

May 31, 2001

Memorandum

To: California Desert Managers Group  
California Desert Managers Group Interagency Working Group Team Leaders

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

Subject: February 21-22, 2001 California Desert Managers Group Meeting Summary

Attached is the draft summary for the California Desert Managers Group meeting conducted February 21-22, 2001. Please review these items and contact either John Hamill (760-255-8888) or Clarence Everly (760-255-8896) if you have any changes.

**Attachments**

Meeting Summary  
Illegal Dump Site Clean-up Recommendations  
Restoration Site Recommendations

**Draft Meeting Summary**  
**CALIFORNIA DESERT MANAGERS GROUP MEETING**  
**February 21-22, 2001**  
**Ramada Inn**  
**Barstow, California**

**1. Desert Tortoise Line Distance Sampling Field Trip and Field Plan Approval**

On 21 February Phil Medica, USFWS, sponsored a field trip to Rainbow Basin in Barstow to familiarize Managers with the process of line distance sampling. All Managers walked a transect and recorded tortoise observed. Following the field exercise, the Managers returned to the Ramada Inn in Barstow where Phil Medica provided a review of the proposed desert tortoise monitoring plans for the FY 01 field season. The Managers approved the plans as presented.

**2. Desert Managers Group Update**

- **DMG Briefings for the New Administration.** Briefings have been postponed until the key agency and DOI appointments are made and in place (probably May/June 2001). DOD indicated that they would participate in briefing the new administration but would not participate in Congressional briefings.
- **DSS funding update.** The DSS Legacy Proposal submitted for FY 01 was not funded. The Legacy Program recommended the DMG work through the SERDP process to fund this initiative. The Managers supported seeking an academic/government agency sponsor for a joint proposal submittal through the SERDP process.
- **Alternative Futures Project Update.** An Alternative Futures presentation was provided to the West Mojave Coordinated Management Plan (WMCMP) Super Group. The Super Group recommendation to BLM, following the presentation, was that BLM not use the WMCMP process as a pilot for the Alternative Futures model. The most vocal opposition came from city and county planners. Their major objection was that they already have similar models and see no reason to change. They also surfaced issues concerning accuracy of data, changes to data and input of these changes, and long-term maintenance of the process.
- **Overflight Work Group Update.** The managers agreed to the Group's recommendation to draft an information brochure concerning overflights in the California Desert. Tim Salt indicated the settlement of the law suite related to BLM's failure to complete Section 7 ESA consultation on the BLM Cal Desert Plan included a stipulation for BLM to discuss the impacts of aircraft overflight on Peninsular Bighorn Sheep habitat with the DMG Overflight Work Group. Accordingly, this issue will be discussed at the next meeting of the Overflight Group (May 3, 2001). DOD indicated that they were still attempting to find a vice chair for the Work Group. Bob Shirley (Edwards) is serving as the interim vice chair.

- **DMG Dump/Restoration Coordinator Position Status.** The position is currently being classified and will be forwarded to BLM who will advertise the position sometime in April 2001.
- **Bruce Evans Tour of the California Desert.** Bruce Evans, Clerk of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee for Interior, and John Hamill spent a week touring the Cal deserts, including the new San Jacinto-Santa Rosa Mountain National Monument, Salton Sea, Imperial Sand Dunes, and Joshua Tree NP.
- **Work Group Chairs/Vice Chairs.** The Science Team Chair position is vacant. A request was made of all Managers to consider who potentially could assume this function. George Walker, USFWS, the current Vice Chair is acting as interim Chair. Katherine Wash of the Ridgecrest BLM office and Shannon Collis of the Barstow BLM office volunteered for the Desert Lands Restoration Work Group Chair and Vice Chair positions respectively. The Managers approved both persons. DoD is still committed to providing a Vice Chair for the Overflight Work Group. The Navy is currently reviewing options to resource this position.
- **MDHRGIS/CHRIS.** The Managers received an overview of the current status of system development. The projection is to field a working version by 30 May. The issue was raised concerning long-term financial soundness for maintenance and upkeep of the system. Initially the state had no funds to maintain the system. This placed the operation and fielding of the system in jeopardy. Since that time project representatives met with the SHPO and obtained his commitment to fund \$40K of the estimated \$97K annual maintenance cost. Significant issues still exist relative to bringing the Information Centers (ICs) on board with this process. The state must review the value of contracted/self supporting ICs and determine whether they should be state operated entities.
- **\$4.0 Million Army Grant to the University of Redlands.** The University of Redlands, through congressional legislation sponsored by Congressman Lewis, will receive a \$4.0 M grant, to be administered by the Army, for desert tortoise line distance sampling. At a recent meeting to discuss the grant, the Univ. of Redlands requested input as to what type of activities they should place in their grant proposal. Their desire is to focus on GIS related activities. The Managers were asked for ideas they may have for additional work/direction for input into the grant proposal. Univ. of Redlands staff will conduct a site visit to MDEP and Fort Irwin for further discussions.

### 3. FY 01 Project Review and Approval

- **BLM California Desert Lawsuit Settlement Update and Implications for the DMG.** Tim Salt reported on the settlement of the law suite related to BLM's failure to complete Section 7 ESA consultation on the BLM Cal Desert Plan. The initial cost for complying with all the stipulations is estimated at \$5M. Since additional funds have not been forthcoming, BLM intends to utilize its DMG funding to satisfy its commitments under the lawsuit.

- **Illegal Dump Project Recommendations.** The Hazmat team presented its recommendations to the DMG. 14 sites were recommended for cleanup. All the recommendations (attached) were accepted except for the clean up of the Kelso Depot on the Mojave National Preserve. Tim Salt indicated that BLM could not justify the expenditure at Kelso Depot in light of the limited benefits of the project to BLM. He said he would reconsider this position if NPS would agree to conduct desert tortoise line distance sampling on BLM land adjacent to the Mojave National Preserve. Mary Martin and Tim Salt agree to discuss this possibility after the meeting.
- **Habitat Restoration Project Recommendations.** Five projects were submitted to the Desert Lands Restoration Work Group for review and consideration (attached). The Work Group reviewed and recommended funding for four of the five proposals: Afton Canyon (BLM) \$43K; Amargosa Canyon (BLM) \$50K; Saline Valley (NPS) \$30K; and Shaver's Hill Climb (BLM) \$2K. The Shaver's Hillclimb project is to be an interagency restoration project, to be covered by extensive media, with volunteers from each of the DMG agencies contributing work time to the effort. Salvage material is to be used to the maximum extent possible and equipment is to be donated/loaned by the Barstow BLM office and Joshua Tree National Park. The Dos Palmas project proposal was not selected to receive funding. The DMG accepted the Work Group's recommendation with the caveat that the BLM Desert District Manager reserves final approval on distribution of available funds. Tim Salt indicated that BLM he was concerned about funding the Saline Valley site in light of the limited benefits of the project to BLM. He agreed to further consider the Work Group's recommendation before making a final decision.
- **Burro Update and Recommendations.** Dave Sjaastad indicated that plans were underway to remove about 1200 burros from the Cal deserts in FY 01. Dave indicated that BLM would accept for adoption all NPS captured burros that are covered by the Wild Horse and Burro Act. Tim Salt indicated that the DMG funding for burro removal never showed up in the CDD budget for FY 01. John Hamill agreed to follow up on this issue.
- **Millennium Conference Update.** An overview of the current status of the conference was provided the managers. Emphasis was placed on all agencies meeting their financial commitments to the conference. The new address and contact information for the California State University, San Bernardino conference office was given each manager with the request to follow up on the status of their funding commitment. The list of session chairs and subject speakers is firming up. Concern still exists over the lack of advertising at national archaeological events. A draft agenda for the conference was provided to the managers.
- **Desert Water Study Update.** Presenters provided an overview of the upcoming water-training course. Discussion focused on topic areas of the training session, abilities of those who complete the training to conduct water studies, equipment needed by each entity conducting water studies, methodology for recording data resulting from the assessment of wetland areas, and an over of the methodology of assessing wetlands and riparian areas in the desert.

- 4. Common Data Management Standards.** Members of the Data Management Team presented recommended data standards for adoption by the Managers. These standards do not obviate each individual agencies data standards but apply to those corporate data sets to be shared among DMG partners as well to those projects conducted by or for the DMG. The recommended standards were approved and adopted by the Managers. The DMG Coordinators were tasked to develop an implementation memo to distribute these standards. A discussion was held concerning development of a data clearinghouse. The Managers approved the concept but asked Data Management Team members to develop a detailed discussion concerning this concept to include cost and utility. Each member agency agreed to review current corporate data sets and provide the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program 5 corporate data sets they would share as part of a data clearinghouse pilot effort. The DMG Coordinators will draft a memo to all managers reminding them of this commitment.
- 5. Native American Participation in the DMG.** The Managers agreed to make a concerted effort to get Native American tribes in the California Desert involved in the DMG. The consensus was that the best way to approach the tribes on this issue was to use existing established relationships between the tribes and the Managers. John Hamill agreed to develop a DMG Briefing Package that would be used by the Managers in meeting with the tribes. The purpose of this initial meeting would be to (a) introduce the tribes to the DMG, (b) assess their general interest in the DMG, (c) invite/encourage their representative to attend the next DMG meeting (June 20-21, in Palm Springs). This meeting will focus on the conclusions/next steps related to the May 9-12, 2001, Cultural Resources Millenium Conference--a topic that should be of interest to the tribes.
- 6. California Desert Fund.** The military members of the DMG voiced non-consensus in the DMG's efforts to establish a non-profit organization. As a result of a lack of consensus on this issue further DMG discussion was tabled and the issue was dropped by the DMG.
- 7. DMG 5-Year Plan Review and Update.** The Managers reviewed the existing DMG 5 Year Plan. Each work group provided input to changes/updates for the current plan. Through discussion during the review, additional changes were made to the existing plan. The DMG Coordinators were tasked to develop and publish a revised DMG 5 Year Plan based on changes agreed to by the Managers. Changes were made and a new 5 Year Plan was published.
- 8. Next DMG Meetings.** The next DMG meeting will be held June 20-21, 2001, in Palm Springs California. The Palm Springs BLM office will host the meeting. The subsequent DMG meeting is scheduled for 19-20 September. The location is TBA.

### Illegal Dump Site Clean-up Recommendations

Dump Name	Agency	Hazard Rank	Total Cost	DMG Cost	Match	Timeliness	Urgency	Interest	Hazmat Recommendation
Nipton	NFO	65	\$150,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	2	1	1	Yes
Berdoo Canyon	JOTR/PSSC	55	\$11,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$4,000.00	3	2	1	Yes
Route 66 Sites (3)	NFO	55	\$212,000.00	\$29,000.00	\$183,000.00	1	1	1	Partial
Indio Hills	PSSC	55	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	3	3	3	No
Yucca Mesa	BFO	47	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	3	3	2	Yes
Vidal	NFO	45	\$100,000.00	\$50,000.00		3	1	2	No
Charleston View	BFO	36	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00	\$0.00	1	2	1	Yes
Andre	ECFO	35	no info			3	3	2	No
Sandy Valley	BFO	33	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$0.00	1	2	1	No
Adobe/Baseline	JOTR	27	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	3	2	1	Yes
Kelso	MOJA	24	\$13,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$5,000.00	1	2	1	Yes
Tire Dump	JOTR	19	\$2,400.00	\$2,400.00	\$0.00	2	2	3	No

**Key:**

Timeliness:	1 = Ready to go	2 = Project almost ready to go	3 = Lots of work to be done yet
Urgency:	1 = Notice and Order	2 = Management priority	3 = Low priority
Interest:	1 = High public/government interest	2 = Medium public interest	3 = Low public interest

## Restoration Site Recommendations

### Project Details

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>In Kind \$</b>	<b>DMG \$ Requested</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>DLRT Rec.</b>
<b>Afton Canyon</b>	R	50 (+25)	\$25K	\$50K	Feb 01 – Apr 01	<b>\$43K</b>
<b>Amargosa Canyon</b>	R	50 (+25)	\$25K	\$50K	Feb 01 – Apr 01	<b>\$50K</b>
<b>Dos Palmas</b>	R	20,000	\$30K	\$90K	Mar 01 – Sept 01	<b>Not funded</b>
<b>Saline Valley</b>	R	800	\$21K	\$36K	Sept 01 – May 02	<b>\$30K (earlier)</b>
<b>Shaver's Hillclimb</b>	U	5		\$4.5K	Sept 01	<b>\$2K (group)</b>