



desert conservation
PROGRAM
respect, protect and enjoy our desert!

Community Advisory Committee

Regional Transportation Commission Building, Room 108
600 South Grand Central Parkway, Las Vegas, Nevada 89155

Meeting Summary for July 16, 2009



Opening and Introductions

Ruth opened the meeting at 1:30 p.m. and commented that at that time the committee was one member short of a quorum. She reviewed the agenda with the group and rechecked for the presence of a quorum. A quorum was present at this second check. Ruth invited the committee members to introduce themselves.

Approval of Meeting Notes From the June 2009 CAC Meeting

Ruth asked the committee if it had any comments, questions or concerns about the June meeting notes. There were none and the CAC approved the June notes by consensus.

Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Presentation

Ruth introduced Roy Averill-Murray of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and reminded committee members where they could find a copy of his presentation in their binders.

Roy began his presentation by covering some background behind the listing of the desert tortoise. He commented that the listing process for the desert tortoise began with a petition in Utah. In 1989, the Mojave Desert population was emergency listed as endangered. In 1990, following more detailed study, the Mojave tortoise's status was changed to threatened.

Roy listed some of the threats to the desert tortoise:

1. Habitat destruction and fragmentation
2. Poaching, road mortality, vandalism
3. New disease, exotic weeds, livestock, subsidized predators

Tom Warden, City of Las Vegas, asked what a subsidized predator was. Roy explained that a subsidized predator is a native predator with a higher than normal population due to human intervention such as feeding on garbage.

Roy commented that in 2002, there was a General Accounting Office (GAO) audit of the recovery program which concluded that the decisions made were reasonable but that the effectiveness of the actions were not known due to insufficient follow-up.

In 2004, FWS sponsored another recovery plan assessment which agreed with the earlier assessment and recommended developing coordinated strategies for a more cohesive recovery program.



Roy explained that the various threats to the desert tortoise were linked in complex ways and it was difficult to determine the effects on the tortoise population of individual threats.

Roy gave the committee information on the Desert Tortoise Recovery Office. He noted that the office was set up in 2004 and had as its objectives revise the recovery plan, coordinate research and administer recovery permits.

Roy displayed a map of the distribution of various desert tortoise populations and commented that he expected the Sonoran population to be designated a separate species based on some genetic work in process.

Jim Rathbun, Education, asked if these different ranges were considered one population. Roy replied that formally, they are all one population, but only the Mojave population is listed.

Roy discussed the recovery criteria for the desert tortoise:

1. Increasing populations over 25 years
2. Increasing distribution over 25 years
3. No net loss of habitat

He pointed out that these criteria do not apply range wide; they are focused on individual recovery units.

Following the discussion on recovery criteria, Roy reviewed the major components of the FWS's recovery strategy:

1. Develop partnerships
2. Protect populations and habitat
3. Augment depleted populations
4. Monitor progress
5. Conduct applied research and modeling
6. Implement an adaptive management program

Roy pointed out that these efforts would be focused on the conservation areas. He also explained that this does not mean that tortoises outside these areas are unprotected. He noted that the Endangered Species Act (ESA), Sections 7 and 9 still protect the tortoises.

Jim asked if the HCP was exempt from monitoring. Roy replied, no, the HCP is the process by which tortoises outside the conservation areas are protected. Ann Schreiber, Seniors, commented that the current drought was making recovery efforts very difficult.



Roy discussed the monitoring methods with the committee. He pointed out that the range wide monitoring program was begun in 2001. Prior to this time, two methods of monitoring, triangular trisects and small study plots were used. He commented that these methods had serious flaws. The current method used for range wide monitoring, line distance sampling, is an improvement. Roy pointed out some areas where there was a heavy concentration of sampling transects and commented that this was due to the presence of supplemental funding to study these areas.

Stan Hardy, Rural Communities, asked if FWS noted any increase or decrease of animals from the expected numbers in those areas where heavier sampling was conducted. Roy commented that it was too early yet to determine trends. Stan commented that he was not interested in trends; he wanted to know if the numbers of tortoises seen in those areas was higher or lower than expected. Roy stated that he had not looked at the numbers from 2001 to 2004 yet. Mike Ford, City of Mesquite, stated that the numbers were significantly less than expected. Ruth asked the committee members to hold their questions until Roy finished his presentation.

Roy went through the various conservation areas and gave the committee the estimated abundances of tortoises in those areas:

1. Mora Mesa - 3,500 live tortoises
2. Coyote Springs valley – 1,830 live tortoises
3. Gold Butte – 2,768 live tortoises
4. Beaver Dam Slope – 1,000 live tortoises

He pointed out that in the entire eastern Mojave, there were an estimated 35,409 tortoises.

Roy also showed some maps which showed the locations where both live and dead tortoises had been found. Stan pointed out that this indicates that tortoises die where they live. Stan also asked if the dead tortoises had died of natural or unnatural causes. Roy responded that it was impossible to tell.

Roy commented that the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center (DTCC) and the Large Scale Translocation Site could be important parts of a research, mitigation, recovery and population augmentation program. Mike asked how that would be possible since most of the tortoises at these locations are former pets, not wild tortoises. Roy agreed that there were lots of questions that needed to be answered before this could happen.

Roy discussed recent partnerships FWS had developed. In particular, he mentioned the cooperative agreement with the San Diego Zoo and the development of Recovery Implementation Teams. He also



discussed the Spatial Decision Support System which is a recovery database which will pull together information on threats to tortoises and information from the monitoring program.

Jane Feldman, Environmental/Conservation, asked Roy what FWS's baseline was for the recovery criteria mentioned earlier. Roy commented that 2001 was the baseline since the current monitoring program only went back that far. Jane asked about the baseline for the "no net loss of habitat" criterion. Roy stated that the baseline will be the date of publication of the revised recovery plan using the newly developed habitat model. Jane asked when that would be published, and Roy replied that it would be later this fall.

Mike asked Roy to put the slides up that showed the combined distribution of live and dead tortoises. Mike pointed out that the areas that had the largest distributions of dead tortoises were the most remote areas. Roy agreed and commented that another interesting area was the Coyote Springs valley area. Scot Rutledge, Environmental/Conservation, asked for the count of dead tortoises in the Coyote Springs valley area. Roy replied he did not have that number.

Marci Henson, Clark County MSHCP Plan Administrator, asked Roy what the baseline cost for range wide tortoise monitoring was and what the confidence level of the population estimates was. Roy replied that the goal was to generate population estimates with a 22% level of precision. Marci repeated her question about the range wide amount of money spent on monitoring. Roy replied that there was no active monitoring range wide. Marci asked why. Roy replied that in California, the managers can not support it financially. He reported that in the northwest Mojave area, they cut the budget by 50%. Marci asked how FWS could use California data if California could not reach the 22% confidence level. Roy replied that the data was still valid; however, the lower confidence level had to be taken into account.

Scot asked how many tortoises were at the DTCC. Roy replied roughly a couple thousand.

Darren Wilson, Nevada Taxpayers Association, asked if any research had been done on tortoise egg collecting and incubation. Roy commented that not a lot had been done. He stated there was a U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) project using hatchlings that came out of the DTCC. These are tortoises that came from Coyote Springs. Darren asked if the tortoises from Coyote Springs had been transplanted. Roy commented that those tortoises are being held in the DTCC. Darren expressed concern that they could be infected at the DTCC. Roy stated that they were being held separately, the veterinarian had checked them, and they were in good shape. Mike commented that Coyote Springs prefers to house them outside. He commented that skunks had managed to get in among the tortoises at DTCC and ate some of them.

Scot asked if FWS was doing air and soil samples to determine if any contamination may be present in the turtle habitat. Roy commented that FWS was only counting tortoises.



Patrick Foley, Banking and Finance, asked if recent fires had had any significant effect on the tortoises. Roy replied that most of the fires had occurred outside critical tortoise habitat.

Jane asked if exotic grasses had replaced the indigenous flora in the affected areas. Roy replied that they had.

Patrick asked where the fires had taken place. Roy replied that they had been in the Gold Butte area.

Patrick asked Roy what he thought the effects of the proposed water pipelines might be on the tortoises. Roy replied that he did not know the current status of that project and what actions might be related to it. Mike commented that the pipelines were inside a fenced corridor along the Highway 93 easement corridor.

Jim asked if there was an HCP for Coyote Springs. Roy replied that there was and there was also an HCP for Lincoln County.

At this point, Roy completed his presentation and discussion. The committee applauded.

Guiding Principles

Eric Hawkins, Co-Facilitator, called for a five to eight minute break. Following the break, he reviewed the poster on levels of detail with the committee and emphasized to the committee that its job was not to focus on implementation details but to give policy level advice and guidance. He asked the committee members to write their answers to a series of questions on single sheets of paper which would then be posted.

Mike asked if the committee had not already done this exercise earlier. Eric replied that the committee had done a similar exercise on guiding principles, but not this particular exercise.

Eric then asked the committee to write two things they hoped to accomplish by participating on the CAC. When the committee members had completed this, Eric and Ruth collected the cards, and posted them, on the wall in a category titled "Objectives" and reviewed them with the group.

Eric then asked the committee members to write down what they thought were the two biggest challenges or obstacles to accomplishing the objectives they had just listed.

Again the completed cards were collected, posted on the wall in a category titled "Concerns" and reviewed.



Once this was completed, Eric reviewed the four permit amendment goals:

1. Address the acreage cap
2. Re-evaluate the covered species list
3. Re-evaluate covered activities and overall conservation/mitigation strategy
4. Re-evaluate structure and implementation of permit and plan

Following this review, Eric posted five category headings on the wall, which corresponded to the four permit amendment goals with an added "Other" category. He then asked the committee members to write down two pieces of advice they would give a person who was hypothetically replacing them on the committee. Ruth asked Paul Larsen, Business/Small Business, who was attending the meeting via telephone, if he had heard the question. Paul replied that he had not, and Ruth repeated the question for him. Paul gave his response orally to Ruth; she wrote it on a card. With respect to the "Other" category, Eric explained that committee members could put anything in this category they felt did not fit under any of the other headings.

Once the committee members had finished, Eric asked them to post their advice under the five possible categories. He informed the group that over the next few weeks, the facilitation team would do some grouping of these responses to provide the committee with possible guiding principles for the work to come. The committee can then refine and adopt its guiding principles with the goal of using them to ensure committee recommendations were consistent with these principles.

Once the committee members had posted their cards, Eric reviewed the cards in the "Other" category with the committee and asked the members to suggest whether they should be grouped in one of the previous categories or remain in the "Other" category. Some highlights of that discussion follow:

Brian Nix, Boulder City, commented that there is a lot of money that comes into the HCP program and he was curious as to how effective the spending of this money is and who is contributing the money. Jim stated that he was interested in how the benefits arising from the HCP could be quantified, in particular, quality of life benefits. Several members of the group were concerned as to whether the HCP and the CAC were actually accomplishing anything of value.

Scott commented that he felt the program had the cart before the horse, that before talking about managing species and lands, we have to learn to manage ourselves. He stated that we can not continue to measure progress in terms of economic growth and we need to think of the heritage we are leaving future generations. Ann agreed with Scot; she felt the focus around the table was more on how to continue growing rather than protecting species.



Stan commented that we do not know what level of recovery we are trying for, or even if we are helping or hurting the tortoise.

Bill Maher, Union, asked if any research had been done into the cause of death in those areas where there were a lot of dead tortoises found. Eric commented that this and Stan's comment could indicate that a more efficient or effective monitoring program was needed. He stated that he was hearing multiple committee members express the opinion that more accountability, efficiency and information are needed.

Terry Murphy, Developer/Homebuilder, commented that it is difficult for the average person to see the logic and necessity of the MSHCP and reminded the committee members that an ability to compromise is necessary for success in this project. Ann commented that the majority of the compromising done so far in this process has been done by the rural communities.

Notice of Intent to Conduct Scoping Meetings

John presented information on the status of the notice of intent (NOI) to the committee.

He explained the idea of scoping as it relates to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to the committee and discussed the difference between an HCP and an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). He informed the committee of the general locations for the scoping meetings, reviewed the major topics for upcoming meetings and discussed the preliminary covered species list and the projected take number and the rationale behind the take number.

Jane asked if the take projections involved acres of private land that has not yet been disturbed. John replied that it did. Jane commented that development could occur without an HCP. John agreed but pointed out that each project would need its own HCP.

Terry asked if development on public land affects our acreage cap. John replied that it depends. If it is public land that has been released for development for something like solar development, it could fall under our permit. Scott commented that the solar projects could end up using hundreds of thousands of acres. This might not affect the acreage cap, but it might affect the amount of land available for mitigation and if there were no land available for mitigation, development would stop.

Marci stated that the projected take number had been provided to the committee today so it would hear it from the DCP and not read about it in the paper. She stated the DCP absolutely needed the committee's help in talking through this take issue. She wanted to be sure the take number was enough so that there would not be the need to do another HCP amendment soon. She suggested that the committee members take the number back to their constituencies and be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting.



Domestic Tortoise Task Force

Jodi Bechtel, DCP Desert Tortoise Task Force Lead, introduced herself to the CAC and gave the group a presentation on the task force. She commented that the purpose of the presentation was to give the CAC a feel for the pet tortoise situation.

Jodi pointed out that Clark County manages a desert tortoise hotline and pick up service, the purpose of which is to pick up wild tortoises found in harm's way in urban areas. This service picks up 1,000 to 1,400 tortoises a year, but only about 2% to 4% are wild.

Jodi reviewed the legal criteria for possessing desert tortoises:

1. The tortoise was collected prior to 1989
2. The tortoise was obtained through a legal adoption program
3. The tortoise was obtained as progeny of a legally adopted tortoise or a tortoise collected prior to 1989.

Jodi informed the CAC that the Clark County DCP has been solely responsible for the management of stray and unwanted desert tortoises since 1996. The DCP currently pays for 100% of the collection and care of tortoises in Clark County. This amounts to approximately \$250,000 annually. Jodi commented that FWS has recently taken responsibility for operation of the DTCC and has requested \$699,000 dollars from the DCP as Clark County's share of the DTCC operating costs.

Jodi reviewed the goals of the Desert Tortoise Task Force with the CAC:

1. Gather stakeholders affected by and interested in issues related to wild and domestic desert tortoises
2. Facilitate a discussion on the issues surrounding management of desert tortoises in Clark County with a goal of developing a more effective management program

Jodi discussed the makeup and time commitments anticipated for the Desert Tortoise Task Force:

1. One representative from each of the Permittees
2. Two representatives from the CAC
3. Two representatives each from FWS, Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), DCP, animal control offices, animal shelters, Tortoise Group, and the San Diego Zoo
4. A tortoise biologist



It is expected that the Desert Tortoise Task Force's work will involve a commitment of two full days in the fall

Jim asked how many HCPs allow their endangered or threatened species to be kept as pets. Marci replied that there actually were some others that allowed this.

Jodi explained the task force would convene for one day and receive presentations by various agencies. It would then break for a period of time, reconvene for a day, receive any additional information and develop recommendations.

Ruth reminded the CAC that its task for today was to come up with the names of two CAC members to serve on the task force.

Stan asked what the task force was to accomplish. Jodi replied that it would provide guidance on what to do with the rescued pet tortoises.

John commented that Mindy Unger-Wadkins, City of Henderson, had volunteered to serve.

Terry volunteered to serve. Paul also volunteered to serve.

Eric informed the committee that Clark County was still working on the schedule and would inform the volunteers as soon as the dates had been decided.

Mike requested that the committee hold a discussion of the pet tortoise issue before the task force meeting so the CAC delegates can carry the committee's viewpoint to the task force meeting.

Jim asked if there were any representatives from local universities on the task force. He was concerned about membership from the biology department of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). Marci replied that the DCP had asked Dr. Sameer to participate.

Jodi informed the committee that the meetings were public meetings, so other members of the committee were welcome to attend.

Scot asked why tortoises were no longer being euthanized. Jodi replied that was a FWS decision. Ann commented that only the sick tortoises were euthanized.

Ruth asked Marci to say a few words about the upcoming project symposium. Marci explained that this was a chance to hear information about all the projects Clark County DCP was involved in. Ruth reminded the committee members the symposium agenda was included in their binders.

Ruth reminded the committee its next meeting would be August, 13, 2009, and she reviewed the items on the agenda. She commented that the task force discussions on pet tortoises mentioned by Mike may take place in August or September, depending on the first meeting date of the Desert Tortoise Task Force.



Scot informed the committee that he would be out of town for the guiding principles discussion in August. John asked Scot to send him any questions he might have on the guiding principles.

Public Comment

There was none

Wrap Up and Closing

Eric asked the committee members if anyone had anything else they wanted to add. There were no comments.

John thanked the committee members for giving up an additional hour of their time for this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:23 p.m.



Attendance

Committee Members Present

Jane Feldman, Environmental/
Conservation
Patrick Foley, Bank/Finance
Mike Ford, City of Mesquite
Stan Hardy, Rural Community
Paul Larsen, Business/Small Busi-
ness
Bill Maher, Union
Terry Murphy, Developer/Home-
builder
Brian Nix, City of Boulder City
Joe Pantuso, Developer/Home-
builder
Jim Rathbun, Education
Scot Rutledge, Environmental/
Conservation
Ann Schrieber, Senior
Tom Warden, City of Las Vegas
Darren Wilson, Nevada Taxpayers
Association

Clark County Staff In Attendance

Jodi Bechtel
Marci Henson
Catherine Jorgenson
Ann Magliere
John Tennert

Others In Attendance

Roy Averill-Murray
Bob Hoyes
Michael N. Johnson
Jerri Krueger
Bill Maher
Rob Mrowka
Par Rasmussen
Sarah Rockwell
Mark Silverstein
John Willis
Ian Zabarte
Eric Hawkins, Facilitator
Doug Huston, Meeting
Documentation
Ruth Nicholson, Facilitator

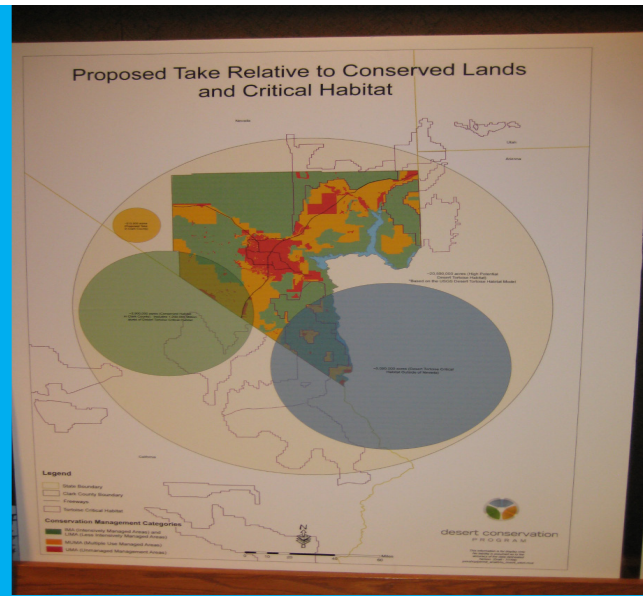


Meeting Graphics

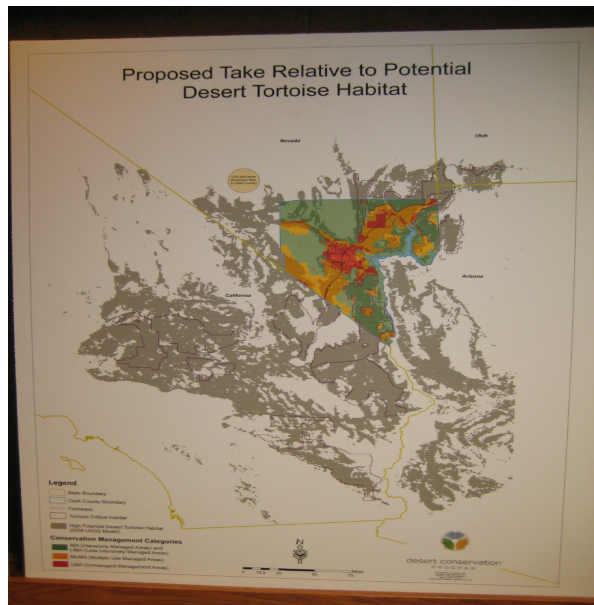
Levels of Detail



Proposed Take Comparison



Proposed Take Comparison II



Permit Amendment Purpose

desert conservation
PROGRAM
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Permit Amendment Purpose

1. Address acreage cap
2. Re-evaluate the list of covered species to refocus attention on those species most at risk and most directly impacted by take
3. Re-evaluate covered activities and overall conservation/ mitigation strategy
4. Re-evaluate structure and implementation of the permit and plan



Flipcharts

Notes:

Agenda

1. Opening
2. Approve June Notes
3. Desert Tortoise Recovery
4. Guiding Principles
5. Notice of Intent To Conduct Scoping
6. Desert Tortoise Task Force
7. Public Comment
8. Wrap Up and Closing
9. Adjourn

Goals

1. To Adopt June Meeting Notes
2. To Learn About Desert Tortoise Recovery
3. To Work On Guiding Principles
4. To Review the Scoping NOI
5. To Name Two CAC Members to Desert Tortoise Task Force

Guiding Principles

Objectives

1. Protect Rural Areas
2. Avoid Any Increase in Fees
3. Remove Acreage Cap
4. Save the Desert
5. Help Unions
6. Multiple Use of Land
7. Ensure That Any Changes/Updates Are Defensible and Truly Represent Our Community's Values

Guiding Principles

Objectives

8. Help and Advice From the Community On How to Shape the Amended Habitat Conservation Plan
9. Protect Species w/out Killing the Economy
10. How Education is Affected
11. Economic Impacts/Habitat Impacts
12. Bring Closure to Open Issues Re: Amendment



Flipcharts

Notes:

Guiding Principles

Objectives

- 13. Improve Ability of the Community To Protect Sensitive Species and Habitat
- 14. To Create Guidance on Opportunity to Enhance Our Surrounding Environment
- 15. Protect Interests of the Home Building Industry

Guiding Principles

Objectives

- 16. Be Certain That What We're Doing (Spending) is Having Measurable Impact
- 17. Adjust MSHCP Based on Changing Conditions
- 18. Save the Tortoises
- 19. Make Sure the Protection Covers Humans As Well as Animals

Guiding Principles

Objectives

- 20. Help From the Surrounding Community on Prioritizing and Focusing the Permittee's Efforts and Expenditures Going Forward
- 21. What Impact on Future Development
- 22. Using Resource Dollars Wisely! Dollars Spent vs. Gain

Guiding Principles

Objectives

- 23. Make Sure Our Plan Adapts to the Changing Lay of the Land (Enviro/Economic/Social)



Flipcharts

Notes:

Guiding Principles

Concerns

1. Vast Complexity of the Issues
2. Growth Does Not Pay For Itself
3. Lack of "Just" Funding Mechanisms
4. The Inaccurate Perception that People Lose if Animals Win
5. Our Community's Misperception of What A Desert Community Is and Refusal to Accept Those Limitations

Guiding Principles

Concerns

6. Lack of Species Knowledge! Accuracy of Current Plan
7. Have Seen No Evidence That We Know More Today, 20 Years and \$130 Million Later Than We Did on 8/4/89
8. Difficulty Measuring Results
9. Lack of Hands On Work to Protect The Environment

Guiding Principles

Concerns

10. Focus More On Building Than Species
11. Potential For Complete Unraveling
12. Extremely Complex Issues
13. Stakeholder Diversity
14. Not Good Info (Data)
15. \$
16. Disparate Expectations Will Preclude Real Progress

Guiding Principles

Concerns

17. Price For Expansion of Cap May Be Too High
18. Too Broad of a Mandate Species Wise
19. Lack of Available Water Resources
20. Ability to Meet Everybody's Objectives In Protecting Their Interest
21. Is There Any Urgency?



Flipcharts

Notes:

Guiding Principles

Concerns

22. A Lack of Long Term Planning That Recognizes Natural Constraints
23. Balancing Disparate Interests Among Stake holders While Maintaining a Razor Sharp Focus On What We're To Do.
24. Regardless of Outcome 3rd Parties Will Challenge
25. Limited Land For Development

Guiding Principles

Concerns

26. Cost of Program vs. Value To Community

Guiding Principles

Acreage Cap

1. Keep Acreage Small, Incentivize Development on Infill
2. We Must Consider the Difference Between "Growth As Development" vs. "Growth as Expansion." Is Increasing Cap Necessary?
3. Open Up Areas of BLM Ground For Sale Not Affected With True Habitat Initiatives Under HCP

Guiding Principles

Acreage Cap

4. Try to Limit Actions That Could Reduce Acreage For Future Development



Flipcharts

Notes:

Guiding Principles

Covered Species

1. Narrow the Scope of Covered Species
2. Keep Number of Covered Species Small;
Scientists Need Help
3. Focus on Species that are Most Impacted By
Our Actions
4. Eat the Elephant One Bite At a Time
5. Question the Need to Expand Acreage Cap

Guiding Principles

Covered Species

6. Do Not Neglect Species That Are Endangered
So Vegas Can Grow
7. Exclude Species Not In Tortoise Areas

Guiding Principles

Activities/Mitigation Strategy

1. Focus On Activities That Best Mitigate for Our
Impact On Species
2. Balance Burdens Across All Affected Stake
holders
3. Focus on the Critical Areas and Avoid Trying To
Appease All
4. Growth Costs: Money, Resources, Services

Guiding Principles

Activities/Mitigation Strategy

5. More Hands On Conservation On Protected
Areas
6. Make Sure Return On Conservation
7. Facts Are the Enemy of Truth
8. Be Willing To Compromise



Flipcharts

Notes:

Guiding Principles

Plan Structure & Implementation

1. Understand Cost \$ And Ensure Accountability
2. Focus On Solutions That Are Efficient and Effective
3. Need For Sustained Growth
4. Pay Close Attention To Changes in Increasing Fees
5. Keep Focus on HCP Being Simple/Useable

Guiding Principles

Other

1. Balance With Quality of Life
2. Does It Make A Difference
3. Are We Getting Value for \$
4. Effective - Efficient
5. Realistic Expectations
6. Follow the Money \$
7. Understand the Fiscal Impact of Plan On Community

Guiding Principles

Other

8. As We Require Species To Adapt We Must Look To Ourselves, Our Industries, And Our Community To Adapt.
9. Make Sure We Aren't Back Here in 2019

Notes

Subsidized Predators

Coyotes, Ravens

Pop Thrives Because of Human Intervention

HCP is Process By Which Tortoises Outside Conservation Areas are Protected

Drought Can/Could Be A Detriment Despite Our Best Efforts

Population Trends In Areas Where Transects

Occurring - Unknown (Too Early)



Flipcharts

Notes:

Notes

Abundance Estimates = Live
Baseline Date for Recovery Program = 2001
No Net Loss = 2009
Using USGS Habitat Model And Database
Mortality Not Necessarily Coordinated With
Population Density
Could Be Other Natural Factors - Recovery/Cap-
tive Release Program May Help ID Why

Notes

What Is Range Wide Amount of Spending For
Monitoring
Monitoring Spending Sparse in California
Compared to Nevada/Clark County
Coyote Springs Population Healthier (Generally)
Candidate for Population Recovery
Coyote Springs Willing To House Locally
Line Sampling Only Current For Population
Estimates

Notes

Any Effect of SNWA Pipeline From North
Unsure
Inside Existing (93) Corridor
HCP In Coyote Springs
Lincoln County Seperate
Clark County Part of This HCP



Appendix A

Meeting 6 Agenda

DRAFT AGENDA






Desert Conservation Program Community Advisory Committee Meeting County Of Clark, State Of Nevada

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of the Desert Conservation Program Community Advisory Committee (CAC) has been called and will be held on: **Thursday, July 16, 2009, beginning at 1:30 p.m. at the Regional Transportation Commission Building, 600 Grand Central Pkwy, Room 108, Las Vegas, Nevada.** Below is an agenda of all items scheduled to be considered. Unless otherwise stated, items may be taken out of the order presented on the agenda.

1. **Opening and Introductions**
2. **Approval of Meeting Notes from June 2009 CAC meeting**
3. **Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Presentation**
Goals: • To learn about the Desert Tortoise Recovery Office and the Draft Revised Recovery Plan
4. **Guiding Principles**
Goals: • To draft and consolidate Guiding Principles for the CAC's work
5. **Notice of Intent to Conduct Scoping Meetings**
Goals: • To discuss the key elements of the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for permit amendment
6. **Desert Tortoise Task Force**
Goals: • To identify two members of the CAC to serve on the Domestic Desert Tortoise Task Force
7. **Public Comment**
No action may be taken upon a matter raised under this item of the agenda until the matter itself has been specifically included on an agenda as an item upon which action will be taken. Speakers are asked to sign-in to speak. Speakers are asked to introduce themselves with their name and affiliation, if any, before speaking. Each speaker will be limited to three minutes.
8. **Meeting Wrap-Up and Closing**
Goals: • To recap meeting results and identify follow-up activities
• To outline the agenda topics and desired results for the August 13, 2009 meeting
• To invite participant feedback on the meeting
9. **Adjourn**



Appendix B Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Presentation

 <p>desert conservation PROGRAM respect, protect and enjoy our desert!</p> <p>Community Advisory Committee Meeting 6</p> <p>July 16, 2009</p>	 <p>Desert Tortoise Recovery and Clark County</p> <p>Roy C. Averill-Murray Desert Tortoise Recovery Office</p>
<p>Background</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ 1977: BDS (UT) popl'n petitioned for listing■ 1989: Mojave popl'n emergency listed as Endangered■ 1990: Mojave popl'n listed as Threatened■ 1994: Critical habitat & recovery plan 	<p>1994 Recovery Plan: Threats</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Habitat destruction/fragmentation■ Poaching, road mortality, vandalism■ New disease, exotic weeds, livestock, subsidized predators■ Many others 



Appendix B Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Presentation

2002

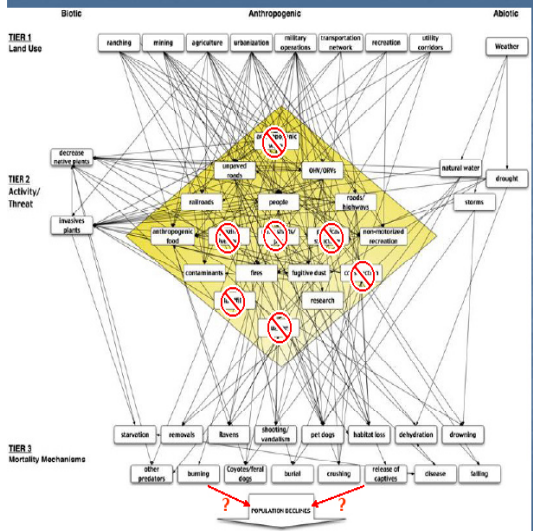


- Listing, CH, RP reasonable
- Recovery action effectiveness unknown
- Coordinated strategy to link mgmt with research

2004



- 1994 RP strong
- Strategies for more cohesive, scientifically powerful recovery program
- Desert Tortoise Recovery Office

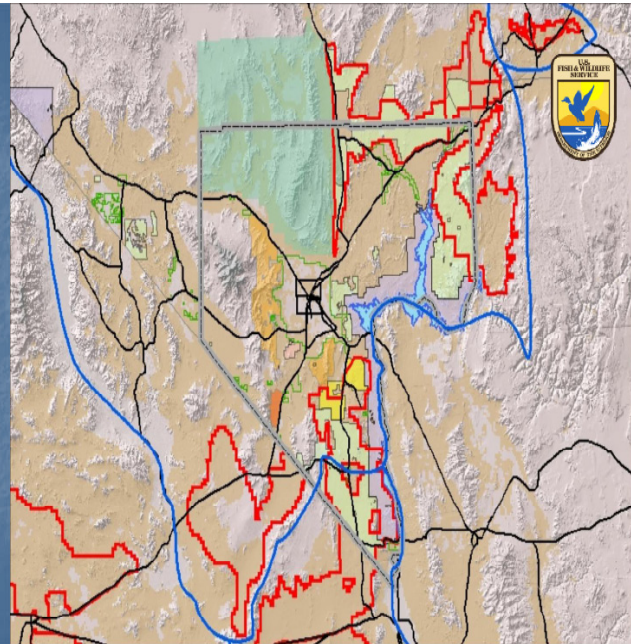
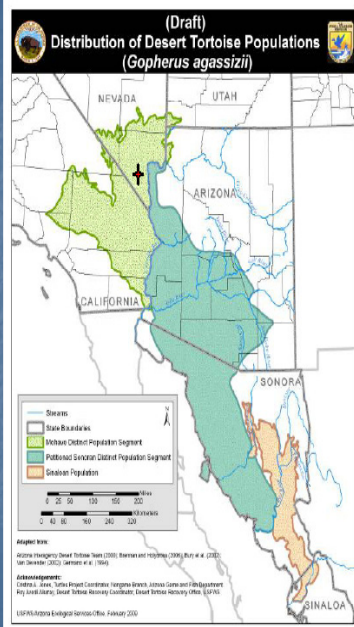


Desert Tortoise Recovery Office

- December 2004
- Revise recovery plan
- Coordinate research, monitoring, & recovery plan implementation
- Administer recovery permits



Appendix B Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Presentation



Recovery Criteria



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Draft Revised Recovery Plan
for the Mojave Population
of the Desert Tortoise
(*Gopher agassizii*)



1. Increasing populations over 25 years
2. Increasing distribution over 25 years
3. No net loss of habitat

Recovery Strategy



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

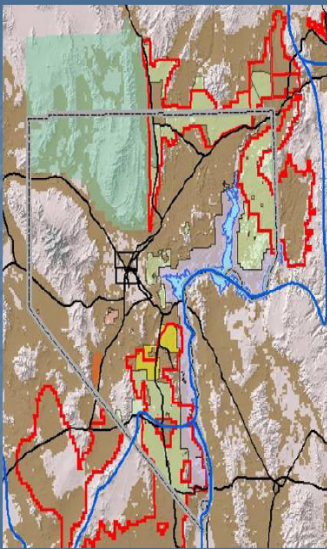
Draft Revised Recovery Plan
for the Mojave Population
of the Desert Tortoise
(*Gopher agassizii*)



- Develop partnerships
- Protect populations & habitat
- Augment depleted populations
- Monitor progress
- Conduct applied research & modeling
- Implement adaptive management program



Appendix B Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Presentation



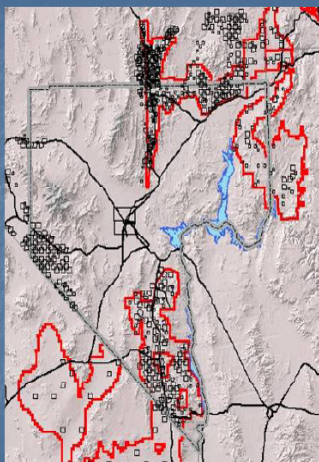
Protect
Populations
and
Habitat



Monitoring

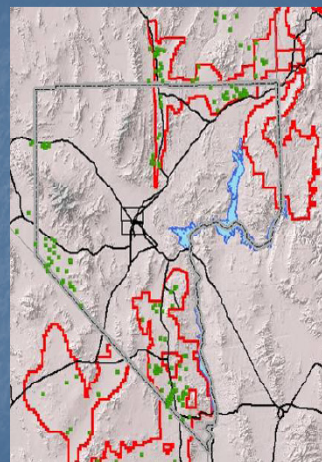


- 1970s: Triangular transects
 - Total corrected sign
 - Transformed to rough abundance classes (0-20, 21-50, 51-100, 101-250, >250/sq. mi)
- 1970s: Study plots (1980s in NV)
 - Small-scale, non-random
- 2001: Range-wide program initiated
 - Line distance sampling



Monitoring

2008
transects



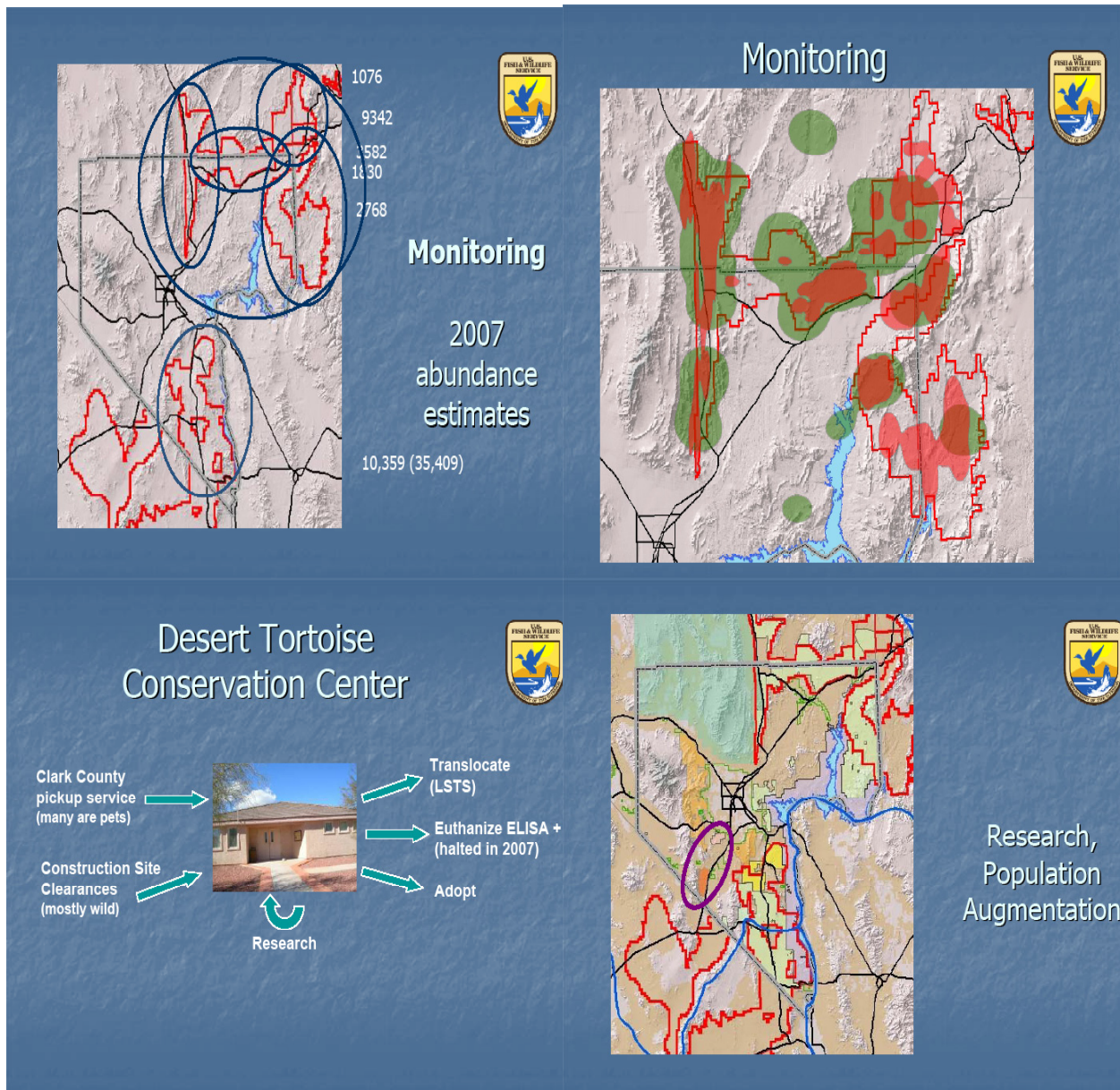
Monitoring

2008 live
observations





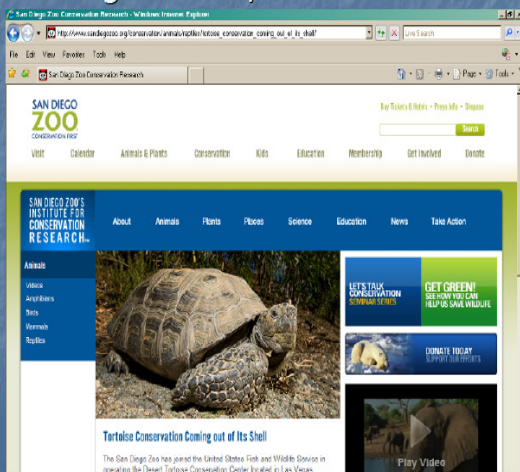
Appendix B Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Presentation





Appendix B Desert Tortoise Recovery Office Presentation

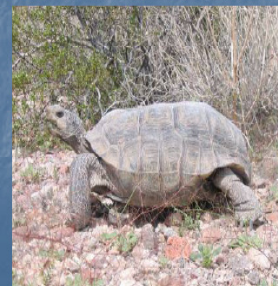
FWS-SDZ Cooperative Agreement, March 2009



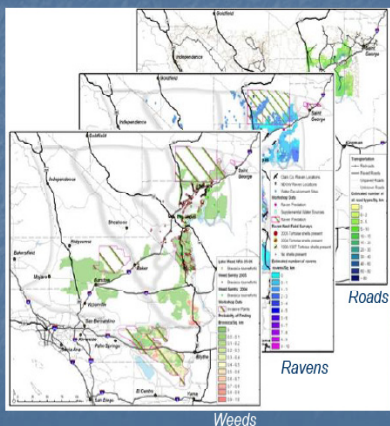
Partnerships/ Adaptive Management



- Recovery Implementation Teams
 - Recovery Action Plans
- Spatial Decision Support System
 - Recovery database





Spatial Decision Support System



Locations of threats to the desert tortoise



Appendix C Desert Tortoise Task Force Presentation

 <p>desert conservation PROGRAM respect, protect and enjoy our desert!</p> <h2>Domestic Desert Tortoise Task Force</h2> <p>July 2009</p>	 <p>desert conservation PROGRAM respect, protect and enjoy our desert!</p> <h3>Overview</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The DCP is sponsoring a group of experts and stakeholders to review and evaluate issues concerning domestic desert tortoises in Clark County communities
 <p>desert conservation PROGRAM respect, protect and enjoy our desert!</p> <h3>Purpose of Presentation</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Provide an overview of issues and concerns regarding domestic desert tortoises➤ Review the DCP's current connection and responsibilities regarding domestic tortoises➤ Review the Domestic Desert Tortoise Task Force purpose and request for participation	 <p>desert conservation PROGRAM respect, protect and enjoy our desert!</p> <h3>Background</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The DCP manages a Desert Tortoise Hotline and Pickup Service<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The purpose of the Hotline and Pickup Service is to collect wild tortoises found by citizens in harms way in urban areas➤ Collected tortoises are taken to the Desert Tortoise Conservation Center (DTCC)<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the San Diego Zoo▪ Owned by U.S. Bureau of Land Management



Appendix C Desert Tortoise Task Force Presentation

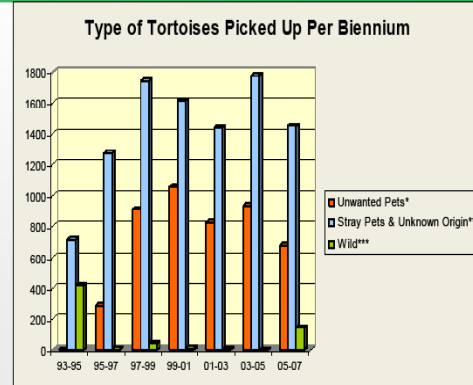


Domestic Desert Tortoise Concerns

- Pickup Service collects an average of 1,000 to 1,400 tortoises annually
 - Approximately 2-4% are known or suspected wild tortoises
 - Approximately 95-98% are stray or unwanted domestic tortoises (pets)
 - A small percentage are non desert tortoises



Domestic Desert Tortoise Concerns



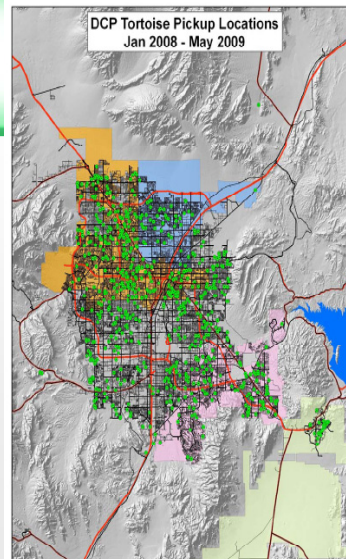
*The pickup of pet desert tortoises began as a pilot project in October 1996.
 **The majority of these tortoises are found in urban areas and are considered stray pets.
 ***Includes tortoises found through mandatory clearances in 93-95, then optional clearances after August 1995, and Coyote Springs (Clark County section) clearances.



Domestic Desert Tortoise Concerns

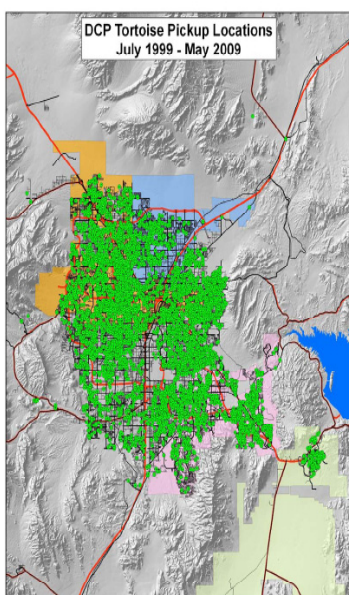
- High number of repeat callers to the Hotline and Pickup Service*
 - Examples of actual collections:
 - 15 pickups throughout 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006 (16 tortoises total)
 - 15 pickups throughout 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 (16 tortoises total)
- Multiple tortoises collected at individual households*
 - Examples of actual collections:
 - 42 tortoises / 1 pickup
 - 55 tortoises / 3 pickups (highest to date for one household)

*Indicates backyard breeding





Appendix C Desert Tortoise Task Force Presentation



Domestic Desert Tortoise Concerns

- Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) allow citizens to possess desert tortoises if:
 - Tortoise was collected pre-1989
 - Tortoise is legally adopted
 - Tortoise was obtained as progeny of pre-1989 or adopted tortoises



Domestic Desert Tortoise Concerns

- No permit is required to possess a tortoise
- No legal restrictions on the number of tortoises per household
- No legal restrictions on breeding
- No known way to spay or neuter tortoises



DCP and Domestic Desert Tortoises

- The DCP has been acting as ad-hoc manager of unwanted and stray desert tortoises since 1996
 - Community-wide problem being solved by a Habitat Conservation Plan
 - DCP funding can only be used for the purpose of mitigating for the take of threatened and endangered wildlife
 - DCP cannot set or enforce restrictions on wildlife
- The DCP pays for 100% of the collection and care for the tortoises collected in Clark County



Appendix C Desert Tortoise Task Force Presentation



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DCP and Domestic Desert Tortoises

- DCP has been expending ~\$250,000 annually on collection, care and management
- FWS has requested ~\$699,000 for Clark County's portion of one-year DTCC operations (care and management only)
- FWS has sole discretion on items affecting cost:
 - Disposition options (ongoing holding, translocation, adoption, research)
 - When and if tortoises should be euthanized
 - Disease and genetic testing needs



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DCP and Domestic Desert Tortoises

- DCP Permit Amendment
 - CAC will be considering future mitigation efforts
 - DCP's future responsibilities towards domestic desert tortoises must conform with new mitigation efforts



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Desert Tortoise Task Force

- The tortoise's status as a threatened species requires specific, expert deliberation by professionals directly involved in the management and care of animals.



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Desert Tortoise Task Force

- Task Force goals:
 - To gather affected and interested stakeholders related to the issue of wild and domestic desert tortoises
 - To facilitate the discussion of current challenges and opportunities with a goal to more effectively address the management of this species in Clark County



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Appendix C Desert Tortoise Task Force Presentation



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Desert Tortoise Task Force

- Two representative from the CAC are invited to participate in the Task Force
 - Commitment of ~2 full days in early Fall
 - Must represent and report back to full CAC regarding mitigation efforts
- Other invited participants:
 - One representative each from the permittees, FWS, NDOW, DCP, Animal Control Offices, Animal Shelters, Tortoise Group, San Diego Zoo, tortoise biologist.



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Appendix D

Notice of Intent to Conduct Scoping Presentation

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Notice of Intent to Conduct Scoping

June 11, 2009

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Scoping under NEPA

What is “scoping” under the National Environmental Policy Act?

- Gathering and analysis of information that the federal government (FWS) will use to establish the breadth, or scope, of environmental review of a proposed project.
- Scoping helps identify significant issues related to a proposed action and is a useful tool for discovering alternatives to a proposal or significant impacts that may be otherwise overlooked.
- Required by NEPA regulations

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Scoping Meetings

- Notice is under review with Regional Office of FWS and Department of Interior
- Anticipate publication in Federal Register in late June/early July
- Scoping meetings to take place in late July
 - Moapa/Logandale (1)
 - Searchlight (1)
 - Las Vegas Valley (2)

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Scoping Notice

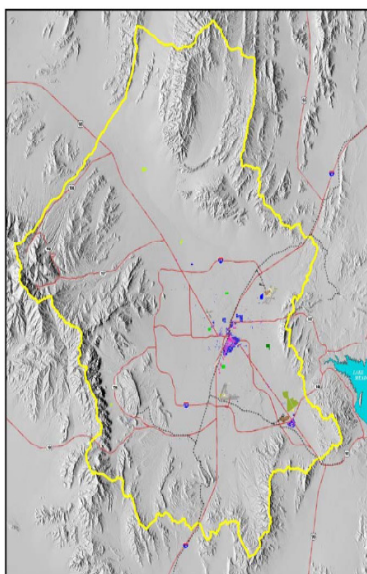
- Describes the proposed action and possible alternatives
- Advises other federal and state agencies, affected tribes, and the public of FWS’ Intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS)
- Announces the initiation of a 30-day public scoping period
- Requests suggestions and information on the scope of issues and alternatives to be included in the SEIS



Appendix D Notice of Intent to Conduct Scoping Presentation

Population:
41,000

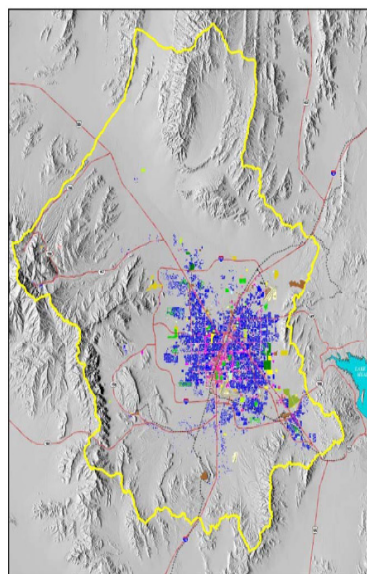
Developed
Land:
6,906 acres



1
9
5
0

Population:
748,392

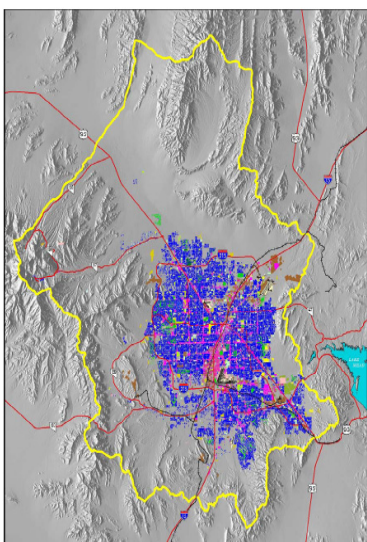
Developed
Land:
71,630 acres



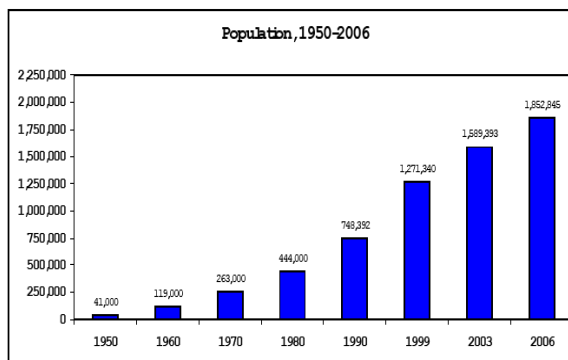
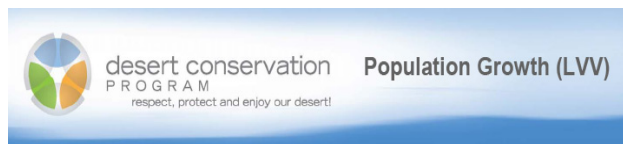
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9
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Population:
1,852,845

Developed
Land:
154,000 acres

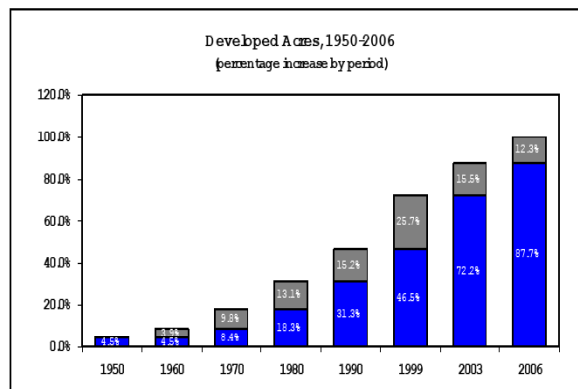
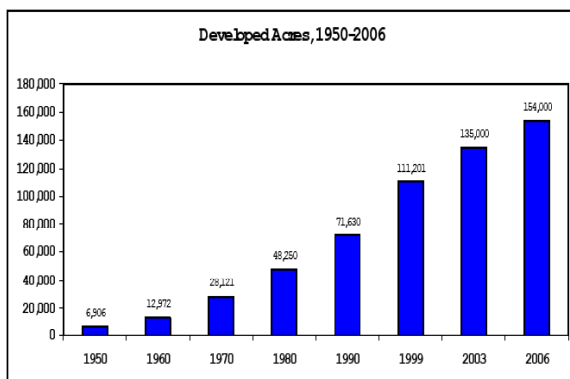
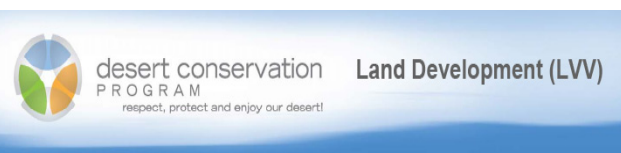
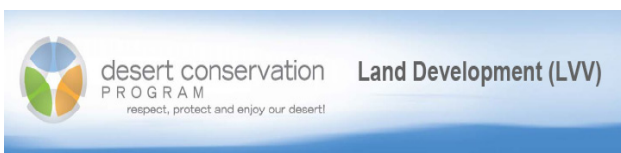


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Appendix D Notice of Intent to Conduct Scoping Presentation



Projecting Take Based on Mean Annual Growth Rates (acres)

Period	Mean	50-year Perm it
1950-1990	1,618	80905
1950-2006	2,627	131334
1990-1999	4,397	219839
1990-2006	5,148	257406
1999-2006	6,114	305700

- Analysis will focus on number of acres on a landscape scale, not specific parcels or areas
 - Based on ecosystem/habitat types
- Actual pattern of future development cannot be predicted
 - Area where take can occur will contract or expand as available land for development contracts or expands
- Acres held in a common pool to be used as needed; not reserved to individual permittees
- Mitigation will be pay-as-you-go; no take, no mitigation

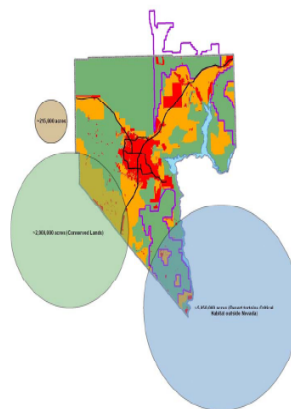


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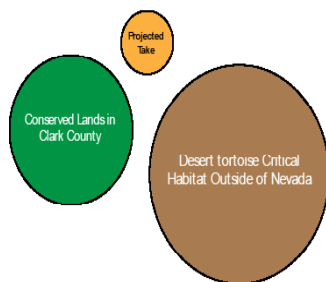


Jurisdictional Boundary	Projected Take
Las Vegas Valley	177,177
Boulder City	1,620
Mesquite	8,108
Other federal disposal boundaries	72,845
Private land outside Las Vegas Valley *	21,934
Total	281,684
Less remaining under existing permit	-67,589
Total projected take	214,095

*Unincorporated Clark County



- Represents less than 5 percent of Clark County
- One percent of potential desert tortoise habitat across its range
- Does not project take in any critical habitat (1.2 million acres in Nevada)



- Represents less than 5 percent of Clark County
- One percent of potential desert tortoise habitat across its range
- Does not project take in any critical habitat (1.2 million acres in Nevada)
- Experience under the current permit
- Expansion of the disposal boundary(ies) by Congress
- Cost and risk of future amendments
- Population and demand projections
- Take and Jeopardy
- Long-Term Endangered Species Act Assurances



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Questions?