

**BLM California Desert Advisory
Council MEETING MINUTES
December 7, 2024 –Meeting**

For complete meeting discussion, please see meeting transcript

Desert Advisory Council Members: Randy Banis, Nathan Francis, Jennifer Henning, Richard Holliday, Josh Martelli, Terry McGlynn, Steve Reyes, Robert Robinson, Dawn Rowe, Creed Stone, Ed Stovin, Ann Kulikoff (virtual), Jack Thompson (virtual), Hans Haas (virtual)

BLM Attendees: Shelly Lynch, Brandon Anderson, Sabrina Bice, Mike Carpenter, Philip DeSenze, Paul Gibbs, Matt Lohr, Kate Miyamoto, Julia Mogen, Alex Schlumpberger, Marc Stamer, Michelle Van Der Linden, Matthew Gibbs (Zoom tech)

U.S. Forest Service Attendees: Justin Seastrand, Jeremey Sugden, Travis Mason, Amanda Loye (virtual), Joanna Wilson (virtual), Todd Harbin (virtual)

Guests: Susan Sorwells, Jodi Dudwill, Annabelle Thompson (captioner, virtual), Anitra Kass (virtual), Steven Gjerstad (virtual), Susan Herring (virtual), Greg Herring (virtual), Jim Bramham (virtual), Joseph Miller (virtual), Maricela Rosales (virtual)

Opening and Introductions:

- District Manager Shelly Lynch opened the meeting, welcomed new DAC member Creed Stone and BLM California State Director Joe Stout, and went over housekeeping items. Kate Miyamoto, 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.
 - DAC member Randy Banis thanked Marc Stamer and the Barstow Field Office for the field tour on behalf of Friends of Jawbone.
 - DAC member Josh Martinelli spoke of his experience as an off-road race promoter.
 - DAC member Creed Stone spoke to his experience as a sixth-generation cow producer and federal grazing permittee.
 - DAC member Ed Stovin shared about his interests on the DAC, protecting off-highway vehicle users as the president of off-highway vehicles coalitions.

Shelly welcomed BLM California State Director Joe Stout to give his remarks. Joe Stout thanked DAC members for their engagement and service, recognized former BLM California State Director Ed Hastey, provided an update on BLM California's statewide budget, and upcoming priorities for the new administration. Spoke about the Foundation for America's Public Lands and enhancing recreation opportunities. Joe opened the floor for questions from DAC members.

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. Kate Miyamoto went over public comment period protocols. There were two virtual public comments.
- Steven Gjerstad provided comments about BLM off-highway vehicle routes claimed to be on his private property in the Western Mojave Route Network and the BLM's potential liability for placing routes on private property.
- Anitra Kass, Southern California Representative for the Pacific Crest Trail, provided updates on the trail and work with the Sand to Snow National Monument on Tropical Storm Hilary clean-up.

Hans welcomed DAC members to provide additional updates or reports and any additional questions for Joe Stout. Randy Banis asks clarifying questions on the continuing resolution and brings up Western Mojave Route Network Project court decision and Dick Holliday asks clarifying questions on budget.

First presentation: Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area draft business plan

- Matthew Lohr, El Centro Field Manager, Alex Schlumpberger, Acting Supervisory Outdoor Recreation Planner, and Mike Carpenter, Acting El Centro Law Enforcement Chief, presented the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area draft business plan. Presented a plan overview; the public involvement process; how recreation fees will be used; the number of visitors during holiday weekends; current revenue of 56% special recreation permits fees, 21% appropriated funds, 18% grants and showed revenue from FY2020-2024. Discussed the proposed fee increases schedule of potentially every three years over the 10-year plan. Discussed the public outreach tactics and public comment results.
- Hans opened public comment on the plan and received one comment.
 - Jim Bramham, with American Sand Association, mentioned the previous technical groups that worked on business plan through a review team. Expressed support and the importance for vendors selling ISDRA passes.
- Hans opened DAC discussion and vote on the draft business plan.
 - Dick Holliday mentioned concerns with Rec.gov, supported vendors making money. Did not want the BLM to change fees as they please.
 - Terry McGlynn talked about safety and low fatality rate thanks to ISDRA safety and EMS team.
 - Josh Martelli spoke about OHV safety updates, for example, how Polaris promotes safety on public lands.
 - Randy Banis spoke about the impact of million dollar increases for the dunes, asked clarifying Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) question.

The DAC voted by category and unanimously approved the ISDRA business plan.

Morning break

Second presentation: U.S. Forest Service Angeles National Forest Fee Proposal

- U.S. Forest Service employees Justin Seastrand and Jeremey Sugden presented the Angeles National Forest fee proposal including an overview, map of the campsites, planned accomplishments with more maintenance, infrastructure and staff, public involvement and comments received.
- Hans opened DAC discussion on the fee proposal. Questions were asked about the water availability. Compliments were expressed on the way USFS showed how the funds will be used for improvements and how well-written the proposal was. Suggestions made to include a map of the campsites in future proposals.

The DAC voted by category and unanimously approved the Angeles National Forest fee proposal.

Lunch Break

District, Field Office, and Fire Overviews

- Shelly Lynch, District Manager, provided District updates on personnel and hiring. Shared it was Jack Thompson's last DAC meeting with his term expiring in February. Thanked Hans and Jennifer for serving as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson.
- Field managers from each of the five field offices reported on issues and projects, and fire and fuels provided an update. Full reports are detailed in the meeting transcript.
 - Marc Stamer, Barstow Field Office – Highlighted importance of partnerships, provided a vacancy update, plans for Razor OHV area, events including National Public Lands Day clean-up at Giant Rock, special recreation permits for Dumont Dunes OHV Area in January and February, King of Hammers race in January and February. Provided updates on projects including the BNSF land sale, Barstow international gateway project, Amargosa Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan, Shoshone land transfer, and exploratory drilling.
 - Matt Lohr, El Centro Field Office – Provided personnel updates, received grant funding, ISDRA numbers up 9% this Thanksgiving, Lark Canyon campground has updated water services, increased visitation in McCain Valley Resource Conservation Area.
 - Sabrina Bice, Needles Field Office – Shared updates on Mojave Trails National Monument planning and are awaiting a draft environmental assessment from contractor, outreach opportunity for 100-year celebration of Route 66 and provided personnel updates and vacancies.
 - Brandon Anderson, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office – Provided updates on hiring and personnel, Santa Rosa and San Jacinto National Monument Visitor Center is open three days a week, several events planned to include National Public Lands Day, Snow Creek fencing project to keep off-highway vehicles out of an area of critical environmental concern, clean-up at Mecca Hills, upcoming 25th anniversary for SRSJ National monument. Easley Solar project was

recently approved, update on Dos Palmas Preserve to repair infrastructure.

- Phil DeSenze, Ridgecrest Field Office – Provided his background as the new field manager in Ridgecrest. Mining and energy development, wild horse and burros and off-highway vehicles are Ridgecrest Field Office's big three issues. About 1,000 animals at the Ridgecrest Regional Wild Horse and Burro Corrals and at full capacity, staffing challenges, provided personnel updates, office hours changed to 8 a.m.- 4 p.m. Mon-Fri.
- Paul Gibbs, Fire and Fuels Program – Contract in the works from FY23 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds, 25% vacant positions, job fair in Apple Valley for entry level seasonals, 6-8 fires since DAC report updates.

Discussion on Future Agenda Topics, Elect New Chairpersons, Wrap-up and Closing

- The DAC suggested an update on the Mojave Trails National Monument planning as a topic at a future meeting.
- DAC members decided on 2025 meeting dates and locations: March 29 in the Ridgecrest Field Office, July 12 in the El Centro Field Office, and November 15 in the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office. Field tours would occur the Friday before the meeting.
- Discussed and voted on new DAC Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. Randy Banis was elected and confirmed as Chairperson and Steven Reyes was elected and confirmed as Vice Chairperson.

Meeting adjourned



Hans Haas, Chair
Desert Advisory Council