

PUBLIC LANDS ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

Meeting Location: BLM Ridgecrest Office

Minutes of: July 27, 2023

Called to order at: 6:03pm by Mark Dunn

PLRT MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Mark Dunn, Sam Merk, Will Liebscher, Raymond Kelso, Liam Connolly, Bev Hill, Libby Vincent, Mary Grimsley, Charley Hattendorf, Jaime Lopez Woltery, Jerome Johnson, Mark Mason, and from BLM James Watson.

Guests: Diane Foucher, Bradford Young, Tom Budlong, Susan Mason, Heather Dunn, and guest speaker Robert Robinson.

Pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Mark Dunn.

BLM UPDATES: by James Watson, Acting Associate Ridgecrest Field Manager **ROUNDUPS:**

- + An Emergency Gather was conducted in the Chocolate Mountains in the Needles Field Office to gather nuisance burros who eat farmer's crops and there have been a couple of accidents. They captured 70 burros.
- + The Horse & Burro facility now has 177 horses & 231 burros. They adopted out 1 horse & 3 burros in July.
- + Sam Merk asked about the condition of the wrangler, Branson (the facility manager), who was hurt recently; it was reported he had no broken bones, but did have severe hematoma. He was bit when one of the Jacks bit him while he was castrated.
- + Sam asked about the status of finding out who killed the 5 burros in Wild Rose Canyon. This investigation is being handled by DVNP, with the assistance of a special agent out of this office as well as out of Barstow, since it was on park lands. No suspects yet, but they did collect some bullets out of the carcasses and will send them in for finger prints, which is how they found the last culprits.

MINING:

- + K2-Gold Conglomerate Mesa is still moving along slowly. They are having to answer more questions.

POWER LINE PROJECT:

- + The project from Bishop down 395 to Hwy 5 on to the 15 to Ivanpah

PIPELINE:

- + A right away for the IWVGA power and water pipeline from California City to Ridgecrest has been proposed.

WEMO:

- + On the Court docket.

DUMPING:

- + No new sites have been reported. BLM has installed animal cameras to try and catch the dumpers.

DWP WATER RELEASE:

- + No water is being released right now. DWP is not communicating with us.

NEW BLM RULES:

- + BLM has been working on comprehending the New BLM Rules received over 150,000 comments that they have to go thru, so the end date has been extended.

DAC MEETING:

- + The Ridgecrest Field Office will host the Desert Advisory Council meeting in August 26. The field trip for the DAC will be on Friday, the 25th, and will go to the Geothermal processing plant on China Lake (limit to 15 cars & 40 people. Members of the public need to RSVP and must have a government issued ID. This part of the tour will not be open to foreign nationals. The next destination after the Geothermal will be to the Olancho Fire Station, then a lunch break and then on to Fossil Falls. A press release should be out on Friday and no later than Monday. We do not know at this time where the meeting on Saturday will be held yet. Block of rooms has been reserved at the Springhill Inn, but don't know if that is where the meeting will be.

OSBORNE CABIN:

- + Has been identified in previous years as potential cultural historical site and is eligible for that distinction, however, unauthorized construction has taken place. They are trying to identify funding with our resource team to determine what, if anything, can be done to return it to its original state or whatever they want to do with it. They asked for funding last year for an in house project, but it was not approved. We have asked for

funding again this year so they can start the analysis of what needs to be done. We would like to see it restored to its historical place when it was first surveyed about 18 to 20 years ago. They want to see it restored, but first need to figure out what need to be done. There is some complexity to it, plus it is inside wilderness by 30', which adds some difficulty. The road is "cherry-stemmed" but not the cabin. If the cabin is to be restored to its proper condition, we need to do it properly in every way. It's not going to be an easy project. We have asked for funding to start that analysis and hopefully it will get funded this year.

SAND CANYON:

+ There is significant public interest to restore the Sand Canyon swimming hole, however, we have tried to contact the folks _____. We can't take a dredge out there without their permission. There has been a significant amount of sediment was washed in by the rains and the dam needs to be rebuilt, as it was washed away. There are lots of environmental concerns about aquatic life and where to put all the dirt/sediment when it is removed.

+ Also, there was a death over 4th of July weekend. A young lady, 20 years old, fell out of the pickup truck driven by her brother. She was hanging out the window. Alcohol was involved. The brother was driving her to the hospital and when he got to the Inyokern Chevron station he saw a CHP and stopped. Inyo County & CHP are doing the investigation, but it seems to be just a tragic accident.

DESERT ACTIVITY:

+ Charley Hattendorf asked if there was much off-road activity over July 4th weekend. Jim's reply was no, not really

A MOTION was made by Sam Merk & 2nd by Libby Vincent to approve the May 25, 2023 minutes. They were approved as sent. Mary did make some minor punctuation and wording changes.

+ Sam also thanked Francis Kuttor, Mary, and Ruth Hidalgo for their taking and typing up the minutes. They have done a tremendous job.

GUEST SPEAKER: Bob Robinson, a DAC member representing the Historic Tribal Preservation Office. He is the Tribal Chairman and belongs to the Foundation for the Kern Valley Indian Community, a 501(c)(3). Represents the Tubatulabal and Kiwaisu Tribes.

+ Bob was invited to give us an update on the Olancho By-pass project. He has been in consultation with Caltrans regarding the disturbance of human/Native remains that halted the project. One grave was disturbed and then a second. The Inyo County Coroner has had a difficult time with Caltrans not reporting when they should. Also, the tribes have to keep people on site 24/7 to keep grave robbers away and Caltrans will reimburse them for that time. The graves that were disturbed are part of an ancient and historic cemetery west of Cartago and will be reburied in the cemetery, but further away from the project. Also, the By-pass will also be moved further west and away from the cemetery. The LA Times had an article about the temporary halt of the project.

+ Haiwee Dam – Bob has been up there twice this week where possible grave and fire pits have been found. The one was not a grave. Next week Bob will be there as they have found another possible grave(s).

+ Sam mentioned that she has a document that shows Ridgecrest City Council, Kern County, as well as Inyo and Mono Counties, signed onto this 395 widening project, as Mammoth Lakes wants 395 widen to get people to Mammoth quicker. Sam suggested that we write our City Council to possibly change their position on this. Mammoth is the money behind this project.

+ Bob then told us that the tribes had GPS'd an alternate route that was acceptable to them, but it was ignored. It was on BLM land and it seems that Caltrans puts roads on BLM lands quite regularly without the proper right-of ways. Charlie substantiated what Bob said by saying there was an article in the Inyo Register with the Tribe approved route that was ignored.

+ Bob discussed the Middle Mile projects, but I was not clear enough on this to write too much. I believe it has to do with the installation of broadband communications such as Digital 395. Bob mentioned that the offices of the rafting companies have moved to Bakersfield because of the need for quick communication with customers that is non-existent in the Kern River Valley.

+ Will asked Bob how do the Native people mark their burial sites? They don't. They have a burning ceremony and a cry dance. This is where you dance counter-clockwise carrying small pieces of their belongings with you and this goes on for most of the night. We have Cry Dancers come down from Bishop, we sing each song twice and then the belongings are thrown into fire. All this removes their footsteps and belongings so that they have no reason to come back and they can continue on their journey. Then a year later they have a smoothing over ceremony and the family has a give-away and the Cry Dancers and sing the

grave song 2 more times and you burn whatever other belongings you've found and then the grave is smoothed over, because graves sink over the year.

+ Tom asked Bob about his tribal affiliation. Bob asked if we had heard of the name Butterbredt? That was his Great Great Grandfather, who was Austrian and his wife came from Coso and lived in Coso, and in summer they lived out where Bob lives now, south of Weldon. Bob went on to explain how the Army California Volunteers in the early 1830's rounded up the Indians and put a bunch of them into the lake and drowned them and his Great Great Grandmother managed to get away with her Dad, her older brother and a baby and her husband and escaped to Kern Valley, Walker Heights. In 1863 the Army came over there and rounded up the older boys and men and killed them, 35 of them, and they were buried in a mass grave there is Walker Heights. She went and hid with the baby and one of the Butterbredt miners took her in and they married and she had 8 more kids. She took her husband to her place in Butterbredt where they homesteaded at the beginning of the Homestead Act.

+ The petroglyph tours on base were briefly brought up and Bev Hill brought up that the base is not interested in reinstating the Maturango Museum tours. After the big fire a couple of years ago, Bob has been working with the base to map out new areas where there are thousands of glyphs, opening a new area. There will never be tours out there as it is like a 5 mile walk to reach them. The area looks over Panamint Valley. Everything just looks like they walked away and left it and you don't find that anywhere.

+ A question was asked (unknown speaker) if the coroner finds that the remains found is not a crime scene, what is done with the remains? Bob replied that they relocate them to where they will be safe and rebury them and ask forgiveness for disturbing their journey. A lot of them that we have been picking up near the railroad tracks and the freeway in Tehachapi, there is a lot of erosion there and people are down there looking for Chinese, they're looking for remains and I don't even know if they're Native American or Chinese, I don't really care, they need to be reinterred in Kelso Valley in the Indian cemetery up there. About 40 have been reinterred, as they keep coming up. At least they are being reported and not taking them. That's one of things that we have to deal with Caltrans about. The railroad & Caltrans creates erosion where it didn't run before and that is why these (graves) are coming out, and the freeway gathers lots of water and they only deal with the water flows on their property, then it flows onto private property, and the private property owners don't want the remains interred on their property.

+ Charley asked about the dam and whether it was Lower Haiwee and Bob replied no, Upper Haiwee. We've done Lower, replaced the fence stock (?) and monitored that for 2½ years and now they have to replace the upper dam. The upper dam was condemned by the state, so they're putting in a new dam to keep the water off the hay ranch. Bob asked why they don't just buy the hay ranch ... Ridgecrest would love to sell it. They bought it to get the water for Ridgecrest. Then Ridgecrest found out that Inyo County wouldn't let them export the water out of the county. Charley didn't realize there was a large village site below Haiwee. Bob said there was a site at Rose Spring where the Native Americans made arrow heads, and before that it was atlatl points. As animals became smaller they then went to bow & arrows. Bob was thanked for his presentation.

NEW MEMBER/SUBSTITUTE MEMBER APPLICATIONS:

+ Board Members of the PLT at our May Chapter meeting on May 16th, 2023, we nominated and elected Mr. Roy Bohnert to be the alternate for Quail Forever Chapter 3176 to member Mark Mason and 2nd alternate Wesley Hensley.

MOTION was made by Sam Merk to accept these 2 gentleman as alternates, 2nd by Mary Grimsley. Passed.

+ Membership for Liam Connolly - DTPC is pending. Need a written letter.

OLD BUSINESS:

PLRT WEB SITE: Charley presented the following regarding the website: We currently have a website called PLRT INFO. Charges so far up until now have been: INFO Domain: \$14.17 and Premium Web Hosting for \$35.88 for a total of \$50.05 cost to date. Domain auto-renew will be on 7/27/2024 for \$20.17 and Web Hosting will auto-renew on 2/25/2024 for \$107.88 for the next year. If you have any problems with the website, please let Charlie know.

+ Francis gave Mary an envelope with \$110 donation in it for the website. Mary will hold on to it and give it back to Francis and then we need to establish a bank account at Navy Federal to deal with plaques & such.

NEW BUSINESS:

IWVGA PIPELINE

- + Sam brought up the water pipeline that will coming up from California City. They are holding a meeting on Wednesday, August 23rd at Kerr McGee at 5:00pm. At this time it is only going to be an EIR done and we really need them to make it an EIS. An EIS would include Federal. We need it to be an EIS because an EIR will not really go into depth in some of those areas and she feels that they may find, like they did in Cartago, and that we are not going to know about it. We really need to push for an EIS instead of just an EIR. Go to the scoping meeting and write something. It's going to be called the Indian Wells Valley Ground Water Authority (IWVGA) Pipeline. Sam requested that Charlie put the document/information up on the website.
- + Bob Robinson mentioned that the pistachio growers have a lot of leverage to not have to pull up their trees. They are part of the Growers Association of the Central Valley. This pipeline will offset what they are pumping out of the ground. The water table is going down here and according to the ground water rules they have to come up with a way to mitigate so that the ground water table stops going down. They're being charged is what it amounts to and they don't want to pay.
- + Looking at the map, they have 3 routes they have proposed to put down the pipeline. They are talking about tapping the Aqueduct down in Mojave and pumping the water back to Ridgecrest, which makes no sense at all.
- + Sam mentioned that LA DWP is going to charge us for the electricity to pump the water back up to Ridgecrest from Mojave and will recover 95% of the expense to pump it.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

- + Will – Save the Pinnacles. Have a presentation on the Pinnacles Evaluation and go from there. The impact from people climbing on them needs to be addressed.
- + Bev or Libby asked Bob Robinson to come back and give a presentation on any topic of his choice. A lot of what Bob does is on public lands. Bob will be attending a quarterly meeting with the Forest Service this coming Monday and has been requesting to have the same with the BLM to discuss ongoing projects. For a while the BLM was attending these meetings with the Forest Service, but that is not the same as meeting with them directly.
- + Charley brought up that the PLRT meets monthly and we currently do not have a Native American representative on the PLRT. Bob is concerned about too many Donkeys who eat the vegetation down to the dirt and drive out the Big Horn Sheep. BHS aren't to be found where they historically were as the Donkey's kill their young and drive them away. If he is available or could send a representative it would be great to have an Aboriginal representative.
- + Next possible fieldtrip in September may be up to Cerro Gordo.

NEXT PLR MEMBERSHIP MEETING

- + Next PLRT meeting will be 8/24/23.

Adjourned at: 7:41pm

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Grimsley

Mark Dunn can be reached at: 760-876-0999
Charlie Hattendorf can be reached at: hidesert@gmail.com
Sam can be reached by phone @: 760-793-0050.
Mary Grimsley by email at: maranjer@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE MEETING:

ATTENDING: