

**Minutes from Science and Data Management Team
meeting, 26 August, 1999, UC, Riverside**

Agenda

0900-0915 - Update on FY2000 budget (Hamill)

0915-0945 - How should research priorities/peer-review be set up for the Mojave?

0945-1010 - Revision of Charter for SDMT

1010-1030 - Future of SDMT and GIS subgroup

1030-1130 - Additional discussion on location of Coordinator positions

(group)

1130-1200 - Discussion of latest Mojave Desert Ecosystem Science Program Workplan (Miller)

1200-1250 - Priority setting if we don't get full FY2000 funding

(group)

1250-1300 - Schedule next meeting, adjourn

Attendees: Clarence Everly, Larry Foreman, Len Gaydos, John Hamill, Jim Kenna, Dave Miller, Bob Williams, Ric Williams

Minutes (ACTION ITEMS AT BOTTOM)

John started with an update of the FY2000 budget situation. While things don't look good at present, we still need to be ready to act, especially if we get partial funding.

The group talked briefly about the water initiative that is proposed for FY2001. We decided that we needed to have expertise in this area in the SDMT. As such, we need to recruit some hydrologists to the Team for development of an FY2000 workplan to implement the initiative in FY2001.

Regarding the SDMT Charter, Len thought that our GIS and Science subgroups were different enough to warrant different teams. Ric stated that Edwards AFB participants in the SDMT support possible separation. The group consensus was to recommend to the DMG that the SDMT be reorganized to form a Science Team (including some hydrologists) and a GIS Team. Our focus will remain on integration among teams, not separation. We also agreed to modify the new Charter to replace Mojave/Colorado Deserts with "California Desert(s)." Clarence will draft the GIS Charter.

Regarding discussion of the Role of the reconstituted Science Team (ST), John thought that we

should prioritize research for the California Desert. Jeff liked the idea of us reviewing proposals as long as we do not become a bureaucratic hurdle. The group came to consensus on the idea that the ST should identify high priority research issues. Larry didn't like the idea of having the ST reviewing agency planning efforts. The consensus was that the ST would recommend to the DMG that we are available to provide technical review.

Len recommended having the DMG request that the USGS lead development of a science strategy for the Mojave. Jeff didn't like the idea because of the problems that were inherent in the old Bureau Information Needs process of NBS and the fact that a number of mechanisms (TAC, MOG, Mojave Desert Science Symposium, etc.) already exist for assisting in the prioritization of research and monitoring.

The group discussed the location of the Coordinator (Integrated Ecological Monitoring, Tortoise Monitoring) positions that were recommended by our Team at the last meeting. Jim affirmed his concurrence with our earlier recommendation of co-locating both Coordinators in Riverside. Bob said that Mike Spear would be the one in FWS to make the recommendation on location for the Tortoise Monitoring Coordinator. The group decided to brief the DMG on the analysis used at the last meeting to arrive at the recommendation of Riverside.

We examined the Tortoise Monitoring Workplan and approved it pending revision to include language for coordination with the Integrated Ecological Research and Monitoring position.

Len and Dave presented the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Science Program FY2000 workplan for recoverability and vulnerability. Jeff pointed out that 7 of the 13 questions that the "...project is designed to answer..." already have answers or at least substantive beginnings of answers (effects of desert disturbance, time to recovery, etc.). Jeff has a major review paper coming out for publication in the journal Environmental Management that already answered most of the questions, and he has a "Readers Digest" version of the manuscript in the latest USGS Status and Trends publication. He passed around copies of both. Questions in the workplan that have merit (as written) include:

Which disturbed sites will recover with assistance, which don't need assistance, and which may never recover?

Can dispersal of exotic species be modeled and forecast?

How will climatic change and its future trends affect recoverability and vulnerability?

What measures (such as introduction of cryptobiotic crusts) may shield sites against disturbance?

How can ecological conditions of the desert be monitored over time?

John thought that the workplan needed more detail. The consensus was that it needed a major revision before it could be presented to the DMG.

We discussed our fallback positions if we don't get funding for the initiatives on the table. The consensus was that our number one priority is to get the coordinators on board. If we don't get money until FY2001 we should slide the schedule to use that year for development and FY2002 for implementation.

The next meeting will be in Riverside from 1000-1400 on October 12 (meeting place to be determined).

ACTION ITEMS

- Clarence will draft Charter for GIS subgroup
- Jeff will redraft Charter for newly constituted Science Team
- Len will redraft the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Science Program workplan
- Jeff, John and Jim will continue working on the PD for the Integrated Ecological Research and Monitoring Coordinator