



March 12, 2003

Deleted: September 20, 2002

Memorandum

To: Desert Managers Group
DMG Interagency Working Group Team Leaders
DMG Coordinators and Interested Parties

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From: DOI Executive Coordinator, Desert Managers Group
DOD Coordinator, Desert Managers Group

Subject: March 4-5, 2003 Desert Managers Group Meeting Summary

Deleted: September 11-12, 2002

Attached is the draft summary of the Desert Managers Group meeting conducted on March 4-5, 2003 in Palm Springs, CA. Please review the action items and follow through on any assignments for which you are responsible. *Action items have been highlighted for easy review.* The Meeting Summary and all referenced documents are accessible on the DMG website at www.dmg.gov. Please contact either John Hamill (760-255-8888) or Clarence Everly (760-255-8896) if you have questions.

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Deleted: September 11-12, 2002 at the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Twentynine Palms,

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Attachment--DMG Meeting Summary

Referenced Documents (available at www.dmg.gov):

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1. DMG Meeting Attendance Roster
2. Briefing re: desert tortoise recovery plan revision
3. Briefing re: desert tortoise disease management
4. Briefing re: desert tortoise monitoring
5. Meeting summary re: Effectiveness of DT Recovery Actions
6. Briefing re: feral dog management
7. Briefing re: Stakeholder participation/involvement
8. Briefing re: DT public outreach and education
9. Hazmat work Group Update
10. Summary of Keep California Beautiful proposal re: Illegal dump/litter prevention
11. Draft Mojave Weed Management Area Long Range Plan
12. RVDE brief and recommendations
13. Draft protocols for inventorying of desert springs
14. Draft DMG 5 Year Plan and FY 02 Accomplishment Report
15. Burro Management Update

DRAFT
Meeting Summary and Action Items
Desert Managers Group Meeting
March 4-5, 2003

1. **BLM Palm Spring Field Office Review.** Jim Kenna provided an overview and slide show of the resources under the jurisdiction of the Palm Spring/South Coast Field Office.

2. **Desert Tortoise Recovery**
 - Results of the MOG meeting:
 - Bob Williams summarized the major results of the last MOG meeting, held in Las Vegas on February 12, 2003, which focused on the recommendations of the GAO audit of the DT recovery effort:
 - the Service plans to revise the DT recovery Plan in the next 18 -24 months (attached). The first step in the process will be to assemble a team of scientist to assess and evaluate new data related to the desert tortoise. The first step will be completed in January 2004.
 - FWS would also like to establish a DT science office. Initially the office may be set up as a collateral duty, but ultimately FWS would like it to be a permanent office with permanent staff.
 - In response to the GAO recommendation to develop an MOA to provide long term funding for desert tortoise monitoring, FWS intends to establish a working group to draft the MOA. The MOA may also address other priority desert tortoise recovery actions as well as establishment of the DT science office.
 - Dr. Richard Tracy provided a report to the MOG outlining various concerns with LDS

 - Review Status of DT Action Items
 - Tortoise Disease Management – Becky Jones provided an overview of the status activities related to disease (attached). Next steps were to:
 - *By June 2003, CDFG and University of Redlands will produce a summary of the November 2002 workshop. The summary will include: what we know about healthy desert tortoises and ill tortoises and the different disease and critical research for specific diseases. Included will be a list of management recommendations that pertain to decreasing the spread of disease, determining other possible causes of disease, and restoring current populations.*
 - *Clarence Everly will post the summary via the DMG website.*
 - *In the summer of 2003, Becky Jones will convene a working group of specialists, familiar with disease research literature, to categorize and prioritize recommendations proposed in the workshop summary. The group should also determine how to aid in funding priorities.*
 - *All pertinent information on desert tortoise disease should be made available through a central location for use by agency personal, stakeholders and other interested parties.*

Deleted: <#>CDFG Desert Tortoise Population Status Report¶
<#>Preliminary Desert Tortoise LDS results for FY 2002¶
<#>Petition to list the desert tortoise as an endangered species¶
<#>MOG TAC Meeting Summary¶
<#>Redlands Institute Desert Tortoise Project Program Design¶
<#>Revised DMG Desert Tortoise Recovery Action Proposal¶
<#>USGS Recovery and Vulnerability Project Brief¶
<#>Proposed Outline for the DMG Desert Tortoise Summit¶
<#>Mojave Desert Information Center Support Request¶
<#>FY 2002 Burro Management Accomplishment Report¶
<#>Draft – FY 2003 Burro Management Work Plan¶
<#>San Sebastian Marsh-San Felipe Creed Watershed Restoration FY 03 Work Plan ¶
<#>DMG Restoration Conference Brief¶
<#>DMG Water Work Group Brief¶
<#>DMG Research Inventory Work Group Report¶
<#>PACRAT Status Report¶
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September 11-12, 2002¶
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- DT Population Monitoring – Williams provided an overview of the status of desert tortoise monitoring (attached). Next steps include:
 - *Monitoring Workshop: FWS, in cooperation with the University of Redlands, will conduct a workshop in the summer of 2003 to review and make recommendations to the MOG and DMG regarding monitoring. As discussed in the 1994 Recovery Plan and reviewed in the GAO report, there is a critical need to conduct monitoring - not only species monitoring, but also habitat and effectiveness monitoring. Given the limited resources that are available to conduct monitoring, there is a need to review on-going monitoring, and through the workshop come to consensus on the priority monitoring that should be undertaken in California. The monitoring recommendations and funding needs will be presented to the DMG and Regional Managers through the MOG.*
 - *Transect Monitoring Review: The FWS in working with USGS-BRD and University of Nevada Reno will implement changes this fiscal year to try to correct currently identified problems with the LDS methodology. Crews this sampling season will be following a modified procedure to improve the accuracy of observers, and there will be an attempt to increase the number of focal animals to improve the non-observed estimate (G^o).*
- Effectiveness Monitoring – Jim Kenna provided a summary of the meeting held to discuss effectiveness monitoring (attached). There was a general consensus that the Recovery Plan Assessment Team should be responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of past recovery actions related to grazing, vehicle management, and fencing. Next steps are:
 - *Jim Kenna will convene a scientist only meeting to refine assessment options, describe monitoring options, prepare a scope of work/strategy, and assign lead for implementation*
 - *Jeff Lovich agreed to determine the feasibility of developing an “Effectiveness Report” (similar to Bill Boarman’s Desert Tortoise Threats Report) as part of the Recovery Plan assessment process.*
- Raven Management Plan — Benz provided an overview of the status of their efforts related to managing the impacts of ravens on desert tortoise. A raven management program is already in place in Clark County, NV -- that effort may be a useful prototype for how to proceed in California. *FWS agreed to convene a meeting in April 2003 to develop a comprehensive plan that identifies the scope and geographic scope of the effort, NEPA compliance, and permitting requirements, and cost estimates. The group will consider starting with a limited/focused control effort which may be able to proceed under an EA and then initiating an EIS for a broader raven control effort. The effort will be controversial and public outreach will be a key component of the effort.*

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- Feral Dog Management - Jones provided an overview of the status of efforts related to managing the impacts of feral dogs on the desert tortoise (attached). Recommended next steps include:
 - *Develop a presentation on the dangers and impacts of feral dogs; this would include attacks on humans and livestock as well as tortoises.*
 - *Develop a sound strategy for removal of feral dogs.*
 - *Once the presentation and strategy are developed, seek out groups that might oppose the action for their input on the proposal to try and head off any negative publicity.*

- Stakeholder Discussions and Participation -Hamill provided an overview of the status of stakeholder participation in DT recovery efforts (attached). Recommended actions include:
 - *DMG agencies can build credibility and trust with stakeholders by better performance at implementing priority recovery actions (e.g., disease management, predator control, monitoring).*
 - *Specific benchmarks should be established to provide for stakeholders to provide input on recovery actions/projects.*
 - *Stakeholders should be engaged in building bipartisan political support for DMG DT initiatives.*
 - *The role/responsibilities of the MOG and the DMG in planning and implementing DT recovery, research, and monitoring activities should be more clearly defined. The role of stakeholders and stakeholder involvement should be defined as part of the process.*
 - *Stakeholders should continue to be invited to attend DMG and MOG meetings.*
 - *The DMG/MOG should continue to work towards a Desert Tortoise Summit following review/revision of the DT Recovery Plan.*
 - *There should be an outreach component for each of the major recovery initiatives to improve understanding, build support, and minimize opposition.*

- Public Education and Outreach. Sanchez provided an overview of the status of DT public education and outreach efforts (attached). He indicated that he had received approval to spend a significant portion of his time on the effort and to seek \$250K to fund the effort. Next steps are to:
 - *Convene a broad based meeting to include potential partners, resource specialists, and other interested parties to develop an outreach strategy/plan (spring 2003).*
 - *Identify specific goals, audiences, project resources, partners, products, funding opportunities, and responsible parties for inclusion in the plan (may/june 2003)*
 - *Develop a draft plan and present to the DMG by the summer of 2003*
 - *Discuss opportunities to hire a DT outreach coordinator through BLM and/or NPS.*

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- **Public Comment on Executive Session**
 - Public participants at the meeting indicated support for actions related to raven management, feral dogs, and disease—they felt these factors (not OHV or grazing) were the primary causes of DT mortality/population decline.
 - Agreed with assessment provided by John Hamill related to stakeholder participation and concerns (attached).
 - Need to get other stakeholders (environmental groups etc) involved.

- **Executive Session: Desert Tortoise Recovery Action Implementation/ Budget Strategies** (Todd Jones, National Conservation Training Center) Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

- MOA – There was agreement that additional funding was needed to effectively implement the DMG DT recovery action projects. DOD indicated it would be difficult to adjust current budgets to address priorities identified in an MOA; DOD also had concerns about the scope of the MOA (i.e., should it go beyond monitoring to include other priority recovery actions?). NPS expressed concerns about whether another MOA was needed (i.e., they suggested that the MOA for the DMG and the current DT Recovery Plan were sufficient to guide/fund the recovery efforts). NPS also questioned whether an MOA would result in more funding to work on DT issues given the way the NPS budget process works. Mike Pool indicated the MOA should be drafted initially to address all the high priority DT recovery actions and it could be scaled back, as needed. The MOA should identify each agency’s funding commitments based on their interest and mandate. The discussion concluded with the understanding that a small work group would create a draft MOA that could serve as a basis for further discussion with the DOI, DOD, the MOG, the DMG, and others. Signatories to the MOA should include AS-DOI, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Installations and Environment, and the Secretary of the California Resources Agency. *Hamill, Everly, and Williams will develop a draft MOA by the next MOG and DMG meetings (June 3, 2003).*
- The current funding requirement for LDS is \$1.5M/year (FY 03 dollars) and \$200K for permanent study plots. No conclusion was reached on the costs for habitat monitoring or assessment—the topic would be addressed as an element of effectiveness monitoring
- Effectiveness Monitoring: Effectiveness monitoring should be a component of all recovery actions that are implemented (similar to the approach in the Clark County HCP)
- *Disease: Draft of the disease workshop report would be complete by June. A group will convene to review the report and make management and research recommendations*
- Road/highway Mortality: NPS suggested an evaluation of ways to prevent road mortality to alleviate the need to construct fences (public education, speed limits, etc).
- *Raven Management: A comprehensive plan would be developed at a meeting in April 2003 including the scope of the effort and NEPA compliance and permitting requirements, and cost estimates.*
- *Feral dogs would be handled in the same manner as ravens.*

- *Science Committee: A proposal for providing science support to DT recovery efforts in Cal would be provided at the next DMG meeting. Jim Kenna's effectiveness group will take the lead on this effort. In addition, the group should look at the issue of long term data management support for desert tortoise data.*

3. **Californiadesert.gov.** Clarence Everly reported that the Website had been redesigned and was available for managers to input data on their recreation attractions in their area. *Managers were requested to immediately contact Eric Boerner to begin entering data into the data base* ← --- Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

4. **Hazmat Work Group Report** John Key provided an update on the work group's activities (attached) and a summary of the KCB proposal (attached). ← --- Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

5. **Habitat Restoration Report** (Scofield) ← --- Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

- Mojave Weed Management Area Long Range Plan - Val Page provided an overview of the MWMA Long Range Plan. Managers recommended adding an annual reporting requirement to the Plan. *Managers agreed to provide comments and a list of project and priority weed issues in their area by March 21.*
- RVDE Project Update - Scofield summarized the results of the meeting between RVDE scientists and the resource managers. He provided a list of recommendations that would be forwarded to RVDE. *Managers agreed to review and provide comment including their recommended priorities for RVDE by March 21.* In the interim, Russell was authorized to share his draft recommendations with the RVDE team. *Managers recommended that the RVDE group should build on and coordinate with the current work related to OHV use in the Jawbone and Dove Springs OHV area.*
- San Felipe/San Sabastian Watershed update (Thomsen/Dice) - Thomsen reported that BLM had treated most of the tributaries along Carrizo Creek, at least those with any significant tamarisk. Jim Dice reported that State Parks has a \$250K project in progress at San Felipe Creek/Sentenac Cienega and have removed and burned 98 acres of tamarisk since October 1, 2002. A second phase (an additional \$250K) of this project is going out to bid this week and a second contract will be awarded in March or April. A third phase (also \$250K) is expected to follow a year later. State Parks submitted a \$1M proposal for FY 04/05 to the Department for tamarisk eradication and restoration of Carrizo Marsh. State Park's resource management team continues to work on tamarisk removal in San Felipe Creek upstream and downstream from Sentenac Cienega, and in parts of Carrizo and Fish Creeks and their tributaries. In January 2003, State Parks closed escrow on an 842-acre purchase of the northern portion of the Mason Valley Ranch adding parts of Oriflamme and Rodriguez Canyon that are tributary to Vallecito (and thus Carrizo) Creek. In November, the Anza-Borrego Foundation signed an 18-month option to purchase 3,400 acres of the Vallecito Ranch property that includes portions of Vallecito Creek and its drainage, which is tributary to Carrizo Creek and an integral part of the western Colorado Desert wetlands complex. A \$500K grant for acquisition dollars for this project was submitted to the Resources Agency in November 2002.

6. **PACRAT Report.** Thomsen reported on a recent conference call he convened to discuss the future of the PACRAT. The DMG agreed to the following: ← --- Formatted: Bullets and Numbering

- *Keep the work group active and schedule meetings in Barstow or Palm Springs. However, the date of the PACRAT meeting tentatively scheduled in April needs to be changed to sometime in early to mid May. The focus of the initial meeting will be on:*
 - CHRIS status and implementation issues
 - Site Stewardship program reporting mechanisms
 - ARPA training (fall 2003)
 - elect Chair/vice chair
 - millenium conference proceedings
 - new initiatives/opportunities
- *Bob Wood (Edwards AFB) and JT Reynolds (DEVA) will join Greg as the Manager reps to the PACRAT*
- *Send their archaeologists to proposed ARPA training class. The class should be scheduled for the fall of 2003.*

7. **Water Work Group.** Kearns provided a summary of the NPS contract to develop Level 1 spring inventory protocols (attached). *Managers were asked to provide comments on the draft protocols by March 10.*

8. **Review/Finalize 5-Year Plan**(Hamill/Everly) Managers reviewed the 5 year plan. Major comments include:

- Goal 1 – provide an annual report that summarizes ongoing restoration projects
- Goal 3 –Add the DT MOA as a goal for FY 03
- Goal 5 --add site stewardship as a PACRAT activity in FY 03
- Goal 7 – add maintenance of Lancaster VC and work in the Coachella Valley as accomplishments
- Goal 8 –deactivate OWG and relegate to low priority activity
- Goal 13 – add hazmat/dump data base to MDEP support

These and numerous minor comments will be incorporated into the Final 5 year plan. *The DOI/DOD coordinators will finalize, print, and distribute the 5 Year Plan.*

9. **Soil Survey Update** David Smith, USDA-NRCS provided an overview of how soil surveys are conducted, their value, and their status in the California desert.

10. **Point Reyes Bird Observatory Bird Plan for the Cal Deserts.** Chris McCreedy, PRBO provided an overview of the Partners in flight program, a cooperative effort to develop a plan for birds that live in the Cal desert. Chris will notify the DMG coordinators of any upcoming meetings—the Coordinators will pass the info on to DMG members.

11. **Roundtable Report:** The managers reported on activities of regional or interagency interest. Highlights included:

- Benz (FWS) – FWS will be coming out with new guidance on programmatic Biological Opinions soon; Medica will now be responsible for coordinating all research permits related to desert tortoise.
- Soderberg (Marine Corps, 29 Palms) – No money will be available for LDS next FY unless there is a funding commitment from DOI.

Deleted: The GAO audit: "Research Strategy and Long Term Monitoring Needed for the Mojave Desert Tortoise Population" is now out and available at: <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d0323.pdf>. Agency comments will be consolidated and provided to Congress within 60 calendar days.24 is f. edJoe .,-will ess. id. Team'sthat e. dthat she , ,ss

- Kenna (BLM)–BLM and FS working on new plan for Santa Rosa/San Jacinto NM.
- Thomsen (BLM) – State Parks and BLM are making good progress in resolving burro issues along the Colorado River.
- Hamill (DOI/DMG)– Handed out burro management update (attached) based on information provided by Sjaastad.
- Reynolds (Death Valley NP) – DEVA is sponsoring a bat gate workshop in the fall of 2003. DMG will be notified/invited.
- Medica (FWS) – DT monitoring (LDS) will commence the second week in Arpil following training at Jean.
- Wood (EAFB) – recently completed high resolution digital photography of the entire Cal desert. Will make available through MDEP.

12. Next DMG Meetings

- June 11-12, 2003, Big Bear Lake, CA. Host: Max Copenhagen , US Forest Service. Preliminary agenda topics:
 - USFS resources, activities and field trip
 - Desert tortoise recovery plans and implementation strategy
 - Desert tortoise MOA
 - Sen. Boxers Wilderness Bill
 - DSS presentation by Redlands Institute
 - State of California Legacy Project Workshop
 - California Desert Fund
- October 7-8, 2003, Furnace Creek, Death Valley National Park. Host: JT Reynolds, NPS.

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MOG/MOG TAC Meeting Summary and Next Steps. Bob Williams summarized the results of the last MOG and MOGTAC meeting (attached). The MOGTAC concluded that the DT Recovery Plan was still up-to-date. However, the Service has not made a decision on whether to revise or update the Plan. This issue will be discussed at the MOG meeting on October 9, 2002 in Las Vegas.

Establishment of a DT Science Office/Team. Bob Williams proposed establishing a Science Office or Team to coordinate research, recovery and monitoring activities and provide DT information and synthesis to Managers in a timely manner and in a useful format. *The DMG supported Bob's proposal in concept. The Managers and requested that Bob develop a White Paper that would examine various options and alternatives for integrating science with desert tortoise recovery as well as the staffing requirements and budget implications of the proposal. Bob agreed to prepare the White Paper for discussion at the next DMG meeting .*

University of Redlands Desert Tortoise Project. Dr. Jill Heaton and Dr. Monty Hempel reviewed the project design for the Redland Institutes DT Project (attached). The project will focus on providing better science-based estimates of DT populations, habitats and threats generally within the West Mojave Recovery Unit and for the Fort Irwin Expansion effort in particular. The project will employ various information science technologies to address the management and policy implications of desert tortoise recovery. *The DMG requested that RI provide a more detailed presentation at its next meeting on how a decision support system, proposed by RI for implementation, could support the recovery effort.*

DMG Tortoise Strategy and Presentation to the MOG. Jim Kenna led the DMG is a discussion of the Ad Hoc Desert Tortoise Work Group proposal related to desert tortoise recovery. *The proposal was modified and approved by the DMG (attached). Specific highlights include:*

place emphasis on evaluating the effectiveness of past management actions, population monitoring, completion and coordinated implementation of agency land management plans, and reducing the causes of desert tortoise mortality
an ad hoc group of managers, biologist and biostatisticians will evaluate the relative priority of funding for Permanent Study Plots and Line Distance Sampling
Redlands Institute will develop a synthesis of existing plot data to determine the relative value of the data collected and what questions the information is best suited to answer/address. USFWS and CAL F&G will provide sample plot data to RI by 1 Oct. RI will provide the results of their efforts NLT 1 Nov.
FWS will take the lead on developing and implementing a predator control plan, focusing on actions to be taken, with the initial emphasis on raven management
the Ad Hoc Desert Tortoise Work Group will evaluate funding options and strategies for discussion at the next DMG meeting.
Jim Kenna will present the DMG approved proposal with to the MOG on October 9.

USGS Desert Recoverability and Vulnerability Project Update. Russell Scofield reviewed the background and status of the USGS Recoverability and Vulnerability Project (RVPDE). *The DMG agreed with the following recommendations:*

A workgroup be formed to provide land manager feedback to the RVPDE project. Members of the workgroup include: Russ Scofield, Jim Kenna, Jim Weigand, Debra Hughson, Shannon Collis, Rhys Evans, and Jane Rodgers.

Invite RVPDE scientists to meet land management resource specialist this Fall to discuss how the RVPDE could support agency resource management needs.

Invite the USGS to provide a brief on the RVPDE at the December DMG meeting in Needles.

Propose to USGS that the DMG's RVPDE workgroup serve to provide continuing guidance to the RVDE project. This goal would be ensure that the RVPDE project remains focused on agency land management needs while still providing the science necessary to meet RVDE and USGS research goals.

DMG Chair. Hamill reported that the Regional Executives would like the Managers to exercise more leadership of the DMG. They proposed that the Coordinators continue to chair the meetings. However, they would like the manager that hosts a meeting to be actively involved in planning and chairing at least a portion of the meeting in coordination with the DMG coordinators. They proposed trying this arrangement for a year and then revisiting how well it is working. *The DMG supported the proposal from the Regional Executives.*

Executive Coordination Meeting—Desert Tortoise Summit. The DMG supported the proposal (attached) presented by John Hamill for the DMG executive coordination meeting to focus on the Desert Tortoise. The group recommended that the meeting be held in the Spring to allow adequate time to plan the meeting.

Senator Boxer's Wilderness Bill. Steven Evanko summarized of the Marine Corps concerns with the proposed wilderness bill. *The Managers requested that the Coordinators invite Senator Boxer's staff to discuss the legislation at the next DMG meeting.*

DIRT Report. Joe Zarki reported that the DIRT had a meeting to develop a FY 03 work plan,. Joebut that he was the only member of the Group that came to the meeting. *The Manager's requested that Joe let the Managers know when the next meeting will be and they will encourage their staff to attend.*

Hamill distributed a briefing from Kathleen Franklin concerning financial support for the Mojave Desert Information Center in Lancaster. State Parks indicated they were developing a business plan for the MDIC. *Managers suggested the issue be discussed with the DIRT and agreed to evaluate and discuss funding options at the next DMG meeting.*

Burro Update. Dave Sjaastad reported on the FY 02 accomplishments of the burro management efforts in the Cal deserts (attached) and presented a draft FY 03 work plan for consideration by the DMG (attached). Dave reported that the goals for burro removal established in the Burro Strategic Plan were not being met due to funding shortfalls in BLM and NPS. Dave indicated that BLM will continue to accept and place into adoption programs all burros captured by NPS that are protected under the Wild Horse and Burro Act. *Mary Martin, John Hamill, and John O'Gara will develop a strategy for re-invigorating and elevating the emphasis priority foron burro management in the Cal desert.*

Hazmat Work Group Report. John Key introduced Garry Brown (Cal EPA) as the new Vice Chair of the Hazmat Work Group. Russ Scofield reported on the status of dump clean-up and prevention efforts and upcoming Hazmat training. *John Key will present the FY 03 work plan for approval at the next DMG meeting.*

Habitat Restoration Report (Scofield)

San Sebastian Marsh-San Felipe Watershed Partnership. Russell was encouraged to proceed with implementation of the work plan (attached). *Formal approval of the work plan was deferred until the next meeting when Dave Van Cleve and Greg Thompson are in attendance.*

Mojave River Partnership. Russell indicated that he and several members of the Weed Management group are assessing the political interest in a Mojave River restoration projectinterest. Diane indicated that Ray Bransfield was interested in participating./ *The DMG approved Russell's continued efforts to assess interest in this project.*

Restoration conference/workshop (attached). *The DMG expressed continued support for the Workshop which is planned for March 3-7, 2002 at the Doral Palm Springs Resort.* Edwards AFB, NPS, BLM, MDEP, and GS are contributing resources to sponsor the conference/workshop.

Weed Management Area MOU and activities. Most parties hadve signed the MOU to establish the Mojave Weed Management Area with the following exceptions:

Fort Irwin-----Section Break (Continuous)-----

BLM

FWS

GS

MCLB—BarstowMAGTFTC

Edwards AFB

-----Section Break (Next Page)-----

The Marine Base—Barstow indicated they would not sign the MOU at this time. *All the other parties indicated that they would follow-up to ensure that the MOU is signed in the near future.*

Russell reported that the weed management group was focusing on control and research related to Saharan Mustard which is spreading throughout the desert. The initial focus would be in Joshua Tree NP and Johnson Valley. In addition, the Weed Management Group will begin drafting a long -range plan for the Mojave Weed Management Area.

Coordinated Natural Resource Monitoring Update. Debra Hughson reported that the natural resource monitoring workshop originally planned for January 2003 has been postponed until completion of the natural resource inventories of the National Park units in 2005. The DMG discussed, but did not reach resolution on how to address the need for additional weather monitoring stations in the desert. This topic will be discussed further at the next meeting.

Water Work Group Report. (Attached) Debra Hughson reported that the NPS will issue a contract to the Desert Research Institute to revise and field test the spring survey protocol. BLM is seeking two grants totaling \$50K for spring surveys on public lands.

Research Work Group Update (Attached) Hughson reported that the ad hoc research group is developing a data base of ongoing research projects in the Cal deserts. The data base will be accessible through the DMG website in the next few weeks. The Managers discussed the best way to require that all the ongoing projects get entered into the data base. *It was decided that each agency/office will develop its own protocols for making sure that projects are entered into the database.*

Roundtable Report: The managers reported on activities of regional or interagency interest. Highlights included:
Dietrich (FS) - The Regional Forester FS will sign the MOU to become a member of the DMG. Gene Zimmerman will represent Cleveland, Angeles, Inyo and San Bernardino National Forests on the DMG.
Kenna (BLM, Palm Springs) - indicated there was increased interest by the Mexican government in working cooperatively; the Salton Sea issues are heating up.
O’Gara (China Lakes NWS) - the Range-wide EIS will be completed soon; several tribes are interested in joining the DMG
Medica (FWS) - MOG meeting Oct 9, LV; MOG TAC meeting Oct 24, LV
Everly (DOD) - Overflight Group Meeting, Oct 25th; Anza Borrego
Hamill (DOI) - DOI Coordinator now reports to Regional Executives from BLM, NPS, GS, and FWS; has meeting with Timbisha Tribe to discuss their participation in the DMG (Oct 3, in DEVA); PACRAT work group Status Report was distributed (attached)
Noda (FWS) - Judy Holman (Ventura) is new desert supervisor; FWS is considering closing the Barstow office due to recruiting difficulties—several managers expressed concern about closing the Barstow Office.

Hayes (NPS, DEVA) - pup fish population at Devils Hole is declining-
workshop to discuss problems/solutions is schedule for Sept 24-25
in Vegas.

Sharpe (BLM, Needles) - BLM approved Cadiz EIS; new day use site
open at the Amboy Crater; initiating a tamarisk removal project.

Martin (NPS, MOJA) - DEVA and MOJA General Management Plans are
done; Dennis Schramm going to DC; construction started on Kelso
Depot; new interagency fire center open at Hole in the Wall

Joia (MCLB) - surplus houses at MCLB available for the taking

Jones (CDFG) - good success capturing Mojave Ground Squirrels this
year

Viallobos (BLM, Ridgecrest) - Monitoring Team working at
Jawbone/Dove Spring; Restoration Team working at JOTR

Quillman (NTC) - The Ft Irwin Expansion BA should be out in
November; needs Section 7 BO on fiber optic line to China Lakes
ASAP.

Next DMG Meetings

December 3-4, 2002, Needles, CA Host: Molly Brady. Preliminary
agenda topics:

desert tortoise recovery plans and implementation strategy
GAO desert tortoise audit results/implications
executive coordination meeting/desert tortoise summit
review and update the DMG 5 year plan (DMG and Work Groups)
USGS Recoverability and Vulnerability Project Briefing
Sen Boxers Wilderness Bill
Burro Management Strategy
Weather Monitoring
Desert tortoise monitoring
DSS presentation by Redlands Institute
State of California Legacy Project Workshop
California Desert Fund
Funding Support for the Mojave Desert Info Center

March 12-13, 2002, Palm Springs, CA Host: Jim Kenna