



Meeting Summary
DMG Meeting
August 15 and 16, 2007
Mojave

The meeting agenda and list of attendees are attached (Attachments 1 and 2, respectively). The first day of the meeting was open to stakeholder attendance. *Major conclusions and action items are italicized.*

Wednesday August 15, 2007

- **Welcome, Introductions and Administration** - Ron Krueper (Tehachapi District State Parks), honorary Chair for the meeting, and Bob Wood (Edwards) and Don Maben (Kern County Board of Supervisors) welcomed the group to Mojave on behalf of their respective agencies. A brief administrative/logistical overview of the day's activities was presented to the group. Introductions of all followed.
- **Tehachapi District State Parks Overview** - Ron Krueper and Russ Dingman provided an introductory Power Point presentation to the State Parks within the Tehachapi District, Red Rock Canyon State Park, and Red Rock Canyon's upcoming General Plan Revision. The General Plan Revision is required because the park tripled in size when the Desert Protection Act transferred lands from BLM to the park and because the current General Plan is over twenty-five years old. A specific issue of concern is motor vehicle access within the Last Chance Canyon riparian zone, which will be a stop on the afternoon's field trip. The plan is targeted for completion in CY09.
- **DTRO Update**
 - **Recovery Plan Update** - (Roy Averill-Murray) DTRO is working to pull the plan together since the last round of workshops. DTRO plans to provide an agency review draft to MOG agencies by the end of August. The agency review draft will be reviewed at the upcoming MOG, September 14. A revised draft plan will be released in late September. *DTRO plans to host workshops on October 16 and 18 in Redlands and Las Vegas respectively to take comments on the draft recovery plan.* A final draft will be provided to CNO by the end of October and a formal public review will follow. Details for peer review have not yet been worked out. Roy does not have an estimated date for a signed recovery plan.
 - **Monitoring** - (Linda Alison) (handout and Power Point) DTRO is still building the final 2007 database. Linda is developing standard operating procedures for future years' monitoring. Currently the focus is on quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC). The monitoring committee is divided into groups to develop the SOPs. The SOPs will

address sample size and a formal permitting process. The training module will be a major component of the SOPs. A complete list of SOP components is in the Power Point presentation. Linda hopes to complete 574 transects in 2008 as compared to 271kms in 2007. *Estimated funding need for 2008 is \$634k.* Linda plans to start bringing on the 2008 field crews by the end of CY07 so they can be involved in the training design. An annual report of 2007 monitoring is expected by the end of CY07.

- **BLM Energy Program** - (Bruce Shaffer) (handouts and Power Point) Bruce said that BLM has formed an interagency Energy Strike Team and recently entered an agreement with the California Energy Commission (CEC) for process and permitting for energy rights of way. Bruce passed out two flowcharts that outlined how the NEPA/CEQA process and cultural will be handled by BLM and the CEC. Bob Wood asked how BLM was going to handle cumulative impacts. Bruce said that cumulative impacts would be addressed and BLM was developing a strategy to do so. Kern and San Bernardino Counties have asked for cooperating agency status under NEPA. There are currently applications for over 500,000 acres of energy development but more than likely only a fraction will ever be developed. To date, CEC has received none of these applications. Developers are being steered away from ACECs and DWMAs. All of BLM's energy documents are available at http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd/alternative_energy.html. *Bob Wood wants to be on the Energy Strike Team.*
- **Service First** – (Bruce Shaffer) (Power Point) Bruce provided a brief overview of the Service First authority, which allows BLM, FWS, NPS, and FS to work collaboratively. Service First can involve the transfer of funding, provide in-kind services, and cross delegate supervision or line authority. Projects include the fire program (BLM, FS, and NPS) and Santa Rosa San Jacinto National Monument (BLM and FS).
- **Stakeholder Comment**
 - Jim McGarvey stated that the OHV community is extremely concerned about impacts to recreation from energy development. Jim also pointed out that everyone attending the afternoon's field trip would be traveling off-road in a four-wheel-drive vehicle and thus be an "off roader".
- **Raven EA** – (Judy Hohman) (Power Point) Public comment for the Raven EA ended May 7. FWS received thirty-one comments, which are summarized in the Power Point. FWS has prepared a preliminary decision document. A change from the draft document is that the preferred alternative is now a phased approach beginning with implementation of Alternative B. If Alternative B (the original preferred alternative) is deemed effective, this effort would continue and would not be increased. If it is ineffective at achieving goals, Alternative C will be used and so on. FWS hopes to complete the decision document within a month.
- **Desert Tortoise Information and Education Project** – (Anne Staley) (handouts) Anne said that the public attitude survey is complete and Dr. Vaske will attend the November DMG meeting to present his results. About twenty-five teachers are signed up for traveling trunk training. Other teachers are needed as trainers. In October, Anne will have a booth at the Long Beach Science Teachers Convention. Attendance at the convention is usually about 2500. Supplies of the *You're in Desert Tortoise Country* brochure will be exhausted soon. The work

group plans to update the brochure and reprint it. So far, over 50,000 have been distributed! Three new print stories will be developed this fall. NFWF grant funding was awarded and application has been made for 2008 OHMVR funding. A press release for the OHMVR grant is available at www.dmg.gov or http://www.blm.gov/style/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/pa/ohv/grants/2008.Par.87955.File.dat/fy2008_dmg_%20ohvgrant%20_public_review_packet.pdf. Bindi Irwin, who is Steve Irwin's (the Crocodile Hunter) daughter, will be in Las Vegas in August filming an episode of her show Bindi The Jungle Girl. Anne is hoping that she will include Mojave Max and tortoise conservation into the show. *Anne passed out a letter that should be forwarded to your cooperating association or retail sales outlet from the Joshua Tree Natural History Association regarding the tortoise marketing items.*

- The meeting adjourned to the Red Rock Canyon State Park field trip.

Thursday, August 16, 2007

- **Climate Change Science Symposium** - (Russell Scofield and Debra Hughson) (handout) Based upon discussion at the last meeting, Russell presented a proposal for the DMG to co-sponsor a Climate Change Science Symposium. Other co-sponsors include University of Arizona Extension and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Russell stated that the symposium would need to be based on real science that affects on-the-ground management and not hand wringing and "the sky is falling" presentations. A difficulty will be that most research has been higher latitude and not focused on the desert. If we are to proceed with the symposium, we need a strong commitment that agencies will provide funding to hire a contractor to handle logistics (TNC has challenged DMG agencies with a \$5000 donation) provide key staff to an organizing committee, and make staff available to attend the symposium. Without such support, the symposium would be a failure. Denyse Racine wondered if the water agencies should be invited as a co-sponsor. Don Maben said that if fire is a major topic and the symposium is open to fire personnel Kern County will provide some funding. Curt Sauer said that Paul DePrey of his staff was working on a climate change workshop in preparation of November's NPS Superintendent's conference. Curt was concerned with potential overlap or duplication of effort.
- Curt Sauer stated that South Coast Wildlands will hold a meeting Wednesday, August 22 in Yucca Valley regarding wildlife migration corridors between Joshua Tree and MCAGCC. Anyone with an interest is welcome to attend.
- Max Copenhagen said that he had attended a Southern California Water workshop where the idea of injecting sewer water to bank groundwater was discussed.
- **West-wide Energy Corridor and Sunrise Power Link** - (Mike Hamilton) Mike showed an informational DVD produced by San Diego Gas and Electric on their proposed Sunrise Power Link. It was pointed out that 20% of the energy transmitted by the Sunrise Power Link would be renewable energy. The balance of the energy transmitted will be nuclear or fossil fuel. Mike also showed a GIS map of the current preferred alternative from the West-wide Energy Corridor EIS.

- **Mojave Tui Chub**
 - **Paleogeography, Life History, and Recovery** - (Steve Parmenter, CDFG Fish Biologist) Steve provided a comprehensive Power Point on the Mojave tui chub, its life history, and recovery updates to date.
 - **Downlisting and Recovery** - (Judy Hohman) (Power Point and handout) Judy stated that the 1984 Mojave tui chub recovery plan calls for the establishment of six secure populations for downlisting. Three populations currently exist and two additional populations have been proposed in Mojave National Preserve and the Lewis Center. Judy asked that managers consider suitable sites that could be used for an additional population. A population in the tributaries to the Mojave River would be especially beneficial. Judy discussed “painless” ways to establish listed species. Under the Federal ESA, establishment of new populations of listed species is covered as purposeful take under Section 10 and requires a Safe Harbors Agreement on private land. It also requires a 2081a permit under California ESA. Judy also passed out a news article about establishment of a population at the Lewis Center in Victorville.
 - **Mojave National Preserve Efforts in Recovery** - (Debra Hughson) (Power Point) Debra discussed the effects of the Asian tapeworm and mosquito fish, hybridization experiments at the Desert Discovery Center, and current recovery actions upon Mojave National Preserve including plans to establish a population at the Morningstar Mine pit. Debra suggested that the DMG could make a goal out of downlisting the species through identifying additional refugia. The first 5-year goal could be identifying the refuge and the second 5-year goal could be maintaining the populations for the period sufficient to apply for downlisting. By doing this the DMG could benefit from the effort already put into this, the effort that will continue to be put into this, and the consequent progress made. The DMG would not have to commit resources, only good will, and would be promoting recovery of an endangered species.
- **MOG Charter Update** - (Roy Averill-Murray) Roy stated that the purpose of the proposed MOG Charter was to define the role of the MOG. Roy also discussed the role of the charter in monitoring. One of the recommendations of the desert tortoise GAO report was to establish a high-level agreement between DOI and DOD for monitoring. Roy is hopeful that if the MOG Charter addresses monitoring GAO will consider it meeting their recommendation. It has not been decided if the MOG Charter will be a signed document.
- **Raven Management Implementation** - (Carl Benz) Ventura FWS is submitting a funding request to collect additional data on raven nest sites. Ventura also met with Southern California Edison to discuss implementing raven management strategies as project mitigation to be funded by Edison. *If agencies plan Spring 2008 implementation, Ventura needs funding commitments now.* The minimum needed is \$70k. To date FWS has not received any feedback from agencies that funding was being sought and Carl asked if implementation of raven management was still a priority. The consensus was that it was. *Don Maben requested a cost breakdown by county. Carl asked that if agency raven contacts have changed to please notify Robert McMorran. Robert’s email is Robert.McMorran@fws.gov. Bob Wood asked for a boilerplate statement of work that procurement could use to transfer funding.*
- **Western Regional Partnership** - (Mike Hamilton) (Power Point) Patterned on the Southeastern Regional Partnership for Planning and Sustainability (SERPPAS), DOD is interested in forming a high-level forum similar to the DMG Executive Committee but with a broader membership

and geographic scope. The Partnership would meet twice annually and involve the states of California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, and New Mexico. A meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 8 and 9 in Tucson.

- **Conservation Acquisition Ad Hoc Work Group** - (Steve Borchard) (handout) Since the last DMG meeting, BLM, FWS-Ventura, and CDFG have met several times to discuss overlapping issues and differences with mitigation and acquisition especially as it relates to the West Mojave HCP. Steve distributed a proposal to establish an ad hoc work group charged with resolving agency conflicts and development of broad strategies to guide acquisition. The work group would involve stakeholders to help identify opportunities and priorities to maximize acquisition benefits to agency mission and conservation. *Managers are to provide Russell with a name for work group membership.* Russell will serve as work group chair initially. Russell provided a brief history of the California Desert Fund (CDF). The idea of CDF was first introduced to the DMG in 2002. The Fund would be managed by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (www.nfwf.org) and would be used to grant funding to projects that contribute to the implementation of the DMG five-year plan. Unfortunately, thus far the private seed funding needed to establish CDF has not been forthcoming. Russell said that a donor has been identified who is very interested in seeing a proposal. Russell also presented the idea of having CDF include and manage mitigation funding.
- **Upcoming meetings**
 - November 28 and 29, Ridgecrest hosted by BLM-Ridgecrest and China Lake
 - March 5 and 6, potentially Borrego Springs hosted by State Parks- Ron will talk to Mike Wells
 - May/June 2008, Twentynine Palms hosted by MCAGCC
 - Aug 2008, Camp Pendleton