

DESERT LANDS RESTORATION TASK FORCE
CALIFORNIA DESERT RESTORATION INITIATIVE
SUBGROUP MEETING
Barstow BLM Headquarters
23 November 1999

In Attendance:	John Hamill	DOI Lead, DMG
	Clarence Everly	DoD Coordinator, DMG
	Jane Rodgers	DLRTF Co-Chair, JTNP
	Val Prehoda	DLRTF Co-Chair, MCAGCC
	Ruth Sparks	Ft. Irwin NTC ITAM Program
	Jim Keeler	BLM, Barstow
	Ileene Anderson	CNPS
	Jackie Lindgren	MDRCD
	Juli Smith	BLM/HAZMAT Working Group
	Jessica Walker	BLM Barstow
	Kelly Hawk-Mu	NPS MOJA

MINUTES

Wednesday, Nov 23

- 9:00 AM** Meeting started with welcome by Jane Rodgers, round table introductions, and review of the agenda.
- 9:15 – 9:30 AM** John discussed the FY2000 budget and said that the priority for funding should be to hire the Restoration Project Manager. He wanted to know if DLRTF agreed with that because a decision meeting would be held in Dec. Clarence and John would be attending that meeting and would also hash out the staffing plan – who reports to who, etc. John would prefer to have all the project managers co-located and working as a team. At this point, the Desert Managers Group is still in the process of deciding where these positions will be located.
- 9:30-10:30 AM** Jane deviated from the agenda somewhat to discuss an issue of deep significance to DLRTF. Attendance at DLRTF meetings has dropped significantly, and motivation has been eroding ever since the focus of effort has been on funding initiatives. The biggest meeting was in 1995, and the anticipation of the members then was that DLRTF was a data-sharing organization. Since the push on funding began, Jane has been forced to take the brunt of the level of effort, and is to the point of resigning as co-chair. She questioned whether hiring a coordinator was even cost-effective, as well as the work plans, for the amount of time we put into it and nothing comes to pass from lack of funding. She would like to return the focus of effort to collaborations with other groups, because we don't have the time or energy to put together competitive budgets and work plans. She also noted that the identity of the group has changed from restorationists to other personnel with little or no preservationist background. Ruth echoed Jane's sense of frustration, and added that she had no sense of accomplishment in the last couple years. She also added that DLRTF was more productive with no money and many valuable members have dropped out from sense of frustration. She said our strength lies in our function as a clearinghouse for restoration projects, questions, etc. She finished by noting that the group needs to become credible as a restoration entity to even hope to get money. Julie added that her points of contact are not expressing confidence in the viability of the group as it exists today. Jim stated that everyone in Jane's position burned out because the level of effort was too much; he dropped out for a year because he couldn't equate the value with the cost. Ileene offered, as an outside agency, to write a letter of support to DMG for the funded positions, which would take the stress off DLRTF members. John supported that initiative, saying that there is tremendous support for the desert but there's no focal point. There is a great need to get all supportive groups behind the DMG, which will enervate all the sub-groups – DMG's biggest challenge. John admitted that the frustration level was high because of lack of funding, and recommended putting the work plan on the back burner to focus on getting the preservationists back into the group and focus on viability. He stated that DLRTF needs to tell DMG that we are not money raisers, our strengths lie elsewhere, and to capitalize on those. Clarence added

that the constituency/work plan/budget all had a political focus and the membership had indeed dwindled because of it. He recommended that DLRTF focus on networking, etc and let John focus on the political aspect.

10:30-11:30 AM Jane conducted a Question and Answer phone call with Kathryn Thomas, the Vegetation Scientist with the USGS Vulnerability and Recoverability Program. In answer to a question, Kathryn stated that the work is not restricted to California, and it would be better to address questions face to face. Unfortunately, the workshop with the restoration group on the V & R planning got stalled. Jane asked if Kathryn could send a written response to DLRTF questions. She replied by saying she needed to understand the focus of the questions. Jane clarified that the focus was on why the Science and Data Mgt. Team did not have the issues addressed in the work plan. Kathryn said that the whole project is really interesting because of the number of scientists working together which poses certain challenges – also the client is a diverse group that also poses challenges. This is also the first year that the Science and Data Mgt. Team of the DMG has reviewed the V and R Program so the process is evolutionary. Jane said that DLRTF would like to know what weight our questions will have over the project. Kathryn asked what weight would we like it to have. Jane replied that as the client, we would like to have answers that we could apply to restoration and help on prioritizing projects etc. Kathryn said that since the funding is USGS, the priority would fall on projects that USGS feels are important, not necessarily DLRFT priorities. While this project has been ongoing for about two years already, the USGS is asking us for input regarding applicability. Jane said the DLRFT would appreciate comments (responses) before our next meeting, which will be held March 7. Kathryn said she would get them out in December but would need to route them through Mat and Len first. After the phone call concluded, Clarence said that her project responsibilities were only one aspect of the whole project which is why the Science and Data Mgt. Team has the overall purview of the project and why it has not yet been endorsed by them. Julie made a good point by asking why not get all three groups to meet with a facilitator to hash things out. Jane noted that the recent meeting that had been canceled was supposed to have accomplished that very thing. Clarence said Len Gaydos needs to come to DLRTF's next meeting to give an overview of the whole project for clarification. There was consensus amongst the group that we need to have a meeting dedicated to a Science and Data Mgt. presentation where everything that everyone is doing gets put on the board. As a follow up, groups doing restoration research should be invited to attend and discuss their projects. Ruth said that it would also serve to bring members back. Jessie interjected by saying that the Nature Conservancy was doing an in-depth study which seemed fairly similar and also stated that their Ord Mt. Vehicle Route Designation EA had just come out and they would like to have it reviewed.

Kelly then gave a brief overview of work in the Mojave National Preserve. Grazing management was the main focus because of all the issues involved. Chris was working on burro management.

11:30 –12:00 PM

Val gave an overview of the DIRT meeting she attended on 18 Nov. The group basically reviewed outreach input from various DMG working groups. 6 groups did not send any information in DLRTF's plan was reviewed with the following comments: Needed to add the JTNP Advisory Council to the "Key Targets Audience"; recommended minimizing the environmental stance and focus more on recreational aspects; focus more on the economic and social benefits, such as bringing more water into the system through riparian restoration efforts, encouraging local nurseries to grow/offer native plants, bringing inner-city residents out to conduct restoration, and promoting flexibility of land use through restoration efforts. Jane noted that DLRFT couldn't do outreach unless members did it on an individual basis and on their own dime. The focus should be on the general public through interpretive centers, not PowerPoint presentations. John said that the DMG sees DLRTF outreach efforts as an opportunity for media; an "ad-hoc" method of promoting greater awareness. DMG can't do the bulk of outreach – all the subgroups have to be involved. He said he has been tasked to look at forming a non-profit organization to generate revenues for outreach efforts along the same lines as national park associations but on a broader scale.

After the outreach discussion, the following general information was passed. Jane stated that DLRTF needed to re-vitalize the database. There is a website for the new Jepson Manual. Anyone with information on restoration and related courses should email them to DLRTF members. In January, there will be a meeting to revise the CA Vegetation Manual. Matt Brooks is organizing a Weed Mgt Group, and there is a new weed list out. John added that USFWS is probably going to get funding next year for a wetland/riparian map, and was DLRTF interested in interacting with them? The group consensus was to give that information to the Science and Data Mgt Team.

12:00 – 1:30 PM Lunch

1:30-4:00 PM Jane, Val, Ruth and Jim worked on the Accomplishments Report and Work Plan for the December DMG meeting. Accomplishments for 1999 were listed as:

1. Soils Class;
2. BLM 1% and the MDRC&D reviews;
3. Outreach Plan;
4. DLRTF Co-chair assigned (DoD);
5. The Riparian/Upland PD completed;
6. The FY00 Workplan completed;
7. The database prototype completed;
8. The website moved; and
9. The presentation by the South African National Park restorationist.

The FY00 Work Plan included the V&R Collaboration, the DIRT Liaison and outreach plan, the Mojave Weed Mgt. Subgroup, and MDRC&D.

For the December DMG meeting, the issues will be 1) the SDMT Desert wide research list, 2) poor attendance at DLRTF meetings, 3) need to refocus efforts, 4) the V&R meeting, and 5) the Science and Data Mgt. workshop.

The next meeting date was set for March, 7 Feb, 9:00 am, at the Barstow BLM office.

Respectfully submitted,
Val Prehoda