

DESERT LANDS RESTORATION TASK FORCE  
CALIFORNIA DESERT RESTORATION INITIATIVE  
SUBGROUP MEETING  
MAY 4 & 5, 1999

In Attendance:	John Hamill	DOI Lead, Desert Managers Group
	Clarence Everly	DOD Lead, Desert Managers Group, MDEP
	Bruce Miller	Director, NREA, MCAGCC
	Jane Rodgers	Co-Chair DLRTF, JTNP
	Fred Edwards	UCR
	Russell Scofield	HazMat Working Group, BLM
	John Key	HazMat Working Group, BLM
	Elena Misquez	BLM, Palm Springs
	Tom Zink	SDSU (SERG)
	Chris Stubbs	Resources Mgr, Mojave NP
	Roy Ernstzen	Section Ranger, CPNP South Africa
	Jennifer Haley	NPS – Lake Mead
	Mark DePoy	Resources Mgr, Barstow BLM
	Alice Newton	NPS – Lake Mead
	Michelle Rosenberger	ITAM – Ft Irwin
	Patti Novak-Echenique	USDA-NRCS
	John Crossman	CA St Parks, Mojave Desert
	Bruce West	BLM-Barstow
	Val Prehoda	Range Mgt Spec, NREA, MCAGCC

**MINUTES**

**Tuesday, May 4**  
**1:00 PM**

Meeting started with welcome by Jane Rodgers and round table introductions. An attendance roster was passed around and photocopied for attendees.

Patti Novak-Echenique presented a brief synopsis of the DLRTF Soil Survey Workshop held on 6 and 7 April 99 in Barstow and Ft Irwin, which was co-sponsored by NRCS. 28 personnel attended, many from the DLRTF. The information gained from the workshop was well-received.

No Project Field Trip Opportunities were presented to the group, and a “heads-up” on a 2 year intern Nursery Manager position was announced by Alice Newton.

The DLRTF web site update was delivered by Tom Zink. The current funding will dry up in September, and \$5000 is required through next May to keep the web site up. This money pays for the part time Web site manager. Tom stated that the DLRTF needs to evaluate the requirement to keep this site going, because there has not been the amount of input that was originally envisioned, and \$5000 is a lot to pay someone to do nothing, if there is no input to manage. Alice commented that she had difficulty accessing information from abstracts posted on the web, and Tom stated that this was due to copyright issues. Val brought up question of sketchy information on SERG current projects web site re MCAGCC, and Tom said he would input updated material as provided. The group agreed that the DLRTF web site was important and that the members would input more information, and budget for its long term management.

Roy Ernstzen, Conservation Manager for the Silver Mine Cape Peninsula National Park in South Africa, presented an overview of conservation issues there, focusing on a vigorous invasive species and natural revegetation program which had recently been funded through the government. Ten woody species, mostly from Australia, were causing massive changes in the topography. Working with local people, park personnel are making progress in returning the park to its natural condition, while significantly enhancing the economic stability of local residents.

A brief discussion of the proposed NRCS Mojave Desert-Mountain Resource Conservation and Development area ensued, but was tabled pending transmission of the minutes from the meeting in Apple Valley which Val Prehoda attended on 26 March 99. There was general consensus from the group that DLRTF should collaborate in some way, primarily in an advisory capacity, but not as a full member.

After a short break, the group re-convened to review the March 18 minutes and discuss the FY99 work plan, which was on track.

Jennifer shared information on the SER meeting in September in San Francisco; she and Mark volunteered to be the DLRTF representatives to DIRT.

At the request of one of the attendees, Jane and John gave a short discussion on how the DMG FY 2001 initiative came about.

Jane then walked the group through the FY00 Upland and Riparian Restoration work plans. Russ Scofield informed the group that the NPS Regional Director told him in writing that NPS would not support the Upland and Riparian Restoration Project Managers reporting to a Department (DOI) supervisor; that the supervisor would have to come from the Agency (BLM or NPS). Much discussion ensued on the issue, which carried on the next day (see Day 2 minutes).

John ventured that the group's focus should be on the work plan itself. The group agreed that a list of projects should be reviewed by the DLRTF sub-group, with recommendations to the group, and final recommendation to the DMG for decision.

Russ passed out a prototype data base developed in his office (Information Packet for Dump Cleanups Under the SWAT Program). Jane discussed the SERG "Consideration for Restoration Project Prioritization", which is similar. Someone in the group brought up the fact that "acreage" needed to be added to the SERG list, to which everyone agreed. Tom said that his people could set up the DLRTF database in two months unless there were complications with licensing of the necessary software.

Changes to the Upland Restoration short and long term goals were agreed upon, with the revised version submitted to the group on the second day of the meeting.

Chris volunteered to create a GANTT chart for the work plan.

Russ volunteered to develop the PDs for the Upland, Riparian, and Dump Project Managers.

Alice volunteered to develop the native plant specifications for private nurseries.

Tom brought up the question of who will be responsible for monitoring the projects because of the huge research potential. The group agreed that the Science and Data Mgt Team should be approached on this. They are meeting 25 May in Riverside.

Lengthy discussion on the budget item for additional nurseries. JTNP is currently "basically max'd out" on plant space capacity, and Lake Mead can not grow plants for CA projects because of quarantine restrictions. They will continue to provide research data. JTNP is getting another greenhouse. Group recommendation was to spend money hiring another nursery employee for JTNP, and to put the rest of the money into projects, encouraging private nurseries to grow requisite plants. The group also agreed that 9 seed storage facilities should be funded, with the rest of the money going into seed collection efforts and the projects line item.

The meeting was concluded at 5:00 PM, with dinner arrangements at the 29 Palms Inn at 6:30 PM.

### **Wednesday, May 5**

#### **8:00 AM**

Due to a scheduling conflict, Fred Edwards from the Center for Conservation Biology was not present to give his scheduled presentation on Nitrogen Deposition.

The goals and objectives from the previous day were reviewed and concurred with. Mark volunteered to put together the "Tool Bag" document" with input from other DLRTF members for an October 1, 1999 deadline.

The California Desert FY01 Budget Initiative for Habitat Restoration was reviewed. Jane did not have time to input recommended changes from group members before the meeting, but would do so before the June meeting. John passed out to everyone his comments, along with a copy of the DOI budget guidance to the DMG. The group reviewed the budget section and agreed that a qualifier needs to be added concerning the line item "Disturbed Lands Database". Further discussion was tabled until the June meeting when Jennifer would facilitate a presentation from a USGS

representative on the subject. The Exotic Vegetation Management Plan required much more detail. Bruce volunteered to be the Acting Project Manager with assistance from Mark and Val.

Russ began his HAZMAT Working Group presentation by offering three employment options on the overhead projector. Option One was two Project Managers (Upland/Riparian Restoration, and Dump), GS11/12, and a GS5/7/9 Natural Resources Specialist, supervised by DMG. Option Two was three Project Managers (Upland, Riparian and Dump GS11/12), supervised by DMG, with a GS5/7/9 Natural Resources Specialist assigned to the Dump PM. Option Three was the three project managers, supervised by DMG.

The actual dump cleanups would be project-dependent and there would be a cost analysis done on each one. CCC crews and interns were discussed as proven cost-effective and successful. Russ discussed partnering at some length to get public and private buy-in to long term project success, and non-profit partnering to take advantage of grants that the federal gov't could not access.

Jennifer asked if the DLRTF would get support from the DMG on NEPA issues and other resources. Consensus was that NEPA should be done by the Agencies for individual projects.

Much discussion on need for having Project Managers hired by October 1<sup>st</sup> which means starting the hiring process no later than August 1<sup>st</sup>. The group consensus was that two project managers should be hired at the GS 11/12 level, one for Restoration and one for Dumps, and that the supervisor should be John Hamill from the DMG. His unbiased position, coupled with his in-depth knowledge of DMG and sub-group work plans and budgets, makes him the best candidate for the position. The DLRTF would review the applicants' resumes, and make recommendations to John for the hiring process. The possibility of hiring another program manager, or assistants, would remain open, pending the workload analysis, capabilities, and recommendations of the two program managers.

Most of the morning was spent brainstorming the Program Manager requirements, and expectations for the Supervisor. The consensus was that the two program managers would have the same basic requirements, as follows: Project Planning Skills with an eco-system perspective and ability to coordinate and implement projects, including contract management (COR qualification preferred).

- Ability to Develop Partnerships to include interagency and all others, and to write agreements.

- Ability to facilitate, review and find cooperating agencies for grants.

- Budget development and oversight.

- Provide staff support to DLRTF and the project unit.

- Be able to provide oral and written reports to the DLRTF, DMG, public and scientific community.

- Facilitate environmental compliance by getting commitment from project units.

- Facilitate educational/prevention programs.

- Facilitate monitoring program by maintaining data base.

- Demonstrated "people person" and team builder.

- Supervisory experience.

- Appropriate education and experience in restoration field.

- PFT, GS 11/12 level, hired from "all sources" with preference to gov't experience.

- Must be able to travel over 50% of time.

For the supervisor, the following expectations were agreed upon:

- Ensure regional integrity through interagency cooperation, and goal of regional ecosystem restoration.

- Insulate Program Managers from interagency politics through resolution of interagency disagreements and provide a consistent agenda.

- Primary liaison between program managers and DMG.

- Ensure goals of the work plans are met.

- Ensure adequate resources are available to the program managers to complete the work plans, including logistical support and training needs.

- Participate in appropriate outreach activities.

- Provide guidance to the program managers.

- Assist in finding funding resources.

The DLRTF group decided that an action brief to be completed by Val would highlight the following recommendations requiring DMG action:

- Commitment to hire the two program managers by October 1, 1999.
- Approve the general direction of the work plans.
- Commit to location flexibility of program managers.
- Commit to John Hamill as the program managers' supervisor.

Russ then passed out the FY 00/01 Budget Initiative and went over the highlights. Alice commented that restoration can not be "completed by planting native vegetation". Planting can only mitigate restoration. Russ agreed to change the wording in his final drafts.

The next meeting date was set for July 13, 1:00-5:00 PM and June 14, 8:00 AM- 12:00 PM in Barstow at the BLM meeting room. Members agreed to bring slides of restoration projects for a "show and tell" session.

The meeting was concluded at 12:00 PM.