



Conservation Acquisition Work Group Meeting Notes

January 30, 2008

Action Items are highlighted in bold italics

- After introductions, the purpose of the meeting and the Conservation Acquisition Work Group (CAWG) were discussed. The consensus of the group was that:
 - We all needed education of each other's missions and procedures regarding acquisitions.
 - Future management of acquired lands as a major issue of concern
 - Acquisition projects needed deconfliction between agencies

- Agencies briefly described their acquisition programs and goals:
 - NPS concerns are primarily around parks where there is potential for impact to the park. The goal is not to reduce development but to make it compatible with the park. Joshua Tree is working with the Morongo Basin Open Space Committee to protect wildlife corridors, night sky, and viewshed.
 - Sam Cox (Edwards) provided a brief of the REPI program for the Navy and Air Force. Tony Parisi (China Lake) provided input as well. Edwards and China Lake recently combined their programs to make one joint program within the R-2508 complex. Both are interested in the Black Mountain Supersonic Corridor and Cords Road and Edwards is also interested in the Precision Impact Range Area. China Lake will be looking at the entire R2508 for potential future REPI projects. Edwards is looking at reactivating Hawes Field and, if this occurs, will be adding some of the area surrounding it to the REPI program. TNC is interested in partnering with the military but has few resources for the REPI project. As a result they're looking for additional partners. REPI can only pay for actual acquisition purchase costs. (handout)
 - Caltrans has the need to acquire land as compensation for various projects and would like to be strategic.
 - DFG acquisition is very opportunistic and occurs in two ways: 1) As part of a Land Acquisition Evaluation targeting specific property the Department is interested in or 2) As mitigation/compensation. The results are lots of scattered parcels. Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) is asking each region to prioritize key areas for acquisition.
 - State Parks are similar to DFG. They have access to some bond money. Except in rare circumstances, all acquisition must be connected to existing state park unit.

- Regional strategies are needed so that each landowner is approached by only one agency.

- Ray Bransfield (FWS) said that he felt the tortoise could never be recovered with acquisition alone. Ray advocated using mitigation funding for other recovery action in addition to acquisition.
- The sharing of data was identified as a need. MDEP can serve as data repository and already contain much of the data used for acquisition. A section of MDEP can be segregated and password protected for sensitive data. ***Each unit is to identify a GIS contact for Clarence. Clarence will work with the GIS specialists to ensure the necessary layers are current and available on MDEP.*** Some layers that would be valuable are:
 - DWMAs/Critical Habitat/Conservation Areas
 - Wilderness
 - ACECs
 - Acquired lands to date
 - BLM Land Use Class
 - Land Status
 - The USGS tortoise habitat model when complete
 - Wildlife corridors
 - Native plants
 - Biodiversity values

If you have additional layers to add to this list, please let Clarence know.
- Each agency should develop priorities and then see where the overlaps are. We should then agree that those overlaps are our highest priorities. The group needs to meet regularly to coordinate.
- There was discussion on how to mitigate the impact on the counties' tax base. Exchanges would be one solution but those are time consuming and very labor intensive for BLM. REPI could not pay for exchanges. Implementation of other recovery actions would have no impact on tax base. Kern and Imperial Counties are not capped on PILT. San Bernardino, Riverside, and Inyo Counties are. None of the counties would receive tax payments from 501(c)(3)s such as TNC.
- The need to include non-governmental agencies, such as TNC, in future meetings was highlighted as essential in coordinating regional acquisition/mitigation efforts.
- Additional items that the work group needs to address are:
 - Monitoring of acquired lands
 - Endowments
 - Addressing the issue of who will hold title to various lands
 - Cooperative management, especially of scattered parcels
 - Identify funding and additional partners
 - ***Ray volunteered to develop a matrix of what each agency can and cannot do***
- ***A list server will be established for the work group. Instructions will be sent out once it is set up***

- *Russell will develop a draft work group charter for presentation at the February 28-29 DMG meeting.*
- *Next meeting will be Wednesday, April 16 at Mojave National Preserve*