

BRIEFING STATEMENT

Title: Riparian Restoration Update

Issue: Update of DMG Tamarisk Control Strategy and Potential Funding Opportunities.

Date: July 15, 2004

Background

Woody, exotic weeds are impacting riparian ecosystems throughout the California deserts. These weeds, primarily tamarisk, consume large quantities of water, alter natural fire and flood regimes, decrease biodiversity, and provide poorer quality wildlife habitat. The DMG restoration coordinator was assigned the task of developing a long-term strategy for riparian weed control and restoration at the April 21, 2004 DMG meeting.

In March, John Hamill and Russell Scofield visited the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in San Francisco and presented the concept of a watershed based, multi-agency, California desert tamarisk control grant. NFWF expressed an interest and asked that we further develop the proposal. Currently, a proposal is being developed that prioritizes and annualizes projects.

In April, Scofield attended the *Team Tamarisk- Cooperating for Results* Conference in Albuquerque. There is currently broad support for tamarisk control through the southwest (including California) and additional sources of federal funding might become available in the near future.

In June, Scofield and Hamill met with potential funders in Sacramento who reiterated the need for landscaped based, multijurisdictional proposals that include NGOs.

Currently several pieces of legislation are before Congress that could greatly increase Federal funding for weed control projects: S144, S1236, HR2707, S2598, and others. These bills, if passed, could fund DMG agency tamarisk control projects either directly or through weed management areas/private partners. The strategy will help position DMG agencies to receive any funding that might come from this legislation.

Strategy Update

Currently, the DMG's *California Desert Riparian Restoration Strategy (CDRRS)* is being reviewed in its second draft. Most major sections are more or less complete but still need work. Several sections still need to be written. These unwritten sections include an executive summary and an implementation strategy. The full second draft is posted to the DMG webpage along with the materials from the San Diego meeting. After internal team review, the second draft will be sent to WCB (Scott Clemons), NFWF (Greg Watson), and Riparian Joint Ventures (Ann Chrisney) for comment and review.

When complete, the CDRRS will:

- Establish a need for long-term coordinated, multijurisdictional weed control
- Define the objectives for weed control as a return of ecosystems to a natural state therefore increasing their natural biodiversity and restoration of habitat for sensitive (T&E) species.
- Define landscapes and watershed where weed control work is needed (table 1).
- Establish goals, priorities, and implementation strategies for the landscapes/watersheds in table 1 so that objectives can be met.
- Be useful in the development of grants for individual projects

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