

Desert Managers Group - Hazardous Materials Working Group
(DMG-HMWG) Meeting Minutes
Blackrock Interagency Fire Center
Joshua Tree National Park
Yucca Valley, California
May 23, 2001 10:00 A.M.

After introductions, the meeting was opened by Co-Chair John Key at 10:00 A.M.

Twenty people were in attendance: BLM (4- John Key, Russell Scofield, Joel Schultz, and Bill Wiley), NPS (4-Jeff Ohlfs, Gerry Wolfe, Lorna Lange-Daggs, and Tom Patterson), BIA (2-Don Knapp and Gil Stuart), DOI-DMG (1-John Hamill), DOD-DMG (1-Clarence Everly), EPA (1-Jim Fletcher), Cal EPA-CIWMB (1-Glenn Young), Cal EPA-Lahontan RWQCB (1-Hisam Baqai), LA County Health-Solid Waste LEA (3-Chris Mastro, Pete Oda, and Joe Voss), San Bernardino County Health-Solid Waste LEA (1-Mark Stevens), and Riverside County Health-Solid Waste LEA (1-Steve Moise).

Guest Presentations: Tom Patterson (NPS-JOTR) and Russell Scofield (BLM-Barstow FO) were guest speakers and presented two different PowerPoint presentations on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and its potential uses in the environmental arena. They circulated several models of GPS receivers that are currently being used in the field. Tom talked about some of the ways that he is using GIS for fire mapping and modeling. Tom distributed copies of his compact disk with his presentation on it. Russell then talked about applications of this technology for dump inventory and referenced his recent poster that he had presented at the Bureau of Land Management's National GIS Conference in Phoenix in April 23-24, 2001.

Minutes Review of Previous Meetings: John Key reviewed the meeting's minutes from the last meeting held in February on two days due to inclement weather. There were no corrections, additions or deletions needed and the minutes were approved. as read.

Status of DMG Funding: John Key next briefed the group about the DMG's illegal dump cleanup projects that are being conducted on a cost-share basis with funding provided by the California Integrated Waste Management Board (CIWMB) under the AB 2136 program. The Nipton and the Route 66 illegal disposal sites are all ready to go but awaiting completion of formal biological consultation from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Next fiscal year (2002), we are planning to cleanup the Vidal Illegal Dump using AB2136 funds. It was recently discovered that the majority of the Vidal Junction Illegal Dump was not on public land - so this project has been deferred until the current land owners (an estate) has been contacted.

Russell Scofield talked about CIWMB's Farm and Ranch cleanup grant program and the grant application that he had submitted under this program for a number of small illegal dump sites in the Landers-Yucca Valley area..

Initiative Reports:

Wire Burning Initiative: John Key talked about the status of our wire burning initiative - the DMG has approved our action plan at their last meeting - so we can start working on implementing it. He also reported about our poster on wire burning that was presented at the 2001 Department of the Interior's Conference on the Environment in Albuquerque, New Mexico in March.

Illegal Dumping Initiative: To strengthen our illegal dump project prevention program, Lorna Lange-Daggs, Education Specialist from the National Park Service's Joshua Tree National Park (JOTR) was invited to give a presentation. She gave an interesting presentation on desert environmental education and outreach that she is doing at the Joshua Tree National Park.

Lorna said that she recently applied a **"Do You Part, Desert Smart"** grant - this grant is a seven-point education program. Some of the points of this program include: Recycling Smart, Garbage Smart, Energy Smart, Water Smart, Earth Smart, Land Smart, and Air Smart. This program will include an activity book for kids. Lorna asked for our help for the recycling/garbage point - she need statistics on illegal dumping and case studies. She indicated that she will be working with Russell Scofield on this project.

Lorna also provided some general education tips. She said that any education program put be incorporated into the state standards. The program must be marketed to teachers. This can be done through workshops, conferences and personal relationships. Teachers should be involved in development of an education program. She said that California State University - San Bernardino has a program where they will use graduate students in their education masters program to develop activity guides for education. Dr. Darlene Stoner would be a good point of contact there. The cost for supporting this program is about \$10,000 and includes publishing the guide. Another possible outlet for information are at fairs such as the Date Festival in Indio, California. Some other advice that she gave was if you have a short, looping video or PowerPoint delivering your message but it should not be longer than about five minutes or people will loose attention.

John Hamill asked that we meet with the Desert Information Resources Team (DIRT) and to develop a coordinated outreach strategy/prevention plan with long-term and short-term goals that could be presented at the next DMG meeting in June. He also suggested that all future cleanup proposals be required to contain a prevention strategy as a component of the individual project plan. The next DIRT meeting is June 18 - both John Key and Russell Scofield indicated that they were planning on attending to discuss our outreach/prevention plan.

Conference Reports:

John Key reported briefly about some of our member's participation at the California Hazardous Materials Investigators Association Annual Conference in Shell Beach, California in early May. He also provided some information concerning some of the latest trends and statistics concerning clandestine drug labs in California.

Training Update: John Key next discussed cooperative training that is available. He said that he was planning another Dumps of the Desert Tour for the first week of November 2001 for agency policy makers and managers to orient them on our problems and opportunities. He also talked about the upcoming eight-hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER) refresher training coming up on June 19 that the hazardous materials working group was sponsoring at the BLM's California Desert District Office in Riverside. He also briefly mentioned additional available technical training at California Specialized Training Institute (CSTI) in San Luis Obispo, CA and at the Bureau of Land Management's National Training Center (BLM-NTC) in Phoenix, AZ.

New Business: Russell Scofield asked the group if it thought we could develop an illegal dumping strategic plan. There was no discussion from the group but John Hamill wondered the value of such a plan. Russell explained that it will be used to elevate the problem's importance and that the Department of the Interior's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (DOI-OEPC) intended to elevate our strategic plan to a Department-wide level. Russell will follow through with development of this plan.

Roundtable discussion followed:

Lahontan RWQCB (Hisam Baqai) - Concerned with permits for access in Mountain Pass/Mexican Springs area; they are also involved with cleanup and remediation operations with California Department of Fish and Game at Searles Lake.

EPA (Jim Fletcher)- Concerned with Mexican truck drivers and their loads of hazardous wastes entering the country and the startup of a General Assistance Program for the tribes.

CIWMB (Glen Young)- Talked about the CIA assistance program that provided grants and cost sharing for cleanup projects.

BLM - Needles (Bill Wiley) - Talked about Needles' development of a programmatic EA for cleanups and the problems they are facing with the formal consultation for Nipton and the Route 66 projects.

Los Angeles County (Chris Mastro)- They are putting together a Farm and Ranch grant and had a tire amnesty day and collected over 10,000 tires. They are also setting up a GIS project to document and track illegal dump locations.

San Bernardino County (Mark Stevens)- Suggested that we involve the military for cleanups. It was brought up that often military base commanders are hesitant to provide military personnel for tasks that don't relate to their primary mission - combat readiness.

BIA (Gil Stuart and Don Knapp)- Reported that they are working on underground storage tank (UST) in the Toro Peak area. The 258 Work Group meets in Fairfield, CA on June 5, 2001.

Riverside County (Steve Moise) - They are preparing a Farm and Ranch grant application for an illegal disposal site project near Winchester.

The meeting adjourned about 1:00 P.M. The **next meeting is scheduled for September 5, 2001** at 10:00 A.M. at the National Park Service's Mojave National Preserve Headquarters in Barstow, California.