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NEW TORTOISE SPECIES DISCOVERED AND NAMED AFTER CONSERVATIONIST, NATURALIST, AND ENTREPRENEUR ERIC GOODE

New York, NY - February 10, 2016 - A team of scientists from Mexico, the U.S. and Canada have recently described a new species of Desert Tortoise found in Sonora and Sinaloa, Mexico, to be called Goode's Thornscrub Tortoise (*Gopherus evgoodei*). Instead of following the standard describing and naming process, the researchers behind this effort decided to try an innovative approach that would support their science with tangible conservation actions. They reached out to Eric Goode, founder and president of the Turtle Conservancy, with the idea of auctioning off the naming rights for the new species at the annual Turtle Ball.

Dr. Taylor Edwards of the University of Arizona and lead author on the scientific paper published in [ZooKeys](#) describing the new species explains his motivation: "I figure if we are introducing a new species to the world and we already know that it and its habitat is imperiled, why not start it out with a trust fund?"

On September 28, 2015, the [Turtle Conservancy](#) held its third annual [Turtle Ball](#) at The Bowery Hotel in New York City. A highlight of the evening was a bid for the right to name the new tortoise, which raised \$100,000 solely for the purchase of land in Mexico to protect this new species. With only a little over 50 living species of tortoises currently known to science, this was a unique opportunity to be a part of this unprecedented naming auction. However, instead of a single bidder winning the auction, four organizations came together to contribute funds toward this project: The Andrew Sabin Family Foundation, Global Wildlife Conservation, Rainforest Trust, and the Turtle Conservancy were motivated to pool together this donation in the name of Eric Goode for his work preserving turtles and tortoises around the world.

The Turtle Conservancy is now working with partners to secure approximately 1,000 acres of Tropical Deciduous Forest in southern Sonora, Mexico, for the protection of this newly described species. The property targeted for this land acquisition has been identified for its excellent tortoise habitat, and for its ideal location adjoining a nature reserve, the [Reserva Monte Mojino](#). This project will not only contribute to the survival of a unique tortoise but also the rich biodiversity associated with this ecosystem. This protected area will safeguard the globally endangered Tropical Deciduous Forest ecosystem supporting 36 families of tropical trees, 48 species of orchids, the highest diversity of birds in Sonora, 5 species of wild cats, and 79 species of amphibians and reptiles. The entire area will be owned and managed by [Nature and Culture International](#), the organization that currently manages the Reserva Monte Mojino.

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