

PUBLIC LANDS ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

Meeting Location: BLM Ridgecrest Office

Minutes of: February 27, 2025

Called to order at: 6:00pm by Chairman George Croll

Pledge of allegiance was led by George Croll.

A MOTION was made by Libby Vincent, 2nd by Sam Merk, to approve the December 5, 2024 minutes. The MOTION was approved as sent. A **MOTION** was made to approve the January 23, 2025 minutes by _____ 2nd by Charlie Hattendorf. The MOTION was approved as sent.

OHV GRANTS: Katy Meyer, Outdoor Recreation Planner for the Ridgecrest office, announced the public review & comment period will be open starting March 4 for the proposed State OHV Grants. Katy sent around a sign-up sheet if you would like to be on her distribution list for upcoming OHV events and announcements.

PLRT MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: John Auburn, Mary Grimsley, Arzell Hale, Charlie Hattendorf, Ruth Hidalgo, Raymond Kelso, Will Liebscher, Gary Luckeroth, Mark Mason, Sam Merk, Steven Rainey, Hector Villalobos, Libby Vincent. Not everyone signed in, so I went from memory & voices. If you are missing from the list, please let me know at the next meeting.

GUESTS: Dennis Cruise, President, Searles Valley Minerals; Karl Cleary, Vice-President, SVM; Jacqueline Aguilar, SVM (Providence); Isabelle Driesen, SVM (Providence); Skip Goreman, Diane (Raymond's friend), Jerry Bynum, and 2 others I could not understand.

GUEST SPEAKER: Dennis Cruise, President of Searles Valley Minerals

+ Dennis gave a short history, with the discovery in 1873 and mining continuously for over 152 year, mining soda ash, borate, and a few other essential minerals.

+ A slide program was shown, and the photos of the slides are posted. The slides include: Production Facilities, SVM Product End Use Applications, Distribution Network, Our Workforce, Community & Economic Contributions, Searles' Water, Safe Yield Discrepancy, How You Can Help, Groundwater Management, Rights Protection, Groundwater Management. Very interesting information in these slides.

Comments:

Will Liebscher made the suggestion that Searles Valley try to upgrade their communications into the valley by getting fiber optics. There could still be monies out there from the California Public Utilities Commission.

ROUND TABLE BUSINESS

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS: **George:** Introduced Skip Gorman, a potential new member, who will be attending our meetings. Will also introduced David Perry, General Manager of the Rand Community Water District, as a potential new member.

+ **Charlie** explained how to apply for membership according to our By-Laws.

+ **Sam:** We have 2 slots open; one for City Council and one for the Rand Water District. Skip has submitted a letter for membership representing the City Council. Charlie Hattendorf made a **MOTION** to accept his request, 2nd by Sam Merk, and he was voted in unanimously.

BLM UPDATES: by Tom Bickauskas, Deputy Field Manager.

LAW ENFORCEMENT: Melissa Brown, one of our law enforcement rangers, works the Cal City area which includes the DTRNA and south Spanglers, was asked to give a presentation to the Desert Tortoise Symposium. Dana Stevenson, Recreation Planner and also our Assistant Field Manager, is the Incident Commander at the King of the Hammers event. Half of our law enforcement staff works the event over a two week period.

STAFFING: At the corrals, we are only down one person, as we were able to hire & keep a front desk admin assistant. His name is Andred Owens (?). We were also able to bring in a couple part-time employees from the fire division to also add some man-power to the corrals.

PROJECTS: Projects such as the IWV/GWA Water pipeline project and the Mojave Precious Metals (Conglomerate Mesa) are on hold due to the many freezes. As the drafts are finished, they will be put on a list, so that when the freezes are lifted, they will be ready to sign.

+ The BLM will be notifying tribes regarding the Gold Discovery Group around Red Mountain, who will be placer mining 125 acres. An extensive discussion ensued (go to 2nd recording, approximately 38:00).

+ Phil, the R/C Field Manager, coming from the Forest Service, would like to have a list of a schedule of proposed actions, a declaration of things that we might accomplish in the next year. Our priorities change daily, so it's a bit risky, but he's considering it, so we could possibly have something to share by the next meeting, so you all have something to look at.

+ Since the Physical Responsibility Act went into effect last June, it basically put time frames on completions on an EA and EIS ... 1 year on an EA and 2 years on an EIS, which has caused us to actually pull things off E-planning. More info at 54:00.

+ Our District Field Manager, Shelley, in January, has moved on to Boise, Idaho. The acting District Field Manager is Brandon Anderson, from the Palm Springs office, and will be presiding over the DAC meeting on March 29.

WEMO: Is still with the lawyers.

NEW BUSINESS:

PUBLIC OUTREACH & INTERNAL BUSINESS: George: The executive committee members need to review the Draft By-Laws, then bring them to you, and finalize them. We also need to get our email list(s) in order. Once these items are done, then we can look at the list of action items and prioritize what is important to us to accomplish. Charlie stated that we have one thing in common ... we all love the desert.

PLAQUE FOR EARL: George asked Skip if making a plaque for Earl (to be placed out at Astronomy Point) would be something he would be able to do? Skip said we could meet at his shop and discuss what they wanted to do, and then go from there. Steven Rainey would need to head this up.

OLD BUSINESS:

Field Trip to the Trona Pinnacle: Mark volunteered to take us to see the Trona Pinnacle, which is behind Trona. This could be combined with the tour of Searles Valley Minerals. We'll table until Mark is at a meeting.

TRASH: Will discussed the orange Cal Trans trash bags. He has a box of them, and if we find trash and put it in these orange bags and along the highway, Cal Trans will pick them up.

Meeting was adjourned at: 8:??

NEXT PLR MEMBERSHIP MEETING will be 3/27/25.

Respectfully submitted, Mary Grimsley

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

George Croll, Chairman, can be reached by phone @:

Steven Rainey, Co-Chair, can be reached by:

Mary Grimsley, Secretary, can be reached by email at: maranjer@gmail.com

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

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