

September 22, 1999

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: September 14--15 1999 California Desert Managers Group Meeting Summary

Attached for your review are the draft action items and assignments and the draft summary of the California Desert Managers Group meeting conducted September 14 -15, 1999. Please review these items and contact either John Hamill (760-255-8888) or myself (760-255-8896) if you have any changes.

Attachments (3):

- (a) Action Items and Assignments
- (b) Meeting Summary
- (c) Meeting attendees

Desert Mangers Group Meeting

September 14-15, 1999

Ventura, California

Action Items and Assignments

Action Items:

1. The Managers agreed that regional/state directors would be given the opportunity to review the FY 2000 work plans before they were sent to the agency directors in Washington D.C.
2. The Managers approved John Hamill's draft cover letter that will accompany the FY 00 work plans and budget request.

3. The Managers agreed that following approval of the FY 00 budget, a group of Managers would go to Washington, meet with each of the agencies, and decide how to approach FY 00 work plans and budget.
4. The Managers approved the Restoration Work Groups work plan of activities they would complete without any new funding. The Managers directed the group submit its fully funded work plan for submission to Washington D.C. Should partial or no funds be provided, adjustments to the work plan will be made at that time.
5. The Managers approved the Burro Management work plan pending revision of the funding table in the plan.
6. Ecological monitoring work plan substantively approved by the Managers.
7. Tortoise monitoring work plan was approved subject to revision to reflect \$300k being spent for other ESA work.
8. Hazmat Working Group work plan approved by the Managers.
9. The Managers agreed to support the Desert Lands Recoverability and Vulnerability Project subject to resolution of technical issues raised by the Science IWG and Desert Lands Restoration IWG. The Managers directed that the projects current budget request be sent forward with the caveat that final details are still being worked out.
10. The Managers approved the DMG program management work plan, with the understanding that a new strategy for funding the DOI coordinator will need to be developed.
11. The Managers directed an ad hoc group be formed to review/discuss the question of where work group coordinators should be located. Members of the ad hoc committee are Molly Brady-BLM, Dick Martin-NPS, Jeff Lovich-USGS, Ernie Quintana-NPS, Bob Williams-FWS, and Dave Van Cleve-State Parks. The DOI Coordinator will coordinate meeting times and location.
12. The Managers agreed to announce coordinator positions both as term positions and as permanent positions pending outcome of FY 00 funding allocations.
13. The Managers approved the DMG Charter and Cooperative Agreement with changes. The recommended process and schedule for finalizing the Cooperative Agreement was approved.
14. The strategy for developing outreach plans for the FY 2001 projects was approved by the Managers.
15. The Managers approved the Science and Data Management Teams recommendation to separate data management and science and form a Science Interagency Work Group and a Data Management Interagency Work Group. A new charter for the Science IWG and an

interim charter for the Data Management IWG were approved. Fort Irwin and BLM will provide management oversight for the new Data Management IWG.

16. The Managers approved the Science IWG request to add hydrologists to the group.
17. The Managers approved the PACRAT concept proposal for hosting a cultural resources millennium conference.
18. The Managers approved the concept of an interagency law enforcement training program. The Law Enforcement IWG was directed to develop a curriculum for review at its next meeting.
19. The Managers approved the recommendation to take the next step in the Decision Support System project and develop a pilot. The Managers also agreed to support development of the pilot with staff and scientists for rule base and knowledge base development.
20. The Managers approved placing the DMG water resources project under the purview of the Science IWG and to develop a FY 2000 work plan.
21. Managers agreed to hold a DMG meeting on 4 and 5 April 2000 at Anza Barrego State Park.

Assignments:

1. The Science, Restoration, and HAZMAT work groups and Dave Sjaastad (burro management plan) were requested to provide final FY 00 work plans to the DOI Coordinator by Friday, 24 September 1999
2. The Science, Restoration, and HAZMAT work groups and Dave Sjaastad should establish funding priorities for FY 00 so that the DMG could quickly identify what would be accomplished under a reduced funding scenario.
3. BLM modify the funding table in the FY 00 Burro Management Work Plan to reflect accurate costs for the NPS units.
4. Science IWG directed to revise its ecological monitoring work plan to better describe existing fragmented monitoring activities, and that this plan, once implemented, will meet the needs of all bioregional planning efforts..
5. Bob Williams was requested to revise the tortoise monitoring project to reflect the revised budget and the S-7 and S-10 ESA work that will be accomplished.
6. Hazmat IWG directed to develop a prioritized list of dump sites for clean-up during FY 00.
7. All appropriate IWG are to develop an outreach plan for each FY 01 project under their purview. Provide the work plan to the Desert Information IWG by close of business on 5 November 1999.

8. Representatives from appropriate IWGs attend a Desert Information IWG meeting on 18 November 1999 to review and discuss group outreach work plans.
9. The Managers requested that the Desert Information IWG submit a coordinated outreach plan to the DMG for review at the DMG meeting in December 1999.
10. The Managers approved three options to be submitted to the Secretaries and Sen. Feinstein's office to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the Cal Desert Protection Act. (1) Lancaster visitor center grand opening – spring 00; (2) Death Valley Days – Nov. 1999; (3) Signing of the DMG Cooperative Agreement – Feb. 00. The DOI Coordinator will submit these options to the Department.
11. DOI/DOD Coordinators develop a recommendation for the structure of an oversight group for the Decision Support System pilot project.
12. Hydrologists tasked to attend the next Science IWG meeting, 12 October 1999.
13. The Science IWG tasked to review and further refine the scope of work for the FY 01 water resources project and develop/review a FY 2000 work plan if USGS money is made available.
14. The Managers approved the strategy calling for the DOI Coordinator to follow-up on issues associated with acquisition of state school lands in the Cal Deserts. Dave McIllney will develop a briefing paper on the issue.

Desert Mangers Group Meeting

September 14-15, 1999

Ventura, California

Meeting Summary

14 September 99

Desert Managers Group Update

Meeting was called to order at 1:30 p.m. A review of the agenda was conducted. The Managers accepted the agenda as written. This meeting is the first to implement rules of meeting conduct as approved by the Managers at the last DMG meeting. As a result, not all Work Groups were included on the agenda. Brief mention was made about the web sites currently under development. One is the California Desert information web site at www.californiadesert.gov. which will be announced to the public on 31 October 1999. The other is a work in progress for the DMG web site at www.mojavedata.gov/mdep/dmg. Also, a proposed logo was passed around for Managers to review and comment on. No immediate comments were made on the logo.

FY2000 Budget and Work Plans

None of the DMG's FY 2000 budget/project requests were approved by Congress with the exception of \$600k in the House budget for the BLM for burro management. The next step in this process is for the Agencies to formally submit the final work plans to the Department. The Managers agreed that all FY 2000 work plans would go through regional/state directors for review/information before being sent to Washington D.C. The Managers agreed that following approval of the FY 00 budget, a group of Managers would go to Washington, meet with each of the agencies, and decide how to approach FY 00 work plans. The Science, Restoration, and HAZMAT work groups and Dave Sjaastad (burro management plan) were request to provide final FY 00 work plans based on the full funding request to the DOI Coordinator by Friday, 24 September 1999. The Managers also tasked the work groups to prioritize the budget so that we could quickly identify what would be accomplished under a reduced funding scenario..

Restoration IWG: The Work Group presented its version of a work plan that could be accomplished without funds. Goals and objectives of the work plan focused on development of a disturbed lands database, restorationist training, and outreach and education. The first priority if funding becomes available is to hire a project coordinator. The Managers approved the Restoration IWG's work plan that identified tasks that could be accomplished without funds.

Burro Management: If BLM is successful in getting \$600k for burro management they will try to insure funds are not taken nationally to be used for adoptions in the east. It is possible the BLM CDD may lose \$250K for this purpose. Priority for funds received will go to conducting burro gathers. The program successfully removed 1200 burros in FY 99. Water trapping helped reduce the cost of burro removal allowing more animals to be

removed than anticipated. BLM, DOD, and the NPS will continue to work together to find the most cost effective and efficient methods for burro removal and continue to make progress in eliminating unwanted animals. The Managers approved the Burro Management work plan pending revision of the funding table to reflect accurate costs for the NPS units.

Science IWG: If no funding is provided, the ecological monitoring project would be deferred to the following fiscal year. The majority of the first year's effort is oriented on development of the program/project. If funding becomes available, the priority will be to hire a coordinator to begin the planning process. The ecological monitoring work plan was approved by the Managers subject to being revised to better describe existing fragmented monitoring activities, and that this plan, once implemented, will meet the needs of all bioregional planning efforts.

Tortoise Monitoring Project: FWS announced that the \$500k FY 00 funds requested by FWS is divided into \$200k for tortoise monitoring and \$300k for ESA Section 7/10 work. This is contrary to the previous understanding on the use of these funds. DOD remains willing to cost share on this project. Discussion occurred on how DOI can show a \$500K cost share using monies currently used for tortoise monitoring by DOI agencies. DOD services continue to support the request for \$500k of Legacy funding to support this effort. The tortoise monitoring work plan was approved by the Managers, subject to being revised to reflect the S-7 and S-10 ESA work that will be accomplished

Hazmat IWG: The FY 00 work plan addressing illegal dumping was discussed. Priorities in FY 00 are project management and outreach along with assessment, cleanup, and prevention. The original work plan for dump clean up presented last May was based on \$450k. These funds were to develop a database of dump sites, prioritize them, start a prevention program, clean up 20 dumps, and conduct replanting in cooperation with the Restoration IWG. BLM plans to reprogram \$300k of its base funding to implement the work plan in FY 00. Concern exists on whether these funds can be used for all DOI lands. The issue of whether to hire a program manager with part of the \$300k is still undecided. The BLM CDD office will receive an Executive Women's Program candidate. This position was offered as an initial coordinator for the Dump project. The Managers approved the Hazmat IWG work plan. The Hazmat IWG was directed to develop a prioritized list of dump sites for clean up during FY 00.

Vulnerability and Recoverability of Desert Lands Project: The project did not present its work plan because of issues that were raised and not yet addressed. USGS is in the process of meeting with the Science and Restoration IWGs and defining their work plan goals and objects in order to meet the needs of Managers and their staffs. The Managers reached consensus on continued support for the Desert Lands Recoverability and Vulnerability Project, subject to resolution of technical issues raised by the Science IWG and Desert Lands Restoration IWG. The Managers directed that the projects current budget request be sent forward with the caveat that final details are still being worked out.

Program Management Work Plan: Program management for FY00 includes three categories of support - funding for the DOI Coordinator position, DMG meeting support, and workgroup support. Program management costs were to be taken from new funding increases prior to distribution to the different Interior agencies. In light of no new funding in FY 00, the Managers/Department must assess program requirements and develop a new funding strategy. The Managers approved the DMG program management work plan.

Program Manager Recruitment Status: There are five coordinator positions under recruitment. Location of the coordinators, once hired, is still under discussion. Pros and cons exist for both centralizing and decentralizing these positions. The issue of location remains unresolved. The Managers directed an ad hoc group be formed to review/discuss the question of where work group coordinators should be located. Members of the ad hoc committee are Molly Brady-BLM, Dick Martin-NPS, Jeff Lovich-USGS, Ernie Quintana-NPS, Bob Williams-FWS, and Dave Van Cleve-State Parks. The DOI Coordinator will coordinate meeting times and location. The Managers agreed to announce coordinator positions both as term positions and as permanent positions pending outcome of FY 00 funding allocations.

Southwest Strategy

Bill Maxon, the Executive Coordinator for the Southwest Strategy, provided an overview presentation of his group. He discussed the Southwest Strategy's development, methodology, and executive coordination process. He emphasized the value of involving the local Native American tribes. Bill also provided a copy of the Southwest Strategy functional statement and suggested the DMG review it for any methods or ideas that may be helpful.

15 September 99

DMG Charter and Cooperative Agreement

An overview of the sections of the proposed DMG charter developed by the ad hoc Charter Committee was presented. A list of issues and concerns was developed through interactive discussion. Each of these issues was addressed and changes, if required, were made to the Charter document. The Managers conducted a review of the proposed Cooperative Agreement--no concerns or objections were raised. The Managers also reviewed and approved the proposed timeline and process for formal approval of the Cooperative Agreement and Charter. The Managers approved the DMG charter and DOI/DOD Cooperative Agreement with changes.

FWS requested Bob Williams be formally added as a voting member of the DMG. Some discussion occurred on this issue. The request was tabled until the next DMG meeting.

Fifth anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act

The Department of the Interior requested some ideas from the Managers on how the fifth anniversary of the enactment of the California Desert Protection Act could be commemorated. Suggestions included anniversary events with others such as the dedication of the Lancaster visitor center and the 49ers event in Death Valley in early November. The Managers approved three options to be submitted to the Secretaries and Sen. Feinstein's office to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the Cal Desert Protection Act. (1) Lancaster visitor center grand opening – spring 00; (2) Death Valley Days – Nov. 1999; (3) Signing of the DMG Cooperative Agreement – Feb. 00. The DOI Coordinator will coordinate submittal of these options to the Department.

FY01 Budget Initiative and Issues

FY 01 budget requests were approved by DOI and submitted to the Office of Management and Budget, with the exception of funding for NPS participation in the public safety/visitor services program. OMB invited the Managers provide a presentation on the DMG requests on 27 September 99. The Desert Information IWG presented a strategy for developing outreach plans for each of the FY 01 projects. The Managers approved the strategy and tasked IWG to develop and provide an outreach plan to the Desert Information Resources IWG by close of business on 5 November 1999. Representatives from appropriate IWGs should attend a Desert Information IWG meeting on 18 November 1999 to review and discuss group outreach work plans. Outreach plans will be discussed at the next DMG meeting.

Work Group Issues or Action Items

The SDMT recommended (a) the group reorganize into a Science IWG, with hydrologists and other earth sciences involved, and (b) the DMG establish a Data Management IWG. Data management is a critical component of all projects the work groups are working on and it would be more effective if they had their own meetings and communicated to the Science team and other workgroups. DOD offered to provide a chair for the new Data Management IWG. An interim charter for the Data Management IWG was provided for Manager perusal and approval. The SDMT's recommendations were approved by the Managers.

The PACRAT IWG requested the Manager's approval to begin planning a Cultural Resource Millennium Conference that would be hosted by the DMG. PACRAT has agreement from 10 different groups and companies for financial support for the conference. The group has conducted a scoping meeting to develop issues that would be featured at the conference. Attendance is anticipated to be in the hundreds, 300-400, depending on marketing. The Managers approved the PACRAT's request to proceed with planning the conference.

The Law Enforcement work group presented a proposal to develop centralized inservice training. The proposal takes advantage of local instructors and offers cost savings to participating agencies. A facility is needed that can accommodate up to 50 participants. The Managers approved the concept of an interagency law enforcement training program. The Law Enforcement IWG was directed to develop a curriculum for review at its next meeting.

Decision Support System (DSS)

The technical specifications with cost estimates for development of a decision support system was provided the Managers. The recommendation to the Managers is to develop a pilot DSS to demonstrate utility and functionality. Possible funding for development of a pilot could come from the DOD Legacy Program. A management oversight group is needed to supervise execution of this project. Additionally, participation of all DMG agency staff is necessary to develop both the pilot and, if approved, the final product. The Managers approved the recommendation to take the next step in the Decision Support System project and develop a pilot. The Managers also agreed to make staff and scientists available for rule base and knowledge base development. The DOI/DOD Coordinators will develop a recommendation for the structure of an oversight group for the Decision Support System pilot project.

Formation of Water Resource Scoping Group

There is a Federal State Cooperative Program that lets USGS take federal funds and match them with state funds for water resource studies and needs. In FY 2000, USGS has approximately \$200K available to conduct a project in the California desert. Additional cooperators are needed to establish the project. John Isbicki, USGS, gave a presentation on USGS water resource studies and how they can apply to the Cal Deserts. USGS is developing a cost sharing proposal for consideration by the California Department of Water Resources. The Managers approved placing the DMG water resources project under the purview of the Science IWG and to develop a FY 2000 work plan. The Science IWG was also tasked to review and further refine the scope of work for the FY 01 water resources project.

Availability of Grants to Support DMG Initiatives

Jim Decker of BLM provided a presentation on grants. Most grant funding sources are looking at regional approaches. This can be a great opportunity for DMG projects. A class on obtaining grants will occur at the Barstow BLM office in the near future. Those interested may contact Mike Floyd 760-252-6022 for more information.

State School Lands Update

Dave McIlney spoke provided a presentation on the land exchange provisions in the California Desert Protection Act, specifically section 707. Dave discussed the current status and problems with exchanges in the desert. The Managers requested the DOI Coordinator to follow-up on issues associated with acquisition of state school lands in the Cal Deserts. Dave McIlney will develop a briefing paper on the issue.

Future DMG Meetings

December 1-2, 1999, Death Valley National Park
April 4-5, 2000, Anza Borrego State Park.

**Desert Managers Group
14 - 15 September 1999
Attendees**

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