

Date: April 27, 2024
Job # 6498711
Subject: Desert Advisory Council Meeting

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SHELLY LYNCH: Good morning, everybody. It is 9 o'clock we will call the meeting to order. I want to welcome our acting state director who is joining this morning. He will have some things to report out on. We are fortunate to hear from him. We have a lot of new faces both on DAC as well as BLM side. I would like to welcome the four reappointed DAC members Nathan, Dick, Rob and Randy and two new DAC members Josh Martelli and Stephen Reyes. Welcome. We will do introductions formal introductions in a minute. Kate, if you could give a brief overview of zoom protocol for the public and housekeeping for the virtual meeting.

>> Good morning, everyone. I wanted to talk about the public comment period which will be shortly at 9:30 promptly. At this time, you will have three minutes to give your remarks away and we will allow you to turn on your mic and camera if you would like. At that time, we will have a timer up and keep it to three minutes if we don't have enough time you are welcome to have another three minutes if there is additional time. If we do run out of time, I will put my email in the chat, but you are welcome to send comments to me they will be included in the official record for the meeting. This meeting is being recorded, and we have a captioner recording notes. Thank you.

SHELLY: Will start with management introduction. Brandon, can you go first?

ED: Good morning I am Brandon Anderson, I am the acting manager for Palm Springs South coast.

>> Good morning, Tom, the acting field manager in Ridgecrest.

SHELLY: Mike, carpenter.

>> I'm Mike Carpenter El Centro field office.

SHELLY: Julie?

>> Good morning I am the acting field manager for the Barstow field office.

SHELLY: Paul?

>> Good morning my name is Paul, the fire management officer for the California desert district.

SHELLY: Matt?

>> My name is Matthew Lohr, the new field manager for the El Centro field office.

SHELLY: Mayra?

>> Good morning. My name is Mayra Martinez, a geologist for the El Centro field office.

SHELLY: Kate?

SHELLY: Good morning, I'm a public affairs specialist for the district.

>> I'm Ron the new field manager from the Needles field office.

>> Tristan I'm a Realty specialist out of the El Centro field office.

SHELLY: Carrie?

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>> Good morning I'm Carrie Sahagun deputy field manager for the El Centro field office.

SHELLY: Nancy?

>> Good morning, everyone I am the new Deputy district manager for California desert district.

SHELLY: If you want to introduce the DAC members.

>> It's my pleasure first, my name is Hans Haas, I'm the chair of the DAC and represent dispersed recreational interests. Let's go down the list and introduce the members first we will start with Nathan.

>> My name is Nathan Francis. I am coming back as a DAC member who usually over the non-renewable resources.

>> Thank you. Next, we have Desirea.

>> Good morning, Desirea Haggard I work for CalPortland and on the DAC representing mining minerals.

>> Thank you. And now, Jennifer?

>> Good morning my name is Jennifer Henning I am vice chair, and I represent recreation interests.

>> All right.

>> My name is Dick Holliday, a representative for dispersed recreation also.

>> A lot of us are here. Next, we have Ann.

>> I represent the public at large.

>> Thank you. Next, Joshua?

>> Hi guys Josh Martelli one of the newest DAC members, representing recreation.

>> And now Terry?

>> I am an academician and I'm a professor of biology ecologist and also the faculty director of the CSU desert study center.

>> Thank you, Terry. Stephen?

>> Good Morning. My name is Steve Reyes the newest member I was Category 2 archaeology and historical. I literally look out and walk into Mojave trails national monuments. I've been in the last subgroup for the BLM management plan for the Mojave Trail national monuments. Went on four different field trips and thank you for selecting me for the DAC.

>> And now, next Bob.

>> I'm not sure if he is on the line so let's keep on going down the list.

>> Matthew: I want to make sure Bob knows it is *6 to unmute.

>> Give him a moment, then.

>> Let's move on to Dawn.

>> Hi, Good Morning everyone. I represent San Bernardino County Third District Supervisor and chairman of the board. Second DAC meeting for me.

>> Thank you, Dawn. And now Ed.

>> I'm Ed Stovin, represent off-highway vehicle users on the DAC. From Jack.

>> I'm Jack Thompson. I am representing conservation, and the wild Conservancy California desert regional member and board member of Friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve.

>> This is Bob Robinson. I hit *6 about 20 times.

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>> Good to hear from you. I am Bob Robinson Chairman for the Kern Valley Indian community reappointed back to the DAC and represent Tribal interests --

>> Thank you, Bob. And with that, will turn it back over to Shelly.

SHELLY: I would like to introduce Gordon. He is again the acting BLM California state director, Gordon has been the acting state director since Karen Mouritsen retired in December. In his permanent capacity is the Colorado associate state director started his career with the BLM on planning and decision support position in BLM headquarters he has served as the BLM's decision chief for wildlife conservation, Senior policy advisor and associate director at national operations center. With that, I will hand the floor over to you?

>> GORDON: Thank you. Can folks hear me, okay? So as Shelly mentioned my permanent position is in Colorado where I am right now, and it is snowing outside. I'm not sure how it is in the desert, but it is snowing here, and my spring plants are not enjoying this nor are the blooming trees. So, it goes with gardening in Colorado. I got a lot of material to cover. I hope I can get through most of it but I first want to express my appreciation to all of you for dedicating your time. I am a huge supporter and as you know you are on DAC you are a very special Part of the groups; we have in the BLM we are actually called out to some of our legislation. The DAC is a special group of folks that has the opportunity for us to engage in a very constructive manner. I hope to improve our decision and make sure we are incorporating the thoughts of local communities and various groups that use public land. First of all, I want to tell you how much I do appreciate the time you dedicate and your efforts in helping us make a decision that represents the people that use public land. We had the fortune to visit the California desert last month and see some of our work on the ground. And a great tour of the white water preserves in Santa Rosa San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center, I love to get out and hike so I love to mountain bike, too, but haven't been able to do that recently because of current circumstances but I really do enjoy backing, biking we stop by the Salton Sea I see that is on your agenda later today a fascinating history of that. I think some of the writings of the Salton Sea and how that area has a huge lake and from time to time over the millennia is a really fascinating story. Really was fun for me to get to spend time at the Salton Sea and see some of the bill funded projects bipartisan funded projects going on. I'm glad to see that is on the agenda later today I will try to stay on so I can listen to that Part of the agenda because it's fascinating and I want to see how those projects come to completion and the success of those projects over the next decades. I also visited the equinox gold mine, the repower project the victory pass, a lot of activity in CDD there are these great efforts from conservation but so much commercial activity going on, too, it is an impressive area the Bureau has the privilege to manage. Again, as many of you mentioned, your new appointments who are just getting into DAC, it's just getting stood back up again, so I am so appreciative of the folks not only going through that entire submission process, but also you accepting the positions on the DAC and your willingness to help us. We know we have a lot of competing issues, no matter where we are in the BLM. Recreation has become a huge impact on public land and a huge benefit to the public that we serve. I think it is really interesting as we think back and try to put this in context in 1976, recreations mention almost as a side note but today, it's one of the major uses

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of BLM land so how we can make sure we are weaving in those recreational uses and benefits into the land we manage and the decisions we make I think is really critical. Again, so encouraging for me to be in California and visit a number of these conservation areas and talk to the recreational users of the appreciation the folks in California have for these places where you can actually go out and enjoy public land without a lot of restrictions or without too much oversight, so it is great that we have those places but again, recreation is certainly can be a challenge. I was just at the national Monument last week and shooting areas and trash and social trails and things like that become a major hindrance to us to manage these lands. Again, I think your positions as DAC members and as members of the recreational community help us bring those recreational users together to help us better manage these lands in a sustainable manner. As all of you know are present and future generations, we want to make sure we are doing our job for the present, looking to the future. I just like to briefly address the Advisory Council roles, and recently the BLM received a letter addressed to the interior Secretary from some of the DAC stated the position, I want to briefly talk about this as was mentioned at the beginning, there will be time for questions, but we are going, I'm going to run out of time before I get through this. I am concerned about the letter and the appearance that it was, the reality not the DAC agenda, and that is a concern. So, I think it is essential all councilmembers the Council operation activity comply with the Federal Advisory Council Act and the California Desert District Council charter. So, council may furnish advice to the Secretary through the Designated Federal Officer which you know is Shelly on topics including and published in the Federal Register meeting notice of those topics can be wide ranging but land-use classification, retention, management, disposal within those areas that the Council has established. Such other matters that may be referred to, so the designated federal officer properly notices the topic of discussions in the Federal Register and counsel discusses and votes on recommendations and the public meeting. Again, this is all to make sure we are having these open to the public and the public is understanding what is on the agenda and activities that we are discussing in these meetings and the recommendations being made. Again, those recommendations are sent up to the designated federal official. Since some of these procedures were not followed on this recent letter the Secretary and BLM will not treat the letter as advice or recommendation from the DAC. I want to emphasize this in no way – am I or anybody else trying to challenge anybody from sending a letter to anybody in the BLM or our Congress about your personal views or thoughts. It is important that when we are sending recommendations, as a FACA committee we make sure we follow these guidelines, so we have the opportunity to continue to operate with these groups. They are special organizations that have been set up so we can collect public information in public opinion, but they do need to make sure they are public. We will be providing training in the future on this not only for the folks on the DAC but for our staff so there is clear guidance on how and when recommendation can go forward. I really do appreciate your interest in topics and really want us to move together, to work together so we are submitting recommendations in a manner we can and add them to the public record and into the decisions we are making. I want to spend the next few minutes of the minimal time I have here because there are some great things happening with the BLM in my

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opinion. As all of you know you have been involved in the DAC a few years legislative or government and know as we come to the end of any administration there is a flurry of activity that takes place. That activity is normally the combination of things the administration has been working on for a number of years and probably a number of years before that administration came into power. As you well know there are people working behind the scenes now, planning the agenda for the next administration regardless of what party and when those folks come in, they have an agenda they want to move forward, and they will pursue that agenda. I think there are some of the things that are coming out the door now and will be coming in the next few months, are significant. I think they are helpful to move the Bureau forward as we continue to understand how we manage these public lands and like so many changes, not only climate changes but also the uses both extractive and recreational uses on public land. The first thing I wanted to talk about with the final rule for the public lands rule that came out. I hope some of you and the opportunity to involved in some of the earlier listening sessions or even comment. The idea of this rule is for the BLM to help the BLM improve the resilience of public land in the face of changing climate, conserving wildlife habitat and landscapes facilitate responsible development and better recognize unique cultural and natural resources on public land. Public lands rule builds on this historic investment being made down to the bipartisan infrastructure, two legislative actions that are once in a lifetime opportunities for we who are in career people the money that has come to the Bureau and Park Service and Forest Service and tribal interest in states is just remarkable. To really work on not only infrastructure but also on some of the needed projects on public land to facilitate these restoration activities. So, I am very pleased with what is happening with that and how the public lands rule will hopefully make some of those investments possible as we move into the future. Just a couple of things the public land rule, protecting clean water wildlife habitat restoring land and making informed management decisions based on science data and indigenous knowledge. As Shelly mentioned in the introduction is one point, I was the science advisor for our renewable and planning division in Washington DC and science is a huge driver as we make our decisions. It is not -- one of the things I like to say it is not a science driven decision but science informed decision. We need to understand the science that is out there and as all of you know who work in the scientific community chances are you can find some research that supports your particular opinion on any particular item. We need to be informed we need to look at those in a rational context and understand which science, with the information from those science research will actually help promote the sustainability of our public lands. We acknowledge there are competing signs, but we also make a decision based upon the recommendations we get that only from the public but also from our DAC and RAC. This is an important part to codify that in a regulation and we will continue to use that. Conservation has a big part of the rule we want to make sure we are adequately allowing for conservation activities to move forward, and we want to make sure that organizations are interested in helping us conserve public lands and do restoration activities for restoration for mitigation that we have that option available. That is one of the things that this rule helps establish is this idea of a conservation lease and those leases like any other authorization have to be compatible with the authorized uses of the public land right now. It is not like the least is

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going to come in and suddenly overturn a decision made it must be compatible with those current uses. Another opportunity for partners to engage and I think the public land rule is an excellent example of how this current administration is trying to make sure we fulfill our original obligations in 1976 and as amended since. In closing, I want to mention a couple of other things. Something I think may come into play in your area of influence over the next months and years as affect the BLM has adopted a forest service category exclusion for geothermal exploration so this will definitely streamline the opportunities for geothermal exploration and once the exploration is complete obviously the rest of the meat but processes take place but this is a good move for us to look at areas where we can potentially have geothermal exploration. This is one of the areas I'm excited about that I think the geothermal opportunities for us not only with hot water but with the hot rock is a really exciting opportunity for BLM and the nation as we look for these low carbon ways to produce energy. Another thing I want to mention, and again these are not impact you but just so you are aware of the activities going on, but the waste prevention rule has been published which really helps limit the amount of flaring that can go on for oil and gas development and oil and gas production. Oil and gas leasing rule which is a very much needed rule that updates are leasing procedures and nomination procedure the solar PEIS is moving forward will not amend the DRECP we need to be clear the solar PEIS is going on across BLM managed land but will not amend DRECP it is viewed as a very progressive excellent work partners in this area so that will not amend the DRECP. There is a lot going on throughout the BLM as we move forward of sustained our public lands for the enjoyment of present and future generations, we also want to make sure the extracted uses of public lands are providing a fair return to the American people and I think many of these rules that are being published now are codifying that and making sure that we have that mission as we move forward. Shelly, I really appreciate you letting me join the Council for a few minutes today. I look forward to future engagements with the Council. I look forward to when I can meet face to face with you and really excited about the agenda today. With that, I turned it back to Kate and think it is about time for the public comment portion. If you have questions, I am sure there will be a question-and-answer session as we move forward. I will stay on for a bit and very much appreciate your time and talents and energy as you serve the BLM in public itself. Thank you again.

SHELLY: Thank you, Gordon, at this point I will hand it over to Hans so we can prep for the public comment period.

HANS: Thank you, Shelly. It is now time for the public comment period. I believe we have quite a few people in the queue and first we need Kate to go over the protocol for public comments.

KATE: Ok, it's me again. Good morning. To allow for the maximum number of individuals to give public, we have three minutes if there is time left, we will offer a second three-minute opportunity but if there is not we have a lot of people interested in commenting you are welcome to send your written comment to my email which I will put in the chat after finished speaking. To the best of our ability speakers will be called on in the order for which your hand is raised so please raise your hand using the reactions at the bottom of the zoom. We will work through as many speakers as possible we have a little bit of time, we would like to hear everyone interested in giving a comment if it goes

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a little past ten we will do that. Again, you're welcome to submit comments or questions at any time to my email and they will be included in the official record. Back to you, Hans. Thank you very much. I'm not quite sure where the list of people are but if we could have the first member of the public.

MATTHEW: If you clicked the participants button at bottom of zoom it pulls up the list of participants and with and that is the attendees tab at the top right. We should see Roger Dale at the top. We are going to stop-- start at the top Roger Dale you have three minutes.

>> Good morning DAC members I'm Roger Dale president of the desert tortoise preserve committee we have been active in conservation 50 years and much of our work is focus on land acquisition and habitat restoration in the desert areas of Riverside San Bernardino and Kern counties. Most notably we are long-term partners with the BLM and management of desert tortoise research natural area it is a 25,000 acre preserve in the Western Mojave Desert. I mentioned it this morning it is essentially a 50-year demonstration project for effective protective measures for sensitive desert ecosystem. It is a model for what can happen in other parts of the desert for its range despite the many factors that contribute to the desert tortoise population throughout its range tortoise density within the DTRNA are estimated to be more than four times higher than in adjacent critical habitat areas that do not have comparable protections. Our organization also owns and actively manages private conservation land within the boundaries of the proposed Chuckwalla national monument. We strongly support that proposal. Just last week as many of you may know the California Fish and Wildlife commission voted to up list the desert tortoise from threatened to be endangered under the California Endangered Species Act. The commission's unanimous full reflects the recognition based on decades of scientific evidence that intensified protective measures for urgently need for the desert tortoise to avoid distinction. We really believe the proposed Chuckwalla national monument represents an important time sensitive opportunity to further protect the ecosystems that support the desert tortoise and other threatened endangered species we appreciate the service of the DAC members and thank you for this chance to speak this morning.

HANS: Thank you, Roger. Next, we have Lisbet.

>> Can you hear me. Very good. Thanks for having this meeting. I don't see the timer going. Now I see it. Lisbet Thorson public land representative for San Diego mineral and gem society one of quite a few societies that are affiliate clubs or societies that belong to the California Federation of the neurological societies representing more than 8000 members. We also belong to the American Federation of mineralogical society across the country that represent more than 50,000 affiliated clubs with more than 50,000 members. I would like to welcome the new faces and members of the DAC and BLM, one of the things that is most concerning is representing rock county recreational trust. What is the status with Mojave Trails National Monument management plan? I think you are off schedule, your own schedule right about now it would be nice if the next DAC meeting will happen hopefully before the plan is the alternative proposed draft plans are presented and we can get some kind of formal presentation. What the status is on that and with the new timeframe is for that and we would like to encourage the BLM to give at least 60 days for public comment on this national monument the entire country

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recreational users are watching closely because we understand it is going to be a template and model for what, and what will not be allowed vis-à-vis rockhounding in national monuments Mojave Trails is especially near and dear to those of us in Southern California desert district because it represents hallowed ground of rockhounding country, in rockhounding areas people have been visiting for over a century in some cases before the 20th century even. We are really looking for some input. One of the specific concerns over the past few years we've really developed working rapport with the management, the manager, Noel who has deep experience with having to draft this really complicated alternative proposals incorporating the CDCA which has to be amended which hasn't been never reflecting recreational rockhounding and any explicit or constructive we also consistent with, we would like to hear how this process is now being undertaken when Noel isn't there to guide this process, who is doing it?

HANS: Thank you. We have additional time at the end of the session so you may continue for another three minutes. For the moment we are going to move down the list, and we welcome next, Cassandra.

>> Can you hear me okay. My name is Cassandra Pino the policy manager for the Native American Land Conservancy Intertribal Organization that focuses on the preservation and stewardship of cultural landscape as well as education of indigenous communities to reconnect with their ancestral land. I would like to comment on the Chuckwalla National Monument. Several Tribes have created official letters and resolutions of support of the campaign includes the Colorado River Indian Tribe, Indian Tribe, we Indians in Quechan. This proclamation would open the door for tribal nations to create new stewardship agreements with the federal government, for their shared ancestral land currently there is no comprehensive management plan for this entire landscape which invite all culturally affiliated Tribes to work together to help shape current and future management. It is critically important to involve Tribes in land management processes so there is consideration of tribal cultural values and use of the landscape which include recreation and enjoyment. The proposal includes the creation of an intertribal commission in which Tribes would collaborate directly with BLM to develop land management plan which incorporates tribal expertise perspective and traditional knowledge. This is important there are tribal cultural natural and spiritual values that permeate all corners of this landscape and beyond that are tied to the long history and continued presence of indigenous peoples in the area. This predates the establishment of the United States the proper protection of these integrated values which includes trails sacred sites villages pottery shards grinding stones is exactly what the antiquities act was meant to achieve with direct federal agencies to ensure tribal nations are equitably involved from day-to-day decision to long-term implementation this means resources will be provided to Tribes to ensure priorities outlined in the monument proposal are achieved and objects identified as quote, antiquities are preserved and can address agencies to utilize funding and other authorities as applicable. This is an exciting opportunity to bolster tribal involvement in public land, by facilitating increased capacity and funding for the various departments. In all governmental discussion regarding the proposed Chuckwalla national monument in their official position should be an integral part of the conversation. This region

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comprises many shared ancestral landscapes and Tribes have expressed strong interest in positive impact this can provide for future generations. Thank you all so much.

HANS: Thank you. Next let's hear from Stephen. You have 3 minutes.

>> Thank you. Can you hear me? My name is Stephen I'm a property owner in the area known as the West Mojave route network project. I have prepared comments I'm going to read. On the Jawbone Canyon in Ridgecrest, I've identified 115 BLM designated routes on approximately 96,000 acres of private property. I've carefully examined two sections photographed signs and noted their locations and created a map that locates the photographed signs on the map. I've driven run dozens of other sections and observed hundreds of BLM route markers, they are ubiquitous in private property the BLM estimates there are 1370 mile of motor vehicle routes on private property in the WM RMP this is provided by the BLM on page 4-115 of 2019, based on density of science I've observed I estimate there approximately seven sign per linear mile so I estimate that about 10,000 BLM route markers on private property. The back of the Friends of Jawbone (FOJ) map states pull, this map is produced for a partnership of Bureau land management, Ridgecrest field office motor vehicle recreation, and Friends of Jawbone this map is one example of how working together improves the trail experience for all. In addition to the route markers in the FOJ map the BLM has joined with OHV, VR, FOJ habitat Conservancy to place a kiosk with large format map that promote BLM OHV recreation routes on private property. With thousands of BLM on private property FOJ maps that show routes on private property and iPhone app that shows routes on private property and kiosk with large maps that show routes on private property the BLM has designated routes across hundreds of thousands of acres of private property and extensively promoted off-highway motor vehicle recreation on private property. That implies the BLM and other agencies bear responsibility for the suitability of private property. Want to talk about liability issues. I'm going to briefly start this and request an additional three minutes if there is time at the end. Providing guidance on the extent of and limits to liability of government agencies to people engaged in recreational activities. I limit my discussion to two cases for the consequences of the designation of off-highway motor vehicle routes on private property. Thank you and I hope to have an opportunity to continue.

HANS: Thank you, Stephen. I appreciate it. We will see how much time we have left. Let's continue next, we have Anitra.

>> My name is Anitra. I am Southern California regional representative for Pacific Crest Trail Association. I am based in – I'm coming at you live this morning from the Coachella Valley, the ancestral lands of the Cahuilla, I'm here for your exciting PCT updates. What's going on with the PCT? As you all know tropical storm Hilary did some damage extensively, Pacific Crest Trail Association was able to raise private funding specifically for damage a natural disaster restoration. With that funding we have been partnering with our friends at Whitewater preserve so we can reestablish access to the PCT. That way the public can get there but our trail crews can so we can start working on the damage in Whitewater Canyon. Which we are coordinating with BLM. After we can get to the PCT we are going to use federal funding we've acquired to work on the PCT in Whitewater Canyon we also use that for work on Mission Creek, BLM, forest

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service and PCT have alerted trail use to the damage made some recommendations they avoid Mission Creek specifically or be prepared to turn around if conditions become too difficult as they traverse that area. Rehab will be a multiyear process you'll get to have updates for me probably at every DAC meeting so stay tuned was that a good cliffhanger. Other things we are looking for to updates and continued involvement with the Whitewater River CRMP and Sand to Snow Monument management plan process environment. Finally, it is PCT long distance hiker season, April is the most coveted time to kind of start a hike so have hikers and a few equestrians they are on their long treks. We are working with BLM and forest service to collect usage data so have a better idea of how the trail is being used by these numbers of people. And to measure the impact of having a lot of people on the trail what those are to the resources in the southernmost 100 miles of the trail. That is what is going on in the PCT. Thanks so much and happy trails.

HANS: Thank you. Next on the list let's hear from Stephanie.

>> Thank you. It is nice to be here with you all. Thank you for your service to all desert Advisory Council members. I am calling in today as owner of a tour operator company in Joshua Tree called Joshua tree adventures. We are a small business, family owned and operated, and we provide off trail hiking adventures for tourists to the area. Our business depends entirely upon visitors to the region and of course, it is Joshua Tree National Park that attracts these visitors to the region. As a small business in this area, I have really seen the importance of the tourists, the tourism industry and how name recognition of a national park such as Joshua Tree attracts people. I have seen a number of other small businesses in my community, the Gateway community of Joshua tree Yucca Valley, Twentynine Palms, really benefit from the protected area of Joshua Tree National Park. We are very interested in what is going on with Chuckwalla national monument proposal and particularly as a tour operator business and being in the industry of tour operators, we really value these designations because it attracts more people to the area with that name recognition. I also want to speak on behalf of just being an avid desert recreation us we have family of four plus two dogs but now one sadly. We love going out to BLM land and recreating dispersed camping areas we can bring our dogs, the beauty of BLM land is being able to camp almost everywhere we appreciate that. We were recently in the area we camped at the Coon Hollow Campground. My seven-year-old absolutely loves rocks of all kinds. We really wanted to take him to the Hauser Geo beds and we had so much fun and one question I have for the BLM, I've heard there is a new policy related to rockhounding in national monuments but was hoping BLM could clarify that. I assume it will be continued to be allowed similar to all legal OHV travel in a new national monument and that is my understanding from my reading of the recent legislation related to the national monument as well, but it would be great for BLM to confirm that. Again thank you for your efforts and we really support the effort to establish Chuckwalla National Monument.

HANS: Thank you. Next, we have Brenda, you have three minutes.

>> My name is Brenda. I am a youth resident of Mecca born and raised I have a deep fondness for national land my family. I really care open spaces are protected in safeguarding these wild spaces will greatly benefit residents and communities by helping ensure more equitable access to nature and protect popular recreation sites.

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Protecting this land will save indigenous land and cultural resources and encourage more people to use our public land which will boost local economies. And preserve the region values and conserve wildlife habitat and corridors. This proposal is exciting to me it will give us opportunity that Chuckwalla Valley will have its very own national monument that would, -- recreational opportunities and I want to see the community engaging with the beautiful land that surrounds us and Chuckwalla national monument would ensure that for generations to come. I support the proposed Chuckwalla national monument -- Joshua tree national Park.

HANS: Next we have Frazier, you have three minutes

>> Can everybody hear me, okay? I appreciate Gordon mentioning the letter recently sent on council letterhead. Struggling for me as a former DAC member I've expressed those in detail. The letter's basic point there is no need to designate a national monument since Chuckwalla area is mostly California desert national conservation land. There's much more to the story which the letter omits which I expect we will learn more about. All that aside I think a common thread among members of the Council, the public participants, the agency staff at the meeting, we care deeply about the California desert wide open spaces the freedom they bring various resources they protect they used to be this common ground was designated by the Bureau as limited use land. We have all seen how these designations that held up since 1980 against new policies and plan amendments in things like industrial renewable energy development. I strongly support the designation of Chuckwalla national monument for this reason. The same reason the recreation community felt the need for congressional designation for off-road vehicles to enshrine their use of recreation in the future. I stand by and ready to act to support the commitment made against the designation of Mojave Trail for peoples like my friend Lisbet, that non-commercial rockhounding for things like personal or academic pursuits is a use that be allowed in the new national monument as well as things like vehicle travel and will manage routes appreciate the time to speak and look forward to the rest of the meeting.

HANS: Next we will hear from Sendy. You have three minutes.

>> Thank you for this opportunity my name is Sendy Barrows. I'm a resident of La Quinta and grew up exploring and hiking the natural beauty that surrounds us in the Chuckwalla Valley. Some of my favorite childhood memories took place in her beautiful public lands here in our doesn't and I am fortunate to live within walking distance within local double local hiking trails. A certified California naturalist and climate steward I understand, and value are areas biodiversity is my hope future generations want the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the natural beauty of the DAC -- Chuckwalla Valley. I too am here to express my unwavering support for the proposed Chuckwalla national mining. Unfortunately there is a significant portion of desert that remains unprotected these are not just part of our landscape they are a resourceful tool in our fight against climate change, acting as a natural carbon sink. Complete protection and adequate management of our public land in the California desert is not just our natural heritage its a critical step mitigating the effects of climate change and ensuring the well-being of our community and our endemic and endangered species. I invite you to help us protect our desert, our hope. Supporting the designation of the Chuckwalla national monument will improve our air quality, revitalize our local economy of unincorporated community,

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improve the quality of life for community members, while protecting irreplaceable cultural and historical sites found within the Chuckwalla monument important to local Tribes and veterans. Thank you for your time.

HANS: Next will hear from Elizabeth. You have 3 minutes.

>> Thank you. My name is Elizabeth Paige. I'm a member of the Torres Martinez Band of Cahuilla Indians, and the education and stewardship program for American Native Land Conservancy. I work to provide connection within all Cahuilla ancestral lands to our people for all indigenous communities whose ancestral sites have endured generations of misuse.... Within the proposed monument lies a creation space of my people and the desert and history many surrounding native nations who traverse all areas and too often looked upon as a waste, dead things to be pillaged for resources and not a living environment. The institutional federal agency traditional of leaving indigenous people out of the decision of our spiritual sites and trails our artifacts, homes and relatives which are wildlife, plant life even our bodies is coming to a close. This monument proposal we create an opportunity and provide resources for Tribes to come together as one body on future planning on these ancestral lands. In intertribal commission rooted in tradition language practice in reverence that predates this country by thousands of years is needed at a time when effects of exponential resource extraction and biodiversity loss can be felt on a global scale. I am hopeful those unfamiliar with indigenous land management will begin to understand the benefits it offers to all living communities. Recreation was and is something that our people also encouraged and enjoyed, we've moved over these areas on foot maintaining trails that connected our nations all across this continent. In closing, I support the monument proposal and I am hopeful the shift toward including tribal perspective will continue, our voices are heard.

HANS: Elizabeth, thank you. Next, we will hear from Ashley.

>> Good morning. My name is Ashley Lee. My driving force is outdoor adventure that includes off roading so much so I'm a competitor with the Rebelle Rally a 2000 mile offered event moves between California and Nevada for the last nine years. It has forever changed me personally, professionally and spiritually. My community I help educate and cohost off-road event we seek new and interesting trails to explore. The key to our events have always been unencumbered experiences and exploration. I also act as president of the Amargosa Conservancy which advocates for the Amargosa basin we work side-by-side with beyond to help protect areas and its mission -- submission to help continue access to beautiful places for us as a community to enjoy these areas. It is important during the planning process communities engage. Accountability and access and protection is one of my most important missions and advocate for them. I am in support of the proposed Chuckwalla national monument to continue unencumbered experiences so people like me and others can venture out and enjoy wildlife in this beautiful desert. Thank you.

HANS: Thank you, Ashley. Next, we will hear from Seth. You have three minutes.

>> Good morning DAC members thanks for having public comment on the subject. My name is Seth Styer, I am a resident of Helmville, Montana. I lived in the desert from 2008 to 2017 and I and my former DAC member from 2013 to 2016. I wanted to comment today to urge the DAC to support the proposal for a newly created Chuckwalla

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national monument and I believe the new monument would give wonderful access to nature for about 2 million residents in San Bernardino County, 2.5 million residents in Riverside County, about a 180,000 in Imperial County. It provides equitable access to nature and the outdoors, forms of recreation like hiking rock-climbing, picnicking, stargazing, OHV touring on legal routes, so it would be a benefit to those communities. The new monument will be a benefit to advancing biodiversity initiatives, would advance state and federal 30 by 30 goals to protect 30 lands in coastal waters by 2030 and iconic species like desert tortoise, bighorn sheep and migrating birds. We also serve as landscape level connectivity for wildlife and a buffer against the worst impacts of climate change. Chuckwalla national monument would be ta largest protected area of Colorado Desert by a region. I urge the DAC moving forward to do what they can to support this newly created monument which would be benefit to citizens throughout the Chuckwalla Valley region.

HANS: Thank you. Will hear from Colin. You have three minutes.

>> Good morning. My name is Colin Barrows. I am a Chuckwalla resident and hiker and a supporter of the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument the designation would not only preserve significant landscape intact desert soils, sequester carbon but perhaps most importantly serve as a testament to the value we as a desert community placed on public lands and access to recreation. The truth about public lands is the access to public land is as much about perception as anything else and we are starting from behind to access proposed Chuckwalla national monument with you will probably have to drive through or by fields of solar panels and agricultural, or state prisons you can imagine starting out as a place I appreciate the diversity designations for managing the desert probably to the majority of people who have heard of DAC, or ACEC and other agencies on the call this morning the average hiker and OHV user is confusing, unwelcoming to access. On the other hand, national monuments hold a special place in the hearts and minds of American people widely recognized as representing conserving national heritage and safeguarding places of exceptional cultural historical, significant it should join the ranks of other iconic landscape in our desert such as Santa Rosa and Sand to Snow national monuments inspire future generations to enjoy and protect public land.

HANS: We have two more and it is past 10:00 a.m. but we will continue on. Next we will hear from José. You have three minutes.

>> Can you guys hear me? Hola, Buenos dias. My name is José. Good morning. I am a community member from Mecca which is adjacent of the proposed Chuckwalla national monument I want to thank everyone today joining. I am in support of this proposal of the Chuckwalla national monument because of the impact, such as Mecca,----- and North Shore. First off it would promote more access to protected public land of our communities to be able, we'll know the hiking trails found toward the west and east of the Chuckwalla Valley in comparison to the east side we hope this would help increase trails near the eastern Chuckwalla valley and it would be promoting other recreational hobbies which are linked to improving mental health and physical health. This will help us create more and better healthier communities. Designating the Chuckwalla national monument would promote economic growth as mentioned and economic growth in communities like Mecca and North Shore are the gateway and entrance to the national

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monument. Besides that it would protect flora and fauna within its grounds and help surround Chuckwalla with protected public land which would increase wildlife increase and protect wildlife habitat in its corridor and help facilitate wildlife migration which is important we know how the desert can be during the summer and it is important for wildlife to move from one place to another depending on the season. It is crucial for us not to remain connected, remain connected having national monument close to home is something I strive for. I myself have been going to Mecca Hills and Corn Springs for a while now and special places for me and the community as well. I have fond memories like playing beach volleyball. The nearest beach for me is three hours away from me. Having that access and opportunity to have that is really important and it is memories I choose, and I plan to give to my family as well. And it, my vision it will help designate and protect and increase outdoor recreation for my communities in future years. I want future students and future kids to grow with outdoor recreational interests so they can become stewards of this land and protect wildlife.

HANS: Looks like someone just raised their hand at the last minute. Let's wrap it up with this one. Luke, you have three minutes.

>>My name is Luke. I grew up in Barstow, California. I was raised by a father, some of you may know, dedicated nearly a third of his life to BLM responsible desert recreation and most of recreation. I hold these values and have done the same, this upbringing is what made me who I am today. My childhood was full of dirt bikes, ATVs, falling into chollas, hunting snakes and picking up pretty rocks, build a strong appreciation for recreation in this desert it is what facilitated me and my family connecting to it on a very deep level. It is because of this appreciation I understand the concerns some may have about this monument. Nobody wants to lose something they love. Chuckwalla national monument is not gonna do that and that is why I support it. I urge the DAC to do the same.

HANS: Thank you, Luke. Looks like that is everyone. We are a little bit behind; it is 10:08 now, we would like to go around to council members. I think members would like to provide a brief 1-to-2-minute update and now is the time. Looks like Jack has his hand raised. Jack, go for it.

>> JACK: Thanks, you'll have to forgive me if I don't turn my video on, I've trouble with my bandwidth. I was pretty disappointed when I learned a number of my fellow DAC members communicated with each other without my knowledge to release a letter on BLM letterhead proposing the new Chuckwalla national monument. I mind the letter we give anyone who saw it the impression it was generated through the formal public process mandated by the Federal Advisory Committee Act when it hadn't. I think this is an inappropriate move in a violation of trust for the public and asked DAC members and not having this debate in public is a bad move it denies the public the opportunity to learn what other voices have to say on this matter. There's a whole host of public policy experts, advocates and tribal groups who fundamentally disagree with the premise the landing question is already durably protected and that is something the public deserves to know regardless of how the Council in the voting. I think people have spoken very clearly how they feel about the national monument. One thing I can at least big to that hasn't been said before is as someone who has grown up in the desert and appreciated BLM lands for my entire life and been the focus of my professional career I take issue

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with the notion that CDNCL, or California desert national conservation land, is durably protected and I would like to draw people's attention during the Trump administration these lands were singled out to be removed from durable protection 2.4 million in total all land designated for conservation that was a decision reversed by the next administration but it should give everyone serious pause categorizing California desert national land as durably protected. Those are important things I think were not present in that letter. I think people deserve to hear from them. Many people realize over a long period of time advocating for the California desert some of the greatest threats to public outdoor recreation which includes off-highway vehicle recreation dispersed recreation comes in the form of industrial scale solar and mining. All of those things are what the Chuckwalla national monument hopes to address. While being imperfect, it looks like it's one of the best options we have had and why the monument enjoys such wide support. Thank you very much.

HANS: Thank you, Jack. So, we can have a clear and informed discussion going forward cause I imagine everyone would like to comment. I would point out a few things. The final version of this letter released by the people that signed it was not on any BLM letterhead. And direction and guidance for writing this letter was sought publicly at the last meeting. If we look at the transcript of the last meeting, we got direction from the then State Director Kate [Karen] Mourtisen. It was also explained this is not an official action by the DAC. We did not vote on this because it is not part of the official agenda. This was merely the opinion of DAC members who wanted to sign the letter we sent this letter to the Secretary of the Interior. We had asked for guidance; we are given it and we followed it. There is no implication this was an official action of the entire counsel. If you are not signed to that letter, I don't think there is much concern someone would imply you were of the opinion of the content of that letter. Anyone seeking further clarification would advise them to look at the transcript of our last meeting where everything was discussed very much in public. Let's move on to the next comment, here. Dawn.

>> DAWN: I wanted to provide a quick update on Route 66 for the County. We had it closed due to bridge and deterioration and it was a massive reroute out in the Mojave Trails area. The County of San Bernardino as well as Caltrans worked rapidly to get that repaired so that folks have access to the monument and pass through to areas north and south of the closure. That is back open again, and the county will continue to work to keep those bridges as safe as possible. Thank you very much.

HANS: Great news. I was in that area a few weeks ago and having every bridge on that route closed was an impediment. Next on the list we have Terry. Go ahead.

>> TERRY: I will give an update from the California desert study center. I am going to continue my role as the faculty director of the California State University Desert Studies Consortium through August and then Dr. Paul Stafford of Cal State Fullerton will be director of the organization however, I am going to remain in my role on the DAC through my appointment for the next 2 1/2 years. I would also like to mention them the consortium is working on a statement with respect to Chuckwalla national monument where the academics' ecologists, biologists, geologists and other desert study professional are advancing our professional recommendation as policy for the government. We will be writing in support of the Chuckwalla proposed national monument. I would like to speak to the 24 members of the public at the meeting. You

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might find this troubling or reassuring, that I knew nothing about this letter until yesterday. Nobody had bothered to communicate with me about this. There was a conversation about this at the last meeting about, not about, some people expressed interest about representing something in terms of an official DAC opinion we were informed by the BLM it wasn't appropriate for us to issue policy recommendation on something like this. So, I think it was intended that people were trying to use their authority as members of DAC to strengthen their voice however clearly this is not an official policy position of DAC that academics and people who are doing scientific research and concerned about climate change clearly generally are in opposition to these efforts to represent the perspective of DAC more broadly. Which does not represent me or my role. Hopefully, we will moving forward communicate with the Federal Government as a whole, as a body falling procedures and if individual members wish to express the opinion, they are free to do so, but putting the DAC name on it seems to be a little shady, in my opinion.

HANS: All right. Next, let's go to Stephen.

>> STEPHEN: I briefly discussed my role in the BLM Mojave trails national monument as participating as a community member for input. I wanted to briefly go back and revisit go talk about some of the things we did as part of the management plan for community input. Some of the starting points is Barstow, Goffs school house, Needles, TwentyNine Palms, some things we visited was Pisgah volcano, Tonopah and Tidewater railroad Broadwell Dry Lakebed, Afton Canyon, based on those 4 field trips we did go on we submitted all of our recommendations to the BLM in August of last year. With that said so submitted and thanks for this appointment.

HANS: Thank you, Stephen. Next, Ed.

>>ED STOVIN: I wanted to thank El Centro BLM for repairing the --- road it had been washed out for not quite a year and I'm happy that got fixed. It is an area where people like to camp. As part of the dirt rider foundation, we did a cleanup in El Centro BLM land. We filled a large dumpster with trash that came from the area that people shoot recreationally. I review state park grants including grant applications from the BLM and happy to say I have not gotten any screwy grant applications from the BLM. Everything looks aboveboard. I've been reviewing grants for a long time and typically find, the BLM reliably ---. I won't saw I'm concerned but I thought it was odd there was not a lot of requests for maintenance and tools and physical things with the grants it was mostly solid grants. Thank you.

HANS: Thank you, Ed.

>> DICK HOLLIDAY: I don't know how to raise my hand. I would like to just address some of these things with proposed national monuments. If you take a look in some of the areas on the maps that we have most of the desert is either a national monument or it's a wilderness area. My big concern with these national monuments is that they are just walking into a wilderness area. They are going to be a national something or other, and there is an awful lot of area out there that can't be used because it is wilderness. To me, national monuments, if the areas are protected, areas are available to use and not being, we are not spending a terrible lot of money maintaining that I think they stay the way they are. I've been going to the desert for my lifetime here and I'm pretty old and I'm tired of seeing these things rolling in here and I think you are ending up stopping

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stuff. I'm going to make one other thing about this wind and solar stuff. I'm going to ask later in the day when we talk about what we are doing I'd like to find out how they are taking how the BLM is taking care of the fees for these. I went through and look at the amount of money coming in for fees and recreation, recreation, they took in \$31 million last year. And for the land they are using for wind and solar they took in \$14,000, \$15,000 in 23. There is twice as much money being paid by fees for recreation than people taking this land. They are taking millions of our acres we can use them you can ride around or walk. I think we need to look at that. There are other issues I have with how they manage that money, how they are finding out that people pay what they are supposed to pay, and it doesn't seem like we don't seem to get any kind of feedback. I have asked several times how are they paying us for this land and how are we managing it? There is some issues with some of these plans and I don't think everybody understands these solar plants are being interrupted you can go to the website and look, they have a curtailment display, they are interrupting solar plants every day because we have too much energy they are either in the wrong place or they are not -- we don't have the ability to keep the frequency of 60 cycles. One of those two things is causing us to have interrupted solar plants. That's my story for today.

HANS: Thank you, Dick. I think a lot of us share the concern about solar and something interesting that just was in the press about two weeks ago was a major change in position in relation to the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument. This had been purported to be a way to stop solar development and they have now reduced the size of the proposed area by 40,000 acres and in turn the solar developers are now supporting the national monument. What was proposed to be a way to curb it, has now been abandoned, apparently. That was a major concern for me. I see no more hands raised we are a little late on the agenda. Let's move to the next item we are going to hear from Tristan Riddell about the Salton Sea restoration.

>> This is Robert Robinson. I don't have any way of raising my hand.

HANS: Go for it.

>>ROBERT ROBINSON: I just first like to thank, be thankful for being returned back to the DAC and representing tribal interests. Yesterday I received an email thirdhand about the Conservancy from the Amargosa Conservancy about Ash Meadows and there was concern about MCloud mining they are doing core drilling on approximately an acre. I was reading through the report and sent the are going to affect about an acre but the Amargosa Conservancy said they are going to be traveling a mile across country I believe traveling cross country is also in effect and is going to be happening about five miles east of Death Valley in drainage in the watershed area to the Amargosa River might look into it more and see what the concerns are based on they sent a group in DC to addresses and I didn't know maybe somebody in the Needles Office from should address that. The Ridgecrest office is scheduling a visit and they meeting regarding the K2 Gold it's a conglomerate Mesa up near Saragota mines in Inyo County and we would like to make sure those people are doing what they are supposed to do and also we support the Chuckwalla wilderness Indian Valley community. When this happens, it focuses more on protecting cultural and preservation and cultural and aboriginal resources in the area. Aboriginal resources being everything whether endangered or threatened are not species. It spells out better where trails can be and

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access and number of people and things like that. It seems to work well everywhere it is implemented and we support that. That is about all I have for now.

HANS: Thank you, Bob let's move on let's hear from Tristan.

TRISTAN RIDDELL: I'm going to pop on one more time we did introductions at the beginning. I am with the Bureau of Land Management El Centro field office been there 7 1/2 years. I spent 11 years in Montana working in community development before I went to law school. Served as an editor public land law review made me fall in love with public land after law school didn't want to chase ambulances wanted to chase hiking trails on public lands. That was a little background on me. I'm going to stop sharing my screen and pop up my presentation to let you guys hear about the Salton Sea. Is that full-screen for everyone? Greetings from the Salton Sea, that is what it used to look like in the 50s and 60s with a vacation resort and fun place for people to travel, still a great place to visit but definitely in a very different way in today's time. Topics that will be discussed today including overview of the creation of Salton Sea details about ecology focused on bird and fish we will look at a map discuss current land ownership in and around the Salton Sea follow up by the Salton Sea habitat project in Phase 1 10-year plan putting together by the US Army Corps. I asked we hold questions until the end of the presentation will be happy to have discussion and answer questions once we are done. Before we delve into how the current see was form the picture to the left shows Lake Cahuilla, the Lakewood form warm water would naturally flow from the Colorado River into the Salton trough which stretches from the Chuckwalla Valley in the Imperial Valley down to the western side of the Colorado River Delta in Mexico. With no outflow the lake would eventually dry up in the cycle would continue. This happened over many years over prehistoric times and as a result was the formation of the Imperial sand dunes which is our field offices largest recreational area. It dried up sometimes in the early 17th century. Let's jump to 1900 at this time the Imperial Valley was being developed for agricultural practices and irrigation canals and from the Colorado River or being constructed in 1905 there was a bunch of spring flooding that resulted in water breaking through one of the canal head gates and dumping into the Salton trough. Over a two-year period nearly all the flow in the Colorado River emptied into the Salton trough Lake was 15 miles wide 35 miles in length, which is not fully accurate today since there has been significant shrinkage of the shoreline. In 2023 surface area of 318 square miles. Also, of important know the level of the sea is two times that of the Pacific Ocean. Let's talk, let me go back one slide. Let me talk about some of the communities as evidenced my first slide that postcard, it turned into a resort destination to the 1950s and '60s there were numerous communities that develop no longer as bustling in the '50s and '60s, and Bombay Beach on the East Mecca to the north still exist along the sea I would like to give one quick plug to the DAC members and anyone listening to this presentation we haven't had a chance to check out current Bombay Beach I would suggest is worth your while, super cool community bunch of cool art installations throughout the town and if you head up over the berm toward the sea is kind of a cool wild place. I would give my recommendation to check that out. Sorry we are not doing this live maybe we could have been out there today. This Salton Sea is a birder's paradise although only existing for about 100 years it has become a critical resource for many species resident and migratory birds including several species of concern due to

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significance loss of wetlands, the Salton Sea ecosystem has become one of the most important wetlands for birds and supports some of the highest levels of avian biodiversity. More than 400 resident migratory and special status bird species have been supported of about which 270 frequent the sea on a regular basis. Salton Sea is part of the Pacific flyway designated as an internationally important staging area for shorebirds with over 124,000 at least 25 different species migrate making it the third most important habitat west of the Rocky Mountains. Bird species a special concern including endangered which we will the Gold Billed Tarran, Plover, and Western Snowy Plover of those the Yuma Ridgway Rail, is actually listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife service as endangered species. If you are ever interested grab binoculars and head down to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife refuge along with southern shores and see wonderful bird experience. When the Salton Sea first formed, a variety of freshwater fish species found their way through the air gaps and canals and drainage canals including rainbow trout, mullet and desert pupfish there is a photo of the desert pupfish to the left which is a threatened species. As the levels rose the freshwater fish began to die off beginning in the 1930s fish and game started introducing sport fish from the Gulf of California into the sea and the area became a haven for sport fishing. Tilapia ultimately found their way that is an African fish than a lot of people now use for consumption purposes. And thrive to the point where there was an excess of 100 billion population of the fish in the sea. As the salinity level continues to grow, fish population began to diminish. And currently there is a very limited amount of tilapia that remain in the sea but along the southern portion there is still small numbers of the endangered pupfish that take refuge, and the BLM actually also manages the sand Philippi Creek which is their designated critical habitat which lies basically directly to the west of the sea, south of the equity at Wells recreation area. Let's take a quick look at the map. It depicts current land ownership in and around DC I will do my best to describe these colors for everyone's ability to understand was going on. First off, we will note there is a large checkerboard pattern of land ownership on the ledges and underneath the sea that was a result of transferring brought number of sections of the railroad those ultimately became private owned land. On this map the darkest of blue colors are the private land those are currently owned by the Imperial irrigation District the magenta color and kind of that, I don't know what they call it kind of a beige, it's next to those magenta parcels will of the sea those are all land managed by the Bureau of Land Management. The magenta-colored land aren't designated as development focus areas under the DRECP. We've got that darkest shade of green those are land administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service a wildlife refuge lighter shaded green is pure of reclamation land and the very Northeast corner kind of the actual tan, brown land those are land part of the Marquis is Indian reservation. As you can see it is probably a little more heavily weighted federal ownership but there is significant private ownership as well. That is the Imperial irrigation District who had been serving as one of the partners on these projects that different federal agencies and state of California have been working on. In 2003, the Imperial irrigation District signed the largest agriculture, that same year California law makers agreed to fund air quality management around the sea January 1st, 2018, about 40 percent less water began flowing into the sea that was the expiration of basically a 15-year mitigation period that was installed when the Imperial irrigation

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District basically signed the right to transfer all those waters to coastal U.S. cities here in California. That resulted in a huge loss for inflow into the sea, although the sea has been shrinking for years the result of this loss of flow resulted in increased water levels significantly as the shores receded at least 75 square miles will be exposed by 2045 is the expectation and that BAP on the left that was a study completed by the U.S. Geological Survey and it shows, it is kind of hard to see to its PowerPoint presentation and being online, if you take a look, there is a number of these dotted lines that slowly creep back from the current natural or what was previously the natural shoreline of the sea, and the trend is on track, the results of this study were kind of coming to fruition and as you can see where we currently at -- my dog is barking. I apologize. Give me one second. The Chihuahua got angry. Anyway, as you can see on that map it shows the significant decrease in the shoreline exposing, specifically most notably on the southern portion of the Salton Sea that is where the focus of some of these projects the state is working on are going to be occurring. This study in 2015 is on trend there is some significant loss of the shoreline and nearly exposed playa on the way in the near future hence the need for these projects. Let's talk about some of these projects. The State of California is moving forward with the Salton Sea species conservation habitat project Bureau of Land Management is a partner as a handful of 480 acres of land are part of the project site. Let's see. At this location, this is zoomed in and kind of spread out it looks a little funky this is at the very southern end of the Salton Sea at the location where the new River comes in from Mexico flows north and ultimately into the sea. Let me jump back and talk about the timeline of how this project got going. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed, DIR and DIS in 2013 specifically focused on this project. The BLM then used a determination of NEPA adequacy sign that 2015 to move forward with permitting the project on the BLM managed land in 2017 we authorized the right-of-way to the Department of water resources with the state of California to basically have the right to complete the project over those BLM lands. A fun note that was the first right-of-way I ever issued working with the BLM. That is kind of cool. Initially, prior to the commencement of the project there was depth perception projects we authorized those were interim projects before the full-on construction that is these photos on the next slide. This shows a general depth suppression project they did on approximately 200, maybe 300 acres in and around the new River area. Basically, dug the detractor and dug a bunch of furrows approximately 3 feet deep. You can kind of see on that photo we were out there when they closed out the project and captured these photos you can really see the dust blowing off the playa in the background shading in over the mountains and as where we were standing, it really wasn't present. I think they realized this project was cost-effective and also very effective in preventing dust. These are one of the tools the state of California is going to use in their suite of different project as they do more development along the sea. Here is another view this is the before and after to the point they were getting a little too close to water level and furrows weren't hard enough to sustain. They paused doing that. This depicts the current project of the Salton Sea species conservation habitat project approximately 4100 acres in size it is a system of shallow seeing ponds with islands that are developed for potential bird nesting and habitat. There is also habitat for the desert pupfish in southern portions of the project. If

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you see at the north east portion, what they have developed basically built a jetty out into the sea and have a sailing pump that basically pulls water in from the Salton Sea, pipes it back in to the new River where they have constructed a divergent structure that mixes the waters to a salinity level that can then be distributed to the ponds they have created and to provide for that important habitat. There is a photo showing the jetty they built in the pump station half a mile or so out into the sea, which is expected over the next just handful of years, all of that water behind that jetty is supposed to have dried up as the sea continues to recede this will basically be standing on dry land at some point. What they are doing to ensure they can pump in the salt water from the sea, they dredge a long trench going north about three miles deeper into the sea. There is the diversion section on the new river, some pump equipment they pipe the water in from the sea, mix it with the freshwater, fresh fish water from the new River, create the proper salinity level and can pump that water out through a handful of ditches that then fill the habitat ponds. They have also constructed a pretty basic visitor center. There will be no facilities maybe an outhouse or two, some picnic benches some parking area but basically a space for people who come to visit the site maybe hang out maybe when they do towards can hang out and see what is going on and do some good birding, who knows. The other big project going on, let me add one more thing basically the first phase of the project was kind of complete early this year they haven't filled the pond with water it but are proposing to do expansion on the project hence why they haven't filled the ponds with water in the expansion project is anticipated to complete in 2026. They U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has prepared a programmatic environmental assessment that discloses the effects of proposed implementation what is called Salton Sea Phase 110-year plan, the plan is going to implement a total of approximately 30,000 acres, about 2,000 are BLM administered public land, around the perimeter of the Salton Sea very similar to projects to what occurred at the Salton Sea species habitat project. It's a multi-agency plan with several federal cooperators including us, Bureau of Indian Affairs and natural resource conservation services and others. Army Corps of Engineers and Department of water resources are currently wrapping up consultation with the State historic preservation office on a programmatic agreement to get the EA finalized and section 106 requirements finalized. We anticipate a decision will be issued sometime later this year. Ultimately, the BLM anticipates responding to specific site requests for developing these specific, site-specific project. I can flip over here to a map of the current proposed action within the EA, you can see the different colors, green, blue, pink, yellow, those show the different styles of projects they propose doing there is a handful of dust suppression project and handful proposing to create shallow ponding some wetland habitat and the like. Besides the current Salton Sea species conservation habitat, the project that is almost done there are a couple of other projects 1 known as the North Lake pilot demonstration project, it's 160 acres located in the north end of the Salton Sea Riverside County near the unincorporated community of North Shore in 2024 project design will begin and construction is anticipated to begin in 2025. There is another project in the Bombay Beach area pursued by Audubon California they are proposing to do Geotech survey the near future perform the design of wetland enhancement project there and there is anticipation the federal partners working with the Salton Sea management program will collaborate with Audubon to help

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complete the design of the project provide additional funding, provide potential permitting and long-term operation and maintenance of that project and that is anticipated to start moving forward in the next handful of years. A lot is going on at the Salton Sea, a lot of cool projects BLM is engaged in and working on. The main lead for completing these projects is a State of California Natural Resources Department and specifically California resources department we are excited to continue to work on these projects. It's been great working with the different entities and look forward to continued progress on creating a sustainable Salton Sea. That wraps up my presentation. We can close up and I will try to answer questions.

HANS: Thank you. I for one I'm excited to see these wetlands developed. I've been recreating in that area for quite a while, and this will be an amazing improvement. If any DAC members have questions, please raise your hand or Bob if you have any questions feel free to speak up.

>>DICK HOLLIDAY: I have a question. I would like to find out with all of these plans, it seems like the need water, and they are sending more water to San Diego and no local inflow into the Salton Sea. How are they going to keep, you are showing water level is going down I have been driving by the Salton Sea 50 years and have going to the Salton Sea back in the 60s and I know how high the water lake used to be and it's gone down dramatically since the water was transferred to San Diego. What is going to keep it from going down --

>>TRISTAN: It is continuing to go down that is part of this new focus trying to create these shallow habitat features and dust suppression project along the very soon to be newly exposed playa. Current water they are using they are using existing water from the sea and mixing it with water flows coming in on the new river. There is an inflow from the new river that makes its way to the sea, that is the water they are currently using specifically at that species conservation habitat project. I don't know, again we are on the opening stages of additional projects we haven't really had those conversations and receive that information were those potential need for freshwater flow is going to come from to support those projects. They are going to have to get it from someone.

>>DICK HOLLIDAY: The new River isn't something want to use, either.

>> TRISTAN: They seem to be very pleased, you might not want to swim in our drink it, but they seem to be very pleased being able to utilize it to mix with the existing saline water from the sea to create type of water beneficial for bird and fish habitat and that is kind of, it seems so far to be a success I guess we will have to see how this project plays out over some period of time to see how truly successful it is.

>>DICK HOLLIDAY: Other studies done to see how the salinity of the lake is going to keep increasing?

TRISTAN: I am sure there are I'm not a scientist. I'm a realty specialist who was tasked with this project. I worked a lot with the state of California on this project and worked a lot with Wikipedia to gather information I could share with you guys about the Salton Sea and the project. I am sure there are definite studies that show as the water continues to shrink and the temperatures continue to rise, it is only a prediction the salinity levels are going to continue to go up and they are currently already two times salty than the Pacific Ocean.

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>> DICK HOLLIDAY: Thank you. It is interesting to go back, to know there was an engineer there and how it occurred back in '05 how it got shut off they couldn't shut them off for two years.

TRISTAN: It took two years for them to fix it.

>> DICK HOLLIDAY: Took the southern Pacific Railroad the head of the scientific railroad to decide it would come out.

HANS: Thank you, Tristan. We don't quite have time for a 15-minute break let's take a five-minute break and reconvene at 11 o'clock.

[5-minute break]

HANS: It's time for us to get going here. Next, we will hear from Mayra Martinez regarding the geothermal update.

>> Hello, everyone. Let me get my presentation up. Can you all see my screen?

>> Yes.

>> My name is Mayra Martinez. I am the geologist for the El Centro field office. Today, I will be covering the geothermal program. In my role as field office geologist, I coordinate the review of documents and project proposals with the BLM California state office with project management staff and members of the BLM interdisciplinary team. Many geothermal related permitting needs are processed in the California State Office and with the assistance of their engineering staff unfortunately the BLM state office lead for the geothermal program was unable to join us today. This presentation will consist of three topics, geothermal leasing, geothermal development, and brief information about lithium. The image you see on your screen now, that is Ormat Diablo power plant located at Mammoth Lake. The BLM administers approximately 244 million acres of public land and 710 million acres of subsurface mineral estate. On these lands the BLM has issued 428 geothermal leases, 84 of which are used for production totaling approximately 2500 megawatts. In 2023, 25 million was collected in revenue from geothermal energy production. The BLM collects revenue based on kilowatt hours sold, BLM is subject to a royalty rate of 3 1/2 percent for leases that are issued after 2007. And 40 percent of the BLM's royalty is returned to the state and to the county. This first part of the geothermal process begins with geothermal leasing, land parcels are nominated for competitive sale but a company or a person usually members of the geothermal industry or can be nominated by the BLM. Nominated parcels must be a minimum of 640 acres but should not exceed 5120 acres. A nomination form containing the legal land descriptions and an administrative fee of 120 dollars, plus 12 cents per acre must be submitted to the California state office for review. When the state office receives the nominations, they will conduct a review of the land parcels and send the list of nominations to the appropriate field office to conduct a land use plan conformance review. In the BLM central field office, we would determine partial conformance and suitability with the CDCA and DRECP. After the land use plan conformance review the field office in turn narrowed doubled it disciplinary team with coordination with district and state offices would complete a new part review includes section 106 conservation endangers species conservation. The NEPA review also identifies resources present are affected and applied stipulations to the geothermal leases. Stipulations can include constraints such as timing limitation or no surface occupancy they can include stipulations to protect wildlife prevent soil erosion, et cetera The list of stipulations is

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provided to the state office who will then prepare a sales notice for the competitive geothermal lease sale. NEPA really does involve a public comment period which will occur prior to the posting of the sales notice. When the sales notice is posted it will include information on how to attend and participate in the competitive geothermal lease sale. The geothermal lease sale is held online at energynet.com in an auction format. Bids start at \$2 per acre and high bidders must pay at the end of the day. The total price includes the winning bid, and advanced rental and administrative and filing fees. Any parcels that do not receive bids during the competitive sale will be offered not competitively at a date after sale or on a first come first serve basis following the sale. After a geothermal lease is acquired and lessee may submit site specific proposals for geothermal development. Activities usually begin with exploration, followed by well drilling -- well drilling and utilization of the site. It is important to note that by any development activity the BLM reserves the right to conduct inspections and enforcement at the sites. Exploration occurs to assess and define a geothermal resource and determine the potential for future development. This can include geophysical operations, temperature gradient wells and construction of access roads. Lessees must cement a notice of intent for BLM review and activities usually covered categorical exclusion. And as Gordon mentioned earlier, the DOI has adopted category of exclusion from the U.S. Forest Service for short term geothermal exploration. The two images you see, the one on the left is a Geo phone and on the right are seismic Vibrioses trucks. Well drilling is used to conduct flow tests to produce or inject geothermal fluid. Lessees must submit a Geothermal drilling permit for review including an operations plan drilling program and bonding mechanism. Activities usually require an environmental assessment, depending on potential impact. The photo on the right is a drill rig drilling an injection well located at Nevada's Casa Diablo parkland. Utilization operations include electrical generating facilities, direct use facilities, field production and injection pipelines and related operations. To conduct utilization operations a utilization plan must be submitted to the BLM for review and after the plan is reviewed, and the BLM determines and needs, meets the federal content requirement, BLM would conduct a NEPA review and prepare either an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement. In Imperial County one active geothermal facility is located on BLM land east of Holtsville the site is referred to as or Mesa. It consists of three power plants with a combined capacity of 69 megawatts which can power over 15,000 homes. It is operated by ORMAT Nevada who holds on the site the map on the left shows geothermal leases shown in different colors and within those leases there are blue lines that represent the well and pipeline work at the site the plants are binary power plants so the geothermal fluid is pumped from a production well to a heat exchanger that uses isopentane heat is transferred from the geothermal fluid to a working fluid the working fluid that explant doubled expands into vapors, the geothermal fluid is then injected back into the reservoir. The Truckhaven area is located near Route 86 Nevada holds one geothermal these located within a checkerboard area of BLM state and private land. Here, ORMAT completed an expiration program in April 2021, which used seismic vibriosis trucks to create artificial seismic waves which were picked up by sensors on the ground those were the Geo phones we saw earlier this exploration allowed ORMAT to conduct surface Geo technical mapping of the reservoir. In 2023,

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following the seismic work ORMAT drilled two wells at Truckhaven and completed flow test of the Geothermal fluid this was in 2019 through an environmental assessment which approved drilling up to four wells. Data from the seismic exploration and the well flow test was used by ORMAT to prepare a utilization plan. The utilization plan proposes to construct, operate and maintain two energy generating facilities, generating between 15 to 25 megawatts each, geothermal wells and pipelines, the solar field a transmission line and support facilities. The utilization plan is under BLM review. Since 2022, the California State Office received geothermal nominations but members of the geothermal industry. The list included over 80,000 acres of BLM land in Imperial County, the BLM has completed a land use plan conformance review and 27 of the 38 nominated parcels will move forward for NEPA analysis. The BLM is currently in the pre-stage what initiate public scoping and tribal consultation. Once all data necessary for NEPA is gathered. The map on the right displays the parcels that are moving forward for NEPA that are shown in blue and purple hash marks. And the map also shows development focus areas in purple, BLM land is shown in tan, ACEC are shown in light blue hash lines between blue and purple and the light pink represents department of defense land. Lithium is subject to the mining law of 1872 and the service management regulations at 43 CFR 3809. Liffey and brines or clays are appropriated by mining claims lithium and pegmatite's Fare appropriated by a load claim. Lithium and geothermal can occur simultaneously under the geothermal steam act. Geothermal development of steam can include its byproducts. By products being minerals found in solution or by association this can include lithium present in geothermal brines. The multiple mineral development act made it possible to develop leasable minimal geothermal and locatable minerals being lithium at the same time. However, the BLM would review and evaluate the co-production of these minerals on a case-by-case vases and look and project specific circumstances. Currently, all active lithium operations are on private land, the most known being the Berkshire Hathaway facility, but today, the BLM has not received any proposal for lithium extraction. The image on the right is a diagram of the lithium extraction process used by controlled thermal resources also located in the Salton Sea and they have a lithium filter attached to the geothermal plant. That is how they extract the lithium there. That concludes my presentation. Thank you. Any questions?

HANS: Thank you. Doesn't look like we have questions from the back at this time.

>> I do.

HANS: Go ahead, Dick.

>>DICK: I have a question on operations. The map of the proposed leasing fields at least over the East Mesa area looks like they are over some of the limited use areas we are not allowed to ride in but they are going to be able to put in a geothermal plant, I guess that is what they are saying.

>> MAYRA: Is this the one?

>> DICK: Keep going on the bottom right the little one with the little dots on the east Mesa, right in there, all of those purple ones I couldn't really see what the legend said, it looks like, keep going, that area is all limited use area you are not allowed to go in except on limited trails but it looks like you've got some leases over that property.

Proposed leases, is that correct?

>> MAYRA: Want to make sure I'm looking at the right --

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>> DICK: Move the arrow to your left. That purple area those are your proposed leases, right?

>> MAYRA: These are actually existing leases, but they are within a development focus area which prioritizes geothermal production.

CARRIE: This is Carrie what you are seeing is DFA and in that area it is limited only to geothermal. And within the ACEC its limited to subsurface only unless there is an existing lease.

>> DICK: We had your arrow I can't -- I can't read the legend. That's a development focus area, right?

>> MAYRA: That's correct.

>> DICK: Seems like public can't use the land to ride in, there's nothing else there it's all old bombing ranges but we are going to let them go out and build geothermal plants. I think they are great I'm not opposed to them it's a very good way of, to have built electricity because they work 24 hours a day and not taking much energy from the world there. They are taking the water out of the ground and putting it back. I am for that. I am interested in the government keeps using one use or another if they are able to use things that we can't use.

CARRIE: This is Carrie from the EI Centro office. That is a limited use area. There are several open riding routes within that area it is not an open area, but there are several open routes for OHV within the area. It's not a closed area and it is not an open area, it's limited use.

>>DICK: Right.

>> ROBERT ROBINSON: This is Robert Robertson. Can you hear me?

HANS: Go ahead.

>> ROBERT: If it's on a proposed geothermal and Indian County 8, 9 years ago we went out with the archaeologists from Ridgecrest office and worked out a mitigation to get a road up to MCloud I'm not positive of the name on a mountaintop between Rose Valley and Navy geothermal site, and the purpose was to get up there and get into a school section that is state property. But their purpose was to go and directional drilling underneath Rose Valley. My question I have asked several times and people haven't gotten back to me about it, when they leave the boundaries of the state land, vertical land down at the ground and they go out underneath the BLM does the BLM have jurisdiction then?

>> MAYRA: That something I have to look into for specifics on the subsurface and directional drilling.

>> ROBERT: That's the same answer I keep getting. I never heard anything back.

>> This is Matt --

>> ROBERT: There's restrictions on drilling in Rose Valley, but they circumvent it by directional drilling underneath.

>> Will get back to you, Mayra, Carrie and myself sometimes next week once we check in.

>> Thank you.

HANS: This is Tom. I will work with Mayra on the answer you are seeking.

HANS: Ed, go ahead.

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>> ED STOVIN: I would like to ask if there are any new applications in the Ocatillo Wells area. I know there is one by the Salton Sea airport. Other any other applications?

>> MAYRA: At the moment, the only project we have right now is the Truckhaven with ORMAT. We have no other projects out there.

>> ED: Thank you.

HANS: Looks like that concludes our questions. Thank you, Mayra, for the presentation. Next on our agenda we are going to hear from Matt Lohr and Michael Carpenter presenting on the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. Matt looks like you are muted.

>> MATT LOHR: My name is Matthew Lohr the new field office born and raised in Imperial Valley we are going to talk about Imperial sand dunes recreation area. I came on board at the end of January and spent a few weekends at the sand dunes to talk to community members or our users. Multiple things have come up one is they would like a change in our enforcement out there from enforcement to engagement with rangers and they like the staffing, the responses. They also, part of this was two items that kept popping up from original this was supposed to be in El Centro person, so we bring up today hot topics out there that have come up and they are ghost camping on Gecko Road and reconfiguration of Osborne Outlook. Today with me is Mike acting chief ranger I'm going to let him start off if you have any questions at the end, we will take them on.

>>SHELLY: Can you put in presentation mode.

MICHAEL: I am the acting law enforcement chief. I've been stationed in El Centro for about 5 years and in this role since October. I think most everybody on here is familiar with the Imperial sand recreation area is the largest off-highway vehicle area in the United States, a large visitation of the million plus visitors per year it is roughly 160,000 acres first off, we are going to hit on ghost camping. What is ghost camping? This has turned into a major issue. It has gotten more attention now on social media and everything else going on. Essentially, people are setting up camp primarily our concerns are Gecko Road the premier real estate for a definition of the area it is paved with easy access large RVs can get in and out in less dust so I highly sought after area. People are setting up shop. They are dropping their stop staying the weekend and leaving sometimes for months sometimes for a couple of days going home and coming back and this has created a lot of issues. Along with that goes camping we are having an increase of the overstay of the 14-day state limit. Some of the problems is used for everyone else, following the rules so these preferred sites are reserved so people show up for a weekend and they can't get these access sites so they are sent off to other areas which some people prefer but some people would rather have these areas. His increasing conflicts between groups people setting up and saving spaces and people show up and say I want to can appear we are having conflict so increased workload on that. Ultimately, reduces our accessibility. One camp is being set up to save spot, when people aren't there in this is allowing less access in these areas. We have really tackled this as an enforcement issue. We spent a lot of time focusing on this and have gotten good social media presence out of our towing and citations we have done but with that, it is really hard for us as an office to track the amount of campers and people on a regular basis. There are, weekend, Thanksgiving weekend you can have 140,000 people on a normal weekend 20 to 60,000 people. Us as a law enforcement agency

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trying to monitor that is a real heavy lift while we try to deal with other stuff. There are legal loopholes within the Code of Federal Regulations. The people we are trying to discourage ghost camping try to figure loopholes and are working a system that creates additional enforcement problems for us. This is the Gecko campground overview this is kind of the premier real estate this is Highway 70 paved all the way down to Road River campground. The numbers correspond with past paved and those are what I am referring to as premium parking areas.

>> MATT LOHR: Thanks, Mike. We see a lot of inequities in this. It is amazing being there just those first couple of weeks hearing from people, the duners, like hey, this is a big problem, can you resolve this? We like the opportunity to camp on Gecko Road. It was multiple people I was hearing from. That started why we are talking about this today. A lot of what we heard when we met with the American Sand Association and also with the duners. Can we go to booking something online like reserving those sites? We understand there would still be a permit fee, but it would give us a chance to plan vacations and travel and bring more equity to the reservations or to the opportunities for everyone on Gecko Road. We wanted to look at an online system the government does have recreation.gov you can book passes do your camping reservations a variety of things. It just was taken over by a new company. We want to enhance the user experience; this will allow us to -- they would know we are coming to a spot we will have those for seven days. It would allow our Rangers to make sure they know who is there and we would have a license plate number we can track in these spots. It protects our resources who is out there we have violations we could ticket them provide access for all. Was this equity thing I'm hearing from just going throughout the dunes those couple of weekends and enhance enforcement. And holding them accountable. We are looking at a few different systems that started this. They also have a permit but you also have to book your space, your camping site and some are Douglas County parks, Sand Hollow State Park in Utah and coral pink sand dunes Park in Utah. A couple of these do use recreation.gov, others have other software point of sale vendors. We wanted to spend some time going forward if this is what we want to move forward with is making sure we visit these sites to understand how they operate and the challenges they provide both past and camping spots. Our next steps, it's not going to happen today or next season this is a way out. Right now, we are focusing on a business plan in the next few months our last business plan was in 2013. I will get more updates this afternoon, we are doing our fee study setting fees we have those other agencies trying to understand why they went to the field what kind of services yet. Some of those sites have power and sort and water hook ups which we won't have. How did they compare and kind of what other protocols. Public outreach is huge, this would be part of our business plan we are looking at all our fees with Imperial sand dunes recreation area. Definitely a lot of public outreach the next couple of years. Camp sizes and lands we are working with the community and American Sand Association and other partners to figure out who to diversify sites, size wise maybe for a small family to a larger group and how we incorporate pricing. I talked about business plans, and we started working with our OHV stakeholder Association. We are moving forward with this idea, nothing set in stone. We are just looking at ways how we can reduce ghost camping. Next, I'm going to roll to

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Mike and talk about all is born overlook this has been another area kind of after COVID has taken off with social media gets really busy with day use. Mike?

>>MIKE CARPENTER: Osborne Overlook as you travel on 78 that is the center of the sand dunes on the south side of 78. We've seen an increase of use since COVID I have been advised has its own hashtag on social media sites and has turned into a very popular destination for those iconic sand dune photos for visitors. This is the main access point for the wilderness on the oversight of 70 where people Park and walk across the road to access that area as well. Right now, this set up has 1 camping area and four parking spaces and rest room and a repeater tower pictured in that photo. This is also additionally the only area that does not require -- we allow people to come here for two hours take photos and not have to pay that recreation fee to OHV. We have the overview pulled up now. That is our bathroom, repeater tower those four parking spots. It is stated but that is kind of the camping pad in the center and then there is a turnaround. Moving on. The short-term proposal is on the very west end, I believe we can do add additional parking spots work with an engineer on the state office to configure that but should have ample space for parking spots without requiring a plan amendment. Long-term we would like to do a plan amendment and remove that camping area and create additional parking for day use area only. With that long-term plan, the west end if we could go back one slide. That west end is kind of the bottom there. We would designate that as LZ for helicopter, or current issues now is that is so inundated with people there is nowhere for them to go so we don't try to use it right now. Long-term with the plan amendment would be to create additional parking spots and take the west, southwest of that in turn that into an LZ.

>> MATT: That is it for our presentation. Questions for us?

ED STOVIN: First, I support the thing you want to do at Osborne. I don't know if people want to be, Osborne is higher elevation than all around it. You drive up the hill and you can look down below and see the desert. It is a neat place, not so sure about having people camp there. As far as this ghost camping is concerned, I can see how that is annoying and I support what you want to do. I don't think it's a good idea to make the dunes a reservation place but maybe some of those highly sought after spots. If it's possible we can make those into a reservation area. If you are working on that please include me in talks that you guys have regarding this area. I was on the dune subgroup 6 or 8 years, and I worked on the business plan to increase the price of the permits. So please keep me included on that. Thank you.

HANS: We will inform all DAC members as we move forward.

>> DICK HOLLIDAY: It's pretty interesting we talked about this a couple of years ago. I also have been on the subgroup for 20 years. One of the issues they have is you are probably aware is BLM isn't charging, the permits fee use now is not a camping fee has nothing to do with camping. The BLM can't charge fees camping fees anyplace in the United States, entrance fees. Somehow, more to be able to occupy property like that something else has to happen. I don't know what it is you will have to research that it but it isn't a fee and recreation, and it isn't a reservation. The other issue I've always had with a reservation is the dunes is a unique area nobody wants you to go there yourself the whole idea you go out there with a group because the dangerous facilities you need to go on rides with somebody else. It usually encompasses a group of people that are

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like-minded that becomes a problem how you do that. Allocate areas for that which obviously that is one of your bullet items, is how do you do that? The other issue becomes for years, I've wanted the BLM and I have done studies and of worked with them on the budget for 30, 40 years how you could allocate that because of the way the fee structure is. The fee structure is such you pay a special recreation permit you're not paying to camp. Most people you talk to think they are paying a camping fee they are not. Consequently, it is hard to look at a reservation system such that it almost seems like it's going to take more work to do than it would be to continue the way it is now.

Typically, I can't go on I have a motorhome and I go to recreation and make reservations and there is a little thing RV camping site it tells the world that is used for this weekend, and I pull in on Tuesday I've got to know I can't stay past Friday because somebody has a reservation on Friday. Or I made my reservation for Friday. The other issue is as far as ghost camping, from the way it used to be years ago, we used to go 30, 40 hours, the size and amount of money people have in their things now, it easily can be 1/2 million dollars in vehicles and more I work at a company make do buggies we made the vehicles used out there for the AFT people there are \$300,000 and then have \$500,000 motorhome you have almost \$100 million, \$1 million you try to have a fee structure such that you get somebody out there and charging them \$100 fine for parking for more than 72 hours and they are not there, that is chump change to these people. They are glad to. I know now there is people out there, they wrote off a section, I know, and gentlemen stays there and charges other people for parking and keeps watch of their stuff. The issue with ghost camping is huge and I am all for you doing something because it isn't right for people to leave their stuff for a month and not be there. It is kind of unique. I am sure it is unique to these other places that do have fee structures, have gone to some of those other places where they have fee structures they are in a situation where they can charge a fee for camping. Like Ed says, Ed and I have been on the desert subgroup I have been chairman for several years I would like to be involved in any of your discussions.

>> Absolutely. Thank you for that information. This is a complex situation.

HANS: It appears there are no more questions or comments. Thank you so much for the great presentation. That was very informative, and I wish you success because I know is a big issue we have been hearing about that for years.

SHELLY: Ed, did you have another commenter question?

ED: I didn't put it down.

SHELLY: Didn't want to overlook that.

HANS: We have a little extra time before lunch. Making sure everyone has an opportunity I wanted to greet a DAC member that joined us late. Mr. Randy Banis this is on the call and Randy, should you desire please provide us with a two- or three-minute greeting and discussion if you would like.

>> RANDY BANIS: Sorry I could not be there this morning we had our annual volunteer day and I'm the president of the organization this is our big cleanup; I couldn't find my clone for this meeting, so I am trying to do double duty. Right now, I am driving way from the Moose Anderson Day trying to race home so I can be seated and ready for this afternoon. Thanks for having me and I have been in since about 10:15 a.m.

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HANS: Thank you, Randy. No other additional comments I think we can break for lunch early here. We are going to take a little over an hour for lunch and reconvene at 1:00 p.m. Thank you very much, everybody.

[Convene for lunch until 1:00 p.m.] [Return at Time Stamp 4:00:06]

SHELLY: Welcome back from lunch. A few things from the State Director's Report. 2024 is the 30th anniversary of the California Desert Protection Act. That designated most of the wilderness areas in CDCA. BIL and IRA that is the bipartisan infrastructure law and inflation reduction in a variety of infrastructure related projects in California since 2022 have been implemented. BLM California dedicated \$20.4 million for ecosystem restoration progress, 1.7 million to clean up orphan well areas, more than \$8 million for forest treatment and received 16.8 million for fuels reduction projects. One thing I did want to mention the Forest Service has approached us because the Forest Service's recreation resource advisory committee is not currently active so there RAC is not active. They requested to use the DAC to provide recommendations on recreation for proposals for national forests in southern California including Angeles, San Bernardino National Forest. The DAC is authorized to provide recommendations to the Forest Service on fees as stated in the charter. We expect the Forest Service to attend the August and December meetings to present fee proposals and ask for recommendations and vote from the DAC. They will provide materials and proposals for your review prior to the meeting. On the personal front, since the December DAC meeting, we hired Ron as he introduced as the new Needles field manager and Matt Lohr as the El Centro field manager and we are in the process, we have made selections on the Ridgecrest and Palm Springs-South Coast field managers they are going through the approval process. Hopefully, working to get those vacancies filled hopefully sooner rather than later. With that, who will head out to the field for their updates and start with Barstow. Julie?

>> Good afternoon, everybody. I am Julie Donnell, assistant field manager for Barstow BLM and currently acting field manager. I'm here to give you updates on projects in program areas in Barstow field office. First, I will start with the Old Spanish national historic trail. The BLM completed submitted nomination for the national register of historic places of a segment of the old Spanish Trail known as immigrant pass. The nomination has been reviewed in fiscal year '23 BLM completed 193 acres of class III surveys along the Old Spanish National Trail. Quarterly consultation with the old Spanish Trail Association is still ongoing and collaborative mapping project was completed in fiscal year '23. For special recreation permits for the Barstow field office fiscal year '23 the Barstow field office held 161 SRP events which is a lot. That includes vendor permits for the huge king of hammers the SRP do include a variety of recreational events mostly motorized races and several multi-event permits. There were questions about recreation fees and much revenue we receive. I've got a couple of years, FY 21 received \$1,232,000 in total recreation fee revenue. In FY '22 was 1,000,902. And then in FY '23 we received \$698,000 in total recreation fee revenue. Moving on to SoCal Edison project the El Dorado fiscal Lucca transmission line, the Barstow field office received an application to upgrade two existing 220 kilovolt transmission line crossing 176 miles of the El Dorado pistol Lucca line to meet safety requirements. Draft environmental assessment is expected to be published in the fall of

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2024. Key issues include cultural and wildlife impact with proposed action to replace existing infrastructure on towers and insert several new steel model poles. One of our major cooperators on this large project is the National Park Service, national Mojave National preserve. Moving on to the office of wildlife. The field office does continue to work collaboratively with several other agencies and partners with Emma Gross of disease study habitat augmentation program that is a mouthful. UC Davis in fiscal year '23 completed a range wide survey and --- the initial study results indicated there was no need for immediate emergency action and report emphasize long-term water management is the key factor to address recovery. And continue with the marsh, received funding that the Barstow field office received funding to initiate a maggot marsh project in cooperation with UC Davis to create a large marsh complex near the borehole marsh to serve as a breeding site for the vole. Planning efforts are continuing as a multi-year project however in March '23, Barstow field office installed 100 feet of post and cable fencing near of old horror marsh to address the incursion issues we have in that area. We continue to add fencing and signage to help the effort for the incursions. Due to improving vole populations and habitat improvement at Amargosa vole team held at UC Davis is no longer needed in all. Been released habitat conditions continue to be monitored there is contingency plans in place to reestablish the captive colony if necessary. Continue talking about wildlife habitat moving to Afton Canyon the field office continues a focus wildlife habitat enhancement program on the Afton Canyon portion of Mojave trails national Monument. This section of the Mojave River is eligible under the national wild and scenic River act and is managed to maintain sitting recreational geologic fish wildlife historic cultural outstanding and remarkable values. We continue to collect data to develop the management plan for Mojave trails national monument included in this piece. Continuing in Afton Canyon to the fire and fuse program, we continue our tamarisk treatments with approximately 200 acres of tempers treated in 2023. Moving to minerals one of our ongoing minimal project St. Cloud exploratory drilling proposal the BLM completed the draft environmental assessment for modification to an existing plan of operation by St. Cloud mining company to drill 43 exploratory boreholes adjacent to the active open mining pit. This project will allow St. Cloud to update and verify historic data and expand upon known areas of mineralization, the proposed action would disturb less than one acre of public land and that one acre does include the cross-country travel disturbance. That is included within that less than one acre disturbance. The Barstow field office held a public meeting at couple weeks ago I believe April 11th we had a really good turnout. A lot of the locals came out to find out more about the project, the draft EA has been posted i.e. planning for 30 days public notice was posted, the public comment period closes May 6th, that's coming up. Let's see. Finally I'm going to talk about our rangeland management. The Barstow field office is working on an exciting project is the round Mountain virtual fencing project. We applied for and have been approved for funding to initiate a virtual fencing project for the Round Mountain allotment in the Juniper Flats area. This technology help to reduce conflict between OHV and ranchers as well as wildlife and fences. The technology allows the cattle to wear collars that connect to base stations to signal the cattle of boundaries instead of traditional fences. It's a really neat program it is just making his way to the U.S. This has been tested and used quite a bit in Europe I

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don't want to get it wrong, but I do think the Barstow field office I think is the second in the state to try out this new technology. We are really excited to try it out and hope it goes well. As far as our active grazing allotments, Mountain Valley Wells, Round Mountain and rattlesnake are being grazed and active. Shadow and Stoddard alignments are ephemeral. Those are sheep allotments the four edges good this year we plan to have sheep grazing on both allotments very soon. Our only other open allotment is Pahrump allotment but not currently grazed because of lack of forage. That is it for Barstow field office. Thank you.

SHELLY: Julie is acting because Mark is on vacation. Are there any questions for Julie?

>> DICK: Julie, we used to have a guy on desert council that was Billy Mitchell, had a ranch near where the King of the Hammers is. I just wondered, he always had issues during King of the Hammers with what was going on around his ranch and the people going through his ranch to go to Rattlesnake Canyon. I wondered if he commented anymore on it are happy with what and when on our fee did anything with him at all. I don't know if you know anything about that.

>> JULIE: I do know about that. We just recently a couple of weeks ago had a range improvement Advisory Council meeting at Barstow and Billy wasn't able to make it so he didn't talk or we didn't get to hear him talk. But we had other folks in the area, the Fisher family who grazes and had the same concerns, so we are putting up additional signage to make sure folks know that there is open range and cattle grazing in the area. So, there are fewer OHV conflicts, but I have not directly heard from Billy. I am aware of the situation. I would be happy to hear more from Billy on how we can mitigate.

>> DICK: He always was concerned about that. I wanted to see if we were addressing his concerns. Thank you very much.

SHELLY: Jack?

>> JACK THOMPSON: I had a question, do I have it right, the St. Cloud project is in the Amargosa North ACEC?

>> JULIE: Are correct.

>> JACK: Is that California national conservation desert land?

>>JULIE: It is.

>> JACK: I'm curious to the use the acreage to calculate with the disturbance caps are.

>> JULIE: I don't know the answer but can get back to you with it. I don't know for sure.

>> JACK: I would be curious to find out how this disturbance caps are generated and whether they are subject to kind of administrative changes whether or not they have any congressional underpinning related to their conservation land status.

>> JULIE: Sure copy. I can get back to you with more detail, I do not believe anything changes as administration changes, I think it's a number that doesn't change but I can get back to you on that.

>> JACK: I appreciate it.

>> BRANDON ANDERSON: This is Brandon. Might be covering some of that in the presentation to follow. Maybe it will answer your question.

>> Thanks, Brandon.

SHELLY: Any other questions for Julie? Okay. Matt, you are next.

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>> MATT LOHR: Good afternoon, DAC members my name is Matthew Lohr I wanted to introduce a few new staff with Matthew Adele who has joined us from the US Forest services as a Ranger, he started in April with us. And he is coming from the Chico area. He's getting ready to do his field training Bakersfield and Marietta, we expect him ready for the season for the Imperial sand dune recreational season in September from his field training. We have Taylor, she is an archaeologist on loan, she is a contractor working with our GIS system and mapping archaeology sites. For the field office. I am at work, I was born and raised, and it is a pleasure to come back is such an honor to work in Imperial Valley after many years of being away and undergrad and Parks and Recreation manager in Chico State and administration, in my career I've worked for city government, county government and state government. This is my first federal job. I'm glad to be back in the valley. In working with the staff, one of my backgrounds is park recreation management. OHV, I have experience with state parks, so that is a little about me. One thing I take a lot of pride and know our staff does is outreach we do a lot of outreach to the community and we have hit in the last three months is Blue Angel Show that is the central Navy air facility. Our staff had the most popular booth engaging with interaction with our law enforcement. I want to thank the staff. We have been onto a lot of career days at Central high school our staff has gone out and presented also we been at IVC Pearl Valley Collage and other events. Next are starting a project with Western mesquite mines East exploration plan of operations. This will be the other side from the current mesquite mind. This will be doing 22 drill pads. So, Carrie and our natural resource staff are working with mesquite mines and Imperial Counties planning department to start planning that, the NEPA process, is a long process. Next is our Oro Cruz exploration project, Imperial County Board of Supervisors, was denied moving forward. We are working closely with Oro Cruz with the planning commission and Board of Supervisors. The end of season April 15th is in season for Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. Next, we will have a report on revenues and a very successful season seems like numbers are a little higher for our holidays from President's weekend to New Year's to Thanksgiving. Thank your staff for all the hard work and dedication. That is a big undertaking, especially the four major incidents we have out there. Next, we are working with Ocatillo state parks and state vehicle recreation area in planning the general plan. In the past they wanted to take over ownership, so we are working closely meeting with our state director to have that discussion how to move forward, this coming Tuesday and we are meeting a lot with the state park staff and Ocatillo Wells staff on how to move forward with our general plan. Next, I think one of first things Ed Stovin, stopped by my office two weeks ago about Painted Gorge Road, it was only a couple weeks out so the road is back open. Sorry for giving you the wrong information Ed. Next, we are working with recreation.gov recreation.gov is a website for permits, right now our recreation facilities are on site they do not take any kind of registration or by a past our first Phase 1 we're going to try doing this in the East County San Diego and the King Valley we are looking to try to get that up by early summer. We think there is a lot more opportunities for family to discover us and campers this is a great way to people to preregister. What is nice about the new software since they have changed if you do want to buy a past there is no cell phone signal you can purchase surpassed when you hit the cell phone signal will finish the purchase. We know you have a

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purchase, and you purchased your past and you can show our rangers hey, or staff for compliance I purchased my past. There's no cell signal that is the nice thing you can have your pass. Next up we have had a couple of big right of ways we finish one was at the border patrol this is going on for I think 8 or 9 years to get this right-of-way done. Another one sandal gas and electric were over 15 years. Hats off to Tristan and Kathy and Carrie for getting those through they have been a long time in the making we are excited some of these were across field offices, so we work close with staff. Next is our Cahuilla Ranger station we have been out to bid for the Ranger station. Bid closed April 16th and should here early next week to hear with the bid price is and see if we can move forward. If it does, we are looking at a temporary site as a new ranger station gets built, it is 15-to-18-month project to build a new ranger station will be a couple of seasons in temporary offices and stations out there. On March 13th our state director Gordon visited. We visited Salton Sea, Imperial Sand Dunes recreation area and saw Osborne Overlook and Mesquite mines. Thank you Gordon for making it out here our staff had nice taco luncheon that was really delicious. Last, San Sebastian Marsh tamarisk treatment is removing the tamarisk for habitat for the desert pupfish we received grant funding, and we will start that work next fall. That is all I have. Any questions? Thank you for letting me present the El Centro office information.

SHELLY: Any questions. I don't see. We will move to Needles. Ron?

>> RON NUCKLES: I will see, there we go. Good afternoon my name is Ron Nuckles, I am the new field manager in needles. I am from this area, born and raised, and a little bit newer than Matt my presentation is not going to be anywhere near as cool. It's going to be quite a bit shorter. I'm still going through the paces and still learning a lot about this area as I have moved back here. I did hear some comments about personnel management as far as the monument management plan, I will talk a little bit about that. First, I will go to personnel, the monument manager is in our top priority list in HR I believe top 2 or 3 I do want to reference we are looking at that, but since I have been on board, we did have an assistant manager here we are working together as a team and going after the monument plan as is. I want to welcome Yazoo Wang he is a new Realty right-of-way specialist to help us out. We do get a lot of requests like that so they should go to him with him on board and we have a new geologist, Grant Swift he's an IRA funded geologist mostly dedicated to minerals but will be helping with geology in Needles field office. Next, project. I only have four top priority projects I want to mention. First is the Mojave Trails National Monument planning effort, we just went over the no action alternative. We finalize that apparently; we are going through currently rewriting contract stuff to cover the class I survey for archaeological once that is done we will proceed with that. After that, second is the operation and maintenance consolidation effort (MOMAC) for the utility corridors the field office. We are going to do a pilot run shortly, I believe this week to try to wrap that up for the utilities for the field office. Third, is the Castle Mountain mine expansion we just reviewed the plan for completeness sent a letter saying the plan was complete where currently working on a schedule and archaeological survey. I did want to mention the CalEx station relocation effort we were in talks with California they're working on their own funding and have internal conversations before they continue the conversations with us. Potentially discuss some land transfer opportunities. One of our completed projects, there might be some

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interest, we just completed the EA for Amboy crater trail system. The project would provide the public with nonmotorized network of hiking trails, directional signing emergency gate and bouldering to prevent vehicle intrusion. It's about ten miles of new trails. Outside of that, I don't really have anything else. I'm here to answer questions.

SHELLY: Any questions for Ron?

>> You are mute. Are you talking to us?

>>DICK: I'm sorry. I wanted to talk about the train line and the electrical substation are you still waiting on the approval of that?

>> RON: The BLM determined the NEPA was not adequate to authorize those facilities. I think they are really looking at that from what I can understand, I haven't been too involved with that, but I can get information and follow up with you.

>> DICK: Maybe the next meeting, it's nothing critical, but I know they've been looking at different things from last time looked like they didn't like, BLM didn't like something they were going to redo it I wanted to find out with the status of that was. I see they had a big celebration down here. I guess it was up in Las Vegas to commemorate the start of the construction for that project I wonder how that was going.

>>RON: I will ensure, I get a good update on that for the next meeting. I will try to send something to you in the meantime. Apologize, I don't have that update today.

>> Thank you.

SHELLY: Any other questions? Moving to Palm Springs South Coast.

>> BRANDON: Good afternoon. I think I have 11 updates for you and I will try to be as efficient as possible. Talking about PCT, we sustained pretty significant damages to the trail over tropical storm and a couple of other storms that came through, we were able to get out and do an assessment of the last couple of weeks the thank you to Jihadda and her team for being able to get the information quickly with her efforts, we were able to put in for a couple of different funding avenues to help with repair work we are hoping some of the distribution of funds will be coming in the summer, early June, July. On the Mecca Copiah FRMA open area where getting the contractors out to the field finally, we completed the categorical exclusion they will be continuing to do the soil survey work for that effort. On the Morongo Communications site we continue internal reviews of the admin environmental assessment we are hoping to have that released sometime in the middle to late summer of 2024. In terms of ongoing or new projects, we have a Grays solar project being proposed by Nextera is in the next early stages of the planning for the permitting and they are requesting to do some early geotechnical investigation. So we are working with the Tribes on consultation, and we have bio and cultural surveys undergoing. It is located in eastern Riverside North and West of the city of Blythe. The geotechnical investigation would be approximately 15 to 30 borings on public land and will be a temporary right-of-way and it would feed into the development and perfection of the larger solar project. We are getting funding secured there are some graffiti on petroglyphs out in eastern Riverside that we are completing the environmental analysis to hopefully remove the graffiti and prevent future damage in the future, that is a good section 110 work under the national historic preservation act we hope to have that completed this fiscal year. The custom and border patrol, the Make Safe project, but due to ongoing litigation we have stop all work on that project until there is some resolution from the litigation, but the beacon mobile communications site works do

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continue. A little update on the Santa Rosa San Jacinto national Monument, E-bikes continue to be one of the major enforcement issues that our law enforcement rangers enforce. We have gotten some requests for a reasonable modification to use E-bikes within the monument on existing trails. We're working through those requests based on national policy. And E-bikes, a little background they are considered off-highway vehicles and are not allowed on trails that have not been planned in terms of where you can ride E-bikes it will be existing routes that we currently allow off-highway vehicles and that is true for most any office within the BLM that hasn't done a trails management plan to manage for those uses. We are in the very early stages of planning for our new visitor center up in the Santa Rosa San Jacinto national Monument. We are looking at the team from our Denver office which is going to visit next week to get additional information in perfecting the proposal. Pretty exciting although that will be a few years out. The Whitewater Wild and Scenic River working on finalizing the legal description and then working in conjunction with the Forest Service on a potential decision should BLM approve the plan we will be doing news releases and Federal Register notices identifying the area at the wild and scenic river boundaries are and releasing the plan. We hope to have that out here later this summer. On the fire front, and Paul will probably will have more information about what we are calling the Palmas fire, but I wanted to talk a little bit on our emergency stabilization and burn area rehabilitation. There was a fire that was caused by, we were doing a prescribed burn that got out of control in the Dos Palmas ACEC. We declare it a wildfire, that fire is completely out. We are working on efforts for the emergency stabilization primarily. A lot of that work is going to be to repair some of the water infrastructure and put-up barriers to prevent damage to resources within those. We might have more information on the wildfire aspect. On our hiring front, we are pleased to welcome our new Park Ranger. It is an Inflation Reduction Act funded Park Ranger that is going to cover the whole of the field office but will be able to support the two national monuments. He is onboarded as of last pay period, and we are excited to have him get up to speed on some other recreational aspects of eastern Riverside. There is a lot of planning and issues out there I think that Park Ranger can help with, and we hired a new Realty specialist, so we have a full functioning team on our lands and realty group. I think that is and of report for Palm Springs. Any questions?

SHELLY: Any questions for Brandon? Jack?

>> JACK: Thanks, Brandon. I just wanted to give a shout out to you for all of the support you have given. Attending board meetings is such a great gesture and we appreciate it underscored that commitment to partner thank you so much. Also wanted to give a shout out to one of the rangers in your field office Brian Starkey has been totally standout and amazing for us out here it is something we wanted to recognize. When you see him definitely tell him a big thank you. That is all. Thank you.

>> I will definitely do that, Jack. Thank you.

SHELLY: Thanks, Jack. Any other questions for Brandon? We will go to Ridgecrest. Tom?

>> TOM BICKAUSKAS: Good afternoon DAC members. Some updates timely submitted our DAC report. We have 13 bands of heat integration and ridge crest -- Ridgecrest office. However, one band that graces in an area that is partly desert tortoise

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critical habitat, and they are already removing those sheep we were getting toward our trigger point for forage, we are moving those sheep. The other thing that happens about this time of year about halfway through the sheep grazing season is the lands are removed from use so that does lighten the load on the forage. Going into the last month of the season. Sheep will be taken off by the end of May. One of our big projects for grazing we are looking at the deep springs valid self-oasis grazing permit renewal EAP we have a delay in that because we have sensitive cultural resources we need to consult on and archaeologists has taken a detail to our state office. That is going to cause a bit of a slow down there. Another big project of ours Indio Wells Valley ground authority geotechnical boring and pipeline project you may remember whether a proposal before us for a 50-mile pipeline between California city and Ridgecrest that would provide water for the town of Ridgecrest, not to provide for growth but to help the town get out of overdraft as required by SGMA, the sustainable groundwater management act. We have offered the geotechnical boring right-of-way, and the authority has not accepted the right-of-way yet nor have they began boring. We do have a lot of stipulations and double checking to make sure they are able to meet those stipulations. The environmental assessment/EIR, ground water authority agency for the groundwater pipeline that has actually based on comments from the potential water provider, the Eastern current authority is going to cause us to add an extra alternative that would basically increase and allow for the replacement, eventual replacement of the existing feeder line between the tank farm and Rosemont and California city. That is going to cause at least a seven-month delay in the project, several months at least in the release of the environmental assessment we are scheduling of the public release of the environmental assessment, the draft to be in April, but it is delayed. Other things. We have got Gold Discovery Group exploratory drilling. This was DAC number Thompson had a question last month at the last meeting how is that going. With their drilling. So far, the company has drilled 51 of the 293 planned holes. We actually use an app that we have this ability, visibility to environmentally monitor so we know exactly where they are working and we have inspected the places they have drilled. We haven't made an on-the-fly adjustment that the proponent, the driller was open to. There are some routes, 2 holes for they need to go in and out multiple times. So rather than have them restore the whole route multiple times what we are having them do basically is restore breakout tracks away from a designated route an effort to keep travelers on those designated routes. That has going to allow for more needed material to be available for the restoration of those routes if we don't move that around multiple times. We think that is a small improvement. And on bio version from late last summer my team was engaged in attempting to bait traps 150 burros over the central field office we were unable to get 75 before conditions change and dispersed the animals. We are actually mobilizing again to the area to get the remaining 75 burros that are nuisance burros, they are in agricultural fields if we were successful there, we use humane bait trapping method for that. On the staffing front, since January, I have had departure of recreation planner at the corrals the program assistant in the facility manager. They've taken other jobs. A geologist has left, and my archaeologist is on detail. On the upside, we did make an offer to a biologist. We will continue to attempt to refill our organization here so that we can carry on business as usual. DAC member Thompson did have a

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late request I'm going to share my screen for just a moment. Made a request on grazing in Ridgecrest. The answer he is looking for, hopefully, will be here. We have had a number of relinquished allotments, but we currently have the most grazing in the CDD is the spreadsheet showing? Okay. We have 19 allotments that are active. Ephemeral allotments don't have animal unit month calculated because they are based on forage that grows every spring. But you can sell the acreage here for our cattle allotments you can see the animal unit months. Most of our cattle grazing occurs north of Ridgecrest with actually the majority of the allotments up in the deep springs fish Lake Valley area. That is east of big Pine. We have a total of 750,000 acres, give or take that are under grazing permits currently 1.8 million acres in Ridgecrest Field Office. Relinquished allotments we have six relinquished allotments. And you can see the type, with the exception of one they are all cattle. The animal unit months are listed here. 364,000 acres or so is how many acres were relinquished. We do have various reasons why these were relinquished. A lot of it was species, so the purpose various, but there is a mechanism for grazing permit holders to relinquish their allotments voluntarily. The most notable one here is the Rudnick comment that was voluntarily relinquished a couple of years ago. As mitigation for solar farms. I made a presentation on that durability agreement of the last fall's DAC. Considering this, that is all from Ridgecrest. If anyone has questions, I will try to answer them.

SHELLY: Dick.

>> DICK: After reading through I had one question here on your wild horse and burro you were talking about adoptions and direct sales what's the difference why would you go, if they weren't adopted you can have direct sales, with the difference?

>>TOM: Sure. Adoption, if you want to adopt you and be eligible for the adoption incentive program where we will give an adopter \$500 for an animal upfront and after a year another \$500 helps to free the cost of ownership and if an animal is offered three times for adoption and is not adopted, he then becomes eligible under sale authority and sale authority animals we issue title right away. One of the reasons animals don't get adopted is because they are usually older. Older animals are less trainable. They're more difficult in general. That is the main reason why animals will go to sale and if we don't sell them, then they go into our system for long-term holding which is the number basically leased properties we have with these horses will live out their years in comfort being fed every day. We never have any problem adopting out all of our burros. People love them. It is the horses that are more difficult.

>> Thank you. That makes perfect sense.

SHELLY: Jack?

>> JACK: Did I cut myself off? I wanted to say thanks a lot for accommodating that last-minute request and appreciate your presentation. Thank you.

SHELLY: Any other questions for Tom? Okay. We'll go to fire. Paul?

>> PAUL GIBBS: I don't have too many updates since the DAC report. Fire activity has picked up a little bit as we get a little warmer and dryer the grass is starting to turn. We've only had two fires on our land that we protect both very small, a tenth of an acre, and the palmist fire is out, we have had a dozen or so more fire we help assist our partners putting that is where we see the biggest uptake is on some of those lands adjacent to our lands. Concerning the Palmas fire, just so folks know the process

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whenever we have a date burnt in BLM that is reviewed so and national team is put together, came in and did a review they go out to the burn site, the interview folks look at the planning documents kind of go through everything from NEPA burn plan and implementation all the way up to the time the fire is declared escape. Right now, the national office, that group of folks who came out and reviewed the information they collected and are preparing a report. I thought it might be available by the time we had this DAC meeting but it is not so we are waiting to see what adjustments we will need to make. Other than that, not too many changes. We are continuing to bring folks on as we look to staff up the engine. We have a change in the helicopter this year. Typically, we have a medium helicopter but the company we were using has decided not to be in the medium helicopter business anymore for suppressing fires we are going to have a light which is a small helicopter coming in being staffed at Apple Valley and are supposed to arrive June third. That is the updates I have unless there are questions.

SHELLY: Thanks, Paul. Any questions for Paul? Not seeing any I'm going to put Nancy on the spot give her an opportunity to introduce herself she is my new deputy she came on after our last DAC meeting. Nancy, if you want to introduce yourself.

>> NANCY: My name is Nancy Schmidt. I am about 5 to 6 weeks here in the California desert district. My background is military I was either active-duty or civil service in the United States Navy about 37 years. My background how it ties to land management is basically program management, HR people, budget I'm excited about being part of the group and feel like I'm eating an elephant one bite at a time but shall enter team have been great and I really like listening to these presentations this it's a learning lesson for me. I appreciate everything you do and for giving me the opportunity to introduce myself.

SHELLY: Thanks. I did want to share my screen quickly. I know we continue to get public comments particularly in national monuments. I know employees as well as DAC members continue to get questions some going to share my screen, I want to make sure folks are aware of this resource. This is a rockhounding on public lands page headquarters has we can make sure the link is in the meeting minutes one of the things I wanted to point out is this frequently asked question section if you click on here this is relatively new, and it goes through a lot of frequently asked questions. There is the full PDF, but it actually answers the same questions we get or comments and speaks to a lot of comments we get both at these DAC beads so the public meetings and interactions with the public. Want to make sure folks were aware these resources out there, so if you get questions about rock pounding on public land this is a resource. Any questions, comments? On anything presented. I will turn it over to you. I think we are about due for another break maybe.

HANS: It looks like we have a break until 2 o'clock and we will reconvene and have another presentation.

[Five-minute break]

HANS: Welcome back, everybody. Time for us to get under way. Next agenda item we will hear from Brandon Anderson regarding California desert national conservation lands.

>> BRANDON ANDERON: So, I am the acting field manager for Palm Springs South Coast. When I have to present today what our national conservation land water

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California desert national conservation land and how the designation was created and the management and lead into some of the conversations about what projects BLM has internally and then externally in the disturbance, I will get into question how disturbance caps are calculated and how we are tracking those. What are national conservation lands? In 2009, BLM or Congress passed the Public Law 11111, it formally established the national conservation land system, so it is comprised of a number of different designations, one being the national historic and scenic trails, this is a picture of the PCT national conservation area this is of the King range. Web wilderness, wilderness study area, wild and scenic Rivers, national monuments this is the Mohave Trail here in the California desert national conservation lands. Nationwide, under that 2009 act, it created about 37 million acres of NCL land. So after the act was passed in 2010 BLM created a national strategy for how we are going to be managing the land. So, kind of and a high level, BLM through this act, we are to conserve, protect, restore nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural ecological and scenic values that benefit today's and future generations. That 15 your strategy is going to be coming up for review now they have had at the headquarters level have had meetings to get the general public up to speed what they are proposing, but the plan is in 2025 to have a new national strategy for the next 15 years. Put a plug in for that if you are not aware they are working on the planning aspect. I wanted to focus on the California desert national conservation lands, and how did those come about to be? After the passage of the 2009, 11111 act, BLM decided to use the land use claiming process through the DRECP to amend the California desert national conservation plan to identify nationally significant land within that planning area that have the outstanding cultural ecological and scenic values. Through that almost 8, 9 your process we started back in 2008, I believe, with DRECP, we used the analysis to identify approximately ten areas that meet these criteria, and it is approximately about 3.9 million acres within the larger California desert conservation area. DRECP, if you want to look at more information on the area, what are the values that we identified for those ten areas you can look at appendix A of the land use plan but also within a couple of other additional criteria for classifying and designating the California desert national conservation land. Some of those criteria would be the development pressure, the level of landscape intactness. Is there a lot of lands that are public lands surrounding in the area? Is there scenic quality? BLM jurisdictions and then the landscape linkages. A lot of this is all summarized the land-use plan itself. For the DRECP how, we went about categorizing these ten different areas. And the mandate was to manage these lands and protect the values which make them nationally significant. Going into management prescriptions, there is two main avenues the DRECP has placed limitations in how we are going to manage the areas. What are the conservation management action. In the desert conservation plan, there are a slew of different we call him conservation management action but essentially they are best management practices and they look at limiting the types of uses in different areas so in the California desert national conservation land, the CMA essentially prohibit renewable energy from these areas they identify it as a right of way avoidance. So, if you have an in holding within a designation, and is a right of way avoided you can only access your property through these particular lands, that would be something we could consider when we analyze an application for that

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particular use. And potentially permit that. And in terms of transmission lines, they have to be located within existing core doors, but virtually all other actions including mineral and mining actions are necessarily prohibited, they will be essentially on a case-by-case basis, including any special recreation permits we would issue or any other commercial activities. I guess the second way BLM, or the DRECP manages this area to help ensure we are living up to the expectations of the 11111 law and DRECP is the disturbance caps. This is mainly or I want to spend a lot of the time on. Within the DRECP it has a .1 percent to one percent This gives, Jack's comments or questions how are we managing disturbances within the area and so, it really has to do with the overlap between the areas of critical environmental concern which is another land use designation. So, if there is no ACEC or other designation that has a more restrictive disturbance cap the one percent applies and it applies to the area in which the disturbances are being considered. So, if there as an ACEC that overlaps on that CDNCL we would be looking at the disturbances within that AC/EC and not using the larger CD capital and CL to define what is the and is it an allowable use. In terms of what is and is not allowable. If you are above a cap to move the project forward you would have to identify some kind of restoration mitigation that would offset the amount of disturbing you are occurring within that AC/easy to say you are at or under the cap. If a unit is under the cap there is no litigation requirements list the disturbance puts it over. This is a brief high-level summary of where the national conservation lands within the desert are at in terms of percentage develop. This does not consider any of the a C/EC or subunit this is just as a whole for the California desert national conservation lands. There are some that are currently over as a whole in some are under. I will get into a little bit about maybe at the end of the presentation how BLM does the tracking. Primarily a lot of these disturbances are existing or predating the development of the DR ECP so there is loads, roads, transmission lines and some mining that make up a lot of the development with in these areas. And in terms how BLM tracks the disturbances, we use a system that is publicly available so anybody can register an account for research, but it is called service disturbance analysis and reclamation tracking tool. I know it's pretty complicated, ambiguous acronyms but that is what it stands for it is a system used nationwide and we have specifically adapted it for the DRECP to track the disturbances not only in the California desert NCL's but ACECs across the California national desert. Going into where some of those acreages came from, there was a big effort when the plan came out in 2016, we needed to see where these various units were at in terms of disturbances. In the DR ECP it identified the threshold of how we are going to calculate the existing disturbances to get it into that system. This is a screenshot within the Colorado desert national conservation lands, you can see here, kind of a transmission line in a road this is at a 1 to 10,000 ratio within our GIS system, anything that we could potentially see, and map would make it into the calculations for the existing disturbances. We have a new system that does have some geographical information you can pull up and at the end of the presentation I will show those two sites but the minerals MRLS as it is called. Tracks geospatially existing disturbances or applications that we have. This is just a screenshot of the existing rights-of-ways within the California desert so we have approximately 320 existing right-of-ways that are being proposed within the desert that has made it into the

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system I think the main point here is you can see I think the vast majority of these proposed projects are outside of the CDNCL any disturbance caps or other CMAs would be applicable to those authorizations. The next couple of slides, our current restoration projects. To help restore and/or treat existing issues within the area. This is a map of the sense of action ACEC this BLM is treating tamarisk trees which is an invasive plant draws a lot of water from the local groundwater and can be out a lot of the local native visitation so the El Centro field office has been working hard securing funds through the inflation reduction act to be able to target the eradication and removal of a lot of the cameras trees in these areas. And in addition to that we have the jawbone restoration project that BLM and existing Fremont County is working in collaboration with BLM to enter into a durability agreement and provide BLM funds to restore public lands within the Jawbone/Butterbredt ACEC that's another example of BLM some of the renewable energy ties that have been able to benefit from the California desert national conservation land and in Needles field office they have the York fire they are working on the emergency stabilization and burn rehabilitation so there is an area about 1/2 mile or so within the CNCDL working on eradicating weeds monitoring the site and keeping track of control out of the area so native vegetation can return. I can take questions now right can show some of the systems I was mentioning during the presentation.

HANS: Looks like you have a question.

>> JACK: Thanks, Brandon. Just as I am trying to get a broad view of this, 11111 laid out the mandate for there to be some vehicle to identify the lands being administered for conservation to be identified as California desert national conservation lands, and the DRECP is kind of the land use planning amendment that allowed those to be identified, correct?

>> BRANDON: So, DRECP was the mechanism in which we are able to identify the lands that met the criteria within the law.

>> JACK: The conservation management actions try to give a best practice for managing mineral projects and setting disturbance caps those are all plan level decisions the BLM kind of is entrusted with that are outside of Congressional mandates, correct?

>> BRANDON: The CMA's that provided planning direction that was outside of what the 11111 act provides that is more within our land use plan.

>> JACK: Just so I am clear, if those caps, the best practices has been envisioned in a way you describe a future administration could look and demand that plan and modify that system if they so choose, correct?

>> BRANDON: In terms of the modification, the planning level decisions like CMA's those can all be changed. I don't think we have tested whether the CDNCL's can be modified. I don't think we have any case law but there is some discussion on permanency of the CDNCL's.

>> JACK: Thanks, Brandon. Really appreciate it.

HANS: One more question.

>> JACK: It's a complex plan if, my apologies if you made this clear and just got by me. Would you have kind of a percentage figure of how many mineral projects were from valid and existing claims before the DRECP and before the Omnibus act and how many came after?

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>> BRANDON: I think we can do that analysis. I don't have it in the presentation, a lot of what I pulled was what you can pull from that tracking system, and it just identifies what the projects are in their disturbances it doesn't provide a date. I think I pulled that report maybe last Monday. Those numbers were as good as last Monday.

>> JACK: Okay. Maybe the last question just so I have it correct, I know there is no mineral withdrawal, but you said it does limit renewable energy development. Is it limited or totally prohibit? The question along with that how does that also relate to geothermal versus solar?

>> BRANDON: The CDNCL they say it's a prohibition on all renewable energy, a renewable energy facility cannot be located within a CDNCL. What it can be is transmission lines as long as it is in the corridor I believe the same is true for geothermal but I can double check to make sure there is no special nuances with geothermal but I believe those prohibitions are true within the CDNCL for geothermal.

>> JACK: To your knowledge has there ever been an instance where an ACEC got adjusted to allow a project?

>> BRANDON: Not off the top of my head. I don't know if we have done a project specific amendment to allow a project within ACEC.

>> Thanks a lot, Brandon.

BRANDON: I can show you quickly if I provide links for the website where you can do the tracking yourself within the two systems. Really quickly --

HANS: Why don't you go ahead, we are ahead on time.

>> BRANDON: This is the SDARTT system we have, it allows you in live time look at what disturbances and if there is an area you are interested in you can click on an area and identify what is the existing features. And then, you can also do if you want to do an analysis of what is the disturbances within a particular NCL unit you can click on each one of these and it will pull up the data for each one of those units. That is how I calculated the current disturbances within each one of the CDNCL and in terms of the MLRS [Mineral and Land Records System] this is how you can track what projects are currently authorized or pending and you can download the raw data or a really cool feature you can launch the full map. You can go into a particular area, and this is really only as good as the information that makes it into the system the caveat, this is a new system that we are working on perfecting. Some of the information may not be completely accurate as we get it up to speed. This is a good place to go if you are interested in what types of projects are being proposed within an area whether it be a right-of-way, mining, et cetera you can go in here and check out where those projects are located and it will give you additional information. And I can provide the links to both systems. Unless there's other pending questions, I think that is all I have prepared.

>>HANS: Thank you very much Brandon quite the scale for the entire desert district.

Moving on, we are still a little bit ahead of schedule. But we would like to go around to all DAC members and see what anyone would like to have included as a topic for our next meeting which I believe is our needles meeting, close to the needles field office.

>>SHELLY: August 9th and 10th. Go ahead, Dick.

>>DICK: I don't know if we can do this or not, I would really like to get somebody from California Independent System Operator to come and explain, I've got two things, how they handle curtailment and how that affects the solar and wind energy. This seems like

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wind and solar is a big Part of everything we do here in the desert lately. I like to find out if they can explain large battery products how they are going to be managed. And we get more and more of these battery projects, would like to know how long they will last. We use a number I've mentioned before that I don't quite understand when you say is going to cover 150,000 homes. Is that with the air conditioner on, what does that really mean? Maybe they can tell us if you got a 500-megawatt battery how long is that going to last and how long does it take you to refill it. And how are they going to use those batteries, can the use it for load management or whatever. The curtailment issues right now they are curtailing wind and solar plants. That is because from my understanding is because of either transmission bottlenecks or because load system maintenance. Maintaining equipment so they can carry a load in the area or move that power out of there. There is quite a few interesting things about curtailment that is from the idea how do people get their money. Then put your money up to build a solar plant in the government tells you to shut it off, do they have to reimburse you for that? What happens there? Anyway, it would be pretty interesting. They are the company that manages all electricity in California.

HANS: Thank you, Richard. Anyone else have a suggestion for our next meeting?

>> BOB ROBINSON: Can you hear me?

HANS: Go ahead.

>> BOB ROBINSON: One thing I didn't hear I guess there is rules change I understand. It is coming down from the Department of Interior that environmental and cultural resources are now being considered on equal basis with all the other considerations. Want that exactly means and how is that going to be implemented.

>>HANS: Thank you, Bob. I would like to hear about that as well. Continuing along. Any DAC numbers with a suggestion for Needles agenda items?

>>TERRY MCGLYNN: I also would be interested in hearing more about the implementation of public lands rule how different folks will be interpreting this I just received the announcement but how is that being translated into policy. I'd like to learn. Thanks.

>> DICK: When is that date?

>>HANS: August 8th and ninth. That is what Shelly said.

SHELLY: Ninth and 10th.

>>NATHAN FRANCIS: For me I couple of things. Do we want to have more discussion in regards to the Chuckwalla National Nonument, do we want that for that meeting? Another brought up a couple of times I would think would be interesting for the Group to have a greater understanding of the tribal lands area that are in the area that have been federally acknowledged and have more training and awareness in the realm as well.

HANS: Thank you, Nathan.

BOB: Can you hear me.

HANS: I can hear you, Bob.

BOB: By then, I think there should be a draft for the Mojave Trails National Monument and a good discussion of that, maybe.

HANS: I agree. I hope we have a new monument manager; I know the amount of our reach and participation with the previous monument manager was significant. I have heard from a lot of groups that are concerned now that Noel has moved on all of that

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work they have put in and all that discussion and learning might be for not. I look forward to meeting the new monument manager and hopefully we can have some detailed discussions, and everyone can get up to speed.

BOB: I agree.

HANS: Hearing nothing else, I'm going to turn it back over to Shelly for the wrap up.

SHELLY: One thing I wanted to clarify normally we try to have these in person this one ended up being virtual because we were originally told in December have the DAC positions were vacated, their terms were up. We put in nomination, and we were originally told our new nominations wouldn't be identified or approved before the April DAC meeting. So, rather than have half the DAC travel we made the decision to make this virtual and subsequently got the rest of the DAC positions approved. But it was too short of a time frame to arrange for travel. Just for folks' explanation and understanding that is why this one was virtual. We did hear you guys loud and clear that you prefer in person meetings as well as how valuable the field trips are, so the next one in August will be in person with a field trip on Friday. Will get back to kind of our normal DAC meeting routine in August. I didn't have anything else. Other any go-backs or anything else anybody wants to chime in on before we adjourn.

DICK: I would like to see a reschedule El Centro for later in the year.

SHELLY: Okay.

JACK: There was some question that came in just wanted to make sure I address. This is for Brandon. Part of this sounds like a few more just to put in the queue if he's going to generate some responses later. The question is if there is a prohibited use inside a national conservation land can it still be improved so under the disturbance act and can the boundaries be amended by the agency and have they ever been? That is one more thing. One other thing I just wanted to say I learned was the word from the California natural resources agency due to the mineral withdraw proposed with Chuckwalla National Monument they are counting 417,000 acres that would be added to California's 30 by 30 goals. Thank you, Brandon, for your hard work.

BRANDON: I will follow-up with Shelly.

SHELLY: Bob did you have something else?

BOB: No, I'm good.

SHELLY: Anybody else? Thank you all for your time and it was a very productive meeting with that we will adjourn the meeting

[Meeting adjourned]