

Briefing Statement

Date: February 28, 2003

Title: Feral Dog Management regards to Desert Tortoise Recovery

Issues: Tortoises with extensive damage by dogs have been seen in various areas in the desert.

Background/Status:

1. **History:** Impacts to tortoises from feral dogs has been documented as far back as the early 1970's. Dogs singly or in packs have been known to damage and destroy tortoise burrows, as well as damage tortoise's shells, bones, and limbs which in some cases have probably led to the death of tortoises. In some areas tortoises with showing damage from dogs is high, about 80% of the tortoises seen at the Lucerne Valley study plot this past year had been attacked by dogs.

2. **Opposition to Controlling Feral Dogs:** Though feral dog management is an action the DMG, MOG and most stakeholders support, it is assumed that there will be opposition by the human society and groups such as PETA once effort to remove these animals in undertaken.

3. **Current Status of Action:** We are awaiting information from the University of Redlands that has been compiled regarding dog attacks. Also, awaiting information Gerry Hillier will provide on county contacts.

Proposed Next Steps:

1. Develop a presentation on the dangers and impacts of feral dogs; this would include attacks on humans and livestock as well as tortoises.

2. Develop a sound strategy for removal of feral dogs.

3. Once the presentation and strategy are developed, seek out groups that might oppose the action for their input on the proposal it try and head off any negative publicity for the active.