

**FY 05 DMG Accomplishment Report
FY 06 DMG 5 Year Plan Goals and Tasks**

Goal:

3. Recover the desert tortoise in the California recovery units.

Task:

- A. USGS will finalize and distribute their report on the Effectiveness of Desert Tortoise Recovery Actions. **(FY 05, GS, on track)**
- B. FWS will establish a Desert Tortoise Science Advisory Committee to provide scientific guidance to the DTRO, the DMG and other tortoise recovery and monitoring activities. **(FY 05, FWS, on track)**
- C. FWS will establish an in-house repository for all desert tortoise data via an MOU. The MOU will outline protocols for the structure and maintenance of the data repository and accessing data in the repository. **(FY 05, FWS, on track)**
- D. As a condition of any new or renewed Endangered Species Act (ESA) and/or California Endangered Species Act (CESA) research permit, the FWS DTRO and CDFG will require all agencies/institutions/researchers to abide by established data management protocols and submit to the desert tortoise data repository a brief annual report along with a complete copy of their field data. **(FY 05, FWS/DFG, on track)**
- E. The DMG will implement a multifaceted education and outreach campaign aimed at increasing public support of the involvement in desert tortoise recovery in California. Required actions include:
 - 1. Hire Tortoise Outreach Coordinator **(FY 05-07, NPS)**
 - 2. Media campaign
 - a. Radio PSAs **(FY 05-07, NPS)**
 - b. Media kit **(FY 06-07, NPS)**
 - c. News releases **(FY 05-08, NPS)**
 - d. Television PSAs/programming **(FY 05-07, NPS)**
 - e. Desert Tortoise Summit **(FY 06, NPS)**
 - f. Media Field Days **(FY 05-07, NPS)**
 - 3. Desert tortoise education component **(FY 05-07, NPS)**
 - 4. Desert tortoise newsletter **(FY 05-07, NPS)**
 - 5. Desert tortoise color brochure **(FY 05-07, NPS)**
 - 6. Public attitude and effectiveness study **(FY 05-08, NPS)**
 - 7. Raven management **(FY 05-06, Defenders of Wildlife)**
 - 8. Desert tortoise website **(FY 05-08, MDEP)**
 - 9. Desert tortoise merchandise **(FY 05-08, Joshua Tree NP Association)**

- F. The DMG will complete appropriate NEPA compliance and secure the necessary permits required by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to implement a raven management program in the California deserts. **(FY 05, FWS, on track)**
- G. The DMG, cooperation with the University of Redlands, USGS and interested stakeholders, will initiate an inventory of raven nests. **(FY 05, all)**
- H. The DMG will implement raven management actions in selected Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMAs), critical habitat, and/or NPS units. **(FY 05, FWS, funding dependent)**
- I. The DMG, in cooperation with local animal control agencies, will report the results of the feral dog survey and develop a Feral Dog Management Plan. The plan will articulate control/management measures, a method for assessing the effectiveness of control/management measures, and provide an agreed upon implementation timeline. **(FY 05, CDFG, funding dependent)**
- J. Develop a Coordinated Desert Tortoise Headstarting and Translocation Plan. **(FY 05, DOD/USGS/FWS/CDFG, ongoing)**
- K. The DMG will identify and implement actions to help control the spread of disease and allow for collection of information that will lead to a better understanding of diseases that affect desert tortoise. **(FY 06, no lead, funding dependent)**
- L. The DMG will develop recovery action plans for desert tortoise recovery units in the California deserts that identify and cost share high priority DT recovery, monitoring, and research action. **(FY 05, DT Implementation and Planning Work Group/FWS, on track)**
- M. The DMG will explore and identify opportunities for increasing funding to support DT recovery and effectiveness monitoring. **(FY 05, DMG Ad hoc work group, on track)**

Acknowledgement:

Summary of Accomplishments:

B. The FWS organized a Science Advisory Committee (SAC) made up of seven scientists from within and outside the Mojave desert tortoise arena. The SAC has met four times since May 2005 with the next meeting scheduled for 20-21 January. The SAC is currently developing recovery objectives and criteria and a threat assessment process. Additional information on the SAC, as well as meeting notes, is available at http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert_tortoise/dtro.html.

C. The MOU has been delayed while database planning continues among the partners. Primary database needs have been identified by Service field offices, and an outline of the various components envisioned has been produced. FWS plans to hire a Desert Tortoise Monitoring Coordinator to oversee data management.

D. The DTRO has assumed lead in recovery permit review for the Service, in coordination with the regional office and field offices. Specific requirements relative to the DTRO data repository remain pending establishment of that repository.

J. No activity other than coordination among the Ft. Irwin Conservation/Mitigation Working Group on the expansion of the National Training Center and associated translocation.

K. No activity. The SAC includes an epidemiologist, so progress on this activity is anticipated in 2006.

L. The Desert Tortoise Recovery Planning and Implementation Work Group formally invited representatives from Defenders of Wildlife, the Center for Biological Diversity, QuadStates County Government Coalition, and OHV interests to join the group; each of these groups accepted the invitation. The FWS developed an agreement with the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR) to conduct a stakeholder assessment of issues surrounding the desert tortoise in Nevada, Utah, and Arizona, and contracting a third-party neutral practitioner to conduct an assessment in California. The assessment is planned to be completed by May 2006. The result of this assessment will determine whether or not proceeding with subsequent phases of regional recovery planning is appropriate or feasible, or how best to proceed, with the possibility of pursuing different approaches in different areas. Assuming a favorable stakeholder assessment, completion of regional recovery action plans is projected for December 2006.

M. ??

Recommendations for FY 06 work plan:

B. Delete.

C. Retain, but move to Goal 9 and integrate with Task E.

D. Retain, but move to Goal. 9.

K. Retain.

L. Retain, conditional on results of the USIECR stakeholder assessment.

M. Retain.

Other – is there anything about fire or invasive weeds elsewhere in the work plan?

Comments/concerns: none

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Goal:

9. Monitor desert tortoise population status in relation to recovery goals for the California deserts' recovery units.

Task:

- A. Continue Line Distance Transect sampling to assess desert tortoise density, habitat quality, and threats. **(FY 05-09, FWS/MDEP, on track)**
- B. Sample selected desert tortoise Permanent Study Plots (PSP) in California. **(FY 05-09, FWS, funding dependent/on hold)**
- C. FWS will identify opportunities to integrate LDS and PSP efforts to:
 - 1. Produce the best data in the most cost effective manner possible;
 - 2. Provide a method by which managers can prioritize funding for PSPs and LDS. **(FY 05-09, FWS, on hold)**
- D. Publish a report of desert tortoise LDS monitoring results for FYs 01-04. **(FY 05, FWS, on track)**
- E. The DOD Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program (MDEP) will coordinate with the FWS to develop a single master database for all desert tortoise data. MDEP will transition all of its desert tortoise data to the master database. **(FY 05-08, FWS/MDEP, on track)**

Acknowledgement:

Summary of Accomplishments:

A. LDS sampling was conducted in 2005. QA/QC of 2004 data is complete, QA/QC of 2001-2 and 2005 data is nearing completion, and a summary report is in progress. The FWS is developing a Monitoring Coordinator position to oversee all aspects of the monitoring program.

B. No activity?

C. LDS evaluation is ongoing. PSPs should only be surveyed if the study addresses specific hypothesis-based management questions.

D. It is anticipated that a draft summary report of density results (less conclusions and recommendations) will be completed by the end of January 2006. Additionally in January, the Monitoring Implementation Committee will meet to draft conclusions and recommendations.

E. This activity has been delayed while database planning continues among the partners. Primary database needs have been identified by Service field offices, and an outline of the various components envisioned has been produced. FWS plans to hire a Desert Tortoise Monitoring Coordinator to oversee data management.

Recommendations for FY 06 work plan:

A. Monitoring efforts will focus on a 5-year review of the program, rather than additional field surveys in 2006. The Service will hire a Monitoring Coordinator to oversee all aspects of the monitoring program. The Monitoring Implementation Committee will also be expanded to include manager representatives.

B. Change to: Integrate PSP surveys into management-action effectiveness research or other hypothesis-based studies.

C. Delete.

D. Change to: Publish comprehensive monitoring report for 2001-05.

E. Integrate Goal 3, Task C, into this task.

F. Move Goal 3, Task D, here.

Comments/concerns:

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