

DESERT LANDS RESTORATION TASK FORCE
CALIFORNIA DESERT RESTORATION INITIATIVE
SUBGROUP MEETING
MARCH 18, 1999

In Attendance:	John Hillman	DOI Lead, Desert Managers Group
	Dick Martin	Supt., Death Valley NP
	Ernest Quintana	Supt., Joshua Tree NP
	Jim Kenna	Field Area Mgr., Palm Springs BLM
	Mark DePoy	Resources Mgr., Barstow BLM
	Chris Stubbs	Resources Mgmt., Mojave NP
	Jane Rodgers	Co-Chair DLRTF, Joshua Tree NP
	Russell Scofield	HazMat Working Group, BLM
	Bruce West	Nat. Rsc. Spec., Barstow BLM
	Jessica Walker	Botanist, Barstow BLM

MINUTES

10:00AM

Meeting started with DLRTF SUBGROUP consisting of Jane, Chris, Bruce, Jessica, and Russell. Jane reviewed original California Desert Restoration Initiative Proposal, specifically looking at goals, desired results, and budget allocation. Our task force is ONLY dealing with three items in the Initiative: upland restoration, riparian restoration, and dump cleanup.

Jane presented schematic layouts of the Initiative's goals, and a draft breakdown of staffing and budget items.

The group reviewed the FY00 budget updates received from John Hamill as follows:

- A. Upland Habitat Restoration:**
 - BLM \$200
 - NPS \$175 - USGS \$0
- B. Riparian Habitat Restoration**
 - BLM \$300
 - NPS \$200
- C. Unauthorized Dump Clean-up and Restoration**
 - BLM \$225
 - NPS \$225
- D. Burro Management**
 - BLM \$525K
 - NPS - \$1.2M
- E. Integrated Ecological Monitoring** - NPS - \$221K
 - USGS (BRD) - \$129K
- F. Desert Tortoise Monitoring**
 - DOI (combination of FWS/NPS/BLM/BRD) \$500K
 - DOD -\$500K
- G. Mojave Desert Ecosystem Recoverability Vulnerability Project**
 - USGS \$1.1M

This budget is slightly different than the original proposal; in most cases where there was a change, funding was increased. There is still some questions as to what happened with the USGS funding for a disturbed lands database. At the end of the subgroup meeting, we made a list of management/policy issues and discussion items to resolve with the Desert Managers.

1:00PM Subgroup met with Desert Managers. Items Discussed:

Temporary Detail: The Subgroup made a request to the managers to provide a full or half-time detail dedicated to planning for the initiative from April through September 30, 1999. The managers agreed that the work needed to prepare for implementing this large-scale project warranted pursuing a detail position. Russell Scofield, BLM Ranger & member of HazMat Working Group, has volunteered for this detail. We are awaiting confirmation from his office. This would greatly improve our planning process, as well as provide DLRTF with support and a liaison for other teams.

Work Plan for DMG in May: We will work with our assigned managers to prepare a program plan for each of the three programs involved. These will include budget, time frames, organizational structure, and program process. Program plans will be provided to DLRTF/HazMat members for review, and to DMG members for *preview prior to May* DMG meeting.

Project Applications, Project Prioritization, and Project Selection Strategies for site selection will emphasize ecosystem management in the decision making process. Step One will be to assemble the existing as well as new information regarding riparian, upland, and dump sites throughout the Mojave. GOAL: to provide managers and field staff with an assessment of size, scope, and distribution of disturbed lands throughout the Mojave. We are drafting a project site data sheet for review in the next week. Step Two will prioritize projects based on similar criteria set forth by DLRTF.

Step Three will select projects.

Staffing Structure: Discussion focused on how each program will be administered. There are many options, and of importance is keeping these options open. Options include interagency teams, contractors, CCC/other work crews, and "floating" assistance available on an on-call basis. Rather than hiring a GS-12 project lead to manage the program, it was decided to hire three GS-11 Team Leaders who will report to John Hammill in Barstow. These leaders will be experts in the field, having specialized experience with the program each will manage: Riparian restoration, upland restoration and dump cleanup.

Compliance: Several concerns were raised over compliance issues. We are looking into programmatic environmental assessments (particularly for dump cleanup and tamarisk removal). We expect that compliance will be handled in a variety of ways. In some situations, projects may already have compliance work done. In others, project staff may be available for non-complex compliance documents.

Fund Administration: Monies will be managed as follows:

Death Valley	Riparian NPS Budget
Joshua Tree	Upland NPS Budget
Mojave	Dump NPS Budget
BLM funds	centrally managed

BLM monies vs. NPS monies: Base increases for NPS, project funds for BLM.

Types of staff: PFT vs. NTE: This issue provoked some discussion regarding increased staffing for the project. It is important to consider the responsibility incurred with Permanent Full-Time staff. For now, we are considering only NTE Term Positions. This will provide for greater flexibility as the project proceeds. It is likely that the implementation of desert-wide restoration and cleanup will go through an adaptive process during the first few years.

Central location of core project staff: Barstow.

FY 2001 Budget: John Hammill discussed the current funding call for FY01. We must provide the DMG with a budget outline, much as it stands in the original initiative. This is due *April 14, 1999*.

We will send out a draft via email for comments by April 7. **5:00PM**

MEETING ADJOURNED This was an extremely productive meeting-- a lot of questions were answered, and the subgroup will be working on task items. Throughout the planning process we will be asking DLRTF and HazMat Working Group members to assist us. Your feedback, input, and help is important, particularly if you are field staff. Contact Jane Rodgers, Anne Knox, or Russell Scofield with your ideas. _