Subj: DESERT MANAGERS GROUP MEETING SUMMARY, BUREAU OF LAND

 MANAGEMENT FIELD OFFICE, BARSTOW CALIFORNIA

 17 – 18 APR 2024

1. The Desert Managers Group held its Spring semiannual meeting 17–18 April 2024 at the Bureau of Land Management Barstow Field Office hosted by BLM. A copy of the agenda is available and the presentations given at the DMG have been distributed to the distro list but are also available upon request. Attendees included representatives from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM); the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS); the National Park Service (NPS) with Mojave National Preserve, Death Valley National Park and Joshua Tree National Park represented; Department of Defense which included representation from NAWS China Lake, NTC Fort Irwin, MCIWEST-MCB Camp Pendleton, MCLB Barstow and MCAGCC Twentynine Palms in addition to several other Conservation agencies and the Coachella Valley Area Government.

2. Mike Hamilton, MCIWEST provided a brief overview of the **History and Background of the DMG**. The DMG was established by ‘The California Desert Protection Act’ and signed into Public Law [PL 103-433] on 31 October 1994. The act among other actions required Federal land management agencies in the desert including BLM, FWS, Forest Service, USGS, and DoD to cooperate with one another and share resources and information. This initial collaboration referred to as the California Desert Innovative Management Laboratory resulted in the establishment of the Desert Managers Group. The geographic scope of the DMG includes the California Mojave and Colorado Desert ecoregions. The DMG was initially funded by the Departments of Interior and Defense which supported fulltime funded CO-Chairs that coordinated all DMG actions including meeting scheduling, developing a Charter and maintaining a MOU with member agencies. In addition to special projects the DMG also coordinated and maintained several Standing Working Groups/Committees that included: Science and Data; Invasive Species; Paleo, Cultural, and Tribal (PACRAT); Illegal Dumping; Abandoned Mine Lands; Wild Horse and Burro; Desert Tortoise; Raven Management; and a Conservation and Land Acquisition Group (CLAWG). Due to changes in policy and top level administration the funding for the DMG was discontinued in 2010-2011 and the organization was formally disbanded. However, due to the value resulting from the opportunity to continue to meet, collaborate, and share data – the current ADHOC organization of the DMG with volunteer coordinator(s) setting up meetings as a collateral duty was established and continues. From its formal origin to its current configuration The Desert Managers Group continues to provide a forum for government agencies to share information and work together to conserve and enhance the California Deserts for current and future generations.  Through cooperative management, each agency achieves greater operational efficiency, enhances resource protection, and better serves the public.

3. The Acting Field Office Manager, Julie Donnell provided welcome and opening comments for the **Barstow BLM Field Office**. The Barstow Field Office encompasses over 3 million acres that includes 17 Wilderness Designations, 5 designated Off Highway Vehicle Areas, and two National Monuments – Sand to Snow and Mojave Trails as well as segments of the Old Spanish Trail and Pacific Crest Trail, and three developed campgrounds. The land within their area of responsibility encompasses many unique features with elevations that vary from near sea level, north of Baker California to terrain over 6,000 feet above sea level in the Ord Mountains. The area also includes many scenic overviews, expansive desert valleys, winding canyons, washes, and dry lake beds, as well as several rugged mountain ranges. The area is crisscrossed with many OHV and hiking trails and the Office as part of its multiuse mission, manages habitat for several special status species such as the desert tortoise, Amargosa vole, and desert bighorn sheep. The Barstow Office also contains 45 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs). The ACECs are areas where special management is required to protect important historical, cultural and scenic values, as well as plant, fish and wildlife habitats and other natural resources. The Field Office has several major interstates and highways that run through the area to include the California Historic Route 66 National Scenic Byway that which runs through the center of the field office management area. The Field Office also manages about 30 miles of the Amargosa Wild and Scenic River that provides riparian habitat for 150 migrant and several resident bird and mammal species as well as the Mojave River. The areas encompassed within the Barstow Management area have provided habitat for wildlife and humans for many millennia and the unique resources continue to be managed to protect these valuable and irreplaceable resources.

4. The California Desert District (CDD) Director, Shelly Lynch provided an overview of the ongoing and planned **Renewable Energy Projects within the Desert District** that include 5 BLM Field Offices: Barstow, Ridgecrest, Palm Springs, El Centro, and Needles. The Desert District currently has 78 active renewable energy projects covering wind, solar, and geothermal projects as well as 3 battery storage facilities. There is also 79K acres of geothermal lease nominations being reviewed in the District. The current and planned renewables are projected to provide over 9,000+ Megawatts (MW) of electricity to the grid and has greatly enhanced the State’s goal to meet 25 Gigawatts (GW) of production in 2025. The Director also discussed the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) 2012 Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) Record of Decision (ROD) — also known as the Western Solar Plan that is projected to facilitate the permitting of solar energy development projects on public lands with its’ final EIS due out in May 2024 [[Areas Identified in the 2012 Western Solar Plan (anl.gov)](https://blmsolar.anl.gov/solar-peis/)]. Additionally the BLM Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Rule (2023) [[Onshore Oil and Gas Leasing Rule | Bureau of Land Management (blm.gov)](https://www.blm.gov/onshore-oil-and-gas-leasing-rule)] and the Renewable Energy Rule [[Renewable Energy Rule | Bureau of Land Management (blm.gov)](https://www.blm.gov/renewable-energy-rule)] were also mentioned, see the URL links for more information.

5. A background and an overview of **‘The** **Sentinel Landscape Program**’ and the proposed **‘Mojave Desert Sentinel Landscape’** were presented by Phil Murray, MCAGCC Twentynine Palms. The Sentinel Landscapes Partnership is a coalition of Federal agencies, state and local governments, and non-governmental organizations that are working with willing landowners and land managers to advance sustainable land use practices around military installations and ranges. The Sentinel Landscape program founded in 2013 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Defense (DOD), and Department of the Interior (DOI), was developed to strengthen military readiness, conserve natural resources, bolster agricultural and forestry economies, increase public access to outdoor recreation, and enhance resilience to climate change. Representatives from these three agencies make up the Federal Coordinating Committee which is responsible for reviewing and nominating (selecting/approving) Sentinel Landscapes [[Home | Sentinel Landscapes](https://sentinellandscapes.org/)].

**The Mojave Desert Sentinel Landscape (MDSL)** proposal covers approximately 3.5 million acres of the western Mojave Desert. This area includes DoD Installations, Multi-mission public lands managed predominantly by BLM, National Parks and Monuments, and includes dozens of endangered and threatened species, all under increasing pressure from development and climate change. More than 40 listed species to include the Mojave desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, Tui chub, Inyo California towhee, and western Joshua tree are found within and around the MDSL. Within this region, there are five military installations including the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, National Training Center Fort Irwin, Edwards Air Force Base, Naval Air Weapons Stations China Lake, and Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow. The MDSL partnership brings together a diverse assemblage of state, federal, tribal, county, local, and NGO partners to address encroachment from sprawl, incompatible development (including air space), wildfires, climate change, Federally listed species, and the desert ecosystem’s vulnerable soil and water resources, native vegetation, and working lands. Efforts to further protect these lands is beneficial for both on and off-installation resources. The ability to conserve and manage the areas surrounding the Installations facilitates the ability to test, research, train, and operate on the 2.8 million acres of DoD installations that surround the MDSL. The FCC is scheduled to formally announce the Sentinel Landscape nomination awards in May 2024. ***The Mojave Desert Sentinel Landscape was selected as a Sentinel Landscape on 15 May 2024.***

Additionally a short summation of **The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**  and its’ requests for grants (though deadline for this year has already passed – 15 April 2024) was provided for situational awareness and opportunity to possibly submit proposals next year if made available. [[Land and Water Conservation Fund | U.S. Department of the Interior (doi.gov)](https://www.doi.gov/lwcf)].

6. Sierra Willoughby, Mojave National Preserve, gave an overview of the actions and success the Preserve has had in **Coordinating with Third Party Mapping Sources** (i.e. Google, WAZE, Apple) to remove, update, and adjust online mapping systems to correctly identify the status of ‘Main Roads’, ‘Backroads’ as well as ‘Closed Areas’ in near real time on third party online mapping applications to prevent the inadvertent use of roads made impassable by storms and/or closed for repair. Roads in and through the Preserve are often closed due to maintenance, as well as during and after inclimate weather, i.e. flooding which makes these routes dangerous and impassable. To exacerbate the problem, several roads through the Preserve offer what some consider to be a shortcut to and from Las Vegas and I-15. These roads although serviceable for park visitors are narrow, often with no shoulders and dangerous drop-offs, have low posted speed limits (usually ignored) and are not designed for high highway speeds. In addition, numerous wildlife cross these thoroughfares to include desert tortoise, coyotes, bighorn sheep, as well as various other species which cause a large amount of roadkill and can cause major vehicle mishaps as well. The Mojave National Preserve has had success with notifying online third party mapping applications of closures and restrictions that in turn may allow end users to avoid and not use closed routes. This successful collaboration has required a large amount of detailed coordination and support as well as actions by the proponent at the Preserve, National Park Service Headquarters, and the Department of Transportation – Volpe Center. More information for these actions can be made by contacting the Mojave National Preserve.

7. Peter Sanzenbacher and Kent Kowalski, US Fish and Wildlife Service Office, Palm Springs briefed ongoing **Actions and Issues for Species in the Mojave and Colorado Deserts.** Highlights from their updates are listed below.

**Mojave Desert** updates fromPeter Sanzenbacher.

**Desert Tortoise** (a RASP species) ongoing project examples and initiatives include:

-Fort Irwin desert tortoise translocation plan - FWS reviewing the draft plan.

-Habitat conservation plans and incidental take permits for the following:

Desert Breeze Solar; Overnight Solar; CalPortland Oro Grande Cement expansion.

-General Conservation Plan for the Desert Tortoise in California: reviewing draft EIS.

-BNSF - Barstow International Gateway (BIG) – coordinating with proponent.

-Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority Water Pipeline - coordinating with BLM and project proponent.

-Range-wide DT monitoring including demographic studies in Superior-Cronese, Fremont-Kramer, and Ord-Rodman.

**Inyo California Towhee** (a RASP species) projects include:

-Ongoing coordination with BLM and Chine Lake Naval Air Weapons Station on spring 2024 surveys.

-Working with partners and their review and comments on an updated cooperative management agreement.

**Southwestern Pond Turtle** actions: FWS has re-opened the 30-day comment period from October 2023 for the proposed listing rule.

**Mohave Ground Squirrel** (a RASP species) project includes the species has had a petitioned to list it with a 90-day finding publishing in 2024.

**Inyo Rock Daisy.** Positive 90-day finding in January 2024; now under review for listing.

**White-margined Penstemon.** After a positive 90-day finding in January 2024 the species is now under review for listing.

**Tecopa bird’s beak. FWS was petitioned to list the species and will publish a 90-day finding in spring/summer 2024.**

**Common raven management program.**

-There are considerations underway to increase the raven program fee (currently $105/acre) to track and account for inflation for projects that could result in subsidies for ravens (development, transmission lines, etc.).

-Other actions include incorporating control measures for other predators (coyotes, feral dogs, etc.) in the existing program or setting it up as separate stand-alone effort.

**ESA regulation revisions finalized.** Regulation reinstates the previously blanked 4(d) rule; definitions/allowances for reasonable and prudent measures.

**Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act** regulation contains revisions for eagle take permitting including general and specific permits.

**Streamlining section 7(a)(2) consultations and habitat conservation plans under section 10(a)(1)(B)** includes the 2020 FWS memo from Assistant Director of Ecological Services and allows for analyzing federal action and exempting take through the intra-Service section 7 consultation for a Habitat Conservation Plan.

**Colorado Desert** briefed byKent Kowalski.

**Renewable Energy:**

Recently Approved Solar Projects in the Colorado region include – Desert Harvest, Palen, Oberon, Arica, and Victory Pass. These projects required substantial acreage in mitigation.

Pending Renewable Energy Projects include Easley, Sapphire, Lycan, and East Mesa Solar. These pending projects are all in BLM Development Focus Areas. FWS is also continuing to coordinate with the California Energy Commission on three geothermal

projects near the Salton Sea.

**Other issues** include the FWS Office working with BLM on conservation of desert pupfish at San Felipe Creek and Dos Palmas Preserve and the Office has completed the programmatic consultation for Salton Sea restoration projects.

**Desert tortoise Recovery actions:**

-Desert Tortoise Weekwas just completed in October with this, thefifth annual event held, yielding a record number of in-person events.

Other pending Desert Tortoise Projects include Desert tortoise population augmentation sites within the Chuckwalla Mountains Area with coordination between BLM, CDFW, and other Agencies.

-Exclusion fencing and rock slope protection at scour critical washes along Interstate 10 is also underway.

**Other Projects:**

**Sonoran pronghorn.** Working to finalize the 10(J) rule document within the Chuckwalla Bench and DoD Installations.

**California spotted owl**. The final listing rule is anticipated in June 2024 for two Distinct Population Segments (Sierra Nevada and Coastal-Southern).

**Pierson’s milkvetch.** Surveys conducted on Algodones Dunes and the 5-Year Review is being conducted this year.

**Monarch butterfly.** The final listing decision is scheduled for December.

**Salton Sea.** The ‘Ten Year Management Plan’, providing planning for habitat restoration is underway. Additionally, the ‘Species Conservation Habitat (SCH) Project’, an initiative to reduce the exposed lakebed and minimize fugitive dusk is in progress and the Bombay Beach Project with an end state to stabilize, preserve, and enhance emergent wetlands is also underway.

8. Dr. Brian Henen, MCAGCC Twentynine Palms, gave an update for the ongoing **Desert Tortoise Recovery and Sustainment Partnership (RASP)**. The Recovery and Sustainment Partnership Initiative (RASP) builds on years of collaboration and innovation with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) between the Department of Defense and the Department of the Interior (DOI). The RASP partnership was formalized in 2018 to develop and promote species conservation while promoting increased flexibility for military mission activities. The RASP was established to better address the dynamic relationship between species needs and mission activities and demonstrates how collaborative partnerships can achieve real-world successes for both military readiness and species conservation. [Recovery and Sustainment Partnership Initiative – Natural Resources (osd.mil)](https://www.denix.osd.mil/nr/focus-areas/partnerships/rasp/).

The Mojave Desert Tortoise is listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) as ‘Threatened’ due to a variety of factors including massive human sprawl and the destruction and subsequent continued encroachment on remaining species habitat. Currently there are 6.45 million acres designated as critical habitat for the Tortoise within the Desert with 24% of this area located in the West Mojave. In addition to the ‘Recovery and Sustainment Partnership (RASP), there are also ‘Species Action Plan’, and ‘Recovery Implementation Plan’ in place for the Desert Tortoise. He discussed the various ongoing collaborations and partnerships that have been established to engage, expand and enhance species conservation and include DOD (W Mojave 5), DOI (e.g., USFWS, BLM) and others (e.g., railroads, CALTRANS).

The Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for Common Raven Management was developed from these collaborations. Other actions that Dr. Henen highlighted included the focus on ‘High Value Conservation’ locations (e.g., Critical Habitat Units) and ‘High value recovery actions,’ (e.g., habitat restoration) as well as partnerships that focus are wider range vice insular approach (single agency/organization) to identify and seek ‘common ground.’ The ongoing results have yielded increased mission flexibility for example, Programmatic Biological Opinions (BOs) for NTC and MCAGCC that identify specific training areas, to include types of training, timing, and intensity. Other ongoing efforts have also enabled the updating of conservation measures for Desert tortoise and a programmatic approach to ESA Section consultation. Finally, the leveraging of established priorities for recovery actions and lessons learned have continued to benefit the species.

Annual request for proposals are announced late in the calendar year and can be found by searching desert tortoise on the website for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (<https://www.nfwf.org/>), with an emphasis to implement ‘on-the-ground’ recovery actions initially focused on the Western Mojave Desert.

9. Mike Hamilton, MCIWEST provided an update and overview of the ongoing **Off Installation Transit and Training Activities (OITTA)** initiative. This initiative and the training requirements have been in development for over 8 years and the initiative has been briefed to the DMG in the past. The need to train both ‘on and off’ of DoD Installations has been a historic, current, and remains a future requirement and the goal of the action is to develop and build on an existing catalog of off-installation sites/events/activities. The opportunity to use air and ground space off of DoD Controlled and managed lands provides realism and diversity that on-installation training alone cannot replicate. Currently MCIWEST as the Marine Corps proponent is working on a NEPA Environmental Assessment (EA) to cover the actions which will ultimately streamline administrative requirements. The EA is intended to provide the overall need and purpose for off-installation training; describe the types/frequency/intensity of proposed training and numbers of personnel/vehicles/aircraft; determine site-specific analysis for the first round of priority sites (approximately 92 sites and linear features) in the DMG Area of Interest; and provide mitigation/conservation measures along with standard operating procedures (SOPs) that could be applied broadly across a range of identified sites/movement corridors. A reminder in the brief stated that the proposal for these actions would only utilize corridor routes and areas that that are open to the public. Additionally, a request was made to the DMG members to solicit their interest in being either a cooperating agency or stakeholder in the OITTA NEPA process.

10. An update on the **Chuckwalla National Monument** proposal introduced by Representative Dr. Raul Ruiz (CA–25) in HR 5660 was provided. The proposed legislation, the ‘Chuckwalla National Monument Establishment and Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act’ would create the Chuckwalla National Monument, consisting of approximately 661,000 acres of Federal land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and would also include the expansion of Joshua Tree National Park by 17,915 acres. Since the bill’s introduction in Congress it was referred to the House Committee on Natural Resources 21 September 2023 but to date no other actions have occurred.

11. The final siting of the **Southern Nevada Supplemental Airport (SNSA)** has been made with the new airport siting in the Ivanpah area, a dry lakebed near the California border, between Primm and Jean Nevada. This new airport will provide the Las Vegas area with a second air facility planned to take larger International Flights and is planned to be operational in 2037. The airport project, under the Clark County Department of Aviation (CCDOA) is now moving forward after a nearly three-decade long planning phase and has transitioned to the environmental planning phase. The CCDOA held a media briefing to outline the necessity of a second commercial airport for Las Vegas and explain why the southern area was chosen in May 2024.

12. **BLM Field Trip** was conducted by Chris Otahal and Julie Donnell. The trip included overviews of the Stoddard Valley OHV Area and discussions of the many uses and management of these areas. The trip was a great opportunity to see and facilitate discussions that highlighted ongoing Desert Tortoise management efforts and also included discussions on raven controls as well as various opportunities to restore and mitigate illegal OHV use which included the design and employment of ‘defensible polygons’. ‘Defensible polygons’ are a conservation concept which goes beyond establishing gates and signage to the closing off and restoring of larger key and strategic areas to prevent further unauthorized incursions. The Trip’s final stop was adjacent to a BLM Desert Tortoise Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) bordering CA Route 247, and provided a look at some of the Desert Tortoise exclusion fencing and also included discussions about controlling invasives that spread very easily along roadsides.

13. Roundtable notes and updates from the attendees:

a. **BLM Barstow Field Office**, Chris Otahal.

-Management Plans for Mojave Trails National Monument are underway.

-Management Plans for Sand to Snow National Monument, co-managed with Forest Service, are also underway.

-Wild and Scenic Rivers Management Plan for the Armargosa Comprehensive river management plan is underway.

-BLM Barstow Field Office continues to work on filling vacancies for several positions in the office.

b. **Death Valley National Park.** Kevin Wilson provided updates for Death Valley NP which continues to have an Incident Command Structure (ICS) response in action planned through the end of April. The ICS has been in response to three 1,000 year flood events that have occurred there since 2015. The restoration efforts have included road, building, and infrastructure repairs. Using this ICS program the Park has been able to repair roads at approximately 1/30th of the cost of conventional contracting --- estimated at ~$185,000 vice almost $1.4 Million.

-Wild Horse and Burro removal efforts continue with $500K in funds received.

-Spring Devil Hole Pupfish population count had good news, with population up from the 2023 survey of 35 to the latest increase of 191 for 2024.

-Mining and mitigation actions also continue to be a concern for the Park.

c. **Joshua Tree National Park.** Dr.Sherri Shiflett, Division Lead for Science and Resource Stewardship provided an overview of the Park’s updates. Her previous experiences include NR Specialist at MCAGCC and Biologist at the Army Corps LA District Regulatory/Planning Division.

- Jane Rodgers has now been officially designated as the Park Superintendent.

- The park is facing encroachment issues including boundary intrusions as more housing is developed along its perimeters and this has created unauthorized OHV routes.

-The Park is monitoring solar projects that fall within their ‘wilderness viewsheds’ to stay informed of impacts to wilderness character and air quality.

- Desert tortoise conservation and discussions about strategies within the park are ongoing with analysis on how to proceed where fencing is not practical or necessary as in areas with low speed limits and are not treated as throughfares.

- The Park is participating in regional conservation efforts including the Mojave Colorado Desert Biosphere Region (MCDBR) and the Joshua Tree Coalition (in its early formation stages).

- The Park is engaging in climate change adaptation responses and planning for Joshua trees and native vegetation including seed collection and germination in an on-site nursey that is being used for out plantings post-fire, a Joshua tree common garden experiment, as well as creating and maintaining fire breaks in Joshua tree refugia. The on-site nursey is nearing end of life and the Park is seeking funds to rebuild.

- Work on Bighorn sheep guzzlers in park continues.

d. **NTC Fort Irwin.** David Housman provided updates for NTC.

Fort Irwin has prepared a Record of Decision (ROD) for its Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS) for Military Training and Public Land Withdrawal Extension, expected to be released in the Federal Register late spring which will withdraw the land for another 25 years.

-Fort Irwin is developing a translocation plan and environmental assessment for a proposed translocation of desert tortoises from its Western Training Area. This EA is expected out for public comment late spring/early summer.

-Fort Irwin has undertaken a major revision to its Integrated Natural Resource Management Plan (INRMP) that will be available for public comment in late spring.

-Fort Irwin is also supporting Mohave ground squirrel population research via camera trapping on its mitigation parcels south of the installation.

-Other NTC updates included 103K acres of mitigation land for Mohave Ground squirrel.

-Review and analysis of the routing and construction of a rail spur to support training deployments from MCLB Barstow Railhead to NTC Ft Irwin. The project would be approximately 13 miles and estimated currently at over $266 Million to construct.

e. **Preservation Ranch.** Heidi Brannon provided an update for the Ranch.

San Bernardino’s Resource Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) plan was recently approved by CDFW. The CDFW announcement is listed below.

**San Bernardino County RCIS Approved by CDFW** The purpose of this notification is to inform you that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) approved the San Bernardino County Regional Conservation Investment Strategy (RCIS) on April 8, 2024. The RCIS includes a strategy (goals, objectives, actions, and priorities) for the conservation of sensitive species, habitats, and other natural resources within the Valley region, the Cajon Pass area of the Mountain region, and the West Desert region of San Bernardino County, which can be used to help guide development and conservation projects, including mitigation. Anyone or any entity may implement actions included in any approved RCIS. The final San Bernardino County RCIS is available on [CDFW’s RCISweb page](https://usg01.safelinks.protection.office365.us/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flnks.gd%2Fl%2FeyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsInVybCI6Imh0dHBzOi8vd2lsZGxpZmUuY2EuZ292L0NvbnNlcnZhdGlvbi9QbGFubmluZy9SZWdpb25hbC1Db25zZXJ2YXRpb24vUkNJUz91dG1fbWVkaXVtPWVtYWlsJnV0bV9zb3VyY2U9Z292ZGVsaXZlcnkiLCJidWxsZXRpbl9pZCI6IjIwMjQwNDE1LjkzMzk0NTgxIn0.5Tinl9V8K4gEyKwCn-WxHIhqVOq4x-vrPOkRHTdXEYI%2Fs%2F1821940523%2Fbr%2F240780257723-l&data=05%7C02%7Ccharles.hamilton%40usmc.mil%7Cf2be25308c844525360e08dc608903fb%7Cf4c44cda18c646b080f2e290072444fd%7C0%7C0%7C638491388847350674%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=yi2e5z0Hk0BiEvFuG4zrDNjfER34GvYk1t%2BZChTVlro%3D&reserved=0).

f. **NAWS China Lake** updates were provided by Julie Hendrix and Susan Wilson.

-China Lake will have a new Commanding Officer this summer and will also be getting a new public affairs officer this Spring/Summer.

-China Lake is contacting CDFW to attempt to have them began attending the DMG.

-China Lake is still in recovery mode from the 2019 Earthquake with over $3 Billion in construction allocated to the effort to date.

-Litigation for China Lake aquifer continues with the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) court actions ongoing.

-China Lake is continuing to work to support various pollinators from butterflies to bats.

-Supporting Wildhorse and burro roundups on the ranges, deconflicting and scheduling around military operations as well as dealing with a range of bad road conditions to nonexistent roads. Additional requirements now include Section 106, NHPA compliance prior to placing corrals and other staging. Ten days of operation last October achieved 270 head of horses and burros being removed.

-Conservation work for the Endangered Tui Chub continues underway.

-Raven PEA specific to China Lake has been completed.

-Inyo California Towhee is included under the RASP.

-China Lake continues to monitor the status of Western Joshua Trees.

g. **Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG)** was represented by Billy Morrow. CVAG is working on several issues to include the following:

-CVAG is reviewing and commenting on the Multispecies Conservation Plan (MSCP).

-Reviewing OHV actions in the Coachella Valley.

-Working on ways to keep Bighorn sheep off of the Golf Course.

h. **Mojave Desert Land Trust**

-Continuing to prepare for upcoming Earth Day celebrations.

-The Agency has received funds for Desert Tortoise Fencing.

-Funds for Heritage Fire restoration received.

-Cultural and Biological surveys for Superior Cronese areas of interest have been scheduled.

-Continuing to work with MCAGCC on Desert Tortoise RASP.

-Work on ongoing seed bank and collection efforts have received $3Mil in funding.

14. The next DMG Meeting is scheduled for 6-7 November 2024 at the Living Desert in Palm Springs.

15. Copies of handouts, questions, and/or additional information can be obtained by contacting myself at (760)725-2635 or by email at Charles.hamilton@usmc.mil or clicking on the contact page on the Desert Managers’ website at

 C. M. Hamilton