOISE BURROW know, the GTC is a wildlife conservation organization dedicated to the perpetuation of the gopher tortoise and its associates in their natural habitat (i.e., in the wild). While we do not promote the long-term maintenance of gopher tortoises in captivity, we realize that there are many potentially valid reasons that persons may have tortoises in their care. Scientific research, relocation projects, and temporary protection of tortoises "dropped off" by well-meaning persons who picked them up on highways (not recommended) or removed them from a site scheduled for imminent and total "development" are just a few of these. No matter what your reasons, if you have tortoises or their eggs in your possession in Florida, you are subject to all state regulations concerning these species. Thus,

although the main intent of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission's changes in possession limit (two per person) and season (Oct-Nov-Dec only) was to reduce human predation on the tortoise, these same limits technically apply to tortoises maintained as pets, temporary "boarders," or scientific specimens.

Legally, to maintain more than two captive tortoises or eggs per person at any time, or to maintain any at all from January through September, requires permission of the Game Commission. Mr. Wood stated that those wishing to exceed these limits may apply to the Commission for legal permission. Should you choose to do this, please remember that you do so as an individual and not as a representative of the GTC. Application letters should include information on the number, present location and source of the animals, the facilities in which they will be maintained, and your reasons for having them. Letters should be addressed to Division of Law Enforcement, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, ##### Tallahassee, Florida 32301.

Dale Jackson
Conservation Chairman

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PROPOSED BAN ON TORTOISE HARVEST IN FLORIDA'S NATIONAL FORESTS

One of several recently proposed rule changes issued by the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission would prohibit the taking of gopher tortoises from the state's three major national forests (Ocala, Apalachicola, Osceola). This is one of several actions recommend last July to the U.S. Forest Service by the Gopher Tortoise Council, in response to the Service's "Proposed land and resource management plan for national forests in Florida." GTC Conservation Chairman Dale Jackson has written a letter of support to the Commission for this proposal, which is due to be acted upon March 14, 1986.

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF CHANGE IN GTC TREASURER

After several years of service as treasurer for GTC, Bob Taylor has decided to step down in order to have more time to perform his role as Director of the Nature Center of Lee County (FL), as well as his growing roles in several local chapters of environmental organizations. All of us thank Bob for his years of effort, and hope that he will remain an active member of the Council.

Susanne Wahlquist, of Stone Mountain, GA, who has served as treasurer for a number of other organizations, has been appointed as the new Gopher Tortoise Council treasurer.

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REPORT WILDLIFE VIOLATIONS

Have you ever seen someone with gopher tortoises that you suspect were pulled illegally (too many, or out of season) or perhaps in unlawful possession of an indigo snake or Florida pine snake? Many of us occasionally witness violations of wildlife regulations or other abuses of the environment but rarely do we know what to do about it. Floridians can help each other protect their environment, and even earn a reward simply by reporting such violations by calling one of the following TOLL-FREE numbers:

Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission	#-###	###-####	(NW Florida)
	#-###	###-####	(NE Florida)
	#-###	###-####	(Central Florida)
	#-###	###-####	(South Florida)
	#-###	###-####	(Everglades)
Florida Department of Natural Resources	#-###	###-####	

Keep these numbers handy at home, and also carry them with you. If you see or suspect wildlife violations, use them. Remember that regulations to protect wildlife do little good if they are not enforced!

To members in other states: Are there similar telephone numbers in your state in the gopher's range? If so, please advise the editor of this newsletter, and those numbers will be included in a future issue

DRJ

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DUES INFORMATION

\$100	+	Sustaining Member
25		Contributor
25		Societies, Clubs, Groups
10		Regular
5		Student

Checks should be made payable to Gopher Tortoise Council and sent to Ellen Nicol, Secretary,
Rt. # Box #####, Anthony, FL 32617

Please remember that membership runs from December to December the following year, and not one year from the time you join. Membership includes quarterly issues of the newsletter and free copy of the proceedings of the annual meeting, which sell to non-members for \$8.00 per copy.

Included in this issue is a directory of officers and contact people for all six states on gopher tortoise matters. You may wish to clip out the page for handy reference. Please feel free to write or call them if you have a question.

The editor is always grateful for any news clip or personal story relating to gopher tortoises. Don't forget to write letters to the editor calling attention to the plight of the gopher. Dale Jackson wrote one to the editor of the Tallahassee newspaper and it resulted in a number of inquiries regarding the Gopher Tortoise Council and its work. Ellen Nicol's name was listed as the source for more information, and quite a few sample TTBs were sent in response. Some who received sample papers joined the Council. We need to make everyone aware of the plight of the gopher and of the FGFWFC regulations concerning possession limit and open/closed season. Then ignorance of the laws cannot be offered as an excuse for law violations.

For those of you who have snowbirds visiting, please do all you can to prevent them from taking a gopher back north with the intent of keeping it as a pet. Sometimes the novelty of carrying off a free live tortoises as a souvenir of a southern vacation is an irresistible temptation. Not only are they in big trouble if they have a gopher with them in the closed season, but these tortoises do not make good pets, with only a very small percentage removed even surviving at all. It is not uncommon for someone to know of my association with the GTC and ask if they can send me down a tortoise that they have so removed and then rather than see it languish and die, they want to undo the damage they have done. I am then forced to tell them that I cannot accept such a displaced tortoise for various reasons and I can't help them, but then I know about one more gopher that has been removed from productivity and will most likely die. (Editors of other reptile newsletters, you can help by explaining this situation in your papers – we MUST spread the word.) It's just not cool to remove the tortoises from the wild to keep as pets

E.N.

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ANIMAL DAY – GAINESVILLE

Florida State Museum sponsored the fourth annual ANIMAL DAY at Oaks Mall on Sat. and Sun., Feb. 15 and 16, with live animals and reptiles on exhibit. GTC member Ronnie Hawkins single-handedly manned a large display of material, posters, and literature on Earth First!, her special ecological project, and graciously included our GTC poster along with copies of the newsletter and other literature. Next year, with some advance notice, we'll try to give Ronnie some help at her table. Displays such as this are crucial to educating the public to awareness of these ecological issues.

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THANKSTHANKSTHANKSTHANKSTHANKSTHANKSTHANKS!!!!

We are happy to report that the GTC treasury is in better shape than ever. We continue to get new members, and this means that more people are interested in and supportive of our cause. Most of the memberships are REGULAR and a few STUDENTS, but sometimes we are so pleased to see CONTRIBUTOR and SUSTAINING membership checks come in. In appreciation to these generous folks, we are listing them by name and state for 1986:

CONTRIBUTORS

Allen, W. – CA	Herrmann, E. – FL
Bechtel, B. – GA	LaPre, L. – CA
Berry, K. – CA	Lepore, J. – PA
Brechler, R. – FL	Light, R. – AZ
Burke, R. & P. – FL	Lohoeferner, R. – MS
Colen, M. – CA	Markoe, J. – NY
Dimmitt, S. – FL	Parker, S. – FL
Fields, E. – AL	Pepper, J. – FL
Foley, R. & N. – FL	Redman, M. – WA
Gregory, H. – CA	Reid, G. – FL
Griner, D. – FL	Ripke, S. – FL
Hancock, J. – FL	Seyle, W. – GA

Solloway, T. – FL

Wernicke, R.

Spotts, R. – CA

Wynot, G. – FL

Talmor, E. – FL

Young, D. & L. – [cut off]

Wahlquist, H. & S. – GA

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Davidovich, M. – California

Edwards, D. – Florida

Markborough Florida (a company)

Mills, N. – Louisiana

Reynolds, D. – Florida

Snyder, H. – Florida

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Some members may wonder what becomes of dues funds. Much of it goes for expenses in connection with publications provided by the GTC for educational purposes – this quarterly newsletter and the annual meeting proceedings. Some is earmarked for the annual student award, although R.A.G.E. (Rattlesnake and Gopher Enthusiasts) also contributes to the award. We have a wonderfully obliging printer (Budget Print) in Ocala who does a fine job on TTB but, even then, an issue can run between \$75. And \$125. depending on the number of pages ordered.

Postage is a considerable expense, as communication is vital, and there is no discount on quantity for that! All officers volunteer their time, expertise and equipment to keep the organization viable.

THE GOPHER TORTOISE COUNCIL IS A REGISTERED NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION,
AND ALL FUNDS DONATED ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE+++++

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BACK ISSUES

of TTB are available for 50¢ each (11 issues) and we still have a few copies of the 1981 and 1983 Proceedings on hand for \$8.00 per copy. Xerox copies of the 1980 and 1982 Proceedings

are available but they are not bound like the original issues. However, the valuable information is intact. ORDER ALL FROM E. NICOL.

The 1984 and 1985 Proceedings are still being worked on and are not yet available. Hope to have news on that in JUNE issue of this newsletter.

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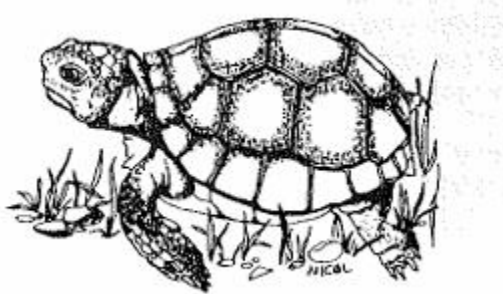


Image: Original artwork for the newsletter of the Gopher Tortoise Council

1986

GOPHER TORTOISE COUNCIL DIRECTORY

1986

OFFICERS:

Co-Chairman 1985-1986: Dr. Robert H. Mount, Dept. of Zoology-Entomology, Auburn University, AL 36830 ###-###-####.

Co-Chairman 1986-1987: Mrs. Terry Ann Linley, #####-###, Vero Beach, FL 32962, ###-###-####.

Secretary and Editor of newsletter (THE TORTOISE BURROW): Mrs. Ellen Nicol, Rt. #, Box ####, Anthony, FL 32617 ###-###-####.

Treasurer: Mrs. Susanne Wahlquist, ###-#####-####, Stone Mountain, GA 30088 ###-###-####.; Office: ###-###-#### (CDC – Parasitic Diseases) (7 am to 3:30 pm).

Immediate Past Co-Chairman: Dr. Dale R. Jackson, Florida Natural Areas Inventory, The Nature Conservancy, ###-#####-###, Tallahassee, FL 32303 ###-###-####..

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN:

Public Information and Education: Ms. Christine Schleh, Busch Gardens Zoological Education Dept., P.O. Box ####, Tampa FL 33674 ###-###-#### or ###-###-####, Ext. ###.

Publishing and Editing: Mrs. Rhonda J. Bryant, Florida State Museum, Univ. of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611 ###-###-####.

1985 Proceedings: Dr. C. Kenneth Dodd, Jr., Denver Wildlife Research Center, #### Ave.,
####, Gainesville, FL 32609 ###-####.

Conservation: Dr. Dale R. Jackson.

Research Advisory Committee Dr. Harold Wahlquist, ####, Stone Mountain, GA
30088 ###-####; Office: ###-####.

STATE REPRESENTATIVES:

Alabama: Dr. Dan W. Speake, ##### Ave., Auburn, AL 36830 ###-####.

Florida: Ms. Joan Diemer, Wildlife Biologist, Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Comm., ####
####, Gainesville, FL 32601 ###-####.

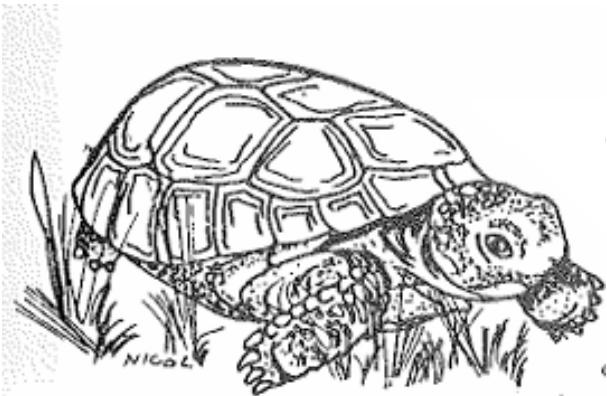
Georgia: Dr. Harold Wahlquist.

Louisiana: Noel Mills, M.D., ####, New Orleans, LA 70118 ###-####

Mississippi: Dr. Ren Lohofener, National Marine Service, ####, Pascagoula, MS
39569 ###-####.

South Carolina: James Sorrow, ##, Central, S.C. 29630 ###-####.

STUDENT AWARD INFORMATION



So far the 1986 Student Award has gone unclaimed. The GTC annually presents a cash award to an undergraduate, graduate or high school student who is planning or actively conducting research involving the gopher tortoise.

The only obligation of the recipient, other than conducting the proposed research, is to submit to the Council a copy of his or her final report within six (6) months of the project completion date and copies of any scientific papers resulting from the research. Proposals should be short and should include a brief biographical section (or resume), a description and justification of the research, and a tentative budget. Proposals should be sent to Dr. Harold Wahlquist, ####, Stone Mountain, GA 30088

The GTC thanks R.A.G.E. (Rattlesnake and Gopher Enthusiasts) for its contribution from the proceeds of the 1985 Rattlesnake Festival, of \$100., earmarked for the Student Award Fund.

Image: Original artwork for the newsletter of the Gopher Tortoise Council

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Excerpt from ORLANDO SENTINEL's special section called "Florida's Shame – Endangered Species" (12/15/85):

"GOPHER TORTOISE (*Gopherus polyphemus*) Few other creatures play as important a role in Florida's ecology as the gopher tortoise. The slow-moving animal, which has been likened to the movie character E.T., performs an invaluable service when it excavates its burrows in dry, well-drained upland areas throughout most of the state. The burrows, which can reach 30 feet long and 12 feet deep, not only provide shelter for the tortoise but also are host to nearly 100 other creatures (half of them insects) that seek permanent or temporary refuge. Some of those visiting creatures are the Florida mouse, the Eastern indigo snake, the burrowing owl, and the gopher frog - - all of which are included on federal "trouble" lists.

Unfortunately, much tortoise habitat is being converted to subdivisions and citrus groves, and the creature - - dubbed the "Hoover chicken" during the Great Depression - - still is eaten by some residents. Tortoise numbers already are low in other southern populations in the Southeastern states. Two Florida State Museum researchers have estimated that gopher populations in the Southeast have been cut by 80 percent in the last 100 years; they predict that few or none will exist outside protected areas by 2025. Hunting limits have been enacted in Florida, although critics believe they are too liberal, and some scientists endorse the governmental purchase of more gopher tortoise habitat to ensure the species' survival.

LEGAL STATUS: Species of Special Concern (state); under review (U.S.)."

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GTC tee-shirts available: Small, medium, large or extra large; light blue, tan and yellow. With GTC logo (circle with side view of burrow with commensals) 100% cotton. Send check for \$6.50 made out to Dr. Robert H. Mount, Dept. of Zoology-Entomology, Auburn University, Auburn Univ., AL 36849. You may want to order one size larger than usual for possible shrinkage. Proceeds go to benefit the Council. Price includes shipping.

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If undeliverable, please return to
Ellen Nicol
Gopher Tortoise Council
Rt. # Box #####
Anthony, FL 32617 USA

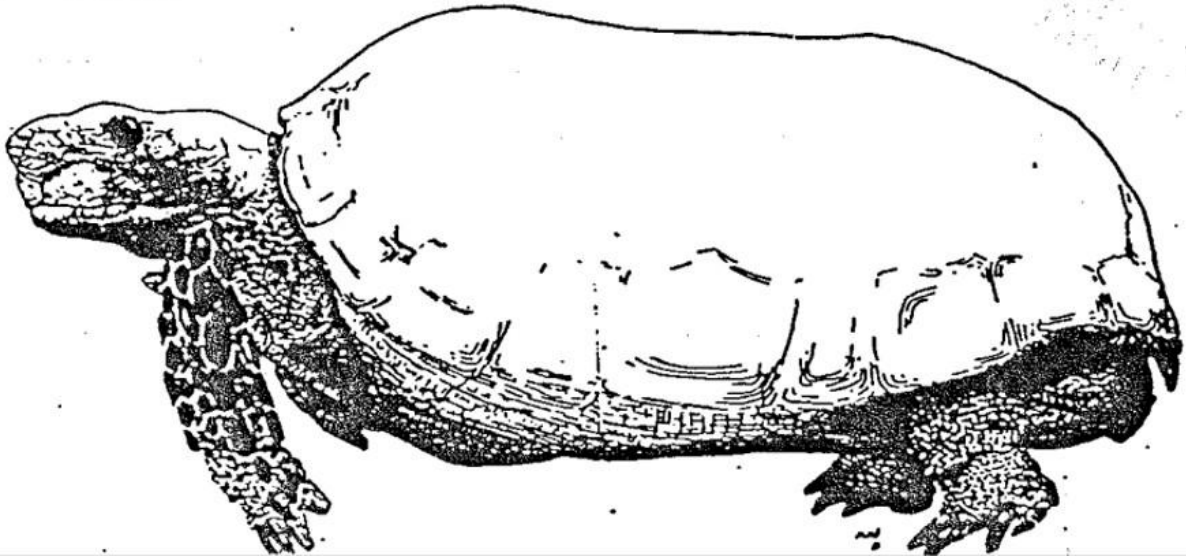


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This document was created and transcribed by Caitlin Jones
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