



**Draft Meeting Summary**  
**DMG Mohave Ground Squirrel Partnership Ad Hoc Work Group**  
**August 23, 2005**  
**BLM Office, Ridgecrest, California.**

**Purpose:**

1. establish what is currently known about MGS range and habitat
2. identify current conservation and habitat protection efforts
3. develop additional info needed to develop a conservation strategy
4. set date for next work group meeting

**Participants**

Becky Jones (CDFG)-chair	Shannon Collis (EAFB)
Tanya Moore (CDFG)	John O’Gara (NAWS)
Steve Juarez (CDFG)	Tom Campbell (NAWS)
John Gustafson (CDFG)	Manny Joia (MCLB)
Annette Tenneboe (CDFG)	Mickey Quillman (NTC)
Larry LaPre (BLM)	Gerry Hillier (San Bernardino County)
Dave Sjaastad (BLM)	Craig Peterson (Kern County)
Carrie Bemis (Cal State Parks)	Bob Wood (EAFB)
Robert McMorran (FWS)	John Hamill (DOI)
Bob Wood (EAFB)	Clarence Everly (DOD)

**Meeting Summary/Conclusions:**

1. Becky Jones indicated the purpose of the MGS partnership effort is to develop a conservation strategy that would alleviate the need to list MGS under the ESA.
2. Becky Jones indicated that Defenders of Wildlife is preparing a petition to FWS to list the MGS. They have indicated a willingness to withdraw the petition if an acceptable conservation plan is developed and implemented. Apparently DOD will be sending a letter to FWS in the near future articulating their concerns and recommendations. FWS indicated that their regulations require a 90 day finding to determine if the petition is substantive which is followed (as appropriate) by a 12 month review where they determine if listing is warranted. This timeline may be extended because of heavy work loads.
3. Becky provided a power point presentation that summarized current knowledge of MGS

- Dave Sjaastad indicated that BLM survey data suggests that MGS are found wherever suitable habitat occurs
  - Larry LaPre thought the MGS distribution/population status map was inaccurate/incomplete. Examples include:
    - MGS occur near El Mirage
    - A corridor through Cal City is not a practical alternative because of the many private land parcels
    - The area northeast of Kramer Jct is an important MGS area
    - MGS are not found on steep slopes
  - Larry thought that the concept of 4 core population areas could be flawed. Another alternative would be numerous meta-populations scattered throughout the area that expand and contract depending on climate and other factors.
  - Becky and John Gustafson indicated that the map used in the presentation was a work in progress that had not been widely reviewed or endorsed by CDFG.
4. La Pre reported that the West Mojave Plan included a number of measures that will benefit MGS including:
    - Limits on the amount of land that can be developed
    - Change in land classification in MGS habitat from Class M to Class L
    - New restrictions on sheep grazing in MGS habitat
    - Establishment of long term study sites
    - A 5:1 mitigation requirement
    - Mitigation fees through the HCP that will generate funding for MGS conservation
  5. NAWS indicated that only 4 percent of the base has surface development impact and that NAWS has implemented a number of action that will benefit MGS (burro management, eliminating grazing,) EAFB indicated that they were implementing similar measures to NAWS. In addition they were doing detailed mapping of habitat on the base.
  6. MCLB indicated that trapping for MGS was included in their INRMP.
  7. NTC reported that the lands being acquired for Lane Mountain Milk Vetch will benefit MGS. They are also purchasing grazing allotments which will benefit MGS
  8. There is a shortage of trained biologists to survey/trap MGS. The current protocol do not lend themselves to sampling large areas and determining population status and trends.
  9. Becky identified three primary information needs:
    - Gap analysis
    - Population Viability Analysis
    - Range-wide survey or potential habitat
  10. **Agree upon next steps:**

- Each agency/office will summarize completed, ongoing, or planned research, management, inventory actions or land acquisition activities that will benefit MGS . Summaries shall be submitted to Becky Jones by Sept 23. CDFG will produced a consolidated report by October 31, 2005
- Robert McMorran will provide an example of a “good” conservation strategy for review by the group (one that FWS has used successfully used in lieu of listing)
- Robert and Becky will provide copies of correspondence or information from DOW about DOW issues, recommendations, articulation of threats that need to be addressed, etc.
- Steve Juarez and John Gustafson (CDFG) will work with The Wildlife Society or other entities to sponsor/conduct a MGS sampling/trapping training class. The goal will be to increase the number of biologists who are qualified to conduct MGS surveys next field season.
- John Gustafson will work with the MGS Technical Committee at their meeting on Oct 12, 2005 in Barstow to develop cost effective protocols for sampling the distribution/abundance of MGS over large areas.
- Larry LaPre (BLM) will develop/update a map that shows the locations of MGS captures as well as areas that have been sampled but no MGS were found. All agencies shall submit their data to Larry by September 23. Larry will contact the cities and counties to get whatever data they have.

11. **Next Meeting:** November 9, 2005, BLM Office in Ridgecrest from 10 am to 3:00 pm. The following additional parties will be invited to the meeting:

- Defenders of Wildlife
- LA County
- Inyo County