



## 2011 PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT SYMPOSIUM

Wednesday, August 17, 2011

Desert Research Institute, Rogers' Auditorium (Atomic Testing Museum), 755 E. Flamingo

*The purpose of the symposium is to highlight progress made to date on projects to implement the Clark County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan.*

### Agenda

**8:30 Welcome**

Sue Wainscott, Desert Conservation Program  
Rob Sutter, Science Advisor, Desert Conservation Program

**8:45 Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Overview and Progress Report**

Marci Henson, Desert Conservation Program

*The Clark County MSHCP and associated incidental take permit, administered by the Desert Conservation Program, provide for regional compliance with the Endangered Species Act in southern Nevada. This presentation describes the wide variety of land management, restoration, outreach, planning, research, and monitoring projects the Program has funded, implemented, and/or completed over the past year.*

**9:10 Adaptive Management Program Progress Report**

*(2005-CC-574 and 2009-CC-801)*

Sue Wainscott, Desert Conservation Program

*The MSHCP prescribes a robust Adaptive Management Program that include an independent science advisor and regular analyses of land use trends, habitat loss, species status, and effectiveness measures. This presentation describes progress on these tasks and activities for providing and coordinating peer reviews, technical assistance, data management, and monitoring design for the MSHCP.*

**9:35 Mojave Max Education Program Development**

*(2005-RRCIA-559A)*

Fran Byers, Red Rock Interpretive Association

*The MSHCP requires a Public Information and Education Program. One component of this program is the Mojave Max Education Program that includes a volunteer training program, teacher training, classroom education programs, school assemblies, and the annual Mojave Max Emergence Contest. The program provides regional outreach to school age children regarding desert ecology, desert tortoise biology, and responsible use of the desert. This presentation provides an update on the program since last presented at the 2009 Symposium.*

**10:00 Break**



- 10:20 Developing Habitat Models and Monitoring Techniques for Nine Bird Species of Clark County**  
(2005-GBBO-581)  
Elisabeth Ammon, Great Basin Bird Observatory
- Great Basin Bird Observatory uses standardized Landbird and Nevada Bird Count monitoring methods to survey in Clark County for nine bird species of interest to the MSHCP: Willow Flycatcher, Vermillion Flycatcher, Phainopepla, Summer Tanager, Bell's Vireo, Blue Grosbeak, Bendire's Thrasher, Le Conte's Thrasher, and Gray Vireo. This presentation provides an update on progress to improve distribution data and habitat modeling for each of the nine species.*
- 10:45 Road Monitoring on Bureau of Land Management Lands**  
(2005-BLM-503)  
Carolyn Ronning, Bureau of Land Management
- Illegal motorized use on federal lands was identified by the MSHCP as a significant threat to covered species and their habitats. This presentation provides an update on progress made by BLM to monitor the network of roads on BLM lands in Clark County that are important habitat for covered species.*
- 11:10 Gypsum Soils Analysis Technical Conditions**  
(2005-UNLV-609F)  
Colin Robins, University of Nevada Las Vegas
- This research project is testing if the habitat for Las Vegas buckwheat, found with gypsiferous soils, is correlated with different soil moisture levels or chemical thresholds or controlled by landscape scale processes. This presentation provides the results of testing and characterization of soil samples, mapping of soil properties that may influence the distribution of the plant, and interpretation of which soil geomorphic processes may influence distribution of the plant.*
- 11:35 Relict Leopard Frog Conservation**  
(2009-NPS-810A)  
Jef Jaeger, University of Nevada Las Vegas
- This project implements conservation efforts described in the Conservation Agreement and Range-wide Conservation Assessment and Strategy for the Relict Leopard Frog, and is a continuation of a project presented during the 2010 symposium. The presentation provides an update on monitoring natural and experimental habitat sites, evaluating new experimental sites, managing a headstarting and translocation program, monitoring targeted sites for Chytridiomycosis, and coordinating the multi-state, multi-agency Relict Leopard Frog Conservation Team.*
- 12:00 Lunch (provided) and Poster Session**
- 1:15 Afternoon Welcome**  
Sue Wainscott, Desert Conservation Program  
Rob Sutter, Science Advisor, Desert Conservation Program



**1:20 Threats Research and Monitoring on the Invasive Species Sahara Mustard**

(2005-NPS-532)

Alice Newton, National Park Service

*Sahara mustard is native to the Mediterranean coast but is established in sandy soils in the southwestern United States. It is a prolific early winter annual and is a highly invasive species at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. This presentation reports progress on several experiments to gain knowledge about the plant and devise more efficient methods to control and remove the plant from habitats that support MSHCP covered species.*

**1:45 ~~Prescribed Fire in a Sagebrush Community: Impacts on Plant Diversity~~**

(Invited Speaker)

**Ecology of White-Margined Penstemon in Nevada (2008-2011)**

Stephen Zitzer, Desert Research Institute

**2:10 Tamarisk Management and Future Prospects for Riparian Ecosystem Recovery**

(Invited Speaker)

Tom Dudley, University of California, Santa Barbara

*Physical disturbance associated with treatments to remove and control tamarisk promoted invasion and/or expansion of weedy plant species that can interfere with native plant recruitment and provide poor habitat for wildlife. Avian occupation of treated sites was poorer than in untreated tamarisk-dominated sites owing to overall reduction in vegetated habitat structure. In the absence of active restoration, wildlife may not benefit from mechanical/chemical control of invasive plants. The unanticipated introduction of tamarisk leaf beetle for the biological control of tamarisk greatly changes how to manage invasive species, presenting both risks and benefits to wildlife and recovery of native vegetation. This presentation provides the status of the biocontrol process and preliminary information related to wildlife, vegetation, and ecosystem responses to biocontrol, along with a new initiative to implement regional riparian restoration for facilitating the recovery process.*

**2:35 Break**

**3:00 Assessment of Post-Fire Rehabilitation of Desert Tortoise Habitat**

(2009-USGS-808A)

Lesley DeFalco, U.S. Geological Survey

*Wildfire has been identified as a major threat to the survival and recovery of the Mojave population of desert tortoise. This presentation provides a progress update to a monitoring and assessment project that will identify and guide management of areas with high fine fuel production that might require fuel reduction treatments and burned areas that can be re-vegetated using appropriate rehabilitation treatments and suitable native species.*

**3:25 Restoring Mojave Desert Ecosystems: Status of Knowledge and Future Decisions**

(Invited Speaker)

Scott Abella, University of Nevada Las Vegas

*Reliable techniques for restoring desert ecosystems are urgently needed to maintain resource values in the face of increasing disturbances from wildfires, human use of desert lands, and ongoing and proposed broad-scale renewable energy developments. This presentation discusses: (i) natural recovery rates and factors such as soil properties influencing recovery rates of disturbed Mojave Desert ecosystems; (ii) a synthesis of published planting and seeding techniques for*



*revegetating disturbed arid lands; and (iii) methods for selecting species for restoration that can both become established in disturbed environments and compete with exotic annual plants inevitably occupying disturbed sites*

**3:50 Panel Discussion: Restoration and Rehabilitation of Mojave Desert Ecosystems**

*Panel Participants:*

Scott Abella, University of Nevada Las Vegas  
Lesley DeFalco, U.S. Geological Survey  
Tom Dudley, University of California, Santa Barbara  
Alice Newton, National Park Service  
Stephen Zitzer, Desert Research Institute

*Moderator:*

Rob Sutter, Science Advisor, Desert Conservation Program

*Panel Questions:*

1. *What criteria should be used to establish restoration priorities for low elevation (below 6,000 feet) Mojave Desert ecosystems?*
2. *Within the context of limited resources what criteria would help guide restoration of degraded desert ecosystems versus protection of relatively intact ecosystems?*
3. *What are the issues involved in developing success criteria for the restoration of low elevation Mojave Desert ecosystems?*
4. *How can climate change be integrated into current restoration goals and objectives?*

**4:45 Adjourn**

*The Desert Conservation Program would like to thank the presenters, panelists, and Science Advisor for their involvement in the Symposium. Additional thanks to Phil Medica (U.S. Geological Survey) for organizing the peer review panel and each peer reviewer for their participation.*