

July 23, 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: June 20-21, 2001 California Desert Managers Group Meeting Summary

Attached is a summary of the California Desert Managers Group meeting conducted June 20-21, 2001 in Palm Springs, CA. All handouts referred to in the meeting summary can be found on the DMG website at www.dmg.gov. Please review these items and contact either John Hamill (760-255-8888) or Clarence Everly (760-255-8896), if you have any changes.

Please follow through on any assignments or actions items for which you are responsible.

cc DMG Interested Parties

Attachment

Desert Mangers Group Meeting

June 20-21, 2001

Palm Springs, California

1. Paleontological and Cultural Resources in the California desert.

The Paleontology and Cultural Resources Work Group (PACRAT) sponsored a discussion of paleontological and cultural resources in the California desert. Dr. Kathleen Springer summarized paleontological research in the California Desert and collections at the San Bernardino Museum. Amy Gileath discussed rock art at China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station. Ted Faye discussed a proposed documentary of the history of Death Valley. Dr. Lowell Bean discussed the ethnohistory and ethnography of the California Desert Indians. An overview of the history of Lake Cahuilla and cultural resources in the area was provided by Dr. Jerry Schaefer. These presentations concluded that the California desert is rich in paleontological and cultural resources, but these resources are threatened by neglect, vandalism, natural decay, and a lack of resources needed for proper management.

2. Millenium Conference.

Over 250 people attended the Millenium conference in Barstow on May 9-12, 2001. The response to the conference was very positive and there have been 61 requests to hold a follow-up conference in the near future.

3. Managers Panel.

A panel of desert managers who attended the Millenium conference discussed management and protection of paleontological/cultural resources in the California deserts. Panel participants included Greg Thomsen (moderator), Molly Brady, Richard Wood, Jim Kenna and Art Gleason. Observations and recommendations of the panelists and the Managers included:

- Cultural and paleo resources are non-renewable and rapidly disappearing. Action is needed quickly to preserve/protect what is left.
- There is a reluctance to share cultural resource information. However, people only love and protect things they know about. Information of paleo/cultural resources needs to be shared in order to protect resources better.
- Managers have a major obligation to tell the cultural resource story. Cultural/paleo resources should be managed for conservation, research, and public values.
- Cultural resources need to be managed from a landscape perspective. There is a need to overcome jurisdictional and mission lines to be effective and tell the entire story.
- Few people are aware of the ongoing research efforts and information available concerning paleo/cultural resources in the California desert. The Millenium conference should be held routinely. It may be advantageous to sponsor mini events and/or to conduct local workshops to identify the resources each jurisdiction manages.
- Need to pursue a strategy for funding cultural/paleo resource management. Must look to develop alternative sources of funding to accomplish cultural resources goals, including developing partnerships and collaborating with non-profits.

- Managers need to accelerate inventory and analysis, summarize the gray literature, and articulate a long-term strategy/protection plan for paleo/cultural resources (including the need for landscape scale, cross- jurisdictional management). It will be important to get the public and community leaders actively involved. (Note: These items are already a component of the DMG 5-Year Plan)
 - Many cultural resource experts will be retiring in the near future. Managers should place a priority on recruitment and replacement of cultural resource specialists currently working in the desert.
 - The Millenium conference proceedings should be put on the web and made available to the public.
 - Desert users who have a large impact on resources should be the target of interpretive programs.
 - Small exhibits should be placed in desert visitor centers.
 - Abandoned mines should be addressed from a regional perspective i.e., how do we manage them, what are their significance, are they safe, how do we protect sensitive species.
 - Effective videos should be developed to address education of the public.
 - The development of shared databases should be evaluated.
 - Need to address how to get Section 110 work done and pass on the cost of Section 106 work to customers.
 - Heritage tourism should be oriented towards resource appreciation. This must be managed very carefully so we don't "love the resources to death."
 - The DMG should seek funding for a project to articulate the history of the military in the desert.
4. **CHRIS GIS.** John Thomas provided the DMG with a demonstration of the California Historic Resource Information System GIS, which was piloted in the Mojave Desert. Clarence Everly discussed an Issue Paper related to implementation and support of the system (see www.dmg.gov).
5. **DMG Update**
- The Managers agreed to consider making staff available to serve as Chair/Vice Chair of the DIRT, Science, and Overflight Work Groups. Clarence Everly offered to have his new GIS analyst serve as vice chair of the Data Management Work Group.
 - The DMG Dump and Restoration Coordinator Position was recently advertised and will be open until July 17, 2001.
 - A copy of the final spatial data standards was distributed (see www.dmg.gov). Clarence Everly also reminded the managers to provide a copy of five (5) corporate data sets to his office by July 20, 2001.
 - Clarence agreed to check on the status of the Lancaster Visitor Center map.
6. **FY 01 Project Review and Update**
- The preliminary results of desert tortoise monitoring yielded low numbers in many areas. This will necessitate increasing the number of transects next year at a higher cost. Phil Medica will develop an FY 02 work plan for consideration by the DMG at the next meeting.

- Phil Medica agreed to follow up with USGS reference completion of the Raven/Desert Tortoise Study status.
- Phil Medica is planning to hold a MOGTAC meeting at the end of summer.
- The FWS and DOD recommended establishing a management group to oversee the implementation of tortoise studies related to the Redlands Grant.
- The Illegal Dump Clean up effort was on track albeit slightly delayed until ESA consultation is completed.
- The FY 01 budget and Illegal Dump Prevention Plan was approved by the DMG (see www.dmg.gov).
- The DMG approved hiring a seasonal employee to populate the dump database.
- The Burro Management Program is on track (see www.dmg.gov).
- The proposed actions identified in the June 19, 2001 Issue Paper re: the CHRIS GIS were accepted by the DMG (see www.dmg.gov).
- Due to a lack of funding and staff there was no field work planned re: the Desert Water Study.
- BLM (Molly Brady) agreed to give MAGTFTC a full briefing on the Cadiz Project.
- Knox Mellon indicated that funding for maintenance of the Mojave Desert Historic Resources GIS (MDHRGIS) for at least a two (2) year period is in the State's FY 01/02 budget.

7. Work Group Reports

- **Overflight Work Group** – The overflight work group is addressing three issues: development of an overflight brochure, development of protocols for downed aircraft and a discussion of overflight issues related to Anza Borrego State Park and bighorn sheep (see www.dmg.gov). There will be reports on these items at the September meeting.
 - **DIRT** – The DIRT's recommendations to enhance the DMG website were approved by the DMG (see www.dmg.gov). The DMG logo style guide will be finalized soon and made available on the DMG website. The DIRT agreed to go back and provide a more detailed presentation and recommendations on whether the DMG should trademark the DMG logo.
 - **Law Enforcement** – The LE Group is meeting once again after a long hiatus and is refocusing on the tasks in the 5 year plan. There has been substantial progress on the tasks in the 5-Year Plan, working outside the DMG LE Group.
8. **DMG/Cal Desert White Paper** – This item focused on the June 9, 2001 DMG White Paper authored by John Hamill –copy available on the DMG Website at www.dmg.gov.
- DOD identified a variety of issues with the White Paper. DOD members of the DMG objected that the document cover included the DMG logo indicating that it was approved by the DMG (when, in fact, the DMG did not approve the document). DOD members have objections too material in the document. Hamill agreed not to put the DMG logo on documents until they are approved by the DMG.
 - MAGTFTC believes the white paper violates Principles A. and F. of the DMG Charter. DoD land management plans do not mandate conservation of endangered species – the Sikes Act says DOD may not write plans that would impact the military's ability to conduct its mission. DOD members also stated they were not given sufficient time to properly staff and provide comments on the draft White Paper.

- DOD members of the DMG believe the White Paper implies that land management and land use decisions would be made by the public or by committees.
- DOD members were unsure what the DMG could add to the current process for land management plan development.
- The DMG requested Phil Medica develop a list of actions that DMG agencies could take to recover the desert tortoise in a coordinated manner.
- The DMG established an ad hoc group that, by the next DMG meeting, will assess the long and short term needs of the DMG and evaluate the concepts presented in the White Paper. The review should address specific near term, mid term, and long term tasks that can be accomplished by the DMG both collaboratively and as individual agencies. Members of the work group will include Mary Martin, John O’Gara, Ray Bransfield, Bob Williams, Tim Salt, Clarence Everly and John Hamill.

9. **Improving the Effectiveness of the DMG** -- This item focused on the June 11, 2001 report “Improving the Effectiveness of the DMG.” Copy available at www.dmg.gov.

- The report generated a spirited discussion of the DOI coordinators and each agency’s expectations for the DMG, staff and budget support for DMG activities, prioritization of DMG activities, the need for several of the work groups, and DMG work vs. agency work, among other topics.
- The DMG agreed to have a professionally facilitated meeting in September to explore these issues in depth and develop recommendations for consideration by agency executives .

10. Next meetings

- The next DMG meeting will be September 19-20, 2001 in Riverside. The second day of the meeting will be the Annual Executive Coordination meeting. Tim Salt will coordinate the meeting.
- The Winter DMG meeting will be 12-13 December 2001 at Death Valley. JT Reynolds will coordinate the meeting.