

DESERT LANDS RESTORATION TASK FORCE
9 September 1999

In Attendance:

Clarence Everly	DoD Lead, Desert Managers Group, MDEP
Ernest Quintana	NPS – Joshua Tree National Park
Jane Rodgers	NPS – Joshua Tree National Park
Eric Boerner	MDEP Webmaster
Patrick Clemens	MDEP
Tony Gross	NPS – Mojave National Preserve
Chris White	DoD – MCAGCC
Ruth Sparks	Charis Corp. – Ft. Irwin, NTC

MINUTES

**Thursday, 9 Sept.
10:00 AM**

Meeting started with a welcome from Jane Rodgers and round table introductions. An attendance roster was passed around.

Jane proposed Val Prehoda as the new co-chair of the Task Force and this action was accepted by the group. In the past, BLM appointees have filled this position, but they have had difficulty finding the necessary time and it was felt that Jane needs someone readily available to assist her.

Calendar of upcoming events was reviewed with the following items noted:

- DMG meeting: 14-15 September
- SER Conference: 22-27 September (San Francisco)
- Science and Data Management Team Meeting: 12 October (UCR)
- CalEPPC: 15-16 October (Sacramento)
- SRM Annual Conference: 4-5 November (Barstow, NTC field trip)

A budget update was presented by Jane. Funds for the Restoration Initiative were not approved by the House or the Senate, but there is hope for FY01. With that in mind, Jane revised the FY00 workplan to focus on those goals and objectives that could be met with little or no money. The group reviewed this and made the following general recommendations:

1. Under Project Goals and Objectives, retain just the short-term goals and indicate that these are for FY00 only.
2. Combine goals 1 and 3 to deal with identifying, monitoring, and tracking restoration projects and techniques via database development, website access and workshops.
3. Combine goals 4 and 5 to cover public outreach and partnering efforts.
4. Statement of products and timeframes should be made more specific.

Jane will revise the workplan based on these recommendations for presentation at the next DMG meeting. The need for generating support for FY01 funding at the grass roots level was emphasized.

The group reviewed a draft response to the BLM proposal for limiting cumulative new surface disturbance on DWMA's. Mr. Larry Foreman had presented this information at the July meeting and requested feedback from the Task Force. The text of the original proposal was passed around and Ruth summarized the discussion that had ensued at the last meeting. Jane also read excerpts from Larry Foreman's reply to the DLRTF draft letter. The consensus of the group (at both meetings) was that more information about the intent of the proposal was needed. However, based on the current understanding of

the proposal, the Task Force could neither support the overall concept of the 1% limit nor endorse the specific recovery criteria. The recovery criteria, as stated, ignore issues of soil stability, biodiversity, unique plant communities, fragmentation and sustainability. Jane will write a final letter to this effect.

Review of the personnel description was postponed until the afternoon.

Jane introduced the Plant Conservation Alliance, which will hold its annual meeting in conjunction with the SER Conference this month. The Restoration Committee, chaired by Jennifer Haley, would like to use the DLRTF as a model for other regional restoration initiatives. This would mean providing examples of our charter, workplans, funding efforts, policy statements, etc. In return, our small group can perhaps leverage some of PCA's involvement with The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club and other national groups for some of the grass roots support that we need for FY01 funding.

Because so few restoration people were at this meeting, Ruth's seeding presentation was deferred to another time.

The group reviewed the Personnel Description as revised at the July meeting. The following general comments were made:

1. Reduce the number of duty categories to four or five primary ones by deleting or combining those currently listed. Percent time allocated to each category must be specified and having more than five becomes problematic. Numbers 8, 9, 11, and 15 were identified for deletion.
2. Need to make sure that the duty categories chosen are compatible with DLRTF workplan goals.
3. Ernie Quintana stated that the duty station for other team coordinators is likely to be the BLM Office in Riverside. Although JOTR makes sense for the Restoration Coordinator, advantages of co-location at Riverside would be the availability of logistic support and academic resources, better communication between coordinators, and a more central location within the Mojave Desert Region.

Jane will finalize the description by the end of September based on these comments. The position can then be classified and recruited even though funding is not available at this time; the announcement can simply be closed without hiring.

The Restoration Project Database was viewed on-screen and Jane explained the various data entry fields. The intent of the form is to collect basic information in a very simple format for initial prioritization of projects. Along with site descriptors is a checklist that covers all of the items previously identified by the Task Force as prioritization criteria.

The following comments regarding the database entry form were made:

1. Have the Cost field be a series of categories to choose from.
2. Include NPS, BLM, and DoD as separate choices in Land Ownership field rather than simply "federal land".
3. Make a distinction between whether a site is Rare/ Endangered/ Threatened Species habitat or whether such a species is actually present.
4. The database should be queriable, so that potential users can get a feel for other projects being submitted. This could be done with some canned reporting forms.
5. The database would be reviewed at intervals (three months?) and current entries presented at DLRTF/DMG meetings.
6. Once proposed sites become actual projects, they would be pulled from the database into their own files.

Jane will send the database to Eric for inclusion on the web site as soon as possible.

MDEP has offered to provide a website for the DLRTF, and other DMG teams, within their current website at no cost. Eric will make contact with SDSU to move the contents of the current Task Force homepage from that site and ensure that SDSU provides redirection to the new address. This change should occur as quickly as possible before incurring any additional costs. Eric will make initial cosmetic changes with our input, but it will be up to all task force members to provide updated information and suggestions.

The group looked over the FY00 workplan for Recovery and Vulnerability of Desert Ecosystems. Clarence gave a brief overview of this project and indicated the need for DLRTF input to provide direction and focus. Len Gaydos will be invited to attend the next meeting in order to give a more in-depth description of the work being done and answer any questions the group may have.

The Dump Cleanup Team is currently working on their Illegal Dump Cleanup Initiative for presentation to the DMG. The point was made that as personnel go to dump, they need to record the information necessary for input into the restoration database as well.

Some members of the group expressed concern that Task Force meetings were no longer well attended by people doing restoration work in the Mojave. Although the past several meetings have focused on workplans and budgets for the Restoration Initiative, the group also needs to provide a forum for exchange of information, ideas, and energy amongst restorationists.

No date was set for the next meeting, although the week of 6 December has been tentatively targeted. Invitations will be extended to Len Gaydos (Recoverability/Vulnerability Project), Jeff Lovich (USGS), and others to present current work that relates to restoration within the Mojave.

Tasks:

1. Revise workplan – Jane
2. Revise BLM response letter – Jane
3. Revise PD - Jane
4. Review Recoverability/Vulnerability Workplan – all prior to next meeting
5. Outreach plan – deferred
6. Training session for next meeting – Jane and Ruth to contact speakers
7. Investigate homepage billing/switchover – Jane to contact Tom Zink, Eric
8. Representative to Science and Data Management Team – Ruth
9. Representative to DIRT – Val (?)
10. Phone calls to people we haven't seen lately – Ruth
11. Minutes – Ruth
12. List of ongoing projects (What studies do you have happening at your place?) – all

The meeting concluded at 1600.