



Draft
Meeting Summary
28 – 29 May, 2008
Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center
Twentynine Palms, CA.

Summary of Action Items

1. DTRO to keep the DMG informed on the status of the draft Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan federal register notice.
2. Subgroup of DMG Managers to work with the San Bernardino and Kern County Boards of Supervisors to develop a model ordinance addressing the use of raven proof trash receptacles.
3. Russell and Clarence to coordinate with the Mojave Weed Management Area, Low Desert Weed Management Area and the Kern Weed Management Area to provide presentations on current and future priority activities for their respective groups.
4. Subgroup of DMG Managers to meet to discuss solar energy development policy. Date to be announced.
5. Russell to provide Managers a timeframe and cost estimate for hosting the “Developing Biological Assessment” training course. At the next DMG meeting Managers will be prepared to articulate the number of students they will have attending the workshop and their ability to contribute financially.
6. Line officers with fire responsibilities to inform fire and resource staff of the MDI fire suppression guidelines for incorporation into local fire strategy as appropriate.

Thursday, 28 May, 2008

1. **Overview of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) natural and cultural resource programs.** Marie Cottrell, Chief of Natural and Cultural Resources, MCAGCC, provided Managers with an overview of MCAGCC’s programs and the resources they manage (see presentation titled [MCAGCC Natural and Cultural Resources](#)).
2. **Desert Tortoise Information and Education Work Group Update.** Anne Staley provided Managers an update of work group activities since the last DMG meeting. Topics discussed included (see presentation titled [DTIE Update](#)):
 - a. Participation in the California Desert Nature festival 11 – 13 March at the Living Desert in Palm Desert. Partners at the festival included the California Turtle and Tortoise Club, the Natural Science Collaborative and the Desert Tortoise Preservation Committee. Activities at the festival included having Mojave Max present, story telling, giving tortoise talks and passing out information.

- b. Conducting winner celebrations for the 5 classrooms with winning answers in the Mojave Max Emergence Contest.
 - c. Participation in Turtle Days activities at Joshua Tree on 3 May.
 - d. Participation in Poppy Festival activities at Lancaster on 19 April.
 - e. Participation in Junior Ranger Day activities at Joshua Tree N.P.
 - f. Participation in Endangered Species Day activities in Barstow on 16 May.
 - g. Development of a You Tube video featuring Mojave Max dancing to the tune of “The Tortoise Trot”.
3. **Conservation Land Acquisition Work Group Update.** Russell Scofield provided Managers an update of work group activities. Items discussed included:
- a. Development of two work group tasks to be added to the DMG 5 Year Plan. The first task, under Goal 6 in the 5 year Plan, outlines the group’s effort to develop a white paper outlining DMG member agency policies and practices for mitigation land acquisition and management. The second task, under Goal 10 of the DMG 5 Year Plan, identifies the intent of DMG member agencies to share data on land use, important resources, planned acquisitions and related information to facilitate and prioritize agency land acquisition efforts.
 - b. Development of the work group GIS Internet Mapping Session website for viewing data contributed by DMG member agencies. DMG members were asked to review the site and provide additional data and comments facilitating greater use of the site.
 - c. The CLAWG white paper subcommittee will meet June 17 at Mojave National Preserve HQ. The next CLAWG meeting is scheduled for July 9 also at Mojave NP.
4. **Climate and Deserts Workshop.**
- a. Debra Hughson provided Managers with an overview of the DMG sponsored workshop. She provided a brief synopsis of each presentation given at the workshop (see [presentation titled DMG Climate Workshop Summary](#)). All workshop presentations are available at <http://www.dmg.gov/climate/agenda.html>. A DVD of the workshop will be available to participants and managers in the future.
 - b. Danny Reinke provided Managers with a presentation on NEPA as it relates to climate change (see [presentation titled Considering Climate Change in the NEPA Process](#)).
 - c. Russell Scofield mentioned the Society for Rangeland Management is planning to host a major conference titled Wildfires and Invasive Plants in the American Deserts (see [Proposal for an American Deserts Conference Workshop handout which became available after the DMG meeting](#)). The conference will be held in Reno the second week of December 2008. The DMG agreed to endorse the conference and to encourage attendance.
5. **Desert Tortoise Update.**
- a. Roy Averill-Murray updated Managers on the status of the revised Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan. The draft recovery plan is currently at the FWS Washington Office undergoing review. Once approved, it will be sent to the Federal Register for posting. Once announced in the Federal Register the draft document will undergo a 60 day public comment period.
 - b. Linda Allison provided Managers an overview of the 2007 Desert Tortoise Line Distance Sampling (LDS) data and a comparison overview of the 2007 effort to the 2008 monitoring effort. She also discussed revisions to the monitoring contract for the 2009 field season (see [presentation titled DTRO Update](#)).

6. **Stakeholder Input.**
 - a. David Hubbard, legal counsel for Ecologic, asked Danny Renkie about the no net increase to green house gas emissions in EO 13423. Danny clarified that the EO only applies to energy consumption.
 - b. Pat Flanagan of Mojave Desert Land Trust thanked the DMG for sponsoring the recent Climate Change Workshop stating that she felt it was excellent. Pat also told the group about a book entitled *The American West at Risk: Science, Myths, and Politics of Land Abuse and Recovery*.
 - c. DeAnne Albers, Defenders of Wildlife, stated the Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative (RETI) involved talks between the solar industry and environmental groups.

7. **Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Command Brief.** Jim Ricker, MCAGCC G-5 provided Managers with the installation command presentation ([see presentation titled MCAGCC Command Brief](#)). He discussed the following topics:
 - a. mission of the installation
 - b. the organization of the command and the functions of each of the subordinate components
 - c. workforce employed at the installation
 - d. regional economic impacts of the installations activities
 - e. support to the surrounding community
 - f. installation training activities
 - g. future plans for the installation

Friday, 29 May, 2008

1. Abandoned Mine Land Work Group Update.

Bob Bryson updated Managers on efforts to:

- a. Streamline the compliance process for abandoned mine land site remediation, especially the efforts with the California State Historic Preservation Office to develop a template for Section 106 Consultation
- b. Prioritize agency current year AML projects
- c. Development of streamlined procurement.
- d. An AML meeting is not currently scheduled but one will be scheduled prior to the next DMG meeting.

2. Raven Work Group Update.

- a. Judy Hohman, US Fish and Wildlife Service, provided Managers with an update on the status of the Raven Environmental Assessment. FWS received 12 comments during the public comment period. Judy discussed the overall contents of the comments. The NEPA process for the EA is complete ([see presentation titled Raven EA Project Update](#)).
- b. Ashleigh Blackford and Jody Fraser, US Fish and Wildlife Service Co-chairs of the Raven EA Implementation Work Group, provided Managers with an update of work group activities.
 1. The first meeting of the group occurred 7 May at the BLM CDD office in Moreno Valley. The meeting focused primarily on bringing the group up to speed on the history of the Raven EA process.
 2. The group started the process of developing prioritized activities for the immediate future.
 3. The group began discussions on education and outreach efforts with the DMG Desert Tortoise Education and Outreach Coordinator.

4. The work group's next meeting will be 1 July, 1000 hours in the Mojave National Preserve conference room. A field trip to a local landfill is planned as part of the meeting.
3. **Morongo Basin Open Space Committee.**
Stephanie Weigel, Regional Planner for the Morongo Basin Open Space Committee provided Managers with an overview of the group's activities. She provided overview maps of the group's area of interest and discussed the groups efforts related to:
 - a. conservation planning
 - b. land use planning and
 - c. community capacity building.
4. **Nevada, Utah, Arizona Mojave Desert Initiative (MDI).**
(See document titled [Nevada, Utah, Arizona Mojave Desert Initiative Summary](#)). Scott Florence, BLM Arizona Strip District Manager, provided an overview of MDI and its goals. MDI was initiated in response to the large catastrophic fires in the Northern and Eastern Mojave in 2005 and 2006. MDI's goals primarily include prevention of future catastrophic fires within desert tortoise habitat and restoration of burned areas. MDI does not include the California portion of the Mojave Desert in its projects; however they wish to coordinate with the DMG on range-wide issues and sharing of information.
5. **Stakeholder Input.**
Chris Spofera, San Diego Off-Road Coalition – Chris asked if the information panels discussed during the previous presentation would be similar in scope to those planned for California highway rest areas. He also requested that containers for flyers be attached to the information panels. Joe Zarki responded that this was a good idea and agreed to work with Chris to develop the panels and flyer holders.

DMG Executive Coordination Session

1. **Fire Discussion.** (See document titled [Managing Mojave Wildfires](#)). MDI developed a one page set of guidelines for fire suppression in the Mojave Desert. Chuck Heard (MOJA FMO) and Ron Woychak (CDD FMO) participated in the guidelines' development. The primary point of the guidelines is that acres burned should be minimized to the maximum extent possible after consideration of firefighter safety, life, and property. Sometimes aggressive suppression tactics that cause significant but very localized disturbance may be warranted to achieve an overall goal of reduction of the loss of habitat. Russell Scofield asked line officers with fire responsibilities to inform fire and resource staff of the MDI fire suppression guidelines for incorporation into local fire strategy as appropriate. There was a discussion concerning whether federal FMOs should meet with local fire departments and the California Division of Forestry (CDF). It was decided that most local fire departments and CDF already operate using a similar strategy.
2. **Energy Discussion.** Russell Scofield discussed the Notice of Intent for the BLM/DOE PEIS for solar energy development that was issued earlier that morning. More information can be found at <http://solareis.anl.gov/>. The DMG will develop an energy position. Managers volunteering to draft the energy position are: Dennis Schramm, Don Maben, FWS, Andy Silva, Mike Wells, and BLM.

3. **DMG 5 Year Plan.**

- a. Clarence Everly provided Managers with a synopsis of changes and updates to the DMG 5 Year Plan based on discussion from the February DMG meeting. The following additional changes were requested:
 1. FY 07 Accomplishments, Goal 3, bullet B – change to read “current headstarting research activities.”
 2. FY 07 Accomplishments, Goal 4, bullet A – add Needles Field Office; add Clark Mountain HMA 98 burros removed; add NAWS 28 horses removed.
 3. FY 07 Accomplishments, Goal 7 – add visitor education numbers (to be provided by Managers) from: Lancaster Visitor Center, Needles Field Office, Mojave National Preserve, and Barstow Discovery Center.
 4. FY 08 tasks, Goal 1 – add Kern WMA.
 5. FY 08 tasks, Goal 3, bullet A – change to read “Desert Tortoise Recovery Implementation Teams (RITs), as specified in the revised draft Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan.”.
 6. FY 08 tasks, Goal 3, bullet C – change to read “Develop a coordinated Desert Tortoise Population Augmentary strategy.”
 7. FY 08 tasks, Goal 4, bullet A – change to read “levels (AML); DOD and NPS will work to eliminate burros entirely from Death Valley National Park, the Mojave National Preserve and desert military installations. Helicopter round ups and water/bait trapping”.
 8. FY 08 tasks, Goal 4, table – add zeros to the table in the Burro AML column under “Herd Areas (HAs), Areas Not Managed For Burros”.
 9. FY 08 tasks, Goal 6, bullet B – add DOD to the list of agencies for this task.
 10. FY 08 tasks, Goal 11, bullet E, sub bullet 1 – change Wood to O’Gara.
 11. FY 08 tasks, Goal 11, bullet E, sub bullet 3 – change Wood to White.

2. **Next meetings.**

- a. The next DMG meeting will be hosted by Camp Pendleton, 20 – 21 August, 2008 in Oceanside, California.
- b. The DMG winter meeting will be hosted by the USFWS Desert Tortoise Recovery Office. The winter meeting has been rescheduled to 3 – 4 December, 2008 in Primm, Nevada.