



April 16, 2002

Memorandum

To: Desert Managers Group
DMG Interagency Working Group Team Leaders
DMG Coordinators
DMG Interested Parties

From: DOI Executive Coordinator, Desert Managers Group
DOD Coordinator, Desert Managers Group

Subject: April 10-11, 2002, Desert Managers Group Meeting Summary

Attached is the draft meeting summary and action items for the Desert Managers Group meeting conducted April 10-11, 2002, in Borrego Springs, CA. Please review the action items and follow through on any assignments for which you are responsible. *Action items have been highlighted for easy review.* All attachments are accessible on the DMG website or by clicking on the hyperlink in the meeting summary. Please contact either John Hamill (760-255-8888) or Clarence Everly (760-255-8896) if you have questions.

Linked documents:

1. Meeting Summary and Action Items
2. [US Forest Service Request for Membership in the DMG](#)
3. [Data Management Work Group Recommendations](#)
4. [Restoration Work Group Recommendations](#)
5. [Proposal: Collaborative Management Training for the DMG](#)
6. [Mojave Desert Conceptual Model](#)
7. [Desert Tortoise Conceptual Model](#)
8. [USGS Proposal to Establish Weather Monitoring Stations](#)
9. [Final DMG 5-Year Plan](#)
10. [MOU to establish a Mojave Desert Weed Management Area](#)
11. [Results of FY 2001 desert tortoise monitoring](#)
12. [Proposed interagency restoration effort for the San Felipe Creek-San Sabastian Marsh Watershed](#)
13. [Ongoing research projects briefing](#)
14. [Results of Manager survey: related to research studies and needs](#)
15. [DMG Meeting Attendance Roster](#)

Meeting Summary and Action Items
Desert Managers Group Meeting
April 10-11, 2002
Borrego Springs, CA

A. **Colorado Desert State Parks Activities Related to the DMG.** Dave VanCleve provided an overview of the natural and cultural resources, activities, and issues at Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

B. **US Forest Service membership in the DMG.** Mike Dietrich reviewed the basis of the San Bernardino National Forest's request to become an official member of the DMG (linked). The Managers welcomed Forest Service (FS) participation in the DMG and formally supported the FS request. The San Bernardino NF will represent all the National Forests affected by the DMG. *Mike agreed to follow up with the DOI and DOD Coordinators to work out several details including the FS representative to the Executive Coordination Committee, FS representation on the DMG Work Groups, and amending the MOU to include the Department of Agriculture/FS. John Hamill also agreed to update the MOU that waives or reduces overhead charges related to the transfer of funds among DMG agencies (including the FS).*

Deleted: '

C. **Work Group deactivation**

1. **DIRT Work Group and Webteam.** Ernie Quintana, Joe Zarki, and Doran Sanchez recommended that the DIRT Work Group be retained as an active DMG Work Group. Joe and Doran would serve as the chair/vice chair for the group. The DMG agreed with their recommendations. *DIRT was requested to develop a work plan by the next DMG meeting that identifies the group's goals and activities.* Based on the Work Plan the managers will determine the level of staff support that each agency will provide to the group.

Ernie reported that the *Californiadesert.gov* website will be maintained and supported by Joshua Tree National Park and the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program. Within the next 6 months, links will be established with agency websites to provide access to more information on recreational opportunities in the desert. MDEP and JTNP will redesign the site over the next 18 months to provide users with direct access to information on recreational opportunities in the desert.

2. **Wilderness Work Group.** Hector Villalobos recommended that the Wilderness Team be placed in an inactive status pending a review of current wilderness issues and a review and update of the Wilderness Annexes. *The Managers agreed to identify to Hector any wilderness issues and concerns with the Annexes by May 1.* Dick Andersen and Chris Roholtz will chair the group until annex reviews are complete. The Managers agreed to provide additional staff support for this review effort as identified by the chairs.
3. **Law Enforcement Work Group.** Bruce Shaffer and Sean McGuinness reported on the accomplishments of the Law Enforcement Work Group. The Managers decided to keep

the LE Group active, but that the group would only meet as needed. *The LE Group was requested to evaluate the benefits of possibly combining the LE Work Group and the FICC Work Group and provide recommendations to the DMG.* The LE work group will be meeting with the PACRAT Work Group on May 1 to discuss law enforcement issues related to cultural resource protection.

4. **Data Management Work Group.** Clarence Everly provided a list of recommendations related to the Data Management Team (linked). In summary, the Work Group recommended that it be placed in an inactive status but that the members of the Team be used as a “knowledge pool” to support regional data management initiatives. The managers supported all the recommendations.
 5. **Restoration Work Group.** Hector Villalobos and Russ Scofield provided a list of recommendations related to the Restoration Work Group (linked). In summary, they recommended that the Group should remain active but only meet annually. Ad hoc work groups should be established to address specific interagency watershed level restoration efforts (e.g, Amargosa River, San Felipe Wash). The managers supported all the recommendations.
- D. **Stakeholder/tribal/local government attendance of DMG meetings (Hamill).** The Managers agreed that stakeholders, local governments, tribal representatives, and other Federal and State Agencies may attend DMG meetings by invitation. The manager who is hosting the DMG meeting will coordinate with the DMG Coordinators to develop an invitation list for each meeting. Meeting notices will also be posted on the DMG website. Outside parties who want to attend a DMG meeting should contact the DOI/DOD Coordinator.
- E. **Realignment/Responsibilities of DOI Coordinator.** Mike Pool and John Reynolds indicated that there was a proposal in Washington to formally transfer supervision of the DOI Coordinator from the DOI Assistant Secretaries to the Regional/State Managers of BLM, NPS, FWS and GS. If approved, the DOI coordinator will represent the regional executives at DMG meeting. The Regional Executives would assume primary responsibility for coordination with the Washington Office.
- F. **DMG Interagency Collaboration Training Class.** John Hamill presented a proposal for “Collaborative Management Training for the DMG” (linked). The proposal was approved by the DMG and the *Managers committed to participate in the course.* The course will be held on June 12-13, 2003. The Ventura FWS office offered to host the meeting. *John Hamill will explore opportunities for outside funding of the course.* If no outside funding is secured, a registration fee will be assessed to pay for the cost for the instructors.
- G. **Role of Managers in Chairing DMG Meetings.** John Reynolds and Mike Pool appealed to DMG Managers to take turns chairing the DMG meetings (as opposed to the current arrangement where the DOI/DOD Coordinators facilitate the meetings). *The Managers requested the Coordinators clarify, in writing, the responsibilities of the Chair/Vice Chair.* The Managers indicated they would take action on the proposal at its next meeting. If the

proposal is approved by the DMG, the Managers will elect a Chair and Vice Chair at its next meeting.

H. **Funding opportunities for Cal desert.** David Brunner provided an overview of the mission of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. David reported that he had contacted Congressman Lewis and the Chrysler Corp. about their interest in establishing a California Desert Fund within NFWF to support the goals of the DMG. The initial response to the proposal was positive by both. The DMG approved, in principal, NFWF's efforts to secure corporate and Congressional funding for a CDF with the caveat that the details of the proposal would be subject to further review and approval by the DMG. *The DMG endorsed further NFWF meetings with Chrysler Corp to investigate DMG funding opportunities.*

I. **Coordinating Natural Resource Monitoring Efforts in the Cal Desert.** Jim Kenna provided an overview of the Natural Resource Monitoring Workshop that was held in Palm Springs on January 30-31, 2002 in Palm Springs. A complete summary of the Workshop is available at: <http://dmg.gov/minutes/monitoring-workshop.html>). Debra Hughson presented an overview of the NPS process for developing a conceptual model for monitoring in the Cal deserts (linked) and invited the DMG to participate in a workshop next January to develop the model. Phil Medica presented the conceptual model for the desert tortoise (linked) identifying the primary factors affecting tortoise population densities. John Hamill presented a proposal developed by USGS (linked) to assist in identifying the best locations for additional weather monitoring stations in desert tortoise critical habitat. Jim presented the following General Principles related to coordinated natural resource monitoring in the Cal deserts:

- Monitoring is a tool for accumulating useful information for making decisions and evaluating the effectiveness of management actions.
- Cooperative monitoring efforts will start at a small scale (limited number of achievable goals or limited geography).
- A framework is needed to tie the multiple agency efforts together across desert ecosystems.
- Standardization in protocols is needed and should be tied to research results where available.
- Land managers will cooperate where doing so will promote greater efficiency and effectiveness.

These General Principles were adopted by the DMG. Based on these principles, *the DMG agreed to:*

- *Continue to cooperate to fund and implement desert tortoise line distance sampling*
- *Accept the NPS invitation to participate in the Jan 2003 workshop to develop a conceptual framework for monitoring in the Cal deserts and to develop standardized data collection protocols when feasible*
- *Establish a group to describe existing weather data in the California deserts. **Richard Wood** will lead the effort and prepare a report before the next DMG meeting. Other members of the group include: **Mike Dietrich (FS), Kathleen Franklin (State Parks), and Ernie Quintana**, who agreed to describe the information available through their agency.*

- J. **Review/Approve the DMG 5-Year Plan.** The Managers reviewed and approved the draft 5-Year plan with minor revisions (linked). *The DOD and DOI Coordinators will finalize, print, and distribute the plan.*
- K. **Formation of a Mojave Desert Weed Management Area.** Pete Lounsbury described the purpose of establishing a Weed Management Area for the Mojave Desert and presented a draft MOU (linked) for consideration by the DMG. *The Managers agreed to provide comments on the MOU to the DOI/DOD Coordinator by May 10.* The comments will be discussed at the next WMA meeting on May 14, 10:00 am, at the Barstow BLM office. *Managers should send their representative to the WMA meeting.* The final MOU will be presented for signature at the next DMG meeting.
- L. **Project and Work Group Update**
1. **Desert Tortoise Monitoring and Recovery.** Phil Medica, FWS summarized the results of tortoise monitoring in 2001 (linked) and reported on the status of 2002 efforts. The effort was going well except that funding shortfalls in BLM will mean that no monitoring will be completed in the Chemeheuvi DWMA. James Peterson on behalf of Senator Feinstein, requested information on the status of FY 03 funding for LDS. *John Hamill said he would provide the requested information.* Becky Jones indicated that Cal Fish and Game will host a disease workshop in the fall of 2001. Phil Medica indicated that FWS would like to co-sponsor the workshop with Cal Fish and Game. Becky also indicated that Fish and Game would like to develop a desert tortoise technical work group under the auspices of the DMG. The DMG supported her effort.
 2. **Integrated data management.** Rob Fisher, USGS provided an overview of the use of hand help computer technology to automate and integrate field data collection. The new technology is being used in the desert tortoise LDS monitoring and the desert water studies.
 3. **Illegal Dump Project Clean-up and Prevention.** John Key updated the DMG on the activities of the HAZMAT work Group and upcoming HAZMAT training opportunities Russ Scoffield gave a status report on recently completed dump clean-ups at Nipton and along Route 66.
 4. **Habitat Restoration.** Jim Dice reported on a proposed interagency habitat acquisition and restoration effort for the San Felipe Creek-San Sabastian Marsh Watershed (linked). The watershed is owned and managed predominately by State Parks, BLM, Cal Fish and Game, and private landowners. The managers approved the recommendations to establish an ad hoc group under the DMG to address this project, and to develop a work plan and MOU for the project.
 5. **Update on the inventory of research projects.** Debra Hughson provided an update (linked) on her assignment to identify ongoing research needs in the desert and identify priority research needs. During her presentation she conducted a survey of the managers on this issue. Results of the survey are attached.

6. **Burro Management and Monitoring.** Hector Viallabos reported that burro capture and adoption were in progress, but that funding shortfall's in BLM may impact the ability to meet the removal goals established by the DMG.
7. **PACRAT.** Greg Thomsen requested that a DOD manager volunteer to help him serve as the Management representative of the PACRAT. He also requested that DOD consider identifying a chair or vice Chair for the PACRAT to replace Russ Kaldenburg. *Clarence Everly stated he would follow up on this request and report back to Greg.* Bob Bryson reported that the PACRAT will meet on May 1 with the LE Work Group. The focus of the meeting would be on improving communications between cultural resource staff and NPS/BLM rangers and evaluating the possible expansion of a site stewardship program. BLM will be sponsoring an ARPA class in Ridgecrest sometime in July and an Advanced ARPA class in Bishop in November. Interested parties should contact Russ Kaldenburg for more information or to register for the class
8. **Overflight brochure.** Clarence Everly indicated the Overflight Brochure was ready to go to the printer. *Steven Evanko, USMC WREC Office, committed to providing \$5K to assist in printing the brochure.* Edwards Air Force Base will make final corrections to the brochure and prepare it for printing. The brochure will be available by the next DMG meeting.
9. **Ad hoc Water Group.** Terry Fisk reported that the Water Group had met on several occasions to redesign the water database and develop new data forms for use on hand held computers. He said the group was making excellent progress.

M. Manager and Coordinator Reports

1. Steven Evanko suggested that the next meeting include a detailed briefing on the new wilderness legislation being considered by Senator Boxer to establish wilderness areas throughout California with many in the California deserts. *The Managers supported this idea and asked the Coordinators to invite outside speakers that would provide different perspectives on the proposed Wilderness legislation at the next DMG meeting.*
2. Diana Noda and Carl Benz summarized the major biological opinions that the FWS was working on. They requested that managers limit their requests for expedited BO's whenever possible.
3. John Hamill reported that DMG Plaques were give to Dave Anderson (NPS/Hazmat vice chair) and the staff of the California Integrated Waste Management Board for their outstanding contributions to the DMG.
4. Clarence Everly reported that the call for DOD Legacy Grant Proposals was open until April 12, 2002. *The Managers recommended that Clarence submit a desert tortoise disease research proposal.*
5. Kathleen Franklin that State Parks was short funding to maintain the Lancaster Vistor Center. She was uncertain whether State Parks will continue to be able to support the facility without additional funding.

1. Next DMG meetings

1. June 12-13, 2002, Ventura, CA (Collaborative Management Training for the DMG; limited business will be conducted at this meeting)

2. September 11-12, 2002 , Marine Corp Base, 29 Palms, CA Host: Major Bruce Soderberg (regular business meeting)