



## **Briefing Statement**

**Date:** July 21, 2011

**Title:** DMG Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) Proposal

### **Background**

The DRECP is being developed by the California Energy Commission (CEC), California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to guide renewable energy development in the California Deserts under the authority of the Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act of 2003. The DRECP will meet the requirements of Sections 7 and 10 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and will amend California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan. The DRECP's development is guided by a Stakeholder Committee. Most of the DMG agencies are represented in the DRECP Stakeholder Committee. Mapping, Cultural, Covered Species, and Covered Activities Work Groups consist of stakeholders and Renewable Energy Action Team (REAT) agency personnel. Much of the DRECP's development is by consultants.

### **Discussion/Proposed Action**

- Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program (MDEP) is currently hosting all DRECP spatial data and has built both a public and an agency portal to the data. Under the leadership of the DOD Coordinator, we propose that DMG form a DMG agency mapping team to establish data protocols, identify relevant data sets, and review consultant mapping products for data consistency.
- The DOI Coordinator, USGS, and CDFG are currently coordinating several scientific studies (e.g. the DMG Mohave ground squirrel research strategy) that are relevant to DRECP's development. DMG also has the development of a research strategy in its work plan. Consistent with the DMG strategic goal to facilitate and promote high quality research that provides a scientific basis for resource management decisions, we propose that a DMG Science Work Group coordinate its scientific development with the needs of the DRECP and ensure that the DRECP is informed of research conducted by DMG agencies.
- Although many DMG member agencies participate on the stakeholder group for the DRECP, information may not be shared with all agency representatives that participate in the DMG. DMG Coordinators propose to establish a routine teleconference with interested DMG managers to provide information about the DRECP and facilitate finding answers to members' questions.
- The BLM is conducting Rapid Ecoregional Assessments (REAs) of the Mojave and Sonoran ecoregions. We propose that the DOI Coordinator coordinate directly with the REAs to ensure information exchange and sharing of products.

- The Mohave Ground Squirrel (MGS) Work Group is coordinating the development of a MGS conservation strategy. It is our intent that the conservation strategy be integrated into the DRECP. We propose that the DMG MGS conservation strategy development continue as a separate “broader than renewable energy” process and closely coordinate with the DRECP process.

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