

**BLM California Desert Advisory
Council MEETING MINUTES
August 10, 2024 –Meeting**

For complete meeting discussion, please see meeting transcript

Desert Advisory Council Members: Randy Banis, Nathan Francis, Hans Haas (Chairperson), Jennifer Henning, Richard Holliday, Robert Robinson, Ann Kulikoff, Dawn Rowe, Steve Reyes, Terry McGlynn, Desirea Haggard, Ed Stovin

BLM Attendees: Shelly Lynch, Nancy Schmidt (virtual), Julie Donnell, Paul Gibbs, Tom Bickauskas, Brandon Anderson, Ron Nuckles, Matt Lohr, Michelle Van Der Linden, Julia Mogen, Matthew Gibbs (Zoom tech)

U.S. Forest Service Attendees: Sarah Belcher, Martha Cruz, Amanda Loye, Joseph Raffaele, Samuel Orozco (virtual), Mary Ann Davila Rodriguez (virtual), Joanna Wilson (virtual), Courtney Miller (virtual), Todd Harbin (virtual), Gary Seastrand (virtual)

Guests: Ashley Lee, Ken Freeman, Heather Easterly (captioner), Kayla Browne (virtual), Marco Antonio Ulloa (virtual), Anitra Kass (virtual), Steven Gjerstad (virtual), Andy Silva (virtual), Ilene Anderson (virtual)

Opening and Introductions:

District Manager Shelly Lynch opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and went over housekeeping items. Michelle Van Der Linden, CDD Public Affairs Specialist, went over Zoom, public comment period protocols for the meeting. Shelly introduced BLM employees and U.S. Forest Service employees and turned it over to Hans Haas, DAC Chairperson, to introduce Desert Advisory Council members. Members were invited to provide a brief update. Shelly spoke about new leadership in the California State Office with Joe Stout introduced as the new state director starting August 12.

Public comment period at 9:30 a.m. PT

(Public comments given orally during the meeting have been condensed and summarized. For full public comments, see meeting transcript)

- Hans Haas, DAC Chairperson opened the public comment period. Michelle Van Der Linden went over public comment period protocols. There were two public comments during the virtual meeting.
- Ken Freeman, former President of the Southern Nevada Off-road Enthusiasts, provided comments on the need for competitive permits in the Razor Off-road Vehicle Area and request for the Needles Field Office to have an off-road vehicle recreation area.
- Steven Gjerstad provided comments about BLM off-highway vehicle routes claimed to be on private property in the Western Mojave Route Network and the BLM's potential liability for placing routes on private property.

DAC member Randy Banis spoke about the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan and provided support statements from media, organizations, etc.

First presentation: U.S. Forest Service – Understanding the Recreation Enhancement Act

- U.S. Forest Service employee Amanda Loye presented on the Recreation Enhancement Act including the three fee types: standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and special recreation permits; how fees are used; fee restrictions; public involvement requirements; items not considered by a resource advisory council and DAC role.

Questions: Presentation stated REA gets reauthorized every year. Was there a reauthorization on the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act? Will the act sunset in Oct. 2024? USFS answered it gets reauthorized every year to expire at the beginning of the fiscal year (Oct. 1) of every year and displayed the language showing this.

Presentation: Cleveland National Forest Fee Proposal

- U.S. Forest Service employees Joseph Raffaele and Martha Cruz presented the Cleveland National Forest Fee proposal in the Pacific Southwest Region including visitor use, and how developed recreation fees are set with public involvement and market analysis. U.S. Forest Service employees Samuel Orozco and Martha Cruz presented the six campsites in the proposal (Corral Canyon, Bobcat, Cibbits Flat, Observatory, Boulder Oaks, Dripping Springs) including the current fee and amenities, and proposed fees. Deferred maintenance projects and planned accomplishments along with the extensive public involvement actions and results were discussed and presented.

Questions: When were the current fees approved? 2008. Some fees were raised, and some were lowered.

Hans opens the public comment period on the Cleveland National Forest Fee Proposal and there were no public comments. DAC discussed the proposal and asked about the low number of public comments (only four) with no big public opposition, and the DAC uses public input to help make a recommendation. U.S. Forest Service stated they usually do not get a lot of public comments on straightforward fee increases.

The DAC voted on the proposal by category and the proposal passed unanimously.

Lunch Break

Training: Federal Advisory Committees and Ethics Responsibilities of Representative Members

Attorney Advisor Liz Barry presented ethics for members, disclosure requirements, direct and indirect financial interests, and recusals from votes.

Training #2: Introduction to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) for BLM

Attorney Advisor Jennifer Heindl presented an overview of FACA, including its background,

consequences of a FACA violation, requirements, and subcommittees.

District, Field Office, and Fire Overviews

- Shelly Lynch, District Manager, talked about the open call for nominations for the DAC, public listening sessions that occurred on the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument, upcoming public lands day events in September, hired field managers positions and vacancies in the District.
- Field managers from each of the five field offices and reported on issues and projects, and fire and fuels provided an update. Full reports and discussion included in meeting transcript.

Afternoon Break

Discussion on Future Agenda Topics

- The DAC suggested several topics for the December DAC meeting including the Mojave Trails National Monument management plan, implementation of the Public Lands Rule, and members expressed interest in a field trip to the Amargosa River.

Wrap up and closing

- The next DAC meeting will be on December 7 in the Barstow Field Office.

Meeting adjourned



Hans Haas, Chair
Desert Advisory Council