

PUBLIC LANDS ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

Meeting Location: BLM Ridgecrest Office

Minutes of: February 22, 2024

Called to order at: 6:05pm by Chair Mark Dunn

Pledge of allegiance was led by Arzell Hale.

PLRT MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: John Auburn, Kayla Browne, Mark Dunn, Mary Grimsley, Arzell Hale, Charlie Hattendorf, Will Liebscher, Mark Mason, Sam Merk, Libby Vincent and Craig Beck BLM.

Guests: Melissa Brown – BLM, James Cardoza (Candidate for McCarthy's House seat), Heather Dunn, Sue Mason, Kaje - Friends of the Inyo and Kern County Sheriff's: Deputy Catalde, Senior Deputy George, and Deputy Holingsworth.

A MOTION was made by Kayla Browne, 2nd by Sam Merk to approve the January 25, 2024 minutes. They were approved as corrected.

BLM UPDATES: by Craig Beck, Ridgecrest Supervisor for Outdoor Recreation & Wilderness Program

WILD HORSE & BURRO: There are 1,012 head at the Ridgecrest corrals. No breakdown of number of horses & burros currently. The goal of the staff is to have Open Houses & adoptions the 1st & 3rd Fridays of each month until May or so. There are 2 categories: BLM ADOPTED animals remain the property of the BLM for 1 year, may be checked on by the BLM, and can be returned, for the cost of \$125. Animals can also be bought outright for \$25.00 after they have been up for adoption 3 times.

SPECIAL RECREATION PERMITS: This weekend (23 & 24) we have a motorcycle race going on out in the Spangler Open area by the Four Aces Motorcycle Club. Coming up next weekend, a fundraiser has been organized by SoCal Gas & Electric within their organization to raise money for Leukemia/Lymphoma Society. Also, there is a 20-Mule Team equestrian event on March 2. March 16/17 and 23/24 are some motorcycle races, also. These types of events usually continue thru into May.

CONGLOMERATE MESA: BLM staff is continuing to work on the draft EIS, working on alternatives that will eventually go out to the public.

IWV GROUNDWATER AUTHORITY: BLM is still working on the pipeline proposed to go from California City to Ridgecrest.

LAW ENFORCEMENT: Investigating unauthorized commercial filming in Jawbone Canyon and at the Trona Pinnacles.

+ BLM Rangers assisted Kern County Sheriffs in locating a stolen vehicle.

+ Ranger assisted an elderly couple stranded in the Cuddeback Dry Lake area.

+ BLM Rangers went down to assist Barstow Rangers with King of the Hammers event in Johnson Valley, Jan.28 – Feb. 3. It is the 2nd to the largest special recreation permit that BLM runs. BLM also had staff from Nevada, Arizona, & New Mexico to assist. KofH = 40,000 attendance. Burning Man = 100,000+/-.

+ Two Rangers attended a Search & Rescue banquet.

+ There is an ongoing investigation down in the Dove Spring area for vandalism over the holiday weekend. +

+ BLM Law Enforcement staff discovered an unauthorized trench for a water pipeline, not a large pipe, but a small one for a house from Red Mountain to Atolia, 2 miles. The trench has been backfilled and recovered.

KERN COUNTY SHERIFFS: Sam addressed Shooters Canyon. It doesn't seem to do any good to call the Rangers because they are usually in some other area. So does the KCS have an agreement with the BLM so that you can ask? No, there is no MOU for Sheriff's to deal with anything on BLM land. If it's something that is going to be public safety issues, they can call us for assistance to other departments and we can go out, but we have to have a call for assistance. Sam is concerned for the kids & dogs.

+ Charlie posed a hypothetical question to the sheriffs: Suppose there is someone driving crazy/drunk and incapacitated and should not be driving. Do we call you, Sheriffs? Sheriffs do NOT handle DUI's. You can call a Ranger to investigate, but a CHP would have to be called to handle the DUI. Also for accidents out on public lands, CHP needs to be called.

+ BLM Dispatch is available 24/7 for any emergency. They can then decide who needs to be notified. The BLM Dispatch number is: 909-383-5652. This number covers deserts, forests, law enforcement.

+ Sam stated that she lives not far from the IWV water tank, and during bird/Chukar season we have hunters that like to shoot very close to the tank and shoot across the road toward the tank. Who do I call? The BLM, the Sheriff's Dept., or call CHP. You can call 911 and depending where you are, they will call BLM or CHP

dispatch, and if it is a hunting violation, they will call Fish & Game. If it's near a major highway, CHP will automatically be called. Hunters cannot shoot within 300 yards of a water source, can't shoot across roads or within 150 yards of a residence.

LITHIUM DRILLING IN PANAMINT VALLEY: There is drilling equipment along the Windgate Wash Road on the edge of the lake south of Ballarat, where they are core drilling for lithium. They have moved a couple of times. They are required to keep the dust down, that is why there is a water truck there on site. They have drilled at 4 sites; this is their 4th they are at now. Other sites have been restored.

WEMO: It was supposed to go through the courts and a decision be out in December??? 24 years!

DVNP ZOOM: Charlie Hattendorf asked Craig about Death Valley joining our meeting via ZOOM? Craig suggested we reach out to Supervisor Mike Reynolds. Sam suggested we write a letter from the PLRT.

NEW BUSINESS:

PENDING MEMBERSHIP:

+ George Croll is supposed to obtain a letter signed by Mallory Boyd, but nothing has been received yet.

OLD BUSINESS:

NEW MEMBERSHIP: Charlie reported that the Kern County Sheriff Dept. was very responsive to the meeting invite and hopefully we may have a new member that would come to a meeting every once in awhile and give us an update.

+ A lady from the Inyokern Solar Company responded to the meeting invitation. She wanted to be here tonight, but is on travel and she tried to get someone else to be here, but they obviously couldn't make it either. She is Charlotte Parker of Dimension Energy, a national company. The solar field in Inyokern is not on public land, but private, but they do have other installations that are on public land.

+ Karen Sanders with the Tehachapi Kern County Supervisor Scribner's office, and she would like to come to the meetings.

+ John Auburn mentioned that Howard McCauley, who does a lot of trail work for the BLM & PCT, was going to check with PTCA and see if they would want him to represent them.

WEBSITE: Charlie: Thanks to the generosity of Randy Banis and his company, he has hosted our website and the main has been moved over, and in the process have learned a lot, but right now it is down as it doesn't look right, so I am still working on it. Right now, now of our member emails work as I have to initialize each one, so right now no one is getting any junk mail. It's a work in progress.

JAWBONE CANYON MEETINGS: They meet the 3rd Wednesday of the month at the Jawbone BLM office, at 9:00am. Randy attends these meetings.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: After Mark asked Charlie if he was still interested in stepping down as Vice-Chair, which we really didn't get a definitive answer from Charlie, but he did suggest that the Executive Committee (officers) meet and define what each of our positions duties are. Charlie explained that he would rather wear the hat of recreational mining, Bickle Camp, historical cabins, and the El Paso's rather than running a meeting. Jerry (Jerome) Johnson, who represented Small (recreational) Mining won't be back. He fell and shattered the bone in his leg that he just had the artificial hip, so now there is a steel rod, and his situation is so bad, that he is living in the Food Bank building in Trona. So back to Vice-Chair, it was asked if anyone would like to step up? "Crickets"! (No response!)

RANDY BANIS: It was discussed that many would like to see Randy attend meetings again. Right now, during Grant Season, he is very busy, and his 3 burros keep him busy, as well as being married.

ROAD CONDITIONS: Mary looked at the DVNP map and announced that Pleasant Canyon to South Park is now open. Questions were asked about other trails: South Pass to Saline Valley is closed; Eureka/Saline Corridor is closed; the road from Emigrant to the Charcoal Kilns is closed; Wildrose Canyon road is closed to the Charcoal Kilns (there is NO road); Sam asked about the North Pass into Saline and it is unknown. 190 from Olancho to 136 (from Lone Pine to Panamint Springs/DVNP) is still closed, but 136 is open.

+ Mark reported that Dirty Socks is now closed to the public. It is gated and locked, and posted it as "Closed", "No Trespassing", and "Private Property".

ECONOMIC SUMMIT: Several went ... Arzell reported it was a good conference with good speakers; the Ground Water Authority had a presentation on their big project, and the pipeline, and they said it was going to cost \$200M, so you know if they say that, it's going to be \$300M or \$400M, and then they talk about what it's going to take to operate the system and who's going to operate it. The Navy base and Realtors, Eric Bruen the Mayor, and the County Supervisor all gave their presentations, so all in all, it was a good Conference.

NEXT FIELD TRIP: Conglomerate Mesa after the snow melts. El Paso's – roads are terrible. Mark suggested going to the pinnacles behind the Trona Dump. Mary suggested adding Great Falls Basin. It was decided that we would go out on Sunday, March 3, meeting at Esparza's (right past the railroad tracks) at 9:00am. If you want breakfast, get there earlier.

Before the Sheriff's left, a trail from Ridgecrest to the open area is needed was discussed. We thanked the Sheriffs for attending.

TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

- + Sam would like to have someone from the city give a talk on the proposal of the BLM giving the city the land at the intersection of 395 and China Lake Blvd. There were 2 more accidents at that intersection this past weekend. The City is trying to annex that intersection into the city, but they are being very quiet about it, now being very transparent about it. Or possibly a City Council Member, Scott Blain, could come address it. The City had made a promise to have someone attend our meetings, and they only did while running for office and we haven't seen anyone since. We discussed the intersection and why there are
- + Go to the Public Communications Officer who is supposed to be the public affairs liaison between the base and Ridgecrest, John Kersey, who was here and is on this committee. Sam will get his actual name and division he works in.
- + DOD is going to begin moving on the Raven problem, and the reason for that is because Fort Irwin & China Lake have just so many takes they are allowed ... China Lake is 4 and Fort Irwin is a lot more because they do ground ops ... like 30 or 40. The Navy cannot do Raven control without the cooperation from the city as commercial dumpsters are the single biggest contributor to Raven populations. 29 Palms base has just signed a problematic agreement for Raven control measures.
- + Bring in someone from Edison asking about how they are planning to provide enough energy for the mandated electric vehicles.

NEXT PLR MEMBERSHIP MEETING

- + Next PLRT meeting will be 3/28/24.

Adjourned at: 7:11pm

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: Mark Dunn, Sam Merk, Mary Grimsley, Charlie Hattendorf

TOPICS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS:

- + Base and the valley's water issues.
- + Liam would like to do a Desert Tortoise presentation
- + Invite Kern County Sheriff to address shooting at Shooters Canyon
- + Invite environmental person from the base to talk about the Big Horn Sheep population on base
- + Adjustment of By-Laws
- + Make amendment to wilderness plan to adjust the boundary for the Osborne Cabin
- + Petty Cash policy:
 - Voucher to withdraw money
 - 2 signatures – Secretary & Treasurer
- + Documents should be double-sided – lead by example