



Briefing Statement

Date: April 19, 2012

Title: Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Update

The DTRO launched its first Recovery Implementation Team (RIT) webinar the week of March 26, delivering six webinars over four days. As outlined in the revised recovery plan for the Mojave desert tortoise, the primary goal of each RIT is to partner across local and regional jurisdictional boundaries to coordinate development and implementation of a 5-year Recovery Action Plan, review progress towards recovery, and assess the effectiveness of recovery actions for the desert tortoise within logistically practical geographic boundaries. A cooperative/coordinated effort among land managers, wildlife agencies, stakeholders, and scientists will: 1) accomplish recovery goals that would be unattainable on a local scale, 2) reduce duplication of effort and increase the efficient use of resources and expertise, and 3) provide consistent information on the status of the tortoise and recovery implementation throughout the four-state range.

The webinars were an all-RIT-combined orientation to familiarize members of the newly-formed RITs with the expectations for the teams and an overview of the Spatial Decision Support System (SDSS) used for ranking threats to the desert tortoise and prioritizing recovery actions to ameliorate those threats. The orientation presentation is available to the public at the [deserttortoise.gov website](http://deserttortoise.gov). Here, you can also access the Model Explorer and can explore the relationships in the SDSS of threats to population changes and the associated recovery actions, as well as the Data Explorer, where you can explore the spatial threats data and maps used by the SDSS in the spatial analyses.

RIT participation in the webinar was very good, with 47 out of the 57 members participating. The California Mojave RIT membership list is attached below. Please note that there are vacancies on the RIT that we are still trying to fill. Note also that many of the counties require representation on more than one workgroup, and this has presented a difficult issue for them that RIT member Gerry Hillier is working with them to overcome. Your assistance in filling the NE CA Mojave workgroup's recreation category also would be greatly appreciated!

Next steps for the RIT include a second webinar (Webinar #2) in June that will be specific to each RIT Workgroup. In Webinar #2 we hope to improve familiarity among RIT members with the SDSS outputs for each workgroup by presenting workgroup-specific outputs from the SDSS, ranking the threats, and prioritizing recovery actions for each workgroup area and associated desert tortoise conservation areas. This information will lead each workgroup member to work with their agency or organization to develop sets of site-specific recovery actions via worksheets that will be used in the development of each RIT's 5-Year Action Plan.

In October, we will arrange the first in-person meeting for each of the three RITs to actually begin developing the 5-Year Action Plan. By the end of the in-person meeting, we hope to have completed drafts of the 5-Year Action Plan for each of the RITs.

Contacts

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DESERT TORTOISE RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEMBERSHIP – CALIFORNIA

WORKGROUP	MEMBER CATEGORY	AGENCY OR ORGANIZATION	RIT REPRESENTATIVE
Colorado Desert	Land Management	BLM, Palm Springs Field Office	Mark Massar
	Land Management	Joshua Tree National Park	Michael Vamstad
	Land Management	U.S. Army, Chocolate Mountains AGR	vacant
	Wildlife Management	California State Parks	Eric Hollenbeck
	Wildlife Management	California Department of Fish and Game	Stefan Awender
	Tribe	Chemehuevi Indian Tribe	vacant
	County	Imperial County	Andy Horne
	County	Riverside County	vacant
	County	San Bernardino	vacant
	Conservation Biology	USGS SBSC	Jeff Lovich
	Conservation Organization	Western Watersheds	Michael Connor
	Resource Use	California Energy Operating Co.	Alex Schriener
	Recreation	San Diego Off-Road Coalition	Chris Sprofera
NE CA Mojave	Land Management	Death Valley National Park	Linda Manning
	Land Management	Mojave National Preserve	Debra Hughson
	Land Management	BLM, Needles Field Office	Hanem Abouelezz
	Wildlife Management	California Department of Fish and Game	Becky Jones
	Tribe	Timbisha Shoshone Tribe	vacant
	County	Inyo County	Bill Lamb
	County	San Bernardino County	Matt Slowik
	Conservation Biology		vacant
	Conservation Organization	Defenders of Wildlife	Jeff Aardahl
	Resource Use	RAIC (Ranching)	Ron Kemper
	Recreation		vacant
West Mojave	Land Management	U.S. Army, Fort Irwin	Clarence Everly
	Land Management	MCAGCC	vacant
	Land Management	U.S. Navy, China Lake, NAWS	vacant
	Land Management	U.S. Marine Corps Logistics, Barstow	Joseph Cook
	Land Management	BLM, Barstow Field Office	Chris Otahal
	Land Management	U.S. Air Force, Edwards AFB	Danny C. Reinke
	Wildlife Management	California State Parks	vacant
	Wildlife Management	California Department of Fish and Game	Tonya Moore
	Tribe	Center for California Native Nations	vacant
	County	Inyo County	vacant
	County	Los Angeles County	Shirley Imsand
		Los Angeles County	Joe Decruyenaere
	County	Kern County	Lorelei Oviatt
	County	San Bernardino County	Gerry Hillier
	Conservation Biology	USGS WERC	Kristin Berry
	Conservation Organization	The Nature Conservancy	Laura Crane
	Resource Use	Sempre Utilities	Chris Sowell
	Recreation	California Assoc. of 4-Wheel Drive Clubs	John Stewart