

# PUBLIC LANDS ROUNDTABLE MINUTES

**Meeting Location:** BLM Ridgecrest Office

**Minutes of:** September 25th, 2025

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

Pledge of allegiance was led by George Croll.

**A MOTION was made for last meeting's minutes** – George led and Sam seconded

**PLRT MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:** George Croll, Charlie Hattendorf, Will Liebscherer, Jaime Lopez-Wolters, Sam Merk, Mark Mason, Mark Dunn, Ray Kelso, Mary Grimsley, Skip Gorman, Phil DeSenze- BLM Ridgecrest Field Manager.

**GUESTS:** Diane Foucher, Susan Croll, Heather Dunn, and one other (Ray Kelso associate)

**Comments:** Sam announced National Public Lands Day was imminent, and distributed trash bags. George recounted encountering a deliberate dumping site near the county dump. Skip Gorman added a detailed account with pictures of an abandoned motor home on Ludmil and Dolphin (?) near his residence. The county compliance officer was identified as a good prospect, (and information was shared to Skip after the meeting). Phil added to get involved the BLM needed the activity occurring on public land. Phil has expert assistance available for remedying occurrences like this. Mary G. commented about the Rebelle Rally happening 10 8 2025. The Gear Grinders are sponsoring a presentation October 4<sup>th</sup> at Desert Valley Credit Union 7pm. PELT funds were discussed to use the county to fund desert cleanups.

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Tina Erway Wildlife Biologist – volunteered Desert Tortoise National Preserve, Has an extensive background with understanding desert wildlife, and working at varied construction sites. Tina exhibited a female tortoise shell. Tina explained about tortoise biology, ideal environment and behavior. She reported the preservation area had problems with tortoise numbers now diminishing. She discussed encountering complications with solar development adversely affecting desert flora and fauna. The desert tortoise is now on the endangered list.

## **ROUND TABLE BUSINESS**

**NEW MEMBER APPLICATIONS:** Tina was voted in as the newest PLRT member for DTNRA.

**BLM UPDATES:** by Phil DeSenze, Ridgecrest Assistant Field Manager.

Phil is looking forward to working with DTNRA. The most recent rain has caused damage in lots of areas, such as Randsburg mine sites, mine waste and tailings, "What went downstream" needs to be identified. Homewood canyon, Trona roadway, Desert tortoise fencing, road work on all lands. Members reminded others about roads being closed permanently in the past, thanks to road damage not being repaired. Phil talked about road maintenance grant funding which is not available. Mary is concerned about Panamint Valley Days, Goler Wash rd in DVNP was washed out. Will mentioned signs are all washed out, roads etc. Assessment is critical now, and BLM is asking for inputs from members. Wild horse and burro gather starting 10/3 on base over 10 days, with 200 animals hopefully being gathered. Lots of burros are on base, they're working the northern herd known as the Centennial herd. Public viewing Sunday 10/5 of gathered animals at 3pm at the corrals. The office is open there Monday through Friday from 8 – 12. DVNP funding could happen for their burros. Focus now is China Lake. No movement on solar or wind projects planned, it's the lowest priority. Thanks to WEMO contestation, grant money earmarked for road maintenance can't be spent on maintaining roads in limited use areas. Money (1.2 million\$) can be spent on law enforcement, restoration on illegal camping areas outside the Dove Springs area, etc. In terms of workload one over-arching fire service agency is now being formed, combining Federal agencies, contractors, etc. making this a huge undertaking under a department of Interior Fire Service. There are 50+ active mining operations in the Ridgecrest office, which require scheduled inspections, grazing will be busy upcoming no doubt. A new archeologist coming to the office, which is great news. BLM will consolidate the structure of law enforcement, a new chief (Jason) is on tap. The Conglomerate Mesa ROD and EIS will be coming out together (final) in the next few months with the decision moved out of the regional office. Methodology Category Exclusions were discussed. Waiting for public comment periods are problematic, give Phil a call. Eplanning info was discussed, and a pointer to it has been added for the PLRT site. Mark Dunn discussed a Trona resident baiting burros and being added into her corral. Sam asked about guzzler BLM support, which Phil talked about how well the support group of

Mark's (Quail Forever) is working outside wilderness areas. District wide programmatic NEPA assessment for wildlife guzzlers is being planned out. CDFW has not been involved yet apparently. Phil mentioned the "expedited" EIS process could affect public meeting, draft EIS and other aspects that've been used in the past. Public comment will still occur. Proponents can write their own NEPA?

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

George requested from Congressman Fong approval to have their assistance through his office supporting the filling of critical positions to the BLM. George suggested the PLRT canvas its members for suggestions. To receive the info, George asked the committee for approval to submit a FOIA request to the BLM for a full roster of personnel and open positions. Motioned was Mark Mason and seconded by Sam unanimous approval for George to pursue the information and ultimate letter to Congressman Fong to support selected critical BLM Ridgecrest office billets.

Sunday October 26<sup>th</sup> Trona Pinnacle PLRT trip. Meeting at Esparza restaurant at 12 noon on the left, look for the flags.

An additional task was identified and voted on for George to generate a PLRT initiative and support letter regarding desert cleanups.

A vote was taken to adopt the logo for PLRT

Treasurer of PLRT has resigned, Charlie accepted an envelope for \$110, for maintaining the domain name. Note: minus the \$30 cost we now have \$80 in our "savings".

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**None discussed**

Meeting was adjourned at: 7:45pm

**NEXT PLRT MEMBERSHIP MEETING** will be 10/23/2025.

Respectfully submitted, Charlie Hattendorf

### **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

George Croll, Chairman, can be reached by email [crollg@msn.com](mailto:crollg@msn.com)

Steven Rainey, Co-Chair, can be reached by email [rainmaneth@verizon.net](mailto:rainmaneth@verizon.net)

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