

CLAWG Minutes 13 Apr 10

The meeting was opened at 1000 and attendees introduced themselves. The following were in attendance:

Annie Kerns (Mojave National Preserve)

Russell Scofield (DMG Coordinator)

Danny Reinke (Edwards AFB)

Paul Mattson (Edwards AFB)

Bob Johnson & Maj McCulley (29 Palms Marine Corp Air Combat Center)

Denise Racine (Dept of Fish & Game)

Gerry Hillier (San Bernardino County)

Fon Duke (DMG Coordinator)

Sam Cox (Edwards AFB)

The meeting started with a discussion on the reason for going to a conf call alternating with face-to-face meetings on a quarterly basis based on slowed down acquisitions in the Mojave Desert due to numerous reasons. We may accelerate the number of meetings and go back to more face-to-face meetings again if acquisition activities pick back up again.

White Paper Update. Russell initiated a discussion on the CLAWG White Paper review of the final version. Russell asked if anyone had specific questions or comments on the current document and then made the point that the paper was intended to be a working document to keep CLAWG members in the loop on what's going on in the region and to share current issues/updates with each other. He recommended we call it complete. All agreed. He also suggested we post it in the document section of the CLAWG web page with a password. Danny Reinke suggested we keep this a working document and not password protect it so those who haven't made input yet can access it and he also brought up the point that the program keeps changing, so updates will need to happen. Sam Cox suggested we date it "current as of " to ensure we have the latest version and to make it editable for those who made input and need to keep their sections current and make it read only for all others. Fon Duke agreed to look into posting it on the web page and to look into making it editable/read only for different groups of people. Sam indicated he had updates as did Annie Kerns. Sam agreed to do his updates and agreed to forward to Annie for her inputs. Denise also had inputs--Annie agreed to forward to Denise.

Wildlife Corridor Update. Russell addressed the latest wildlife corridor issues. There are a couple of studies in the works, the first of which is the BLM-funded USGS landscape genetics study of the entire California desert in addition to the greater Mojave up into Nevada. The study will spatially depict genetic data from 12-15 species then look at the genetic distribution of those species and overlay that onto topography to give us a better idea where gene flow is occurring between populations and how the gene flow might be occurring on the ground. The effort is currently underway with preliminary results expected by the end of the fiscal year and a formal report in about 18 months. Danny Reinke asked if he could be part of the peer review. Russell agreed to get him in the loop on it. MGS research strategy has also moved forward in terms of trapping efforts and genetic data collection and modeling. Danny put out a call for any additional MGS technical reports.

Energy Update. On the energy topic, the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan is gearing up. A public meeting occurred two weeks earlier in Riverside and a Science Advisory Panel was scheduled to meet at the end of April. Part of the DRECP effort will be to focus on mitigation lands and where they will be.

Roundtable on Land Acquisition Efforts. Sam Cox started off the roundtable and brought up the fact that for the Edwards AFB/China Lake joint REPI acquisition effort, there are few willing sellers. He thought it might have something to do with the green power initiatives and land owners holding out for better prices than the fair market value the DoD is held to under REPI. There was also discussion about the study efforts in the PIRA, one that Bill Christian had done with Fish & Game, one that lost funding through Legacy, and the one in the works with Becky Jones (Fish & Game) and the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) which is held up with State funding needed to match OEA to obtain the grant. Bob Johnson from 29 Palms stated they're still working with the Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT), there may possibly be some BLM transfers, and they're exploring some other REPI efforts on their southern border and looking at the northern border in terms of solar development, maybe some mitigation land. They're also currently working to close on 955 acres near Joshua Tree Natl Park with the MDLT. Mojave National Preserve is also working with MDLT on parcels within the preserve boundaries.

General Discussion. Gerry Hillier mentioned that Kern County got the impression from Fish & Game that multiple species in an area would result in additive mitigation of, for example, 6 to 1. Denise Racine indicated she hadn't heard that and that multiple species in a given area were taken into consideration, but no formal additive mitigation was being conducted in determining the ratio. She stated there was no additive formula for say tortoises and MGS on the same parcel, but that it would be looked at as more valuable in general than a parcel with only one species. Russell and Denise will see if they can get some clarification on that topic.