

To: Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group

From: Paul Souza, Regional Director, Pacific Southwest Region

Subject: March 16, 2018, MOG Webinar Summary

The Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group (MOG) convened via webinar/conference call on March 16, 2018. Glen Knowles (USFWS) noted that the primary purpose of the call was to review the prioritized RIT project list (distributed via email on 3 March). The call also included review of action items and feedback from the December meeting and a summary of 2018 range-wide monitoring planning, among other topics. The call was attended by a diverse group of approximately 25 people.

Action items from December

	Action Items	Status
1	Provide project descriptions/budgets from RIT to MOG	Email from Glen Knowles on 8 March
2	Share PowerPoint presentations from meeting with MOG: link to Meetings tab on DTRO webpage	Completed
3	Send to MOG list of feedback items from RITs: see "RIT Feedback" presentation at website address above	Completed
4	Monitoring funding commitments for 2018 to Linda Allison/DTRO	Funding in place; cooperative agreement using BLM funds under DOI review
5	Alert MOG of new research publications quarterly	Email from Glen Knowles on 21 February
6	Have Science Advisory Committee identify research needs not being addressed	Report at June meeting
7	Convene interim conference calls to maintain continuity between meetings and prepare for upcoming meeting	This call

MOG evaluations from December Meeting

Glen Knowles reviewed the feedback received from the MOG members after the December meeting. As a result of that feedback, the following changes are being implemented for future MOG meetings:

- Anticipate a lighter agenda and be more realistic about how long agenda items will take.
- Add breaks into the agenda, morning and afternoon.
- Provide the opportunity for social time over happy hour the night before the meeting.
- Provide an ongoing project list at every meeting that gives the details of projects that are available to fund and their priority according to the RITs, to allow for and encourage collaboration on funding.

- Encourage high-level MOG members to attend the meetings.
- Have a webinar or conference call between meetings to allow for continuity and to accomplish more.
- Have a tighter RIT process and discuss this with the MOG during the March webinar.

Revised MOG/RIT Cycle

Ken Corey (USFWS) described how the MOG/RIT cycle was modified based on feedback at the December meeting, primarily focused on providing more regular input and updates to the MOG on RIT projects in need of funding for implementation and deleting reference to specific timelines for loading budgets (see attached).

- Flo Gardipee (USFWS) noted that the revised cycle provided for a more dynamic process that will help the RITs stay on track to provide up-to-date projects to the MOG.
- Amy Fesnock (BLM) reminded us that each agency also conducts a lot of other work not routed through the RITs and that we need a way to communicate these projects to the MOG, RITs, and between agencies to ensure that high-priority projects continue to be implemented. Roy Averill-Murray (USFWS) reported that the contract to re-establish the spatial decision support system, including a recovery action tracker, is on the verge of being completed. The system should be up and running in 3 months or so, and support will be provided so agency representatives can upload tortoise recovery projects for centralized reporting and information sharing.

Current list of RIT projects

Roy Averill-Murray described the format of the list of prioritized RIT projects, which consists of a table organized by RIT workgroup. Each project is listed by name and its associated budget estimate. In February, RIT members prioritized projects on a scale of 1-5, and these scores were collated into overall priorities of High, Medium, and Low, and are indicated in the table. A separate table identifies projects in development. Brief project summaries are included below the two tables. Questions about a particular project may be directed to the project proponent or a USFWS contact listed at the end of each summary.

- There was some discussion about an “in-progress” proposal to develop a Mojave Desert Plant Materials Center. Mark Sappington (Lake Mead NRA) indicated that LMNRA has a plant nursery that is undergoing a large renovation, so there may be opportunities to coordinate plant-material needs. Flo will integrate Mark into the RIT plant materials sub-group.
- Amy Fesnock noted that there are only two projects on the list for the Colorado Desert workgroup. She is actively trying to pair solar mitigation along the I-10 corridor (5-6 projects are on the horizon) with recovery projects. Additional projects, especially including habitat restoration (and highway fencing where implementation can be worked out with CalTrans), would be high on the list for mitigation for solar developments.

Update on the status of 2018 Line Distance Sampling

Linda Allison (USFWS) reported that she is coordinating surveys of eight monitoring strata in 2018. Clark County is funding the planned surveys of Coyote Springs, Mormon Mesa, and Gold Butte-Pakoon. Department of Defense installations are funding planned surveys of Ord-Rodman, Chocolate Mountain Aerial Gunnery Range, Ivanpah, Fenner, and Chemehuevi. Funds are in hand from BLM to survey Fremont-Kramer, Superior-Cronese, and Chuckwalla, but the

cooperative agreement with the project partner to conduct this field work is undergoing Department of Interior review, which is unlikely to be completed in time for the spring field season (surveys of several strata were cancelled last year for the same reason). This year, approval of the full cooperative agreement through the next 2 years is being solicited in advance, so we hope that surveys are not delayed in 2019.

Action Items

- Roy Averill-Murray will report to the MOG on the status of the spatial decision support system and recovery action tracker in June.
- Flo Gardipee will integrate Mark Sappington into the RIT's Plant Materials sub-group.
- The RIT's Colorado Desert Workgroup will work on developing additional recovery proposals in anticipation of mitigation needs in that region.
- USFWS will coordinate with BLM-California for highway fencing needs where CalTrans can authorize implementation.

Future MOG meetings

June 14, 2018 - Springs Preserve, Las Vegas

September 13, 2018 - Webinar

December 6, 2018 - Springs Preserve, Las Vegas

