

## Mojave Desert Initiative Summary – 5/08

### Background/History

In May 2007, the Arizona Strip District, Ely Field Office and Las Vegas Field Office hosted a two-day meeting/field trip to look at and discuss Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ESR) projects for some of the large wildfires which burned over one million acres in the Northeast Mojave Desert in Arizona, Nevada and Utah in 2005 and 2006.

An outgrowth of that initial meeting was a follow-up meeting of agency managers from the BLM, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and Arizona Department of Game and Fish in August 2007. A draft action plan was prepared at that meeting and later finalized at a subsequent meeting. The vision, scope and goals from the action plan are outlined below. At subsequent meetings, immediate priorities were identified based on specific action items outlined in the plan. Those are discussed below.

### Vision

Healthy functioning landscapes provide ecological diversity for current and future generations.

### Scope/Focus

This initiative is focused on breaking the fire/invasive species cycle in the NE Mojave Desert (AZ/NV/UT) by integrating fire and habitat management through collaborative efforts to:

- Protect intact pieces of the ecosystem
- Strategically restore portions of the damaged ecosystem

### Goals

*Goal 1:* Protect remaining unburned Mojave Desert vegetation and reduce re-burning to prevent habitat conversion to non-native grasslands.

*Goal 2:* Restore strategically located islands, key habitat areas, and corridors that provide habitat connectivity to other areas of quality habitat.

*Goal 3:* Improve communication, collaboration, and coordination, both internally and externally.

*Goal 4:* Leverage funding with all possible partners (federal and non-federal) to achieve the greatest long-term results.

## **Immediate Priorities**

### FY08

1. Assemble a team to complete a rapid assessment of what has and hasn't burned throughout the region; identify priority areas for protection and restoration. This is largely a GIS exercise using existing datasets. Refine over time. *(In progress, target date 6/08)*
2. Identify types of possible protection and restoration projects and techniques across the landscape for fuel breaks, green stripping, use of pre-emergent herbicides, re-establishing islands/corridors or other protection/restoration measures. Team also makes recommendations on criteria for evaluating projects priorities across the region. *(In progress, target date 9/08)*
3. Develop regional guidelines for fire suppression in the Mojave Desert and in desert tortoise habitat. Fire and resource personnel review existing guidelines (e.g. NV and AZ Strip) and provide recommendations that can be applied consistently across the region. Implement before the coming fire season (managers issue as delegation of authority to initial attack ICs). *(Completed)*
4. Coordinate with Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group (MOG) and California Desert Manager's Group (DMG) to share information and not duplicate efforts. *(Ongoing)*
5. Share research and monitoring results, as a part of regular meeting on an annual basis. Explore ways to continue some level of long-term monitoring throughout the region (beyond the 3 years that ES&R funds will pay for). *(Ongoing)*

### FY09

1. Prepare guidance for use of non-native species for fuel breaks/green stripping.
2. Identify and recruit new partners to help implement projects (TNC, GBRI, etc).
3. Initiate efforts to increase availability of native seeds.

## **Funding**

The group is providing input for a tri-state Healthy Lands Initiative proposal for FY10 and pursuing other non-Federal source of funding. Individual BLM offices would identify projects in BPS based on regional priorities.

## **Participating Agencies**

As the principal land and wildlife management agencies within the northeast Mojave Desert, the following agencies will work collaboratively together and with other partners to achieve the vision, goals, and actions outlined in the Mojave Desert Initiative:

### **Bureau of Land Management**

Las Vegas Field Office  
Ely Field Office  
St. George Field Office  
Arizona Strip District  
Colorado River District

### **National Park Service**

Lake Mead National Recreation Area

### **Fish and Wildlife Service**

Desert National Wildlife Refuge Complex  
Flagstaff Ecological Services Office  
Las Vegas Ecological Services Office

### **Department of Defense**

Nellis Air Force Base/Nevada Test and Training Range

### **Arizona Department of Game and Fish**

### **Nevada Department of Wildlife**

### **Utah Department of Wildlife Resources**