

Final Draft
Desert Managers Group
FY 2002 Accomplishment Report
and
5-Year Plan
(FY 2003 - FY 2007)

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Information about the DMG is available at www.dmg.gov or by contacting:

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1.0 Background and Purpose

The California deserts (Figure 1) include some 100 communities, 2 national parks, 1 national preserve, 6 military bases, 8 counties, 10 state parks, 37 federally recognized Native American Indian tribes, and more than 11 million acres of public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The 25 million-acre desert region is situated within a day's drive of 40 million people and is a well-known destination for hundreds of thousands of out of state visitors each year. The California deserts' abundant sunshine, wind, and geothermal resources also make it an important source of renewable energy in the western United States. In addition, the California deserts are critically important training and testing grounds for the U. S. military.

By 2020, the deserts' permanent population is expected to increase by over 1 million and the population of the surrounding area is expected to increase by about 10 million. The demands of increasing use by millions of visitors and permanent residents will create mounting pressure and new challenges for land management agencies in the deserts. A mechanism for addressing desert-wide issues was established in 1994 in the form of the Desert Managers Group (DMG), an interagency group that is coordinating and integrating desert conservation, visitor services, and public safety efforts in the California deserts. Under the multi-agency management umbrella provided by the DMG, interagency collaboration is occurring; duplication of effort is being eliminated; resources are being shared; data are being collected in a uniform manner; and complementary and more uniform management polices are being developed.

Partners involved with the DMG include the State of California (Fish and Game, Parks and Recreation, and Caltrans), the Department of Defense (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps), the Department of the Interior (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and Geological Survey), and the U.S. Forest Service. More information on the DMG, including the Group's charter, organization, and current events is available at www.dmg.gov.

The purpose of this document is to (1) summarize the accomplishments of the DMG in FY 02 and (2) describe the goals and objectives established by the DMG for fiscal year 2003 through 2007. As with all crosscutting, multi-agency programs, performance is dependent on the availability of adequate funds and staff for each agency to carry out these efforts.

2.0 The DMG 5-Year Plan and Accomplishment Report

The 5-Year Plan is an operational plan that is updated and approved annually by the DMG. The 5-Year Plan is intended to:

1. Facilitate internal and external communication about the goals and activities of the DMG;
2. Provide a tool for the DMG and its Work Groups to track activities and projects; and
3. Serve as a basis for future budget planning for DMG agencies.

In 2001, the DMG Managers reviewed the precepts, methodologies, and processes by which the DMG operates, how projects would be managed, and its priority goals and objectives. This review resulted in major changes to the DMG 5-Year Plan. Many of the goals/projects included

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in last year's 5-Year Plan were identified as lower priority efforts that would not be pursued given the current level of staff, funding, and agency support (see Appendix A). These goals/projects will be pursued by DMG agencies as time/resources permit.

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The DMG 5-Year Plan includes 15 goals in four general categories:

1. Resource Conservation and Management
2. Visitor Services
3. Science and Data Management
4. DMG Program Management

A brief description of these goals, a summary of FY 02 accomplishments, and plans/activities to be completed in the FY 03 to FY 07 timeframe are provided below. The objectives/tasks, schedule and responsibilities for the FY 03-FY 07 activities for each goal are described in Table 2.0.

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2.1 Resource Conservation and Management Goals and Accomplishments

Goal 1. Restore selected upland and riparian habitats identified for restoration.

FY02 Accomplishments:

1. A work plan for landscape-based restoration in the San Felipe Creek-San Sebastian Marsh watershed of Anza-Borrego State Park and El Centro Field Office was developed. The following were accomplished:
2. The Restoration Work Group email list was reestablished to facilitate communication among workgroup members.
3. Planning for the Arid Southwest Lands Habitat Restoration Conference was initiated. The conference will be held in Palm Springs, CA on March 3-7, 2003. (<http://www.dmg.gov/conference.html>). The conference will include a session focused on the USGS Recoverability and Vulnerability of Desert Ecosystems (RVDE) project field trips, and practical information about restoration and restoration techniques.
4. A Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Mojave Desert Weed Management Area (MWMA) was developed and finalized. Over 20 DMG members and local government agencies were signatories to the MOU.
5. Partnerships with federal, state, and local agencies and private groups to restore the Mojave River watershed were explored.
6. An ad hoc DMG workgroup was established to provide management guidance to the USGS RVDE project

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FY 03+ Goals:

1. The work plan to acquire land and restore habitat in the San Felipe Creek-San Sebastian Marsh Watershed will continue to be implemented.

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2. Pursuant to the MOU that established the Mojave Desert Weed Management Area, the DMG will assist with coordination of weed management activities in the Mojave Desert and the development of the long range plan.
3. Discussions will be continued with stakeholders and potential partners to conduct landscape-based restoration of the Mojave River and the Amargosa River watersheds.
4. The DMG will coordinate and sponsor the Arid Southwest Lands Habitat Restoration Conference in Palm Springs on March 3-7, 2003.
5. The DMG will continue to provide guidance and recommendations to the USGS RVDE project aimed at improving the management applicability of the research effort.
6. The DMG Habitat Restoration Coordinator will assist DMG partners in procuring funding for restoration projects.

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Goal 2. Clean up and restore illegal dumps that pose a public health or environmental threat and reduce the incidence of illegal dumping in the future.

FY02 Accomplishments:

1. The Hazardous Materials Work Group remained active in FY 02; The Group met four times during the year; representatives reported on work group activities at all regular and special DMG meetings.
2. The Work Group sponsored, co-sponsored or provided regional technical training for participating agencies including an 8-hour annual hazardous waste operations and emergency response (HAZWOPER) refresher training in Riverside in June 2002; a 3-day EPA hazardous materials sampling training course in Riverside in May 2002; a 2-day environmental crime scene investigations training course in Riverside in September 2002; and an illegal dumping workshop in Bakersfield in October 2002.
3. The illegal dumpsite database was populated by BLM's national technical service contractor, Dynamac; 118 sites were identified and visited in the field. The database will be used to produce a list of priority sites for clean-up.
4. Six large legacy illegal dumps sites were cleaned-up:
 - Nipton
 - 3 Route 66 sites (Amboy, Chambless, and Essex)
 - Crevasse/Hi Vista, and
 - Vidal

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The clean-ups were funded under a cost share Program with the California Integrated Waste Management Board.

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FY 03+ Goals:

1. The HAZMAT work group continue to work with Keep California Beautiful and others to develop and implement a program to prevent illegal dumping. The prevention program will focus on (a) educating the public about the problems associated with illegal dumping, (b) enforcing laws related to illegal dumping, (c) providing viable alternatives to illegal dumping, and (d) protecting sites that have been restored.
2. The illegal dump database will be maintained and high priority sites will be selected for clean-up based on established criteria.
3. Illegal dumps identified for clean up and restoration in FY 03, include:
 - ❖ Dillion Road Canyons illegal dumping sites (Long Canyon, East and West Wide Canyons, Fan Canyon, Berdoo Canyon, Indo Hills site, and Frago Canyon);
 - ❖ Walter's Camp illegal dumping site;
 - ❖ Mesquite/Sandy Valley illegal dumping sites; and
 - ❖ Two other yet to be identified sites.
4. Partnerships with the California Integrated Waste Management Board, counties, nonprofit organizations and other federal agencies will be continued or created. Funds will be leveraged to the maximum extent possible.
5. DMG agencies will sponsor or provide regional technical training for participating agencies to include 8-hour annual hazardous waste operations and emergency response (HAZWOPER) refresher training and at least one other technical training opportunity.
 - ❖ Sponsor EPA air monitoring training in Winter 2003;
 - ❖ Sponsor the 8-hour HAZWOPER refresher training in Spring 2003; and
 - ❖ Co-sponsor appropriate technical training such as the environmental crime scene investigations course in Fall 2003.

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

FY02 Accomplishments:

1. The DMG developed and approved the Desert Tortoise Recovery Action Plan, September 11, 2002. The Plan includes a variety of actions aimed at recovering the desert tortoise such as evaluating the effectiveness of recovery actions implemented since the desert tortoise was listed; monitoring and adaptive management; addressing causes of mortality with emphasis on disease and predation; public education and outreach; and implementation and funding strategies.
2. The University of Redlands, at the request of the DMG, produced a series of reports that summarize completed and ongoing recovery, monitoring and research actions for the desert tortoise for each of the recovery units in the Mojave Desert (<http://www.dmg.gov/dtactions.html>). Information in the reports was based on a comprehensive survey of land and resource management agencies and entities responsible for desert tortoise recovery and management. The information in the report

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will be used by the DMG to manage and plan an effective recovery effort for the desert tortoise. The reports will be updated annually.

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FY 03+ Goals: The DMG will focus on completion/implementation of the following actions:

1. Conduct a scientific evaluation, based on current information, of the effectiveness of past recovery actions, specifically actions related to vehicle management, cattle and sheep grazing, and construction of tortoise fences.
2. Synthesize and evaluate existing information related to the status/trends of desert tortoise populations
3. Implementation of line distance sampling for critical habitat in the desert tortoise recovery units in the California desert
4. Integration of line distance sampling with permanent study plot sampling
5. Coordinate recovery actions in various agency land management plans with emphasis on the West Mojave recovery unit
6. Develop/implement recommendations for addressing the impacts of :
 - ❖ Disease
 - ❖ Raven predation
 - ❖ Feral dogs
7. Develop and implement a public education outreach program to educate the public about the effects of the release of captive tortoises on wild tortoises and to build public and stakeholder support for desert tortoise recovery.

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Goal 4. Reduce and maintain burro populations to appropriate management levels and in appropriate locations.

FY02 Accomplishments:

In January 1999, the Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service signed the California Desert Strategic Plan for the Management of Wild Burros (<http://www.dmg.gov/documents/StrtgcPlanBurros.PDF>). The Plan was based on the recognition that overpopulation of wild burros was adversely impacting many desert resources. A key element of the strategy is to “aggressively remove existing excess burros to reach appropriate management levels (AML) and to maximize efficiency and reduce operational costs through innovative shared use of staff and resources.”

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Since the wild burro strategy was signed, BLM, NPS and various other agencies (Fish and Wildlife Service; California Fish and Game; BLM Field Offices in Yuma and Havasu; military reservations including China Lake, Chocolate Mountain Gunnery Range, and Ft. Irwin; Bureau of Reclamation, Metropolitan Water District, and the Chemehuevi Indian tribe) have worked collaboratively to accomplish the goals and objectives of the plan. Approximately 3,450 animals have been removed from the California Desert and placed in adoption programs. This averages 986 animals annually--significantly more than the historical annual average of 200 to 400 animals/year.

These removals have benefited special status animal and plant species, riparian habitat, other wildlife, and cultural resources. For example, more than 1,000 animals were removed from

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desert tortoise habitat; 493 animals were removed from Inyo California Towhee habitat and lands immediately adjacent to Inyo California Towhee habitat; and 595 animals were removed from lands along the lower Colorado River including portion of the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation.

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A total of 539 burros and 7 horses were removed from the Mojave Desert in FY 02. (BLM removed 3 horses and 416 burros; Death Valley NP removed 123 burros and 4 horses). These removals include:

- ❖ 75 burros removed from Butte Valley and the Panamint Mountains as well as from the Owlshead Mountains
- ❖ 38 burros and 4 horses from Saline Valley, Hunter Mountain and Lee Flat.
- ❖ 313 burros from the Chemehuevi HMA
- ❖ 92 burros from the Clark mountain HMA
- ❖ 3 horses from the Chicago Valley HMA
- ❖ 13 burros from Park Moab, California

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The California BLM placed more than 1,200 animals through its adoption program.

In addition, BLM completed a population census on the Chemehuevi and Chicago HMAs. BLM also completed monitoring on Chemehuevi, Centennial, Clark Mountain, Picacho, Chocolate-Mule Mountain, and Chicago Valley. BLM established vegetative monitoring studies within the Picacho Herd Area Complex, Chemehuevi HMA, Clark Mountain HMA, Panamint HMA, and Centennial HMA. A reduction in the level of use along the lower Colorado River has been observed as a result of removals in this area. BLM and California Fish and Game are two years into a five-year study to monitor the seasonal movements of both burros and deer within the Picacho Herd Area complex.

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FY 03+ Goals:

The continuing goal is to reduce burro populations on BLM, FWS, DOD and State lands to “appropriate management levels” and eliminate them from Death Valley National Park and the Mojave National Preserve. An estimated 1,300 excess animals remain in and around BLM’s herd management areas in the California deserts. BLM believes there is an additional 700 nuisance animals spread throughout southern California in Death Valley National Park and the Mojave National Preserve that are not protected under the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act. The key to removing these animals will be funding for additional removals and the successful adoption of the animals held in captivity. Currently there is a funding shortage in BLM and NPS and a backlog in the BLM adoption program. To address these issues, the DMG will explore opportunities for funding burro roundups and adoptions through private donors/foundations.

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- Deleted: Appropriate Management Levels (AML) of burros will be defined/refined as part of the BLM land management planning process. Burro populations will be reduced on BLM, FWS, DOD and State lands to “appropriate management levels” and eliminated on National Parks and Preserves by 2003. Management actions (e.g., fences) will be implemented as practical to prevent movement of burros to areas where they are not supposed to be (e.g., outside herd management areas or into National Parks/Preserves). Standardized population monitoring protocols will be developed and burro population and range land health monitoring will be conducted. The BLM will have lead responsibility for coordinating burro management activities throughout the desert in coordination with NPS, FWS, DOD, and State Parks/Fish and Game.
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Management actions (e.g., fences) will be implemented, as practical, to prevent movement of burros to areas where they are not supposed to be (e.g., outside herd management areas or into National Parks/Preserves). Burro populations and rangeland health will be monitored subject to the availability of funds.

Goal 5. Protect cultural resources and enhance public awareness of the sensitivity and value of paleontological and cultural resources in the California deserts.

FY02 Accomplishments:

1. The BLM Training Center sponsored a three-day ARPA class in July, 2002 in Ridgecrest, California that was attended by a variety DMG archaeologists and rangers.
2. Final editing was completed on over 60 technical papers that were presented at the May 2001 "Millennium Conference: the Human Journey and Ancient Life in the California Deserts."

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FY 03+ Goals:

1. Proceedings of the Millennium Conference will be published and distributed in FY 03.
2. The Paleontological and Cultural Resources Action Team (PACRAT) will meet to monitor CHRIS GIS implementation, management, and maintenance, and identify new initiatives and activities.

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Goal 6: Ensure the long-term sustainability of the military mission in the California deserts.

FY02 Accomplishments:

1. All military installations in the BLM West Mojave planning area actively participated in the planning effort. BLM planners actively sought input from the installations regarding species and land management prescriptions. As a result, the West Mojave planners included provisions of the various Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans into the West Mojave plan that articulates the contributions the military installations make to the overall plan. Additionally, several installation personnel participated in key roles in the overall project.
2. Death Valley National Park and Edwards Air Force Base actively collaborated in a project to develop a compatible location for an additional radar site in the Saline Valley. This radar site will significantly enhance safety for aviation in the area as well as improve the Air Force's ability to gain information on aircraft operating in the area.

FY 03+ Goals:

1. BLM, NPS and the State will continue to actively consider DOD mission requirements in their land and resource management and planning activities and analyze/consider potential impacts of proposed land management decisions/actions on DOD lands and airspace.
2. Incorporate the value of DoD ecosystem management contributions into agency outreach programs.
3. Continue the development and implementation of state and agency ecosystem based management plans.
4. DOI, California State, and DoD agencies/services continue to work collaboratively towards implementing monitoring and recovery actions leading to delisting of the Desert Tortoise.

2.2 Visitor Services and Public Safety Goals and Accomplishments

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Goal 7. Develop a coordinated interagency system for delivering useful, comprehensive, and consistent information about desert resources and recreation opportunities.

FY02 Accomplishments:

The California deserts web site (www.californiadesert.gov) was redesigned to provide easier access to information about recreation opportunities in the desert. The website (www.californiadesert.gov) generated over 6.4 million hits in FY02 generated by over 66,000 unique users. Not included is the number of these unique users that visited the website more than once.

FY 03+ Goals:

The California deserts web site (www.californiadesert.gov) will be maintained by the Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program. The redesign of the site allows each agency to designate a webmaster, specific to their organization, to update their organizations information on the website by cutting and pasting from existing sites/documents. Agency webmasters will initially input information on recreation opportunities and sites in the California desert on Caldesert.gov and update their information as needed. The administrative website tool allows agency webmasters to add their resource news in an easy and timely manner. In addition, a desert news section will allow agencies to disseminate news to desert recreationists that may potentially visit their resource.

The interagency "gateway" visitor center at Lancaster will continue be maintained by Cal State Parks.

Goal 8. Resolve noise issues related to aircraft over flights for all participating agencies.

FY02 Accomplishments:

1. The DMG Overflight Work Group worked collaboratively to develop a brochure that outlines the history of military aviation training in the desert and emphasizes the continued importance of these training activities. The brochure was printed using contributions from the Marine Corps and is available to all DMG member agencies for distribution in their visitor centers.
2. Navy and Marine Corps representatives met with management from Anza Borrego State Park to discuss issues involving low level overflight occurrences in the park. Discussions included articulation of park concerns, the legal parameters for overflights in the park, a review of existing flight routes and the importance of these routes to military training. As a result of these meetings, a hotline was established for park personnel and concerned citizens to call when overflights occurred that they felt were not in accordance with prescribed parameters. Points of contact were established for park and military personnel to contact when issues concerning overflights developed.

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FY 03+ Goals:

The Overflight Work Group, meeting semi-annually, will continue to work to share and disseminate information concerning issues involving military over flights in the California deserts.

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2.3 Science and Data Management Goals and Accomplishments

Goal 9. Coordinate and conduct scientific studies and monitoring programs needed for effective resource management.

FY02 Accomplishments:

1. The format for a research inventory database was created and procedures for DMG agencies to gather/enter data into the database were agreed to by the Managers. The purpose of the Research Inventory Database is to provide ready access to ongoing, inventory, research and monitoring projects in the California desert.
2. The DMG approved a proposal for a Mojave Desert Science Symposium that will be held in late 2003 or early 2004. The purpose of the Symposium will be to inform managers of the best scientific information on physical and biologic resources, advise scientists of the most pressing research needs, and publish information on current research in the Mojave Desert.
3. The Mojave Desert Ecosystem in collaboration with USGS, the University of Redlands, and USFWS developed a desert tortoise database to house all of the line distance sampling data collected during desert tortoise monitoring. Development of the database included development of digital field forms for collection of field data. The use of PDAs using the digital field form has significantly reduced field worker error in capturing data and virtually eliminated data error caused by transcription of data from paper field forms to digital spreadsheets.

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FY 03+ Goals:

1. The Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program will develop a web accessible Research Inventory Data Base. The inventory of existing resource inventories, research and monitoring studies will be initiated to populate the database. Managers will implement protocols to encourage scientists to input data and or update the data base
2. Planning for the Mojave Desert Science Symposium will continue.

Goal 10. Coordinate natural resource monitoring program.

FY 02 Accomplishments:

Monitoring is a common element of all the DOI, DOD and State land management plans in the California deserts. The National Park Service (NPS) through its Natural Resource Challenge is developing and implementing a comprehensive monitoring program for plants and animals on NPS units in the Mojave Desert. BLM is currently working with Geological Survey to develop

monitoring programs to address the impacts of off-highway vehicle use. BLM also has programs to assess range-land health as part of its livestock and burro management programs. The Department of Defense installations in the desert will continue to conduct monitoring activities in accordance with their Integrated Natural Resource Management Plans. USGS and FWS have developed monitoring programs for wetland resources and the desert tortoise, respectively. Cal State Parks is also in the early stages of developing monitoring programs for their lands. The goal of the DMG is to coordinate/integrate these efforts by identifying and developing compatible objectives, methodologies and data management systems.

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In January 2002, the DMG sponsored a multi agency natural resources monitoring workshop to:

1. Increase awareness among land and resource managers of the scope, objectives and status of existing/planned inventory/monitoring programs for the California desert.
2. Identify common goals/objectives and information needs.
3. Develop recommendations for coordinating/integrating inventory and monitoring programs.

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Approximate 80 people representing DMG agencies and other interested groups participated in the workshop where about 20 papers were presented. A summary of the workshop and copies of many of the presentations are available at <http://www.dmg.gov/documents/monitoring-workshop.html>. Major conclusions of the workshop were that DMG agencies would:

1. Continue to cooperate to fund and implement desert tortoise line distance sampling;
2. Participate in the NPS workshop to develop a conceptual framework for monitoring in the California deserts; and
3. Describe existing weather data in the California deserts and develop recommendations for how important data gaps could be addressed.

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FY 03+ Goals;

1. Participate in the NPS workshop to develop a conceptual framework for monitoring in the California deserts (scheduling of this workshop is still uncertain). This workshop will provide the basis for the design of compatible monitoring programs by land and resource management agencies in the California deserts. Implementation of monitoring programs will be subject to the availability of funds.

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Continue to cooperate to fund and implement desert tortoise line distance sampling;¶
Participate in the January 2003 NPS workshop to develop a conceptual framework for monitoring in the California deserts;¶
Describe existing weather data in the California deserts and develop recommendations for how important data gaps could be addressed.

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Goal 11. Monitor desert tortoise population status in relation to recovery goals for the California deserts recovery units.

FY02 Accomplishments:

In 2001, a multi-year desert tortoise population study was initiated on 4.7 million acres of critical habitat in the California deserts. Over the next several years, the study will establish the population baseline from which we may evaluate whether tortoise populations are increasing, remaining stable, or declining. This monitoring effort will also assist managers in assessing the effectiveness of recovery efforts.

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The Fish and Wildlife Service is coordinating the monitoring effort on behalf of DMG agencies. The tortoise monitoring data is being maintained in an interagency database established by the

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DOD sponsored Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program. The number of tortoises that were encountered in 2001 (388) was relatively small and less than needed to establish statistically reliable baseline estimates of tortoise density. In FY 02, the sampling protocols were adjusted and the area sampled was increased by 25 % to provide more reliable estimates of tortoise density. However, due to drought conditions and other factors, the numbers of tortoises encountered (357) was still insufficient to establish a reliable baseline estimate of tortoise density.

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FY 03+ Goals:

1. Implement Line Distance Sampling on BLM, NPS, DOD and state lands to assess the density of desert tortoise. Sampling will only occur in the West Mojave Recovery Unit due to limited availability of funds. In cooperation with the University of Redlands and the University of Nevada, Reno, protocols will be modified and tested to reduce variance in the data and provide more reliable density estimates.
2. The interagency data management system will be maintained by the DOD Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program (MDEP) and data will be collected in a manner that facilitates a regional multi-state assessment of the status of desert tortoise populations.
3. An annual report will be produced by the FWS Desert Tortoise Coordinator no later than December of each year. The report will outline monitoring activities conducted and provide results from the analysis of data collected. Issues and improvements to protocols implemented will also be provided.
4. The University of Redlands will host a monitoring workshop in the Summer of 2003 to discuss the results and efficacy of the Line Distance Sampling technique and the need for additional population, habitat and management effectiveness monitoring.

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Goal 12. Monitor and protect desert water resources.

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FY 02 Accomplishments:

Springs, seeps, playa lakes, marshes, oases, and other wetland areas are very scarce in many parts of the California deserts. They support human settlement, are rich in bio-diversity, and support 35 endangered, threatened, and sensitive plants and animals.

Under the auspices of the Desert Managers Group, NPS, GS, BLM, FWS, and several DOD facilities initiated an interagency study aimed at improving management and protection of water and biological resources in the California Desert. The DMG water study includes mapping the distribution of wetlands throughout the desert, assessing the hydrological and biological characteristics of priority wetlands and riparian sites, and implementing actions to restore their proper functioning condition.

In FY 2002, the FWS National Wetlands Inventory Program delineated wetlands and riparian habitats for and additional 129 7.5-minute USGS quadrangles, mostly in the West Mojave Planning Area. Completed NWI maps are accessible through the NWI website at: <http://www.nwi.fws.gov>.

Standard protocols for assessing the hydrological and biological characteristics of desert spring developed by the DMG in FY 01 were tested by NPS in the Mojave National Preserve.

Generally many of the protocols did not work very well for many of the small springs in the Mojave. In response, the National Park Service and Desert Research Institute have entered into a cooperative agreement to develop spring inventory protocols and associated databases that are applicable to all spring-fed water features in the Mojave Desert park network. Protocols and databases that are developed will build on existing information developed by the DMG.

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FY 03+ Goals:

1. The ultimate goal is to map springs, riparian and wetland habitats throughout the California deserts. For FY 03, draft wetland and riparian maps will undergo quality control by NWI and eventually be posted on the NWI website. The first batch of 12 quads will be posted in February 2003 with new quads added each month thereafter.
2. NWI will focus new wetland and riparian habitat mapping in the Mojave National Preserve in FY 03.
3. Level one protocols for characterizing the biological and hydrological characteristics of springs will be completed by DRI in March 2003. Training and field testing will occur in the Mojave Desert Parks (e.g, DEVA, JOTR, MOJA, LAME). The DMG Water Group will review the draft protocols and be invited to participate in the field training and testing.
4. Level 2 protocols will be developed by DRI and submitted to the DMG Water Group for review and comment

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Goal 13. Integrate and share data and database management systems needed for effective resource management and planning.

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FY02 Accomplishments:

The Marine Corps Air Ground Task Force Training Center, Edwards Air Force Base, Death Valley National Park, and The Mojave National Preserve provided data sets for incorporation into the MDEP database. Data pages for each agency were developed each containing its own interactive IMS session to allow immediate visualization of the data provided by the agencies to MDEP. The DMG Water Work Group and The Desert Research Institute developed a common database structure to accommodate the common data collected via the standardized Level 1 spring surveys. The combined database will reside on the MDEP server to allow for the universal sharing of springs data throughout the desert.

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FY 03+ Goals:

The Mojave Desert Ecosystem Program (MDEP) will maintain the Geographic Information System (GIS) of natural and cultural resources in the California deserts (see www.mojavedata.gov). To expand the database, each Manager will provide a minimum of five corporate data sets, adhering to the DMG established data standards. MDEP will also provide data management and analysis support to a variety of DMG initiatives (wetland/springs inventory, desert tortoise monitoring, etc.) as the need arises.

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2.4 DMG Program Management Goals and Accomplishments

Goal 14. Ensure the orderly and efficient operation of the DMG and its work groups.

FY02 Accomplishments:

1. The DMG held four meetings and an Annual DMG Executive Coordination Formatted: Bullets and Numbering
2. The DMG 5-Year Plan was updated and approved in April 2002. Deleted: t
3. The DMG recognized four individuals who provided outstanding service to the DMG. Deleted:
4. An evaluation of the operation and effectiveness the DMG was completed. Based on the evaluation, the DMG deactivated several work groups, deferred work on several lower priority goals/activities in the DMG 5-Year Plan, and clarified the role of the managers and coordinators in the operation of the DMG. Deleted:
5. Completed and distributed copies of the DMG FY 01 Annual Report <http://dmg.mojavedata.gov/documents/dmgannual02.pdf>. Formatted: Bullets and Numbering
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6. DMG members participated in a Collaborative Management Training Class/Workshop in June 2002, in Ventura. The workshop resulted in the DMG asserting a leadership role in desert tortoise recovery (see Proposed DMG Desert Tortoise Recovery Actions, September 11, 2002 at <http://www.dmg.gov/documents/DTDMGPlan1.doc>). Deleted:
7. The DMG approved a request from the U.S. Forest Service to become a member of the DMG. Formatted: Bullets and Numbering
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8. The DMG website (www.dmg.gov) was maintained and updated and used regularly to disseminate information about DMG activities and products

FY 03+ Goals:

1. The DMG's 5-Year Plan will be updated, Annual work plans will be developed for specific initiatives. Formatted: Bullets and Numbering
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2. The BLM Natural Resources Restoration Coordinator will coordinate implementation of dump clean up and habitat restoration efforts. Deleted: Detailed a
3. The FWS Desert Tortoise Coordinator will coordinate tortoise recovery and monitoring activities. Deleted: The DMG will also explore opportunities to establish a California deserts fund within the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.
4. The DMG website (www.dmg.gov) will be maintained to allow for the efficient dissemination of information about DMG and work group activities.
5. Forest Service membership in the DMG will be formalized.

Goal 15. Garner support for the DMG, its mission, activities, and funding initiatives.

FY02 Accomplishments:

1. Worked with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to establish the California Desert Fund. Discussions were held with Daimler Chrysler Corporation to establish the CDF have been promising—NWFF is currently waiting for a proposal. Formatted: Bullets and Numbering
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2. Briefed key congressional staff, and DOI staff on the DMG. Continued to work with the congressional delegation, the agencies, and department to maintain visibility of the DMG. Deleted:
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FY 03+ Goals:

1. The DMG briefing packet and a report on DMG accomplishments will be produced and updated annually.
2. Federal and state agencies, Congressional representatives, and interested parties will be briefed about DMG activities and initiatives.
3. The DMG will continue to pursue establishment of a California Desert Fund in cooperation with NFWF.

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**Table 2.0 Desert Managers Group
5-year Plan (FY 2003 - 2007)
March 2003**

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| | ACTIVITY | WHO | STATUS | FY 03 10/01 - 9/03 | FY 04 10/02 - 9/04 | FY 05 10/03 - 9/05 | FY 06 10/04 - 9/06 | FY 07 10/05 - 9/07 |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>Resource Conservation and Management</u> | | | | | | | | |
| 1.0 | Restore selected upland and riparian habitats identified as restoration priorities. | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Develop partnerships to acquire land and restore habitat in the San Felipe watershed. Implement priority restoration and acquisition | A-B State Park/BLM | On track | X | X | X | | |
| 1.2 | Develop partnerships among federal, state, local, tribal government entities and private organizations to secure funding, foster awareness and support for restoration efforts, and implement restoration efforts. | Restoration Coordinator | On going | X | X | | | |
| 1.3 | Sponsor and plan the Arid SW Lands Restoration Conference to foster an awareness of restoration projects and methods in the California deserts. | Restoration Coordinator/Team | On track | X | X | | | |
| 1.4 | Assist with developing a long range plan for the Mojave Desert Weed management Area and cooperate with local agencies to control invasive species. | Restoration Coordinator/Managers | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 1.5 | Explore opportunities for developing a Mojave River and Amargosa River watershed restoration initiative | Restoration Coordinator | On track | X | X | | | |
| 1.6 | Provide guidance and recommendations to the USGS RVDE project aimed at improving the management applicability of the research effort. | Restoration Coordinator | On going | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2.0 | Clean up and restore illegal dumpsites that pose a public health, safety, or environmental threat and reduce future illegal dumping. | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Input data and maintain illegal dumpsite database and determine priority sites for clean up. | Hazmat Team/Restoration Coordinator | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2.2 | Clean up and monitor up to 20 illegal dump sites per year (5 sites will be cleaned up and monitored in FY 03). | Hazmat Team/Restoration Coordinator | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2.3 | Foster federal, state and local partnerships and develop a desert wide constituency to support illegal dumpsite clean up and prevention. | Hazmat Team/Restoration Coordinator | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2.4 | Develop and implement a program to reduce/prevent the incidence of illegal dumping in cooperation with Keep California Beautiful and others. | Hazmat Team/Restoration Coordinator | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 2.5 | Sponsor Regional technical training re: hazard and solid waste | BLM/Team | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |

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|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3.0 | Recover the desert tortoise in the California desert recovery units. | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Conduct a scientific evaluation based on current information of the effectiveness of past recovery actions, specifically actions related to vehicle management, cattle and sheep grazing, and construction of tortoise fences. | Kenna/GS | On track | X | | | | |
| 3.2 | Synthesize and evaluate existing information related to the status/trends of desert tortoise populations | GS/Redlands | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 3.3 | Integrate line distance sampling with permanent study plot sampling | FWS/Redland | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 3.4 | Coordinate recovery actions in various agency land management plans with emphasis on the West Mojave recovery unit | Redlands/ Managers | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 3.5 | Develop/implement recommendation for addressing the impacts of : ❖ Disease ❖ Raven predation ❖ Feral dogs | FWS/DFG | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 3.6 | Develop and implement a public education outreach program to educate the public about the effects of the release of captive tortoises on wild tortoises and to build public and stakeholder support for desert tortoise recovery. | DIRT | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4.0 | Reduce and maintain burro populations to appropriate management levels and in appropriate locations | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 | Identify and implement management actions to control populations and movement. | Sjaastad (BLM), NPS, DOD, and State | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4.2 | Define Appropriate Management Levels through BLM land management planning process. | BLM | Complete | | | | | |
| 4.3 | Remove burros and place in adoption programs; FY 03 - 1000. | Sjaastad, (BLM), NPS, DOD and State | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4.4 | Standardize population monitoring techniques and monitor population status. | Sjaastad, (BLM), NPS, DOD and State | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4.5 | Monitor rangeland health. | Sjaastad, (BLM) | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4.6 | Adjust AML, as needed, based on results of 4.4 and 4.5 | Sjaastad, BLM | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 4.7 | Explore opportunities for private funding for gathers/adoption | DOI Coordinator/ BLM/NPS | On track | X | | | | |

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| | ACTIVITY | WHO | STATUS | FY 03 10/01 - 9/03 | FY 04 10/02 - 9/04 | FY 05 10/03 - 9/05 | FY 06 10/04 - 9/06 | FY 07 10/05 - 9/07 |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 5.0 | Protect cultural resources and enhance public awareness of the sensitivity and value of paleontological and cultural resources in the California deserts. | | | | | | | |
| 5.1 | Publish Millenium conference proceedings | PACRAT | On track | X | | | | |
| 5.2 | Monitor implementation of the California Historic Resource Information System GIS for the California deserts. | SHPO | On track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 5.3 | Sponsor/attend ARPA training. | PACRAT/ BLM | On track | X | | | | |
| 6.0 | Ensure the long-term sustainability of the military mission in the California deserts. | | | | | | | |
| 6.1 | Consider the DOD mission requirements in BLM, NPS and State land management planning. | DOI and State Agencies | On going | X | X | X | X | X |
| 6.2 | Analyze potential impacts of proposed land management decision/actions on DOD lands and airspace. | DOI and State Agencies | On going | X | X | X | X | X |

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Table 2.0 Desert Managers Group
5-year Plan (FY 2003 - 2007)
March 2003

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| | ACTIVITY | WHO | STATUS | FY 03 10/01 - 9/03 | FY 04 10/02 - 9/04 | FY 05 10/03 - 9/05 | FY 06 10/04 - 9/06 | FY 07 10/05 - 9/07 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>Visitor Services</u> | | | | | | | | |
| 7.0 | Develop a coordinated interagency system for delivering useful, comprehensive, and consistent information about desert resources and recreation opportunities. | | | | | | | |
| 7.1 | Update and maintain the <i>California Deserts</i> website. | Managers/ DIRT | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 7.1.1 | Redesign the California Deserts website. | MDEP | On track | X | X | | | |
| 7.2 | Maintain the Lancaster Visitor Center. | State Parks | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 8.0 | Resolve noise issues related to aircraft overflights for all participating agencies. | | | | | | | |
| 8.1 | the Overflight Work Group will meet to exchange information concerning military low level aerial over flights and associated resource and visitor use impacts. | Overflight WG | Ongoing | X | | | | |
| 8.2 | An interagency over flight brochure will be finalized and distributed by DMG agencies. | Overflight WG | On track | X | | | | |

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**Table 2.0 Desert Managers Group
5-year Plan (FY 2003 - 2007)
March 2003**

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| | ACTIVITY | WHO | STATUS | FY 03 10/01 - 9/03 | FY 04 10/02 - 9/04 | FY 05 10/03 - 9/05 | FY 06 10/04 - 9/06 | FY 07 10/05 - 9/07 |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>Science and Data Management</u> | | | | | | | | |
| 9.0 | Coordinate and conduct scientific studies and monitoring programs needed for effective resource management and planning | | | | | | | |
| 9.1 | Develop a web accessible Research Inventory Data Base. | MDEP/ Redlands | On track | X | | | | |
| 9.2 | Initiate an inventory of existing resource inventory, research and monitoring studies to populate the database. | Managers | On going | X | X | X | X | X |
| 9.3 | implement protocols to encourage scientist to input data and or update the data base | Managers | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 9.4 | Sponsor and plan the Mojave Desert Science Symposium. | Hughson (NPS) | On track | X | | | | |
| 10.0 | Coordinate natural resource monitoring programs. | | | | | | | |
| 10.2 | Conduct workshop for DMG agencies to develop monitoring framework for the California deserts | NPS | On track | | X | | | |
| 11.0 | Monitor Desert Tortoise population status in relation to recovery goals in the California recovery units. | | | | | | | |
| 11.1 | Refine line distance sampling monitoring procedures | Tortoise Coordinator | On Track | X | | | | |
| 11.2 | Implement line distance sampling in California desert recovery units.(FY 03: West Mojave Unit only) | Tortoise Coordinator | On Track | X | X | X | X | X |
| 11.2.1 | Analyze data collected and produce annual report with recommendation for the next year's monitoring. | Tortoise Coordinator | Behind schedule | X | X | X | X | X |
| 11.3 | Update and maintain data management system. | MDEP | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 11.4 | Conduct monitoring workshop to review the results and efficacy of LDS and the need for additional population, habitat, and effectiveness monitoring. | Tortoise Coordinator/ Redlands | On track | X | | | | |
| 12.0 | Monitor and protect desert water resources. | | | | | | | |
| 12.1 | Develop protocols and assess the hydro and bio resources of priority wetland areas according to established protocols. | NPS, BLM, DOD | | X | X | X | | |
| 12.1.1 | Map and digitize wetland and riparian areas. | FWS | On track | X | X | X | | |
| 12.1.3 | Develop user friendly graphic interface to allow access to hydro and bio database. | DOD | On track | X | | | | |

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| | ACTIVITY | WHO | STATUS | FY 03 10/01 - 9/03 | FY 04 10/02 - 9/04 | FY 05 10/03 - 9/05 | FY 06 10/04 - 9/06 | FY 07 10/05 - 9/07 |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 13.0 | Integrate/coordinate and share data and Data Base Management Systems needed for effective resource management and planning | | | | | | | |
| 13.1 | Identify, acquire/develop new datasets from DMG agencies | MDEP and DMG Agencies | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 13.2 | Provide data management and analysis support to DMG initiatives. | MDEP | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |

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for all desert managers.
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**Table 2.0 Desert Managers Group
5-year Plan (FY 2003 - 2007)
March 2003**

Deleted: 5-year Plan (FY2002 - 2006) April 2002

| | ACTIVITY | WHO | STATUS | FY 03 10/01 - 9/03 | FY 04 10/02 - 9/04 | FY 05 10/03 - 9/05 | FY 06 10/04 - 9/06 | FY 07 10/05 - 9/07 |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>DMG Program Management</u> | | | | | | | | |
| 14.0 | Ensure orderly and efficient operation of the DMG and its work groups. | | | | | | | |
| 14.1 | Develop and update/maintain the DMG's 5 year plan. | DOI/DOD Coordinators | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 14.2 | Ensure adequate staffing to administer the DMG and provide for effective coordination and implementation of desert wide initiatives. | | | | | | | |
| 14.2.2 | Fund DOD/DOI Coordinators. | DOD/DOI | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 14.2.4 | Fund FWS Desert Tortoise Coordinator | FWS | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 14.2.5 | Fund BLM Restoration/Dump Coordinator. | BLM | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 14.3 | Formalize FS membership in the DMG. | FS/DOI Coordinator | On track | X | | | | |
| 15.0 | Garner Support for the DMG, its mission, activities and funding initiatives | | | | | | | |
| 15.1 | Update the DMG briefing packet. | DOI Coordinator | Ongoing | X | X | | X | X |
| 15.2 | Produce annual accomplishment report. | DOI/DOD Coordinators | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 15.3 | Update and maintain DMG website. | DOD Coordinator | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 15.4 | Inform stakeholders and policy makers about the DMG activities and funding initiatives. | All | Ongoing | X | X | X | X | X |
| 15.5 | Explore opportunities to establish a California deserts fund within the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. | DOI ,DOD Coordinators | On track | X | X | | | |

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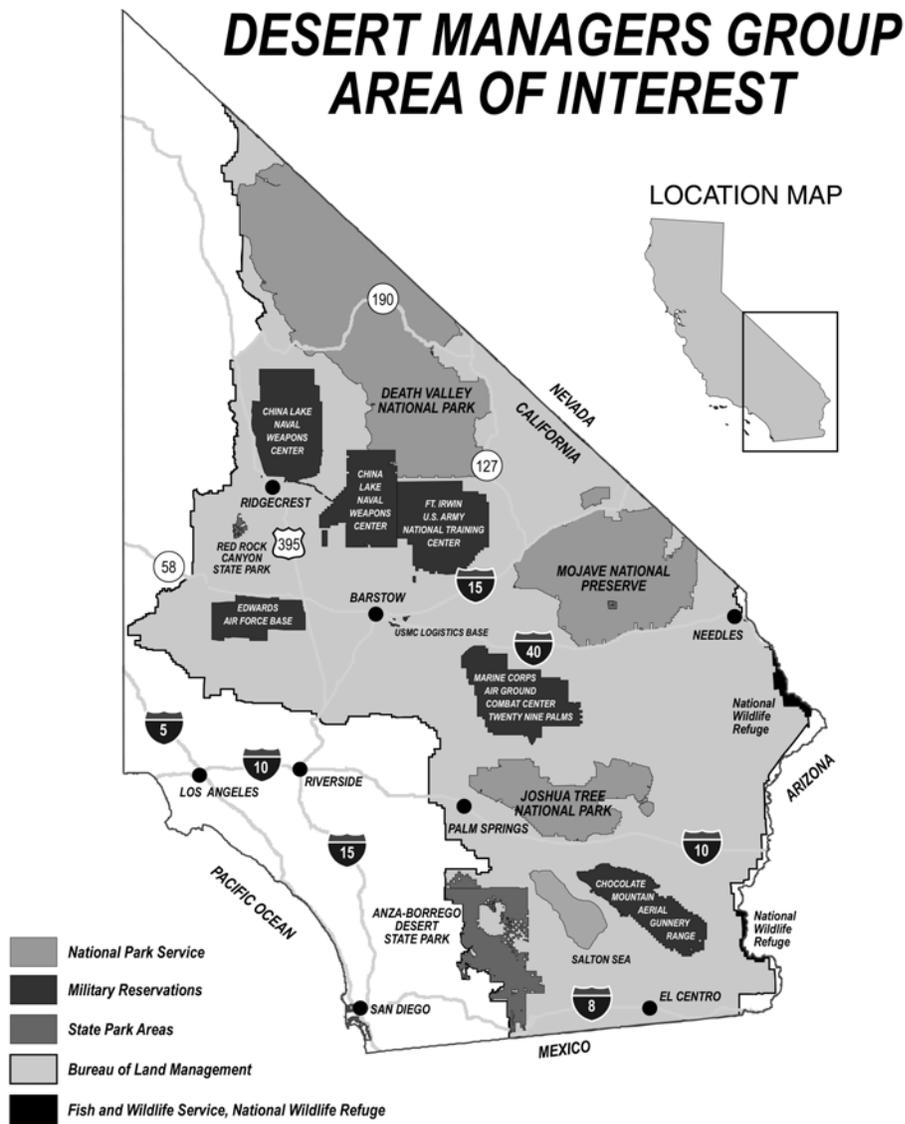
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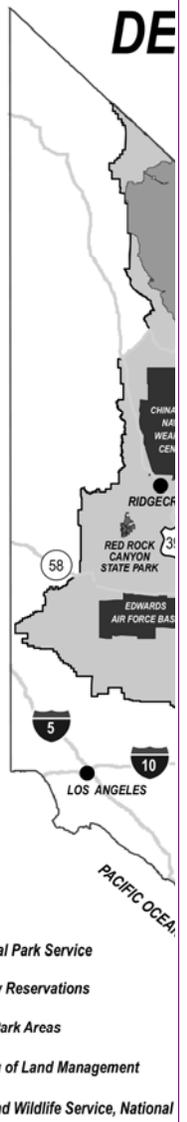
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Figure 1. California deserts



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Appendix Lower Priority DMG Goals

The following goals or elements of goals included in the Feb 2001 DMG 5-Year Plan have been determined too ambitious to complete given the current level of staff, funding, and agency support. These goals/elements will be maintained as long-term goals that will be pursued as time/resources permit.

Goal: Reclaim priority abandoned mines in the California deserts. Abandoned mines will be inventoried, incorporated into a database, prioritized, and reclaimed by agencies on a priority basis. An interagency group will be established to evaluate and streamline processes for complying with environmental laws and regulations.

Goal: Reduce the incidence of wire burning in the desert. There is anecdotal evidence that the California deserts are being used increasingly to illegally burn wire to salvage the valuable metals (e.g., copper) contained in the wire. Neighboring states have passed laws outlawing the sale of salvaged wire. This action may have displaced illegal wire burning activities to the California deserts. An information paper, brochure and action plan will be developed on wire burning. The action plan will provide direction for determining the extent of the problem and reducing the incidence of wire burning in the future.

Goal: Reduce the incidence of roadside litter in the desert. Roadside litter is widespread throughout the desert. The Hazmat Team will review existing litter clean up and prevention efforts, evaluate opportunities for interagency cooperation, and develop an action plan.

Goal: Protect cultural resources and enhance public awareness of the sensitivity and value of paleontological and cultural resources in the California deserts. Funding will be pursued to develop a Regional Handbook of the History and Prehistory of Desert Cultures.

Goal: Develop a coordinated interagency system for delivering useful, comprehensive, and consistent information about desert resources and recreation opportunities. An inventory of existing and planned visitor centers will be completed and recommendations for establishing additional gateway visitor centers will be developed. The feasibility of establishing a centralized system that allows visitors to make reservations at all agency's recreation facilities will be evaluated and implemented.

Goal: Educate the public about the value and importance of desert resources to promote a conservation ethic. Information and educational materials will be produced to provide consistent information to the public about California desert resources. This will include teacher packets, displays and a desert access guide. In addition, the DMG will develop and implement a desert-wide information and education strategy for the California deserts.

Goal: Coordinate and integrate efforts in the California deserts to provide for the safety of desert users and agency personnel and to protect natural and cultural resources. This goal will be achieved by (a) providing interagency training of rangers and wardens and (b) developing and implementing a plan to share law enforcement and emergency response personnel to deal more effectively with large events.

Goal: Assist managers/staff in the use/application of technological and scientific information and knowledge in day-to-day decision making processes. Based on the recently completed study of the feasibility of establishing a decision support system for the California deserts, a pilot application of a DSS will be implemented. The pilot will focus on information/decision making needs and processes common to all desert land/resource management agencies (e.g., NEPA assessments, evaluating alternative futures

for the desert, tortoise habitat assessment, livestock grazing forage allocation, etc.).

Goal: Ensure the orderly and efficient operation of the DMG and its work groups. Agencies will hire the staff needed to coordinate implementation of initiatives included in the DMG 5-Year Plan. Two positions remain to be funded and filled:

- Outreach and Education Coordinator
- Research and Monitoring Coordinator

Goal: Garner support for the DMG, its mission, activities, and funding initiatives. An annual newsletter on the DMG will be produced and broadly disseminated.

Goal: Ensure that Native American tribes, local governments, non-DMG State and Federal agencies, and stakeholders are appropriately represented on the DMG and/or informed of DMG activities. Native American tribes and local governments in the California deserts will be contacted to determine their interest in participating in the DMG and/or its work groups. Options for involving interested parties will be identified, assessed, and implemented as appropriate.

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1. Indio Hills
2. Continuation of Berdoo Canyon
3. High Vista
4. Continuation of Farm and Ranch Grant sites
5. Sandy Valley
6. Fargo Canyon
7. Andre Road
8. Border sites
9. Vi

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A concerted effort will be made to prevent illegal dumping by (a) educating the public about the problems associated with illegal dumping, (b) enforcing laws related to illegal dumping, (c) providing viable alternatives to illegal dumping, and (d) protecting sites that have been restored.

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| 5.3 | Improve coordination between cultural resources and law enforcement staff | PACRAT | On track | X | |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------|---|--|

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| 10.1 | Conduct a workshop to review and summarize each agency's monitoring programs/practices. Identify existing barriers and opportunities to make the monitoring programs/practices compatible. | DOI Coordinator | Complete | X | |
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|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|---|--|
| 10.3 | Review existing weather data and develop recommendation to fill data gaps. | Ad hoc group | On track | X | |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|----------|---|--|