

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Meeting: Coordinated Natural Resources Monitoring

Date/Location: October 25, 2005, NPS, Barstow, CA

Agenda: See attached

Purpose: To review various natural resource monitoring programs being conducted/planned by various agencies and identify where cooperation and collaboration makes sense.

Participants: See attached. Participants included three DMG managers: Bob Williams (FWS); Larry Morgan (BLM), and Mary Martin (NPS)

Results/Conclusions:

1. NPS Vital signs: NPS is pulling together a core group to develop a conceptual model to guide the program—the focus is on priority vital signs as defined in last spring’s vital signs workshop. High priority vital signs for the Mojave Network included ground water, invasive species, and air quality.
2. USGS has many efforts related to monitoring soil, air, water, wildlife, etc. The RVDE project is attempting to integrate these efforts
3. BLM has an extensive monitoring effort related to OHV use in the desert. The focus is on dunes, woodlands, and creosote habitats, Pierson milk vetch, flat-tailed horned lizard, and Joshua trees. The effort is based on unstable funding. BLM is relying on NPS to provide leadership.
4. BLM has 200-300 long term plots dating back to the 1940’s for monitoring range/vegetation conditions. The data are archived somewhere in the CDD office. There has been little new data collection over the past 10 years. Current emphasis is on “public land health,” however, there is currently little activity.
5. FWS intends to expand the desert tortoise line distance sampling effort to assess DT threats and habitat as well as monitor population trends. FWS also wants to provide greater emphasis on hypothesis based monitoring to assess the efficacy of monitoring actions.

Recommendations:

1. Reaffirm previous DMG conclusions/commitments/principles (from Jan 2002 Monitoring Workshop):

- The primary purpose of monitoring is to accumulate useful information for making decisions and evaluating the effectiveness of management actions.
- Cooperative monitoring efforts should start at a small scale (limited number of achievable goals or limited geography). The initial focus should be on:
 - continuing to support desert tortoise monitoring,
 - monitoring precipitation/climate patterns in the desert.

- A framework is needed to tie the multiple agency efforts together across desert ecosystem and jurisdictional boundaries.
 - 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.
2. **Implement the DMG Research Data Base:** This database, which summarizes what research is being conducted, where, etc., is fundamental to developing a cooperative research and monitoring effort. The major problem has been getting researchers to enter data and getting managers to provide appropriate oversight. Entry of data into the database should be a requirement for obtaining permits and funding.
 3. **Conceptual Model:** The NPS conceptual model should reflect multi agency priorities and needs (to the extent that is practical). Accordingly, NPS should consider the monitoring efforts/priorities of other agencies (e.g., desert tortoise density, habitats, threats) in the development the Vital Signs conceptual model.
 4. **Mine Existing Data:** Potentially much can be learned from data that is being stored in agency and researcher files. The focus should be on mining data that is relevant to high priority vital signs. NPS will have some funding to mine data related to priority vital signs
 5. **Funding and Management Commitment:** Except for NPS, monitoring appeared to be a low priority for most land management agencies and funding to implement a coordinated effort is tenuous/non-existent. Managers should evaluate their capabilities to pursue cooperative natural resource monitoring efforts in the Cal deserts in light of current priorities.



AGENDA

Coordinated Natural Resource Monitoring in the California Deserts
NPS Conference Room, Barstow, CA
Monday, October 25, 2004

Purpose: To review various natural resource monitoring programs being conducted/ planned by various agencies and identify where cooperation and collaboration makes sense. Findings and recommendations will be presented to the DMG in January 2005 .

Agenda:

- 10:00 am Introduction, Background and Purpose
- DMG principles and agreements
- 10:20 am Overview of Select Monitoring Programs and Needs
- NPS
 - Results of the NPS vital signs workshop (Heister) – 10 min
 - Ecosystem Conceptual Model (Hughson) – 10 min
 - Relationship to GS Research Initiative (Esque) - 5 min
 - BLM Monitoring (Weigand/Morgan) – 30 min
 - OHV monitoring programs
 - Range monitoring
 - Land Management Plan Recommendations
 - FWS DT Monitoring (Tracy/Williams) 30 minutes
 - Future plans/direction of DT Monitoring (Tracy)
 - GS Research Projects related to Monitoring (Esque) 10 minutes
- Noon Lunch break (lunch will be delivered)
- 1:00 pm Identifying and Implementing Common Monitoring Goals/Indicators
- Short term cooperative efforts
 - weather/climate monitoring
 - desert tortoise (population, habitat, threats)
 - other
 - Long term process for interagency cooperation
 - Recommendations to DMG
- 3:00 pm Adjourn

DMG Monitoring Meeting

25 Oct 04

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