



US Fish & Wildlife Service

Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

Preserving the Biological Diversity Of the Great Basin, Eastern Sierra & Mojave Desert

Desert Tortoise Recovery

February 2007

Revising The Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Desert Tortoise Recovery Office (DTRO) is revising and updating the recovery plan for the desert tortoise to ensure that it is scientifically credible with realistic prospects for implementation and success.

As a first step, the Service secured the assistance and impartial expertise of the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution to assess the feasibility of a collaborative approach to recovery planning.

The assessment team completed over 100 interviews and determined there was support for a collaborative process. However, the team's judgment was that the DTRO should *not* proceed with this process until adequate funding

and staffing resources were confirmed. The team also recommended that a scientifically credible base of information be agreed upon prior to convening regional working groups.

Unfortunately, funding sources were unavailable in the short term. Since recovery of the desert tortoise will be a long-term process, the Desert Tortoise Management Oversight Group (MOG) determined that an expedited recovery plan revision was prudent.

The DTRO has initiated an approach to work directly with the MOG to complete an expedited draft recovery plan by September 2007. This approach will limit broad-scale collaboration in the short term. However, implementation of

Assessment Report recommendations are underway to build collaborative relationships for recovery implementation, future five-year reviews and recovery plan revisions.



Recovery Planning Approach

Two MOG work groups, one for California and one for Arizona-Nevada-Utah, will develop recovery action plans that will form the basis of the revised recovery plan. Each meeting of these work groups will include an open session for public input into the process. The DTRO will work with a Science Advisory

Committee (SAC) to review and integrate draft recovery action plans and information from the MOG with recovery criteria and research priorities. Regional workshops will provide an additional opportunity for broad stakeholder input into the recovery action plans.

The first meeting of the California work group will be on March 7 and 8, 2007, in Redlands, California. The Arizona/Nevada/Utah work group will meet March 22 and 23, 2007 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Follow-up meetings for both work groups are planned for mid to late April.

