

Briefing Statement

Date: January 14, 2004

Title: Lower Desert Weed Management Area

Issue: DMG support for the formation of the Lower Desert Weed Management Area (WMA)

Background:

Weed Management Areas (WMA) are established, through an MOU, to provide a coordinated, local approach to weed management through control, mapping, and identification. Some of the benefits of a WMA are:

- Better coordination of weed management in general and specific weed management projects.
- Coordinated funding and grant requests.
- Eligibility for grant funding that would otherwise not be available.
- Provides a formal process for pooling and sharing resources when practical.

The Mojave WMA, under the leadership of the WMA coordinator, has proven to be effective in obtaining grants for project work. Mojave WMA has also developed a weed GIS layer, conducted control projects, and published a *Dirty Dozen* educational brochure.

Currently, there is no WMA for eastern Riverside or San Diego Counties. The Imperial WMA has limited resources and currently focuses on weeds of agricultural importance, not wildland weeds. DMG agencies within this geographic region are:

- Colorado Desert State Park Region
- El Centro Field Office
- California Fish and Game
- CalTrans
- Palm Springs Field Office
- Santa Rosa San Jacinto National Monument
- Navy (Chocolate Mountains)
- San Bernardino National Forest
- Cleveland National Forest

Proposed Action:

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and the Southern Low Desert RC&D support the formation of a Lower Desert WMA. The RC&D has expressed an interest in sponsoring the WMA, however, does not have the funding for a WMA coordinator. Without such a coordinator, the value of a WMA would be limited. Recommend that the involved DMG agencies contribute \$500 to \$1,000 each per year for two years to establish a WMA and hire a WMA coordinator. This would serve as seed money and beginning the third year, the WMA would be expected to self-sustaining.

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