

DMG 5 Year Plan FY 05 Accomplishments

Goal 1. Restore selected upland and riparian habitats identified for restoration.

- A. DMG agencies actively participated in the Mojave Weed Management Area (MWMA). Major activities focused on developing a plan for inventorying invasive species (tamarisk) and implementing control measures in the Mojave River. The DMG assisted the MWMA in obtaining a grant of \$21,000 for control of tamarisk on BLM land in Afton Canyon.
- B. The DMG Restoration Coordinator coordinated development of a Low Desert Weed Management Area (LDWMA) covering the desert portions of Riverside and San Diego Counties. An implementing Memorandum of Understanding was developed and is currently being signed by members.
- C. The DMG hosted a workshop for parties interested in conservation and restoration efforts for the San Felipe Creek - San Sebastian Marsh Watershed and developed a work plan for cooperative conservation within the watershed.
- D. The DMG obtained approximately \$550,000 in grant funding for priorities identified in the draft *California Desert Riparian Challenge: A Strategic Plan for Restoration of Riparian Habitats in the California Deserts*. The DMG restoration coordinator is assisting in the management of these grants.

Goal 2. Cleanup and restore illegal dumps that pose a public health or environmental threat and reduce the incidence of illegal dumping in the future.

- A. The Hazmat Work Group provided information on solid waste disposal to the Raven EA Work Group for inclusion in the Raven EA.
- B. DMG partners sponsored community/volunteer illegal dump cleanups resulting in the removal of 497 tons of trash from the California deserts.
- C. The DMG cooperated with state and local governments to increase the awareness of illegal dumping and its environmental consequences, create prevention solutions, and improve illegal dumping laws.

Goal 3. Recover the desert tortoise in the California recovery units.

- A. FWS established a Desert Tortoise Recovery Office (DTRO) consisting of a Desert Tortoise Recovery Coordinator and three local field coordinators.
- B. FWS empanelled a Desert Tortoise Science Advisory Committee (SAC) to serve in an advisory role to the DTRO and DMG.
- C. Primary database needs have been identified by Service field offices, and an outline of the various components envisioned has been produced. FWS plans to hire a Desert Tortoise Monitoring Coordinator to oversee data management.
- D. The DTRO has assumed lead in recovery permit review for the Service, in coordination with the regional office and field offices. Specific requirements relative to the DTRO data repository remain pending establishment of that repository.

- E. The DMG formed a Desert Tortoise Recovery Implementation Planning Work Group to work directly with the DTRO and the SAC to develop and implement Recovery Action Plans for each desert tortoise recovery unit in California.
- F. The DMG hired a Tortoise Outreach Coordinator to implement a multifaceted education and outreach campaign aimed at increasing public support of the involvement in desert tortoise recovery in California.
- G. The DMG Desert Tortoise Information and Education Outreach Work Group collaboratively developed a desert tortoise information pamphlet that was printed and distributed by DMG partners.
- H. The DMG Free Roaming Dog Work Group developed preliminary draft report on feral and uncontrolled dogs in the desert. This preliminary information, along with interim findings and recommendations was presented to the DMG at its' November 2005 meeting

Goal 4. Reduce and maintain burro populations to appropriate management levels and in appropriate locations.

A. 276 burros were removed from BLM, NPS, and DOD lands throughout the California deserts in FY 05. BLM removed 95 burros from the Centennial Mountains along the boundary between BLM and the North Range of NAWS China Lake. 89 burros were removed from Mojave National Preserve and 86 burros were removed from Slate Range within NAWS China Lake.

B. BLM continues to monitor the habitat within the three remaining herd management areas on BLM lands (Chocolate – Mule Mountain, Chemehuevi, and Chicago Valley). BLM collected monitoring data indicates the continued recovery of dry washes and riparian areas located within these HMAs.

C. BLM installed a below ground water storage tank for West Well located within the southern portion of the Chemehuevi HMA. This 10,000-gallon water storage tank was critically needed to maintain burros within the general region and to delay burro migration to the Colorado River during the summer. This has greatly reduced previously observed impacts within the residential areas of Havasu Landing and the riparian areas along this reach of the Colorado River.

D. BLM continues to place a large emphasis on adoptions as the main avenue for placement of burros. In FY05, BLM adopted just over 1,000 animals in California. Of those, 286 animals were adopted in Ridgecrest and approximately 250 animals were adopted at satellite adoptions held throughout southern California.

Goal 5. Protect cultural resources and enhance public awareness of the sensitivity and value of paleontological and cultural resources in the California deserts.

A. OHP selected a contractor to develop a web-based MDHRGIS application. The contractor completed optical character recognition of scanned site records and related documents and began initial development of a user interface linking the data to GIS in a manner that allows multiple types of queries. Through on-going meetings and bi-weekly teleconferences with DMG members, specific details about the application were worked out and portions of the user interface examined and discussed in detail to insure the application meets the needs of DMG member agencies. Delivery of the system is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2006.

B. The DMG supported the inaugural Three Corners Conference and participated in its planning. The conference was attended by approximately 75 participants and included a series of presentations on a wide range of anthropological topics. A compendium of the papers presented will be made available to conference participants. The Three Corners Conference was considered a success by participants and organizers and will be held bi-annually. Greater participation by the PACRAT at future conferences will enhance both the content of the conference and its attendance.

C. A sub-committee of the PACRAT was formed to organize the first annual 2-day PACRAT Workshop scheduled for spring 2006.

Goal 6. DMG agencies will strive to understand and work collaboratively to resolve conflicts in each agency's mission.

A. Through regular DMG meetings and related activities, DMG agencies gained a greater appreciation of each agency's mission and programs.

B. The DMG sponsored an Introductory Wilderness Training for non-wilderness professionals at various DMG office locations throughout the California deserts.

Goal 7. Develop a coordinated interagency system for delivering useful, comprehensive and consistent information about desert resources and recreation opportunities.

- A. The Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program (MDEP) maintained the California deserts website, www.californiadesert.gov.
- B. DMG member agencies developed and installed initial updated interpretive posters at the Caltrans Desert Oasis, Kane, Valley Wells and John Wilkie roadside rest areas.
- C. California State Parks maintained and operated the interagency “gateway” visitor center at Lancaster, California.

Goal 8. Coordinate scientific studies and monitoring programs needed for effective resource management.

A. An outline for the book, **THE MOJAVE DESERT: Ecosystem Processes and Sustainability**, resulting from the Mojave Desert Science Symposium was developed. This book proposal has been accepted by the University of Arizona press and is also being considered by other publishers. Manuscripts for sections of the book are currently being peer-reviewed.

B. A preliminary ecosystem conceptual model of the Mojave and Great Basin Deserts was developed by D. M. Miller, T. C. Esque, D. R. Bedford, R. H. Webb, J. Fenelon, K. M. Schmidt, and J. R. Nimmo. This model is published in the Mojave Inventory and Monitoring Network Phase I Report/Draft Phase II Report, which has been reviewed and accepted by the National Park Service Inventory and Monitoring Program. The report can be found on the DMG website.

C. High priority vital signs for ecosystem monitoring have been selected for the Mojave Network of national parks. Data mining for species inventories and existing monitoring was done as part of the Vital Signs selection process.

D. The Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program (MDEP) developed a web accessible Research Inventory Database. The database template is online and available for use at <http://www.dmg.gov/science/>.

Goal 9. Monitor desert tortoise population status in relation to recovery goals for the California deserts' recovery units.

A. DMG agencies supported implementation of rangewide desert tortoise monitoring to establish a population baseline and evaluate whether tortoise populations are increasing, remaining stable, or declining. In FY 05, over 9,000 kms of transects

Goal 10. Inventory, monitor, and protect desert water resources.

A. DMG agencies utilized the Level I protocols provided by the Desert Research Institute for inventorying the hydrological and biological characteristics and quality of desert springs.

B. DOI agencies held two coordination meetings in accordance with the 2004 Amargosa Basin MOA.

1. A letter was sent to the Nevada State Engineer encouraging the requirement for meters on all existing water uses in the basin.
2. A draft GIS map of the DOI areas of concern and the critical water and water dependent resources was developed.
3. The framework for developing a coordinated interagency groundwater monitoring plan was discussed.
4. Funding was secured to support maintenance of the USGS Regional Groundwater model and application of the model to address DOI agency needs.
5. An agreement between DOI agencies and Nye County reference protesting water rights applications in the Amargosa Basin was drafted by the DOI Solicitor and circulated for review among DOI agencies. Nye County is currently reviewing the draft.

Goal 11. Integrate and share data and database management systems needed for effective resource management and planning.

A. The MDEP maintained its GIS database (www.mojavedata.gov) of natural and cultural resources in the California deserts.

Goal 12. Ensure the orderly and efficient operation of the DMG and its work groups.

A. The DMG updated and finalized its FY 05 Work Plan and accomplishment report in April 2005.

B. The DMG reviewed and updated its charter to reflect current priorities and policies. The DMG implementing memorandum of understanding was renewed and is currently in the signature process.

C. The DMG Natural Resources Restoration Coordinator coordinated implementation of dump clean-ups and habitat restoration efforts (see Goal 2 under accomplishments).

D. The FWS officially established the Desert Tortoise Recovery Office and coordinated tortoise monitoring activities on behalf of the DMG (see Goal 3 under accomplishments).

E. The Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program (DOD) maintained the DMG website (www.dmg.gov) to allow for the efficient dissemination of information about the DMG and its work group activities.

F. The DMG continued coordination with the Clark County HCP on development and implementation of a desert tortoise education and outreach program in California.

Goal 13. Garner support for the DMG, its mission, activities, and funding initiatives.

- A. Briefings on DMG activities and accomplishments were provided to a variety of government and non-government entities.
- B. The DMG worked with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and the Resource Law Group to secure funding for DMG projects and to establish a California Desert Fund.