Edwards Air Force Base
95th Air Base Wing
Environmental Management

Report to STAKEHOLDERS

October 2007 Volume 12 No. 10

Recycling: What's your part in it?

page 6

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

Rehabilitated hawk, owls release 3

RAB member Brenda Weems-Hunter ... 4

Underground storage tanks yanked ... 9

Desert Managers Group 10

Report to
STAKEHOLDERS

Report to Stakeholders is a publication of the Edwards Air Force Base Environmental Management Office. Its purpose is to inform and educate the public, base workers and residents about continuing Environmental Management efforts on base. It currently has a circulation of 6,000, including about 2,000 subscribers.

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Next RAB Meeting

Nov. 15, 2007
5:30 p.m.
North Edwards, Calif.
Richard B. Lynch Education Center Multipurpose Room
17100 Foothill Avenue

The public is invited

If you have a question about the Edwards Air Force Base Environmental Management program, you may address it to Stakeholders Forum, Attn: Gary Hatch or Miriam Horning, 5 E. Popson Ave. Bldg 2650A, Edwards AFB, CA 93524-8060, or send e-mail to: *95ABW.PAE@edwards.af.mil*

Letter from the Editor

You may have noticed that the *Report to Stakeholders* might be a tad heavier and thicker than usual.

That's because it is. With direction from the Environmental Management Division Chief, Robert Wood, the *Report to Stakeholders*, or the RTS as we like to call it here, has increased the number of pages in each issue. October is the first issue we've converted into a 12-page newsletter. The reason behind the increase in pages is that Edwards Air Force Base also wants to promote the importance of Safety and Occupational Health, as well as continue its emphasis on Compliance, Conservation and Restoration.

Thanks for your support!

COVER PHOTO *— A tractor sits at the Edwards Air Force Base landfill with trash as well as items that are recyclable.*

Environmental Management volunteers aid in release of three rehabilitated birds

Volunteers and biologists with Environmental Management (EM) worked together in July to release a rehabilitated great-horned owl, a barn owl and a Cooper's hawk back into the wild at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB).

Working with EM as volunteers Senior Master Sgt. Jerry Todd and Tech. Sgt. Travis Buckley relayed the status of the birds to base biologists and picked up the birds when they were ready to be taken back to Edwards AFB for release.

"I felt proud," Buckley said. "It's not often you get to return something into the wild."

Edwards AFB 95th Air Base Wing Commander, Col. Bryan Gallagher, released a great-horned owl shortly after 7:45 p.m. on July 20. The owl clawed at the carrier door until it was released. Immediately, the bird took flight and vanished into the surrounding trees. A barn owl was released by Todd at 8:15 p.m. at Arnold Park. The owl hesitated at first, and then flew away, blending in with the surrounding desert.

"I was excited! Their wing spans were larger than I anticipated. Both immediately dodged around trees and bushes," said Robert Wood, Environmental Management Division chief.

"Both owls appeared to be healthy and fully recovered," biologist Amber Bruno said. "The owls flew a great distance away as soon as they were released."

The owls were originally discovered by base residents in May and June, and reported to EM. They were taken to the Facility for Animal Care and Treatment in Bakersfield. The great-horned owl had a fractured wing and the barn owl was found on the ground at Arnold Park with no nest in sight.

After 20 days of rehabilitation at the Ojai Raptor Center, a Cooper's hawk was released into the wild by EM volunteers a week later. The hawk had been found on the ground by a base resident in July. It was too young to fly and was found near its nest, which base biologists believe had been blown to the ground by the wind. The hawk suffered no injuries but because it was too young to survive on its own, it was sent to the Ojai Raptor Center.

***FREEDOM** — Environmental Management volunteer Senior Master Sgt. Jerry Todd releases a rehabilitated barn owl at Arnold Park.*

"Rehabilitation of wild animals is very important, and it's our responsibility to the native environments we develop and change," Bruno said. "Birds of prey, like hawks or owls, can be sensitive to urban development within their home areas. These birds unknowingly nest on electric lines or temporary structures, or eat road kill on the sides of busy streets and get hit."

Sometimes birds will fall out of their nests or their nests will get destroyed by the wind. Without a nest around base biologists, under permit, are able to handle and check the birds before they are taken to a rehabilitation center.

"The rehabiliation centers we work with give native birds of Edwards AFB a second chance at survival," Bruno added.

"My favorite part about the event was releasing the bird and knowing it's returning to its natural habitat," Todd said.

The EM Volunteer Program offers a variety of programs and tours to people on- and off-base. Volunteers are trained at EM to run programs like bird releases and tours.

"The volunteer program is a good program that has huge potential to become even better as it evolves," Buckley said. "I think allowing the volunteers to be involved in projects like the bird release, where they can see the final product, is great."

Those interested in volunteering – active duty and their dependents, civil servants and contractors working at Edwards AFB – can contact the EM volunteer program coordinator, Wendelyn Leon, at (661) 277-2436 or the EM customer service desk at (661) 277-1401 for an application.

Volunteer activities can take place any day of the week and there is no time requirement.

RTS

BACK TO ENVIRONMENTAL WORK *— Brenda Weems-Hunter, the new South Base Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) member, visits the Environmental Management building, where she once worked in the library.*

Weems-Hunter returns to work with environmental issues in a new capacity

Ten years ago, Brenda Weems-Hunter walked the hallways of Environmental Management as the library administrator and now she returns to volunteer as a Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) member for South Base at Edwards Air Force Base.

Weems-Hunter wants to provide insight to her community about Environmental Management's cleanup efforts by using her past experience working with the division and by encouraging awareness.

"I want to use my experience working as a contractor for Environmental Management and the knowledge I will gain from being a RAB member to promote awareness in my community," Weems-Hunter said.

Weems-Hunter recognizes the importance of awareness as a tool to help comfort people and address their fears. She is a cancer survivor of 18 years and remembers how her concerns about the disease affected her.

"I'm a cancer survivor and know how hard it is to deal with something uncertain and scary," she said. "Through my experience with cancer, I can now understand why and how people become concerned about things and if I can help them by handing out awareness publications, sharing information or expressing their concerns, then that is what I want to do.

"I know that awareness sometimes makes the difference and addresses concerns people might have that are completely unfounded," Weems-Hunter continued. "When I first found out I had cancer, I thought that maybe it had something to do with the groundwater contamination on base. My neighborhood in Lancaster had a handful of people with cancer and this only encouraged my fears.

"I can understand how if someone

doesn't know why there are cleanup activities on base, they could feel fearful. For me, learning about the cleanup efforts Environmental Management was taking to make sure that humans and the environment were safe helped me move past some of my concerns."

The former library administrator said her personal RAB goals are to learn as much as she can about the environment and the cleanup efforts on base. She said she wants to be able to answer questions that members of the South Base community might have or at least be able to express them at RAB meetings and get answers. With her experience and desire to learn, Weems-Hunter said she wants to hush rumors and reach out to her community, much like what she does in other areas of her life.

Weems-Hunter has volunteered with the American Cancer Society for many years and is now the volunteer coordinator for the "Reach to Recovery" program. This program groups cancer survivors with cancer patients in an effort to teach, comfort and serve all parties involved as they continue to fight off cancer or go through treatment.

In her professional life, Weems-Hunter is a database administrator programmer for flight test at South Base. There she works to reduce data, track flight information and support the B-1B bomber. She has bachelor's and master's degrees in computer information systems from Chapman University.

In 2003, the week of her bachelor's graduation from Chapman University, the Antelope Valley Press featured an article about her, highlighting the obstacles she overcame in her life. However, that wasn't her first time in the news. She was also featured in an article about the Installation Restoration Program library, currently known as the Environmental Management library, in 1997. Weems-Hunter helped establish the library years ago when she worked as the administrator.

She wants her community to know that she is approachable and available to listen to any environmental concerns that they might have.

"I want to get information out to the community and let people know that it is safe to work or live here. I find environmental issues and the cleanup efforts at Edwards Air Force Base very interesting," Weems-Hunter said. "My experience with Environmental Management has taught me a lot about the environment and I look forward to learning more."

The South Base RAB member enjoys volunteering with "Reach to Recovery," singing in her church choir, traveling around the globe, going to San Diego Chargers games with her husband and modeling. She said that when she models, she feels like she can represent breast cancer survivors, having gone through chemotherapy and undergoing double mastectomy and breast reconstruction surgeries. She has been married to Gregory Hunter for 15 years and has three children from a previous marriage.

RTS

Restoration Advisory Board Meeting Highlights

The following report highlights the latest quarterly meeting of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) held Aug. 16 in Rosamond, Calif.

Sites 162 and 177/325 *In Situ* Bioremediation Treatability Studies – Restoration engineers continue a study to treat tetrachloroethene (PCE), trichloroethene (TCE) and perchlorate in groundwater that is in fractured bedrock at the Air Force Research Laboratory, Edwards Air Force Base. Recent treatability studies at Sites162 and 177/325 attempted to enhance microbial degradation of the contaminants by providing a carbon source, which acts as food for the naturally occurring microbes (single-celled organisms such as bacteria). According to Rebecca Mora, Earth Tech engineer, the addition of a microbial food source was effective in treating perchlorate in the fractured bedrock but failed to fully degrade PCE or TCE into ethene (a harmless gas byproduct). Mora attributed this outcome to an inability of each treatment area to maintain adequate carbon concentrations and insufficient populations of microbes that completely degrade PCE and TCE to ethene. Other efforts include ways to maintain an adequate carbon concentration and increase the amount of PCE and TCE degrading microbes in the fractured bedrock.

The next RAB meeting will be held Nov. 15, at 5:30 p.m. at North Edwards, Calif. The venue will be determined at a later date.

***SPEAKING INTO THE MIC** — From left, David Newman, Rosamond RAB member; Brenda Weems-Hunter, South Base RAB member and Victor Yaw, Mojave RAB member give their community reports at the August RAB meeting.*

Recycling at Edwards

***BALES AND BALES** — Of recycled material sit outside the Edwards Air Force Base Recycling Center waiting to be picked up by recyclers.*

Efforts continue for base recycling program with awareness and education

It's a matter of knowing what recycling is about when it comes to the recycling program at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB). "People need to know what goes where," said Milton Riley, who is the recycling program manager for the base. "For example, when writing something on a piece of note paper, instead of trashing it, place it in the recycle bin at your desk and when it's full, empty it into bigger recycle bins located in the building."

Recycling bins can be found in housing and industrial areas of the base. "Most of the industrial complexes on base have a pickup schedule for recycled materials. Some buildings' recyclables get picked up every day like the post office, while others range anywhere from daily, weekly, monthly to on-call pickups."

***RECYCLABLE** — White paper in a bin. This paper was taken from base industrial complexes. The recycler stops by work buildings to pick up recyclable material.*

The base landfill supports military family housing and industrial complexes with recycling and refuse disposal. Recyclables collected from these areas are baled and sold to off-base recyclers. One thing to note, however, is that those who work on base yet live off base cannot bring in their refuse, or trash, for disposal. Only recyclable items are welcome.

The recycling center on base was built in 1995 and the program kicked off in 1997.

"For base housing residents, their recyclables can be picked up every week with the regular trash pickup," Riley added. "Just place the gray recycle bin out with the trash bin and we'll take care of the rest."

People who work on base but live elsewhere can use the Edwards AFB recycling center to turn in glass bottles, plastic bottles and aluminum cans, and in return they can get paid for it.

Where to start

In the world of consumer goods, many items are recyclable. Three items are mandated by regulatory agencies — cardboard, white paper and newspaper — so they would be a good place to start. Beyond that it's probably easiest to look at items you use every day — soda cans, plastic water bottles, colored paper, magazines, and the list goes on.

California Cash Redemption Value

When California Redemption Value (CRV) beverage containers are brought into the base landfill, recycling customers receive reimbursement based on state-mandated CRV rates. Currently, the rate for glass bottles is 11 cents per pound, while the rate for number one plastics, is 89 cents per pound — see the list of current prices for recyclable materials in the box to the right.

"All beverage container values are based on five cents each for a container less than 24 ounces and 10 cents each for 24 ounce or larger containers. The various sizes and densities of the different types of containers make the 'per-pound' rate different for each type," said Mike Ferola, landfill manager at Edwards AFB.

"A good example is aluminum cans. There are 31 cans in a pound, times five cents each equals $1.55 per pound. The California Department of Conservation averages the sizes and densities of the various plastic beverage containers and sets the per-pound CRV pricing," Ferola added.

CALIFORNIA REFUND VALUE

Some beverages sold in aluminum cans, bimetals, glass or plastics require a deposit when purchased. This deposit can be refunded when you turn in the container at any state recycling center, including the Base Recycling Center. Below is a list of common beverage containers that have California Refund Value and common beverages that do not:

Beverages that have CRV:
Beer
Carbonated and mineral water
Carbonated soft drinks
Coffee and tea drinks
Fruit drinks
Fruit juices packed in containers less than 46 ounces
Noncarbonated water
Sport drinks
Vegetable juices packed in containers less than or equal to 16 ounces
Wine coolers

Beverages that do not have CRV:
Fruit juice in containers 46 ounces or more
Infant Formula
Milk
Medical Food
Nutritional Supplements
Vegetable Juice in containers larger than 16 ounces
Wine

CRV Pricing

Beverages come in different containers and each container type has a different refund value. Here are the current refund value for aluminum cans, bimetals, glass and the seven types of plastic used to store beverages.

Beverage Container	CRV Price
ALUMINUM CANS	$1.55 per pound
BIMETALS	$0.38 per pound
GLASS BOTTLES	$0.11 per pound
PLASTIC	
Plastic #1	$0.89 per pound or paid per container, the CRV is $0.05. Also if container is 24 ounces or larger, CRV per container is $0.10.
Plastic #2	$0.51 per pound
Plastic #3	$0.56 per pound
Plastic #4	$2.21 per pound
Plastic #5	$0.55 per pound
Plastic #6	$3.88 per pound
Plastic #7	$0.51 per pound

*Note: Other containers eligible for CRV have "CA CASH REFUND" or "CA REDEMPTION VALUE" printed on them.

Hazardous and Universal Waste

Some recycled materials are handled differently. Household hazardous waste and universal waste, such as computer monitors, fluorescent light bulbs, plasma or liquid crystal display televisions and batteries from base residents can be dropped off at the U-Fix-It store. The hours of operation are Wednesday through Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; the store is closed Mondays, Tuesdays and holidays.

Industrial hazardous waste goes through the Hazardous Waste Storage Facility (HWSF) and is shipped off base. Each industrial sector on Edwards AFB has a point of contact who will notify the HWSF for pickup and disposal of hazardous waste.

What to do with Green Waste

Green waste is also recyclable and includes trees, shrubs, grass clippings, and leaves. Green waste cans are brown in the housing area of the base. Green waste that is recycled on base is transformed into compost, which is a combination of green waste, horse manure, water and the right

See RECYCLE, page 8

RECYCLE

From page 7

temperature. At Edwards AFB an Ag-Bag™ is used to achieve the right temperature for compost.

The Ag-Bag™ process consists of placing the mix into a 200-foot-long plastic bag. When full, air is pumped through the bag for six to eight weeks. This provides the perfect environment for the bacteria to break down the green waste. The mixture must reach 131 degrees for three days straight. Following the air treatment, the bag is opened and the product is passed through a screener that separates the fine, rich compost from the larger wood mulch.

Compost is a free commodity for residents, housing and maintenance industries at Edwards AFB. It is not available to those living off base; however, wood chips can be taken by anyone via their own transportation.

Baling trash

In order to make space at the base landfill, trash is baled, set in place and covered with soil. There is currently no way to separate recyclables from regular trash.

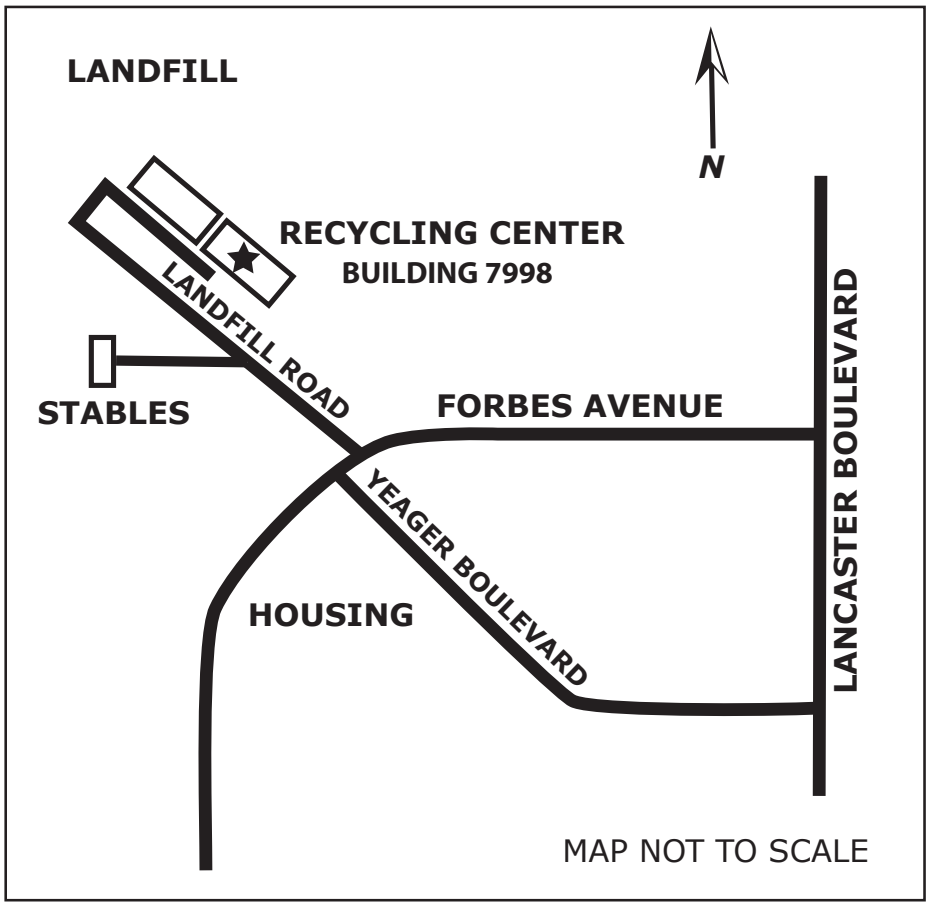
"There is a refuse baler at the base landfill," said Gary Schafer, solid waste and recycling specialist for Environmental Management. "What happens is the refuse is compacted and the liquids are squeezed out. The liquid is then collected in drums outside of the building. This method not only conserves space in the landfill, but it also decreases the amount of leachate in the landfill."

Leachates are formed when water or liquids from the waste itself collect contaminants as they trickle through the waste. This may result in hazardous substances entering surface water, groundwater or soil.

"Once material in the ground decomposes, leachates and gases form, the ground settles and you get sinkholes. Baled refuse takes a lot longer to settle," Riley said.

"Landfill workers remove scrap metal and any items that may cause damage to the baling machine – concrete, lumber, pallets, pipes, poles, etc.," Ferola added. "We remove items that are not supposed to be in a trash can or bin to begin with."

What you can do



***WHERE TO TAKE YOUR RECYCLED MATERIAL** — This map shows where the Edwards AFB Recycling Center is located. The star on the map identifies the Recycling Center.*

Helping to recycle can be done in a variety of ways and can lessen the impact to landfills. If you live or work on base, here is how you can help:

If you are a military family housing resident, simply place all your recyclable materials in the gray can. Place the can at the curb on the designated pick-up day. Acceptable materials include: paper, cardboard, newspaper, magazines, aluminum cans, plastics (including bottles, hard plastic toys and frames), toner cartridges and glass bottles.

Dormitory residents can place all recyclable material in the large white trash bin with the blue recycling logo that is located next to the large trash bin. Recyclable materials accepted at the dormitory complex are the same as military family housing residents.

Industrial areas of the base may recycle materials in their facilities. A centralized area of recycling containers in the facility shows you what types of materials can be placed in each bin — white paper, colored paper, newspaper, magazines, aluminum cans, plastic bottles, toner cartridges, disposable batteries and cardboard. Scrap metal and wood can be taken to the Edwards AFB Recycling Center located at the landfill in Building 7998.

Recycling prevents pollution and when materials are recycled, they remain useful and can be made into other products. This conserves coal, oil, iron ore and other nonrenewable resources.

Recycling also helps Edwards AFB comply with federal, state and local mandates.

"When you recycle materials instead of throwing them into the trash, you divert waste from entering the landfill. This helps extend the life of the landfill – a valuable resource on the base," Riley said.

For more information on the Edwards AFB Recycling Program, contact Milton Riley at (661) 277-2431 or the Base Landfill at (661) 277-3867.

RTS

Yanking tanks is no small feat

Base environmental engineers remove one of the oldest and two of the largest underground storage tanks

***MYSTERY TANK UNEARTHED** — A backhoe operator removes a World War II-era diesel fuel tank from the ground where it had lain for 60 years. The 1,000-gallon steel tank was found by a contractor digging a trench for a new water line. Well hidden under 6 feet of soil, it still contained gasoline that was nearly pure enough to put into an engine. Environmental Management specialists believe the tank supplied a generator used to power a pump at a nearby drinking water well. Both the 100 gallons of remaining fuel and the steel tank itself were recycled.*

***WORKERS REMOVE GIANTS** — Workers prepare recently unearthed 50,000-gallon fuel tanks for their final trip off base to a recycler. These tanks were used to store jet fuel.*

Between 1988 and today, more than 500 underground storage tanks were removed from the ground at Edwards Air Force Base. Most were pulled out by 1996, beating a 1998 U.S. EPA deadline for removal of tanks that did not meet new guidelines. The underground tanks that remained in the ground beyond 1996 met federal requirements or as in the case of the mystery tank (above right) were not known to exist.

RTS

***FIELD TRIP** — Desert Managers Group members listen and learn as they visit a pumice cave, one of the many places the group visited on their field trip near Mojave, Calif.*

Desert Managers Group tackles role as caretaker of Mojave Desert

The Mojave and Colorado Desert landscapes in California encompass 25 million acres. Twenty million of those acres are publicly owned and include two national parks, a national preserve, six military bases, 14 state parks, and the California Desert Conservation Area managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

The California deserts are also home to 37 federally recognized Native American tribes, and the jurisdiction of the deserts falls under eight different county governments. Efficient and cost-effective management with all levels of government is not only the objective, but the only solution for resolving the constant conflicting demands on the desert land.

A mechanism for addressing desert-wide issues was established in 1994 in the form of the Desert Managers Group (DMG), an interagency group tasked with coordinating and integrating desert conservation, visitor services and public safety efforts within the California deserts. Partners include the State of California (Fish and Game, Parks and Recreation and Caltrans); Kern, San Bernardino and Imperial counties; the Department of Defense (Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps); the Department of the Interior (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish

and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and Geological Survey); and the U.S. Forest Service.

According to the DMG Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the group's goals include conserving and restoring desert resources; providing high quality recreation; public education and visitor services; providing for the safety of desert users; integrating databases and scientific studies to aid with resource management; as well as promoting compatibility in the application of each agency's mission.

"All together we have the same common problem," said Robert Wood, chief of Environmental Management at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB) and a member of DMG. "We manage large chunks of land and have multiple users wanting to use this land. Collectively, we all face the same issues.

"I personally and professionally know the other land managers with DMG. So when any of us has a problem or concern, we can pick up the phone and instantly know each other, which cuts through tons of red tape. We help each other accomplish our joint mission of managing large amounts of land."

In an effort to share successes and lessons learned, DMG members meet quarterly for two days and rotate the responsibility of hosting the meeting. The afternoon of the first day always includes a tour at the location of that meeting's host. The group's August meeting included a tour of Red Rock Canyon State Park located between California City and Ridgecrest. The park encompasses more than 27,000 acres of dramatically colored cliffs and mountains and includes many prehistoric and historic artifacts. It also has been the backdrop to numerous movies and television shows. However, California state park officials are currently dealing with the issue of balancing the need to protect the historical value of the land while allowing the park to be accessible to off-road vehicles – a common concern of several land managers.

The DMG's coordinated efforts have made progress in a variety of areas including the clean up and restoration of numerous illegal dumps; removal and adoption of more than 4,000 burros; creation of weed management areas; and the implementation of a standardized monitoring program to determine the population status of the desert tortoise on more than four million acres of critical habitat, while also implementing desert tortoise recovery actions and public education efforts. Critical habitat is defined as an area that contains physical or biological features essential to the conservation of the species, even if the species is not present in those areas. Edwards AFB has about 60,800 acres of designated critical habitat within the Fremont-Kramer Critical Habitat Unit on the Precision Impact Range Area.

The group also was responsible for establishing two Web sites to better share information amongst each other and with the public. The first site, *www.mojavedata.gov*, was created to facilitate data sharing and integration, while the second site, *www.californiadesert.gov*, was designed to provide the general public with information on desert resources and recreational opportunities.

"We can get more done through collaborative efforts," Wood added. "I can't recover the desert tortoise entirely on this base alone. We all agree to a common way of studying things and then jointly fund it. The DMG will not put its seal of approval on anything without a total consensus."

> "We can get more done through collaborative efforts. I can't recover the desert tortoise entirely on this base alone. We all agree to a common way of studying things and then jointly fund it."
>
> **Robert Wood**
> **Division Chief**
> **Environmental Management**
> **Edwards Air Force Base, California**

According to the MOU, the deserts' permanent population is expected to increase by more than one million, while the population of the surrounding area is expected to grow by approximately 10 million by 2020. This drastic increase will undoubtedly create many new challenges for land management agencies. Looking to the future, the DMG plans to continue its ongoing efforts, while also making abandoned mine land sites a high priority. These sites reportedly pose significant environmental and safety threats, so the DMG's goal is to reduce or remove the physical and chemical hazards associated with these sites.

RTS

***PICTURE TIME** — Desert Managers Group members take a group photo inside the museum at Red Rock Canyon State Park.*

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Report to STAKEHOLDERS

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Where to Find More INFORMATION

Published data and documents relating to Environmental Management are available for public review in information repositories at three locations. The current information repositories are located in the cities of Lancaster, Rosamond and Edwards AFB. They are updated when new documents are released.

For questions about information in the repositories, you may contact Gary Hatch, Environmental Public Affairs at (661) 277-1454 or by e-mail at *95ABW.PAE@edwards.af.mil*.

Location	Days	Hours
Edwards AFB Library 5 W. Yeager Blvd. Building 2665 Edwards AFB, Calif. (661) 275-2665	Mon-Thu Fri Sat & Sun	9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. 10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Kern County Public Library **Wanda Kirk Branch** 3611 Rosamond Blvd. Rosamond, Calif. (661) 256-3236	Tue & Wed Thu-Sat	Noon - 8 p.m. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Los Angeles County Public Library 601 W. Lancaster Blvd. Lancaster, Calif. (661) 948-5029	Mon-Wed Thu & Fri Sat	10 a.m. - 8 p.m. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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