

PUBLIC LANDS ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

Meeting Location: BLM Ridgecrest Office

Minutes of: December 5, 2024

Called to order at: 6:01pm by Chairman Mark Dunn

Pledge of allegiance was led by Mark Dunn.

A MOTION was made by Libby Vincent, 2nd by Sam Merk, to approve the December 5, 2024 minutes. They were approved as sent.

PLRT MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: John Auborn, Barbara Bane, Kayla Browne, Mark Dunn, Mary Grimsley, Arzell Hale, Charlie Hattendorf, Will Liebscher, Mark Mason, Sam Merk, & Libby Vincent. Tom Bickauskas, R/C BLM.

Guests: Carol & Brian Wolfe, Bradford Young

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: The Executive Committee amended the By-Laws to be stated that if you do not show up for meetings, that you would be deleted or forfeit, so according to the amended By-Laws, Mallory Boyd has not been here in quite some time, so has been deleted. So, we can now move forward with George Croll becoming a member, and move on from there. Mark then ask for a vote for George Croll becoming a member representing the IWW Water District. All Ayes, No Nays. Welcome George. Mary also said she would stay on as secretary if the Chairman so desired.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD: With George finally being voted in as a new member, nominations were opened, where George Croll was nominated for the position of Chairman, and Steve Rainey was nominated for Vice-Chair. These are the only two elected positions; all others are appointed by the Chairman. George was nominated for Chairman by Will Liebscher, 2nd by Sam Merk. Steve Rainey was nominated for Vice-Chair by Sam Merk, 2nd by Charlie Hattendorf. The vote was taken and George is now our new Chairman and Steve our new Vice-Chair. They will take over at our January meeting.

BLM UPDATES: by Tom Bickauskas, Ridgecrest Deputy Field Manager

Phil Desenze, our field manager will not be here tonight, as he is on his way to the Desert Advisory Council meeting in Pahrump, Nevada. He will attend the tour on Friday morning, and the meeting on Saturday. You can go on our website for the DAC report. The Barstow office is hosting the DAC meeting.

LAW ENFORCEMENT: We had a really busy Thanksgiving weekend and Phil got to ride with our Chief Ranger on Saturday. Because the weather was nice, we estimate that we had around 45,000 visitors spread out in our popular areas. Our rangers reported that they made 682 contacts which resulted in 442 warnings; 232 citations; and 8 reports of serious accidents. There was also an Officer manning an Outreach booth in Randsburg. There was also a booth out in the Dove Springs area.

Sam asked if the Officers/Rangers, when out doing their drives, they have a way to document a large pile of trash? It happens that is in their reports. If it can't be picked up on the spot, as it is gross, we also have a standing contract with a HazMatt specialist in the district. We also had 2 Rangers that responded to a disturbance at Bickel Camp. The Rangers found that it was the result of a verbal altercation earlier in the day. We also had an Officer that followed up on fence breaks, abandoned property, and several trash dumps in the DTNRA around Cal City.

FIELD TRIP: The field trip to Conglomerate Mesa is coming up (December 7), and Tom passed out the itinerary with a packet including maps. They have 2 confirmed, Kayla & Jaime.

STAFFING: We thought we had a geologist coming, but he has declined. This is the last day for our current NEPA Planner and in a week and a half, it will be the last day for our Natural Resources person, Emma. We are trying to hire a Biologist, but the list is not very long. We are anticipating a hiring freeze when the new administration takes over. This is very typical and happens often. We are going to be onboarding a new Program Assistant (front desk person). We also need a Corral manager and hope the job will be out there next week. Tomorrow is one of our open houses, from 8:00am to noon for adoptions. The BLM is getting into the on-line game, and burros can be shipped from one BLM corral to another, but not during this time of the year. We also do not have an archeologist.

MINING: Tom started off discussing the article in the L.A. Times about the mining boom, especially regarding in the tri-city area of Red Mountain, Joburg, and Randsburg area, including Atolia where some projects are being studied and could soon be in operation after all the paper work is completed. A lengthy discussion took part regarding the mining boom. The minutes can be accessed on our website.

FROM THE SECRETARY: DURING TOM'S PRESENTATION (around the 43 minute mark), THERE WAS A LOUD SIDE CONVERSATION GOING ON, WHICH IS RUDE, AND MAKES IT VERY HARD FOR OTHERS TO HEAR TOM & FOR ME TO TAKE NOTES. If it's that important, please wait and open the discussion to everyone so that we can all hear, or take it out into the hallway. Thank you!

PROJECTS: Regarding the Impact Statement for Mojave Precious Metals, it should become available in March, however, the BLM is finishing its reviews this month, when it will go to the state office sometime in March, and then it will go to headquarters for review. However, with the administration change, everything is up in the air and we have no idea if that schedule would be met, but that's the schedule we are trying to meet. Hopefully the EIS would be out for public review.

Around the same time, the IWV Ground Water Authority's pipeline final _____ would be available. This is not an EIS, so does not have to meet the same standards for higher level review as an EIS.

DOVE SPRINGS FIRE: The fire was around 1,000 acres and we have applied for an emergency stabilization/restoration project, which we think will be funded.

NEW BUSINESS:

PLAQUE FOR EARL: Sam suggested we table this until the next meeting when Steven Rainey is here, plus our awards business went out of business.

OUR MEETINGS AVAILABLE ON ZOOM: Would it be a good to have our meetings available for DVNP and/or the public? Tom mentioned that he would be happier if we brought a laptop and that the BLM does have a standalone Wi-Fi that we could log into. We have this "owl" camera (a conference camera) here on the table that is 350 degrees. It requires the use of a USBC connection. It's already plugged in and ready to go and there is no special software required to run it. It was brought up that when virtual meetings are started, then people stop showing up to meetings in person. Charlie pointed out that the DVNP park service will NOT come here and are not real wild to use ZOOM. They have their own conference call meetings called TEAMS (?) and were not allowed to use ZOOM. Someone also, would have to give up their off duty time, which I doubt anyone would want to do. Mark added that he already reached out to DV and they were not interested.

NEW ILLEGAL DUMPING: Mark reported that there is a new dump across the road from Fish Rocks where they bringing illegally obtained copper wire and burning off the insulation. The fire department reported it to Mark, and he said there been about 3 fires over the past year. One of the recycling places in RC had 3 55-gallon drums of clean copper house wiring. A discussion continued.

Mary reported that there is a huge refrigerator/freezer with food in it out the pole line road off of Brown Road. Mary will send the GPS coordinates.

The yellow bags for trash clean-ups have been really successful.

Is a volunteer clean-up of illegal dumpsites possible? Are they close enough that we could get a roll-off centrally located? There is also a lot of trash at Shooters Canyon and out near the Burro/Horse corrals. We will discuss a possible clean-up of some of these sites at the next meeting. Discussion ensued.

501(c)(3): It was decided it wasn't really necessary. We don't need to raise money & it's a lot of work.

WEBSITE UPDATE: Charlie brought up the tedious job of transcribing the audio of each meeting into minutes. The minutes from now on will have just general comments and if you want to hear more, you can listen to the audio.

Adjourned at: 7:17pm

NEXT PLR MEMBERSHIP MEETING will be 12/23/25.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Grimsley

George Croll can be reached by phone @:

Charlie Hattendorf can be reached at: hidesert@gmail.com

Sam Merk can be reached by phone @: 760-793-0050

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