

**Western Ecological Research Center** <http://www.werc.usgs.gov>

## Box Springs Field Station

In areas of southern California to southwestern Utah and into Arizona, deserts are experiencing rapid changes due to human activities. Rare, threatened, and endangered species and ecosystem processes are affected by these activities, and their influence will likely increase as the burgeoning human population continues to grow in this region.

The Box Springs Field Station, co-located with the Bureau of Land Management in Riverside, Calif., provides natural resource data for land managers' decision-making process throughout the Mojave and Colorado deserts. Many of the management questions require interdisciplinary studies in collaboration with other USGS scientists: geologists in Flagstaff, Ariz., Menlo Park, Calif., and Denver, Colo.; hydrologists in Tucson, Ariz.; and cartographers in Menlo Park. Primary clients include the Bureau of Land Management, Department of Defense, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as the California Department of Fish and Game, National Park Service, and California Energy Commission.

The scientist at the field station conducts research in the Mojave and Colorado deserts on the desert tortoise, its habitats, long-term population trends, causes of ill health and high mortality rates. Team research projects on upper respiratory tract, shell diseases, toxicants, and other disease processes in desert tortoises are undertaken with collaborators at the University of California, Davis, University of Florida, and within USGS. Other ongoing studies include factors affecting high rates of mortality in desert tortoise populations, effects of military maneuvers on tortoise behavior, and effects of roads on tortoise populations and habitat.

The scientist also conducts research on short- and long-term changes in the desert ecosystems using such techniques as rephotography, analysis of historic land uses, and change in climate. Current research projects focus on effects of natural and anthropogenic changes to the environment, including effects of invasive plants, vehicle use, military maneuvers, and habitat fragmentation.



M. Brooks

### Lead Scientist

**Kristin H. Berry, Ph.D.**, Research Wildlife Biologist

- Demography and population trends in desert tortoises
- Health and diseases of desert tortoises
- Anthropogenic effects on desert tortoise populations and critical habitats
- Short- and long-term changes in Mojave and Colorado desert ecosystems

### For more information, contact:

USGS WERC Box Springs Field Station  
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos  
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Phone: 909.697.5361 Fax: 909.697.5299

For a list of technical products from this field station, click on the "Products" button on our home page at <http://www.werc.usgs.gov/>