



**DMG Meeting
Summary
November 30 and December 1, 2010
San Diego**

Action Items/Upcoming Meetings

- *[Russell](#) requested comments on the [Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative \(DLCC\) document](#) by January 3, 2011.*
- *Any agencies that wish to participate directly in the DLCC Core Committee should contact [Russell](#).*
- *The next DLCC Core Committee meeting is January 19 in Phoenix.*
- *The next Conservation Land Acquisition Work Group (CLAWG) meeting is January 19 in Barstow (this meeting will likely change to resolve the DLCC conflict).*
- *If your agency has funds for the 2011 desert tortoise range-wide monitoring program, please contact [Linda Allison](#).*
- *Amy Vandergast requested location data on a number of species that are included in the Rapid Assessment of Genetic Diversity and Connectivity in the Mojave Desert model. Please contact [Amy](#) for a list of target species or to provide her with species location information.*
- *The next Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) stakeholder committee meeting is January 12 and 13.*

Tuesday, November 30, 2010 (open to stakeholders)

Welcome, Introductions, and USGS Update- Mike Shulters, USGS Pacific Southwest Area Executive, welcomed everyone to San Diego. USGS has recently undergone reorganization. Previously, USGS had three regions that oversaw area executives. The top tier regions were eliminated and area executives now report to the director. Also, organization was by discipline and is now by the mission areas of ecosystems; climate change and land use; natural hazards; water; energy, minerals, and environmental health; and core science systems. Science center organization remains the same and daily agency interaction should not change. Mark Sogge, the new senior science advisor, will be the primary regional representative to the DMG. Mark is located in Flagstaff.

Overview and History of DMG- Dennis Schramm provided a [slide presentation](#) outlining the history and status of the DMG.

Desert Tortoise Recovery Update- Roy Averill-Murray provided a [slide presentation](#) explaining the Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan's revision, plans for moving forward with collaborative implementation of the revised plan, and Desert Tortoise Information and Youth Education Program accomplishments. The [revised recovery plan](#) is expected to be signed soon.

Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative Overview and Update- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and FWS are convening the Desert Landscape Conservation Cooperative (DLCC). Russell Scofield provided a [slide presentation](#) outlining what LCCs are and the status of DLCC. DMG could play a key role in DLCC and Russell asked for comments on [proposed governance](#) for DMG's involvement. ***Russell requested comments by January 3, 2011. The next DLCC Core Committee meeting is January 19 in Phoenix. Any agencies that wish to participate directly in the Core Committee should contact [Russell](#).***

Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program (MDEP)- Fon Duke provided a [slide presentation](#) outlining recent improvements to [mojavedata.gov](#) and the new desert tortoise smart phone application (app). The app has been developed pro bono for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#) (this link only works from an Android phone) There have been recent stories about the app carried by the Victorville Daily Press, National Public Radio, and a Scientific American blog. Users have downloaded the app over three-hundred times as of December 6. In addition to [mojavedata.gov](#), MDEP manages [californiadesert.gov](#), [dmg.gov](#), and [deserttortoise.gov](#).

DMG Strategic Plan Review and Approval- Sarah Craighead provided an [overview presentation](#) of the DMG's new [strategic plan](#). Managers approved the plan without further discussion. The DMG will now develop its work plans from the strategic plan and agency work plans. We will review the strategic plan annually.

Conservation Land Acquisition Work Group (CLAWG)- Bob Wood provided a [slide presentation](#) update of the CLAWG. The URL for the CLAWG map and white paper have changed and both can be accessed from the [CLAWG webpage](#). The password remains the same. Please contact [Fon](#) if you require assistance.

Russell Scofield also discussed renewable energy mitigation acquisition and how the CLAWG can work with the Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) and the California Council of Land Trust (CCLT) Desert Working Group to coordinate renewable energy mitigation acquisitions. ***The next CLAWG meeting is January 19 in Barstow (this meeting will likely change to resolve the DLCC conflict).***

Wednesday, December 1 - open to stakeholders

Desert Tortoise Recovery Implementation Teams- Dr. Cat Darst provided a [slide presentation](#) that introduced managers to the Desert Tortoise Recovery Implementation Teams (RIT) and the Desert Tortoise Spatial Decision Support System (SDSS). The California RIT is planned to be a DMG work group. There was discussion whether Death Valley should be included in the California RIT (political/regulatory landscape) versus Nevada (ease of travel to meetings). Even though DTRO is developing the SDSS to primarily support the RITs, there was considerable discussion regarding the use of the SDSS to conduct impact analyses and quantify mitigation options for

utility-scale solar energy development projects. As the underlying models and data for the system are improved, its utility for renewable energy planning will increase.

Desert Tortoise Monitoring Program- Linda Allison provided a [slide presentation](#) update of the desert tortoise range-wide monitoring program. [Previous years' monitoring reports](#) are now online. Estimates of tortoise densities from the range-wide monitoring program have also been used to guide translocation planning to date, and since 2009, two results that account for undetectable tortoises during surveys have been used to improve description of the number of tortoises that might be impacted in project action areas. The very improved monitoring effort in 2010 demonstrates that small commitments from multiple sources can be an effective way to fund this program. So far Fort Irwin and BLM have providing funding for 2011 monitoring so *if your agency has funds available, please contact [Linda](#).*

Mohave Ground Squirrel Research Strategy- Russell Scofield provided a [slide presentation](#) update of the DMG's Mohave ground squirrel research strategy. Russell introduced Dave Delaney with Army Corps of Engineers Construction Engineering Research Laboratory (CERL) and Dr. Phil Leitner with Cal State Stanislaus who provided a more in depth [slide presentation](#) on the camera detection study that will be used to validate the USGS habitat suitability model. Commercially available trail cameras will be used in conjunction with bait stations to detect Mohave ground squirrel presence. Currently, sixty randomized camera grids are planned. This additional data will contribute to a more robust model.

Desert Habitat Connectivity Study- Dr. Amy Vandergast with USGS in San Diego provided an [interim update](#) of the DMG supported and BLM funded Rapid Assessment of Genetic Diversity and Connectivity in the Mojave Desert. Amy's study will provide valuable information elucidating habitat connectivity in the desert. Much of the genetic modeling is complete and habitat suitability models are now being developed. *Amy requested location data on a number of species that are included in the model. Please contact [Amy](#) for a list of target species or to provide her with location information.* The project is scheduled for completion September 2011.

Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP)- Scott Flint with the California Energy Commission (CEC) provided an overview of the DRECP and Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) activities.

Current fast track projects have three options for mitigation available:

- SB34 advance mitigation program, which functions like a mitigation bank. \$10m is available as grants to land trust for the purchase mitigation lands. Proponents may then buy credits for those lands.
- NFWF managed in lieu fee program. Proponents will pay into a NFWF account and NFWF will manage mitigation implementation.
- Proponents can meet mitigation requirements on their own. This is the way CDFG usually requires project mitigation and is business as usual.

So far, most proponents seem to want to pursue mitigation on their own. REAT agencies are requiring the posting of security deposits for required mitigation.

Development of the DRECP moves forward with David Harlow as the new Executive Director. DRECP has four work groups and a stakeholder steering committee. The stakeholder steering

committee includes many DMG members and meets monthly. *The next meeting is January 12 and 13.* The work groups are cultural, covered species, covered activities, and resource mapping. All work groups except cultural are up and running with mapping being the most active. DMG/MDEP is heavily involved in the mapping work group and the REAT agencies would like MDEP to host DRECP data on mojavedata.gov.

CDFG is updating the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) for the desert region in support of the DRECP.

Desert Tortoise Translocation Protocols for Renewable Energy Projects- Roy Averill-Murray provided a [slide presentation](#) outlining issues underlying the recently developed [Desert Tortoise Translocation Protocols](#). Large-scale developments within tortoise habitat may affect long-term recovery by compromising population connectivity. In cases where tortoise habitat cannot be avoided, translocation has shown promise but still should be considered experimental. Two independent science advisory committees have stated that translocating animals into existing resident populations should not be conducted. Other key factors to consider are proximity to habitat impacts and recipient site protection, genetics, health and disease, and carrying capacity of recipient site. Implications for health and disease are especially problematic and require intensive sampling.

BLM Fast Track Renewable Energy Update- Holly Roberts, Palm Springs BLM Associate Field Manager, provided an update of current [BLM fast track renewable energy projects](#). Agencies have approved several fast track projects and construction has begun. Additional RODs will be forthcoming. BLM is evaluating reasonable workload for the next round of renewable energy projects.

BLM Solar PEIS Update- Almost all DMG members are cooperating agencies for the [solar PEIS](#). The voluminous administrative draft was released to cooperators August 27. Comments were due back to BLM by October 1 and comments were reviewed in October and November. The Draft PEIS is scheduled for publication December 17 and a ninety-day public comment period will follow. In mid to late February 2011, BLM/DOE will host up to twelve public meetings. The BLM PEIS project manager has committed to brief the DMG at the February DMG meeting. The Final PEIS is still expected in late fall of 2011.

Habitat Restoration- Russell Scofield provided a [briefing document](#) discussing the need for collaboration among on-the-ground restoration professionals. There has been much new science since the last DMG restoration workshop in 2005 and many DMG agencies are working independently on restoration projects that could be otherwise lend themselves to collaboration. Russell proposed partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to host a “low budget” restoration meeting to update practitioners on current science and the state of the art, discuss projects to share knowledge, and identify efficiencies that could be gained through collaboration. The group may evolve into an on-going forum. Joshua Tree has expressed an interest in taking the lead. The managers approved the proposal.

Raven Management Work Group Update- Ashleigh Blackford provided a [slide presentation](#) updating the managers on the [raven mitigation plan](#) for renewable energy and other desert projects. There is a project specific component to minimize direct impacts and a regional component to address indirect and cumulative impacts. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will manage a fee program for the regional component. Participation in the regional plan will be

incorporated into projects via permit conditions. The fee is determined by the size of the project and the duration of the permit. Project proponents will pay \$64/acre (20-year permit) or \$105 (for a thirty-year project) per project acre and funding will implement the DMG Raven Management EA.

Upcoming DMG Meetings

Winter- ***February 9 and 10, 2011***

Host to be determined, please contact [Russell](#) or [Fon](#) if you are interested in hosting the meeting

Spring- ***May 18 and 19, 2011***

Hosted by State Parks at the [Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve](#)

Summer- ***July 21, 2011***

Conference call/web meeting

Audio call in number: 888-790-2388

Audio pass code: 2972879

Web meeting URL:

<http://www.mymeetings.com/nc/join.php?sigKey=mymeetings&i=741180795&p=DMG&t=c>