



Nevada Site Office News

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MEDIA ADVISORY

An important step was taken today directed toward protecting desert tortoises at the Nevada National Security Site (formerly the Nevada Test Site). Sixty juvenile desert tortoises were released in an undisturbed area on the southern end of the Site. The animals came from the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center (DTCC) in Las Vegas. The DTCC is managed by the San Diego Zoo for conservation research for the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The desert tortoises are fitted with special radio tracking devices so their movements can be studied. Among benefits of the study:

- Identify habitat features that desert tortoises prefer
- Determine the “home range”, habitat use patterns, burrow use patterns and movement patterns of desert tortoises
- Correlation of weather, vegetation and soil data with tortoise activity and movement patterns
- Use of foraging and drinking sites
- Causes of tortoise injuries and mortality
- Assess the health and condition of desert tortoises at the Site

Under the Endangered Species Act, the USFWS lists the desert tortoise as “threatened”. This project is a joint effort of the NNSA/NSO (Nevada National Security Site), San Diego Zoo, USFWS, and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Biological Survey.

Video of the release today, and interviews with participants, are available for unrestricted use on [YouTube](#) at the following URL:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9h4eDUL4Q0>

Interviewees are: Dr. Jennifer Germano, San Diego Zoo, Institute for Conservation Research and Darwin Morgan, Nevada National Security Site.

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