

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

## Box Springs Field Station

Deserts in the southwestern United States are experiencing rapid changes due to human activities. The growth of human populations and development of cities and towns affect adjacent rare, threatened, and endangered species and their associated ecosystems in the Mojave and Sonoran deserts of southeastern California, southern Nevada, southwestern Utah, and western Arizona.

Scientists at the Box Springs Field Station, co-located with the Bureau of Land Management in Moreno Valley, California, conduct research on subjects of importance to land managers in the Mojave and western Sonoran deserts. Many management questions require interdisciplinary studies in collaboration with other research scientists in the USGS and Department of the Navy, as well as academicians at the University of Florida, Royal Ontario Museum, University of Arizona, and elsewhere. Primary clients include the Bureau of Land Management, Department of Defense, California Department of Fish and Game, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Scientists at this field station conduct research on the desert tortoise: long-term population trends, causes of ill health and high mortality rates, social behavior and ecology, and factors affecting habitat condition. Some research projects (e.g., infectious diseases, shell diseases, and toxicants) are undertaken with collaborators at the University of Florida and Department of the Navy. Research on genetic structure of populations is underway with a team of geneticists at the Royal Ontario Museum and University of Arizona.



F. Woodard

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

### 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



S. Schwarzbach

### For more information, contact:

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