

PUBLIC LANDS ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

Meeting Location: BLM Ridgecrest Office

Minutes of: April 24, 2025

Called to order at: 6:06pm by Chairman George Croll

Pledge of allegiance was led by George Croll.

A MOTION was made for last meeting's minutes – well it should've been made!

PLRT MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: John Auborn, Barbara Bane, George Croll, Skip Gorman, Arzell Hale, Charlie Hattendorf, Will Liebscher, Gary Luckeroth, Jaime Lopez-Wolters, Ray Kelso, Sam Merk, Mark Mason, Phil Desenze, Ridgecrest Field Manager.

GUESTS: One guest was in attendance, but unsigned in the roster. The unidentified gentleman asked about setting up an off the grid residence in the Cantil area, several members offered assistance.

GUEST SPEAKER: None – focusing on Bylaws amendment

ROUND TABLE BUSINESS

NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS: none

BLM UPDATES: by Phil Desenze, Ridgecrest Field Manager.

LAW ENFORCEMENT Phil mentioned his recent tactical shooting training, along with BLM Law Enforcement in-service training lasting one week. The BLM rangers require a specialized skill set for their difficult and diverse work, dealing with the many types of incidents and special operations asked of them. They are called upon to assist in diverse situations – from education of OHV users to drug interdiction, assisting search and rescue, etc these members of the BLM enforcement use all their capabilities for their difficult job and are to be recognized.

ENERGY EMERGENCY: As dictated by a very recent Executive Order, emphasis is to be given projects relating to energy transmission and mineral development. These projects will be condensed from their current time for execution down to 28 days. Details on how this will be achieved are still being defined at the regional level. This would allow a very short comment period for new projects, perhaps only 7 days from announcement in the Federal Register to public comments, stakeholder reviews etc. Phil mentioned he envisioned an increase of staff being needed to meet these objectives.

Questions from members were numerous, pointing out possible effects from anticipated litigation, to effects on current projects in litigation, and to how such complicated and involved projects can be addressed while upholding the current regulations such as NEPA. How this will work out we will see. Hopefully the e-planning website will be updated in a timely manner to keep project status accurate.

Phil's goals include transparency to the public on all projects.

SPECIAL RECREATION PERMITS: These permits are used for competitive events such as equestrian, foot races, OHV races and other events (such as a poker run), while filming is separate. Lone Pine filming has been reduced due to a buyout (?) of individuals involved and rules being different between Lone Pine and Ridgecrest. A small group less than 6 could only require a letter of authorization. The office supports around 40 SRPs a year. Phil provided a list of event type and general locality and duration date which was appreciated by the members. Long time (over 30 years!) Resource Specialist Craig Beck is not well, and members voiced their concern and well-wishes. Charlie asked about the feasibility of applying the SRP to preservation of an historic site, such as Bickel Camp. Phil defined the need for the site to be audited and registered, and this topic can be further discussed.

MISCELLANEOUS: Phil will be on a long-delayed vacation in Portugal next month. Rob Rodriguez the heavy equipment operator is retiring and his expertise will surely be missed. Will asked about the signage at the X15 memorial site, and if one could be on the highway, which is a CalTrans question. Discussion occurred regarding there being limits for non-official recognition of sites such as these on public land, while giving the areas the respect they deserve. Sam asked about the Kennedy Meadows campground being modified, and Phil offered his forestry experience on the difficulty to maintain a seldom used Forest Service camp site, without any local support or viable concessionaire. Sam asked about map showing the BLM district's boundaries.

NEW BUSINESS:

A lively discussion was participated in by attending members regarding amending and updating our group's Bylaws. Thanks goes to all the attending members, and those that offered their opinions and insights. We made it half way through (!) and covered some sticky questions. We will tackle the remaining topics at our next PLRT.

OLD BUSINESS:

Field Trip to the Trona Pinnacle: Charlie asked Arzell regarding consolidating the Pinnacles visit in with a Searles Valley Minerals tour. We need to consolidate the number of vehicles and will discuss further.

Meeting was adjourned at: 8:07pm

NEXT PLR MEMBERSHIP MEETING will be 5/22/25.

Respectfully submitted, Charlie Hattendorf

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

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

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

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