

## Environmental Changes Desert Tortoise Conservation Plan

**Estimated Time:** 15-20 minutes

**Age range:** 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

**What you need:** a pencil, this page or a blank page for drawing, coloring

**Background Information:**

All living things need food for energy, water for hydration, shelter for protection, and space to move and grow. These four things that all living things need are actually part of what scientists call a habitat. A **habitat** is the natural home for living things that has everything an organism needs to survive.

**New Words**

**Habitat** – a natural home for living things that has everything an organism needs to survive

**Conservation** – protection of things found in nature

**Organism** – any plant, animal, or other living thing

**Habitat restoration** – helping the recovery of habitat that has been damaged or destroyed

Imagine a desert tortoise in its natural habitat. Write or draw an example of each of the four parts of its habitat:

**Food:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Water:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Shelter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Space:** \_\_\_\_\_



And/or draw:

**Food:**

**Water:**

**Shelter:**

**Space:**

Often, habitats for desert tortoise can be damaged or destroyed by humans or nature. For example, people might build solar panels where desert tortoises lived or ride dirt bikes or ATV's off trail. A natural disaster like a fire or storm can also damage desert tortoise habitat. When this happens, desert tortoises might have to move to a new habitat. The good news is, scientists have some ways of helping to keep desert tortoises safe when their habitat is damaged or taken away.

**Habitat Solutions:**

1. Scientists plant **native plants** (plants & animals that are from the area) to make sure desert tortoises have healthy food to eat in a new habitat.
2. Scientists and engineers build **informational signs** to teach people on motorized vehicles (ATV's or dirt bikes) what to do so they do not damage desert tortoise habitat.


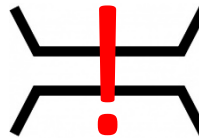
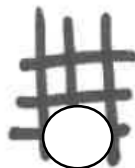
3. Scientists and engineers create **fence holes** to help desert tortoises get through fences to travel to a new habitat.

**Instructions:**

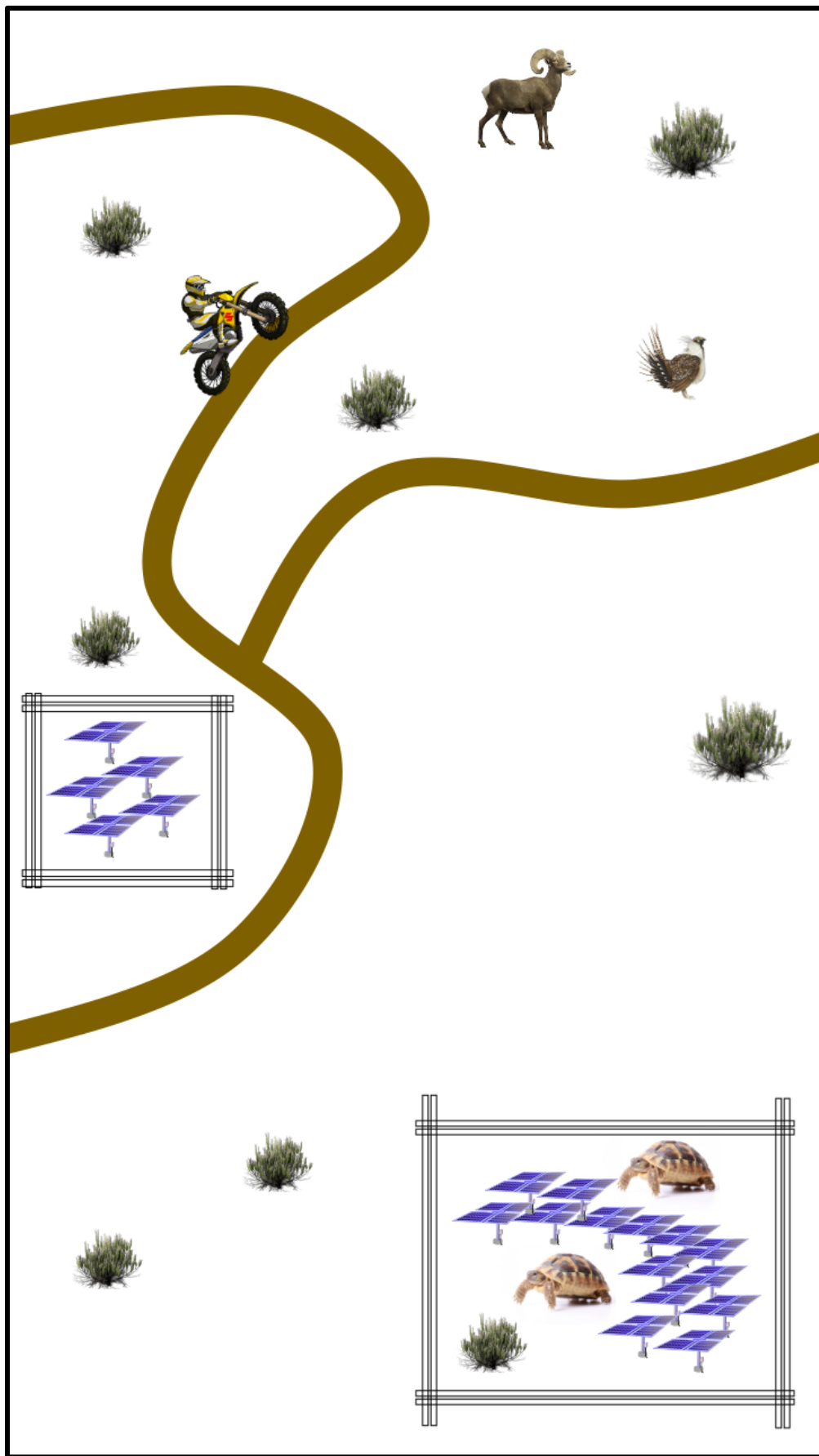
1. Look at the map below (page 3). The desert tortoise habitat at the bottom of the map was damaged by a new solar panel farm with fences all around it and the desert tortoises need to move to a new habitat at the top of the map. **Draw** a path for the desert tortoises to take and **circle** things on the map that could be obstacles for the desert tortoises to get to the new habitat.

2. Use the chart to plan what solutions you will use to help the desert tortoises move safely. **You have a budget of 100 points.**

3. Draw or sketch your solutions on the map to see if you helped the desert tortoises get through every obstacle circled on your map.

	Points	How many?	Total	Symbols
Native Plants	5 x	_____	= _____	
Informational Signs	20 x	_____	= _____	
Fence Holes	10 x	_____	= _____	

Space for work:



Observe your map and answer the questions below:

How will your plan help the desert tortoises travel safely to their new habitat?

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Are there any other ways that humans can help keep desert tortoise habitats safe?

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What kinds of other animals could these habitat solutions help besides desert tortoises?

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For more information on desert tortoise conservation efforts, please visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service link below:

[https://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert\\_tortoise/dtro/dtro\\_recovery\\_plan.html](https://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert_tortoise/dtro/dtro_recovery_plan.html)

**Sources:**

Desert tortoise picture:

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.reviewjournal.com%2Fnews%2Fbundy-blm%2Fdesert-tortoise-faces-uncertain-future-amid-bundy-conflict%2F&psig=A0vVaw31HRYqXRwGDHTOI5qDkL3E&ust=1589491358240000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCKD975zmsekCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD>