

The Desert Managers Group:

Working Together to Conserve the
California Deserts

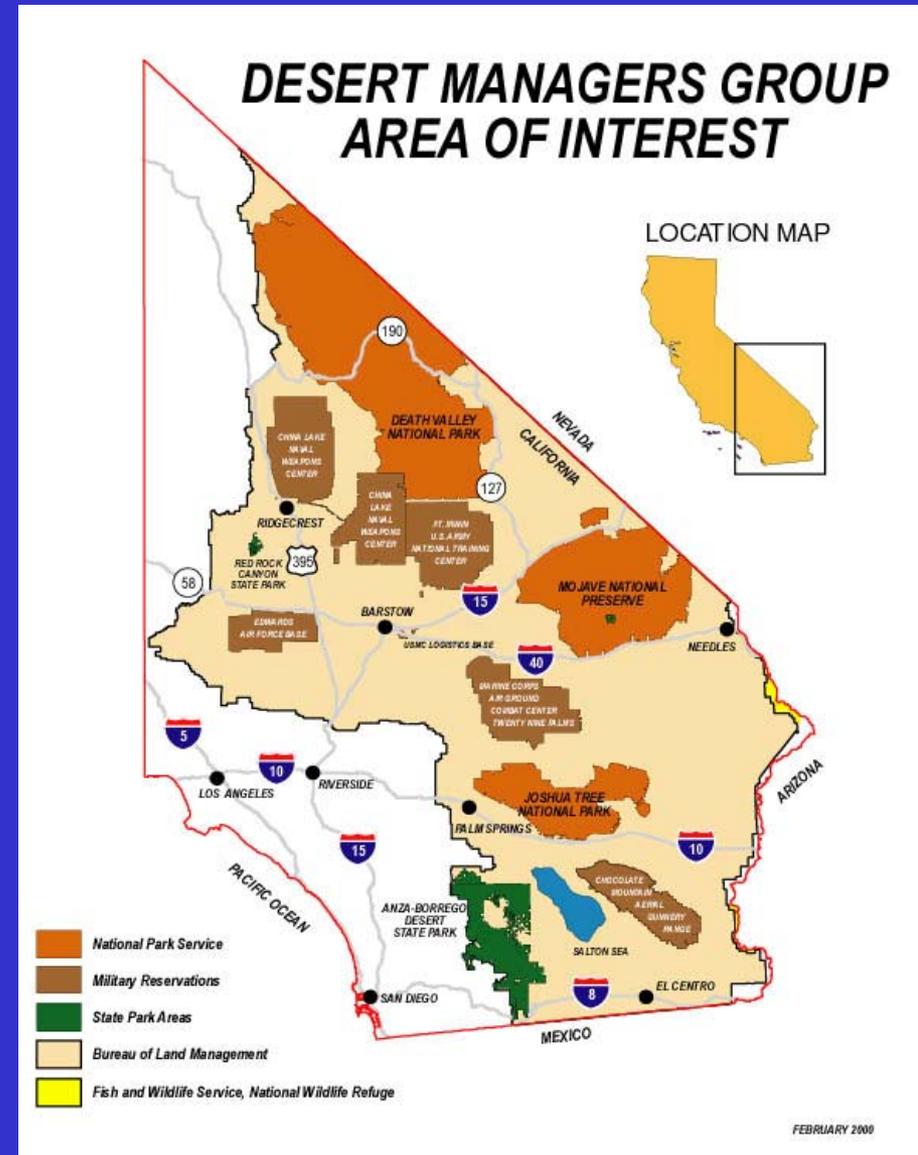
by

John Hamill

Department of the Interior



- 40 million people within a day's drive
- 25 million acres – 80% public ownership
- Multi-jurisdictions
 - 3 national parks
 - 10 state parks
 - 7 military bases
 - 4 National Wildlife Refuges
 - 11 million acres BLM land
 - 37 Native American tribes
 - 100 communities



DMG Background

- 1976 - FLMPA (directs DOD, DOA and DOI to consult and coordinate)
- 1994 - Cal Desert Protection Act implementation (BLM and NPS)
- 1995 - Reinvention of Government Laboratory - (membership expanded)
- 1999 - DMG Charter approved
- 2000 - Memo of Understanding signed

Desert Managers Group Mission

Develop complementary management practices and programs

- Desert land restoration
- Recreation, visitor services
- Law enforcement
- Data management
- Research and monitoring

Resolve conflicts in agency missions

DMG Participants

Department of Interior

- Bureau of Land Management
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- Geological Survey

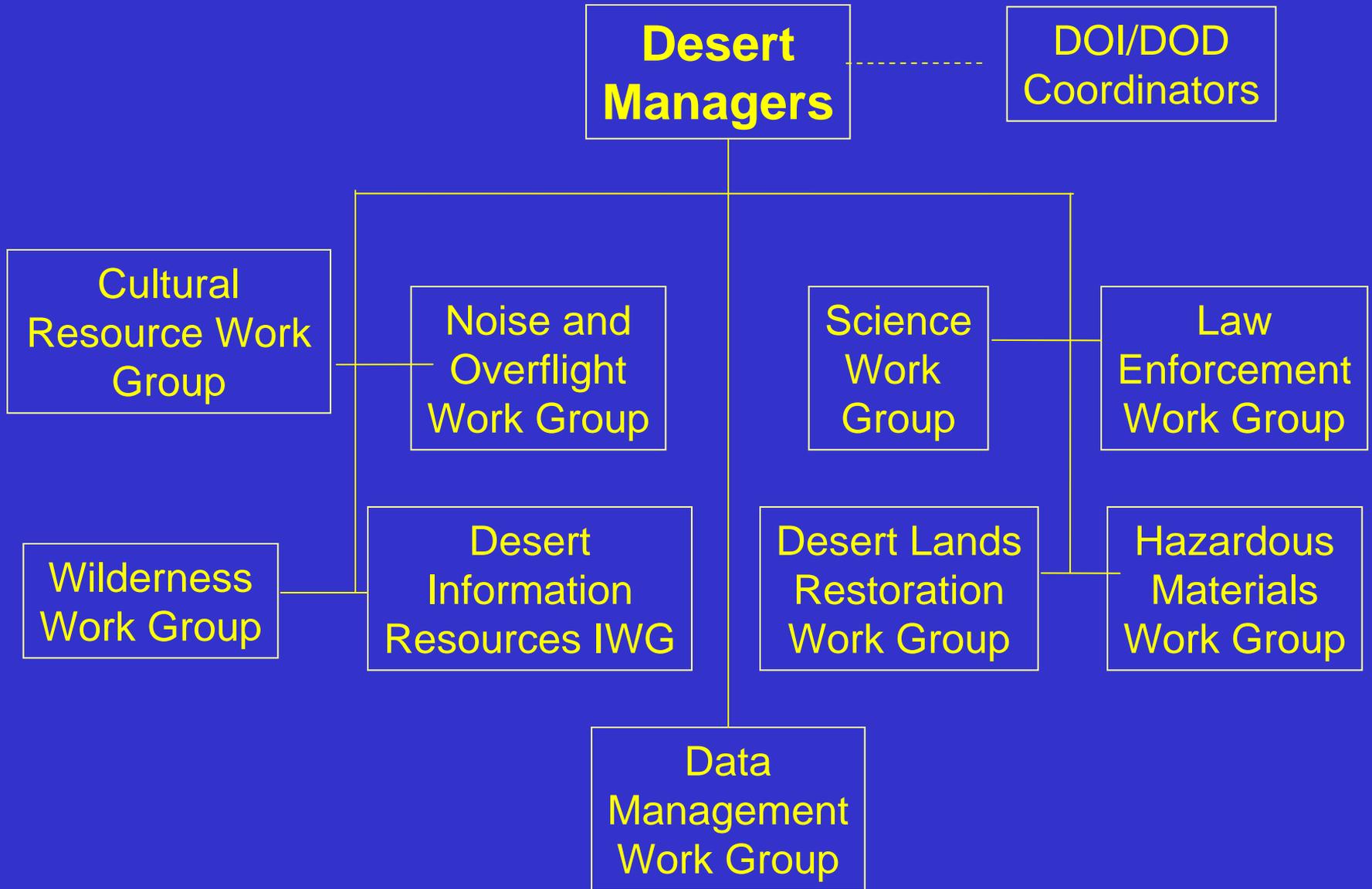
State of California

- Department of Fish & Game
- Department of Parks
- Department of Transportation

Department of Defense

- Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake
- Edwards Air Force Base
- National Training Center, Fort Irwin
- Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twenty-nine Palms
- Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow
- Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma

DMG Organization



DMG 5 Year Plan

Purpose: create common sense of purpose;
provide accountability; budget planning

Elements:

- 21 goals
- Tasks, responsibility, schedule
- Updated annually

Resource Conservation

- Burro management
- Tortoise recovery
- Habitat restoration
- Illegal dump clean-up
- Cultural resource protection



Visitor Services and Safety

- Outdoor recreation
- Visitor information and education
- Noise and overflight issues
- Law enforcement



Science and Data Management

- Coordinate/integrate research, inventory & monitoring programs
- Coordinate and share data



Just Another Year in the California Desert

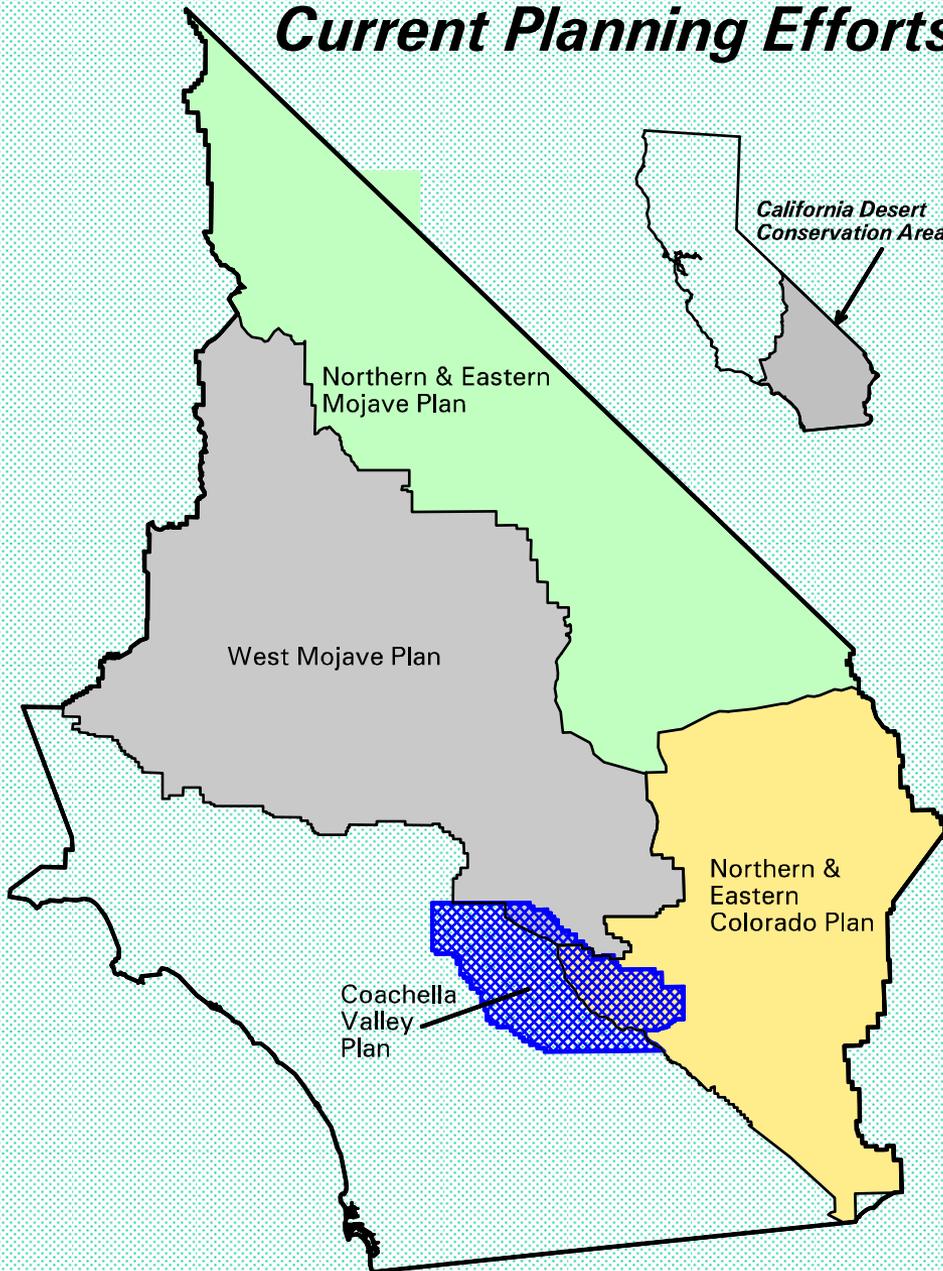
- Santa Rosa/San Jacinto National Monument
- BLM ESA Law Suit
- GMP's completed for Death Valley NP and Mojave National Preserve
- Fort Irwin Expansion
- Timbisha-Shoshone Tribal Lands
- Cadiz Water Storage
- Airport Authorized at Stateline, Nevada

The Future

- Increased Population
- Increased Development of Private Lands
- Increased Demand for Consumptive Uses
- Increased Demand for Resource Protection
- Increased Listing of T&E Species
- Increased Restrictions
- Increased Litigation
- Increased Expenditure of Resources for Reactive vs Proactive Measures
- Conclusion: Constant “Whitewater”

Land Mgt Plans

Current Planning Efforts



BLM - NEMO, NECO,
WEMO

NPS - GMP's for Death
Valley, Mojave, and
Joshua Tree

DOD - INRMP for Edwards,
China Lakes, NTC, MC-
Barstow, MC-29 Palms,
MC-Yuma

State Parks - Colorado
Desert, Mojave Desert

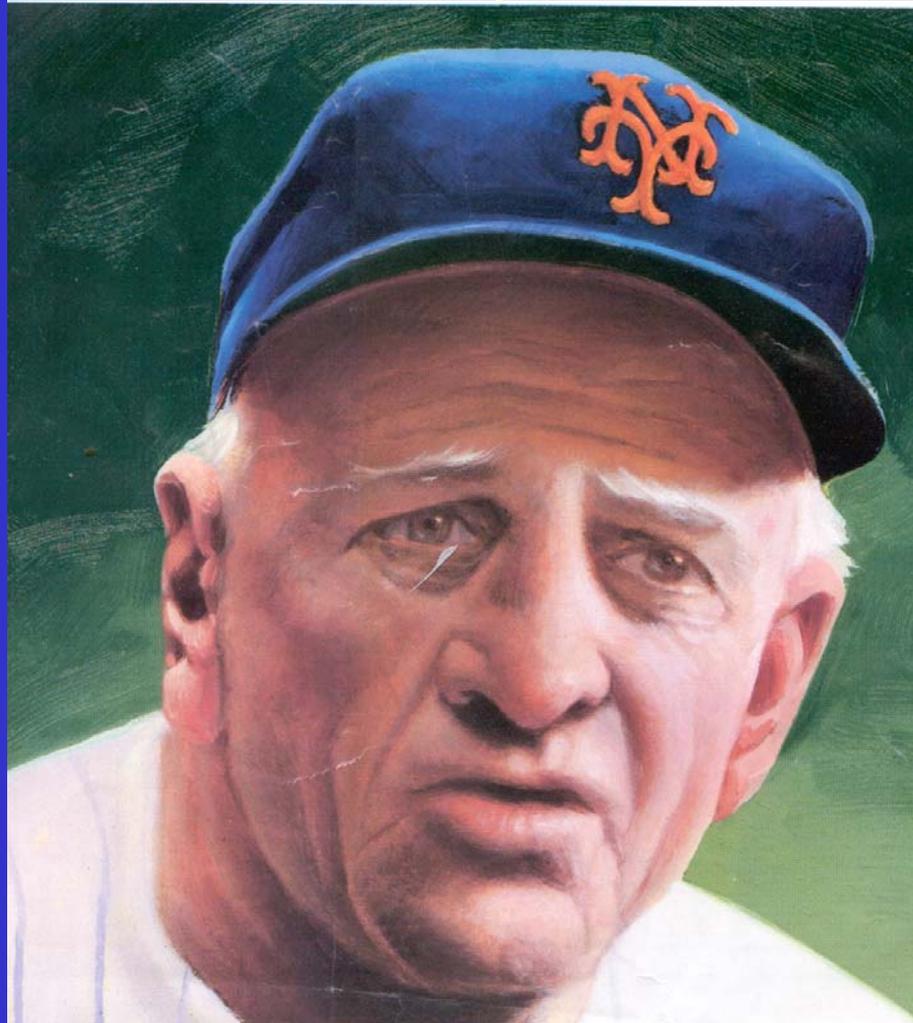
HCP's - Coachella Valley

Role of the DMG



- **Networking**
- **Collaboration and Partnerships**
- **Ecosystem management**
- **Training**
- **Uniform data collection**

*"It's easy to get the players.
Getting' em to play together,
that's the hard part."*



DMG Accomplishments



- Study of Desert Wetland and Riparian Areas
- Illegal Dumping
- Desert Tortoise Monitoring
- Millennium Conference
- Public Outreach
- Burro Management

Study of Desert Wetland and Riparian Areas

Purpose

- Adopt standardized data collection protocols
- Develop and maintain hydrologic and biologic data bases
- Complete hydrologic and biologic inventory of springs and wetland areas
- Develop understanding of the hydrologic and biologic processes of desert springs and wetlands



Study of Desert Wetland and Riparian Areas

Accomplishments

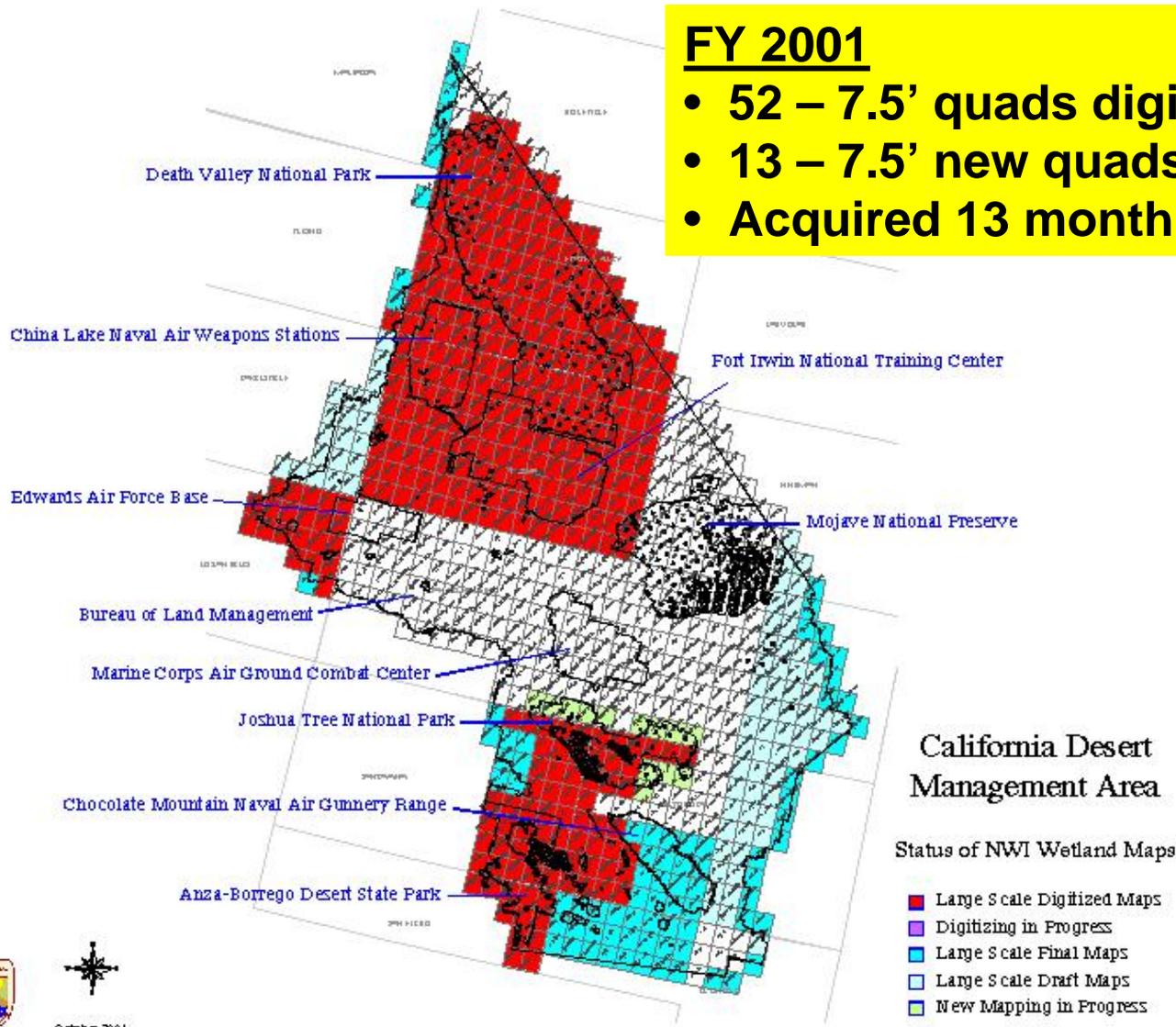
- Developed standard wetland and riparian area data collection protocols
- Conducted workshop on protocols for hydrologic and biologic data collection



USFWS Wetland Mapping

FY 2001

- 52 – 7.5' quads digitized
- 13 – 7.5' new quads mapped
- Acquired 13 month term position



DMG Accomplishments

- Study of Desert Wetland and Riparian Areas
- Illegal Dumping



Program Goals



- Inventory illegal dumps on DMG agency managed land
- Cleanup of seven high priority illegal dumps
- 70% of cleaned dumps will remain clean
- Develop and implement an illegal dumping prevention program
- Partner and seek grants to leverage DMG funding

FY 01 Accomplishments



- Contractor retained to complete dump inventory
- Four BLM dumps funded with DMG money
- Twenty-eight dumps cleaned up with DMG partnerships, grants, and volunteers
- More than 70% dumps remaining clean
- Prevention plan developed
- Receipt of \$220,000 in grants and in-kind services from partners

FY 01 Expenditures

\$200,000 allocated for FY 01



- Cleanups 76%
- Prevention 0%
- Inventory Contractor 10%
- DOI Coordinator 14%

DMG Accomplishments

- Study of Desert Wetland and Riparian Areas
- Illegal Dumping
- Desert Tortoise Monitoring



Desert Tortoise Monitoring

Purpose

- Coordinate range wide monitoring efforts
- Expand line distance sampling procedures
- Evaluate monitoring efforts and modify as necessary



Desert Tortoise Monitoring

Goal

- Refine and implement a comprehensive monitoring program to provide reliable population density estimates

Objectives

- Intensive monitoring to detect short term drastic declines
- Less intensive long term monitoring to detect long term increases in density due to management actions within recovery areas
- Compare trends across recovery areas and surrounding lands



Desert Tortoise Monitoring

FY 01 Accomplishments

- Two training workshops held for field crews
- 2000 kilometers surveyed
- Mean encounter rate = 0.13 live tortoise/kilometer
- After action review conducted to resolve FY 01 issues
- FY 01 results indicate a need to increase number of KMs walked (estimated cost increase from \$814K to \$1.9M)



Desert Tortoise Monitoring

FY 01 Funding

BLM	\$200 K	California
DOD	\$169 K	West Mojave
FWS	\$ 80 K	Nevada
FWS	\$ 20 K	Joshua Tree NPS
Section 7	\$180 K	Nevada
HCP	\$ 80 K	Utah
NPS	\$ 60 K	Mojave Preserve
NPS	\$ 20 K	Joshua Tree
AGFD	\$ 5 K	Beaver Dam Slope
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Total	\$814 K	

DMG Accomplishments

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- Illegal Dumping
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- Millennium Conference



Millennium Conference

Purpose

- Review recent significant contributions to cultural resources
- Review the status of knowledge in the respective cultural resource fields
- Identify research/information needs
- Recommend future research directions
- Recommend future direction for public education related to cultural resource protection

Millennium Conference

Conference Key Points

- The California Deserts contain a wealth of world class cultural and paleontological resources.
- These resources are disappearing at an alarming rate, they need more protection.
- Resources must be viewed in terms of a cultural landscape - go beyond looking at them as individual sites.
- The public places great value on the cultural landscape
- There is a need for more inventory and evaluation of these resources as part of a long term protection strategy
- Need to develop a greater public constituency for cultural and paleontological resources.
- Explore opportunities for more and better shared databases.

Lancaster “Gateway” Visitor Center

Purpose

- Foster public understanding and appreciation
- Promote conservation of natural and cultural resources
- Provide the public coordinated information about:
 - desert resources
 - visitor opportunities
 - programs
 - experiences
- Facilitate the safety of desert users
- Create an understanding of each agency’s role and conservation efforts in the desert



Lancaster “Gateway” Visitor Center

Accomplishments

- Secured DOD Legacy Program funding for exhibits
- Acquired lease facility to house the “Gateway Visitor Center”
- Provided personnel to manage the facility
- Established computer exhibit providing access to the sights, sounds, and activities in the California Mojave Desert
- Exhibits depicting each agency’s role in the desert
- Interactive map of the California Mojave Desert
- Grand Opening held 31 October 2000



www.californiadesert.gov

Purpose

- Provide web based information on:
 - Recreation
 - Public lands
 - Desert safety

Accomplishments

- Web site developed and put online FY 00
- FY 01 use statistics
 - 4,021,180 hits to the site
 - average 335,098 hits per month
 - average 3000 user sessions per month



DMG Accomplishments



- Study of Desert Wetland and Riparian Areas
- Illegal Dumping
- Desert Tortoise Monitoring
- Millennium Conference
- Public Outreach
- Burro Management

Burro Management

Program Goals

- Collaborative/efficient burro management
- Aggressively manage burros to reach current AML in 3 years
- Manage Burros as part of the natural ecosystem on BLM land
- Manage for zero burros on non BLM lands

Program Objectives

- Develop coordinated annual operations plan
- Determine viable herd management areas
- ID long term management actions/population levels in HMAs
- Conduct research on burro behavior and movement



Burro Management

	<u>FY 99</u>	<u>FY 00</u>	<u>FY 01</u>	<u>FY 02</u>	<u>Total</u>
Gathers Planned	1,108	1,017	1,000	1,065	3,125
Burros Gathered					
BLM	184	124	265	675	573
NPS	600	508	377	100	1,485
BLM/NPS	205	197	31	190	433
BLM/DOD	<u>119</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>246</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>553</u>
Total	1,108	1,017	919	1065	3,044
Burros Placed	1,108	1,017	817		2,942
BLM Adoption	529	457	440		1,426
Interest Groups/contractors	579	560	377		1,516

❖ Program will achieve authorized management levels in 2003

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