

**Minutes from Science and Data Management Team  
meeting, March 7, 2000, BLM Barstow Field Office**

**Agenda**

0900 - Update on Desert Tortoise Coordinator Position (Williams or Hamill)

0915 – Update on tortoise Technical Advisory Committee meeting and status of the Management Oversight Group (Lovich/Hamill)

0930 – Update on MDESP (Gaydos)

1000 – Update on SERDP (Mouat)

1100 – Discussion of development of a Study Plan for Desert water initiative

1200 – Lunch

1300 – Combined meetings with Desert Lands Restoration Task Force

- discussion of MDESP
- discussion of Manager's spring field trip to research and restoration sites
- update on current projects

1600 - Adjourn

**Attendees**

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**Minutes**

John told the group that at the last meeting to discuss the location for DMG coordinators (Integrated Ecological Monitoring, Tortoise Monitoring, etc.) it was decided to put the positions in Barstow.

Jeff gave an overview of the last meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of the Manager's Oversight Group for the desert tortoise. The TAC decided to establish tortoise research priorities by recovery unit and assignments were made to generate lists of priorities ranked high, medium and low. Lists will be discussed at the upcoming TAC meeting on March 28<sup>th</sup>.

Len gave an overview of the Recoverability and Vulnerability of the Mojave Desert Ecosystem program of USGS (formerly Mojave Desert Ecosystem Science Program) with emphasis on the results and application of research to date. Soil vulnerabilities were modeled as were recovery rates of perennial plant communities. Although the program suggests that perennial plant cover recovery is rapid, Jeff noted that the cover is dominated by pioneering species, not the long-lived plant species present prior to disturbance.

Rob gave an overview of the SERDP project results. Their future scenarios for growth and development in the Mojave appear to have great relevance to developing bioregional plans and the Team endorsed having the SERDP principles make a presentation at the next DMG meeting. The West Mojave Plan might be a good test case for applying the results of the SERDP models.

The group began discussions of developing a study plan for the FY01 Desert Water Initiative. Dennis Peters gave an overview of the National Wetlands Inventory of the FWS and John Izbicki provided a summary of USGS Water Resources Division expertise in the desert. **ACTION ITEM - John and Dennis will work with Mel Essington to generate a one page summary of recommendations for developing the study plan including scope, objectives, tasks, end products, and schedule. About \$300,000 will be available to the DMG through the USGS budget if the initiative is funded.**

After lunch, we combined meetings with the Desert Lands Restoration Task Force (<http://mojavedata.gov/dlrt/index.html>). The two groups shared updates and database information with each other. The two groups discussed plans for a joint field trip/workshop. A joint sub-committee was formed, consisting of Ruth, Zina, Len, Bill, and Jane Belnap (not present, volunteered by Len). The agenda will be posted in two weeks to the SMDT and DLRTF web servers ([sdmt@mojavedata.gov](mailto:sdmt@mojavedata.gov) and [restoration-team@mojavedata.gov](mailto:restoration-team@mojavedata.gov)). Tentative dates are for two days in the week of 22 May, or 5 June (to coincide with DLRTF's next planned workshop/ field trip). Len volunteered to pay for one 44-pass. bus. If there is overwhelming interest, the cost of another bus will be prorated amongst the members. Field trip locations will include the ValJean Recoverability and Vulnerability of the Mojave Desert Ecosystem program research site, and possibly Viceroy Mine, or a burned Joshua tree habitat (to be interpreted by USGS biologist Matt Brooks) along I-15 at Mountain Pass. John

recommended that the DMG managers for the two groups be invited to attend, as well as any congressional staffers who may be interested, and possibly the media. However, the main purpose of the trip is to allow further communication and transfer of information among the Science Team and the Desert Lands Restoration Task Force.