

Bureau of Land Management
Quarterly Report
September 30, 2013

1. Route Monitoring and Compliance

a. Monitoring Compliance with Route Closures at a Statistically Significant Level -- Update from July 2013 Quarterly Report

Pursuant to the Final OHV Monitoring Protocol adopted in June, 2013, monitoring compliance work commenced on July 31, 2013. To date, the following has been accomplished:

- A two-person team has been assembled to collect field data, and their other workload has been redirected as necessary;
- The sample of West Mojave routes has been randomly selected for the first three-year statistical monitoring cycle;
- A GIS person has been tasked with downloading raw sample information and uploading field data collected for subsequent analysis;
- Equipment has been assembled, training provided to the two-person team, and field work has commenced in six subregions;
- Field inspection and data recordation has occurred on approximately 64 miles of the 336 miles of field sample routes. See Table 1 below for a list of routes monitored to date.

Table 1. Monitored Routes from August 5, 2013 to September 6, 2013					
Subregion	Routes Monitored				
Calico Mountains	CM7617				
Coolgardie	CG8056A	CG7216A	CG7250	CG7259	CG7256B
	CG7174	CG7262	CG7253	CG7275	CG7210
Fremont Peak	FP5430	FP5302	FP5320	FP5165	FP5345
Harper Lake	HL7141	HL7168B	HL6475	HL7142	
Iron Mountain	IM4863	IM6447			
Mitchel Mountains	MM7163	MM7164	MM7181	MM7170	

BLM anticipates completing a third (approximately 112 miles) of the field monitoring and the aerial sampling by the summer of 2014. The one-year memo will be issue by September, 2014.

b. Summary of Monitoring/Enforcement Effort – Update from July 2013 Quarterly Report

Law Enforcement Overview

Law Enforcement (LE) Rangers from the Barstow and Ridgecrest Field Offices conducted 354 compliance checks (e.g., wilderness, Area of Critical Environmental Concern, cultural sites) and 175 enforcement contacts, of which 70 pertained to off route or closed area motor vehicle violations within the West Mojave planning area. Enforcement contacts included education, written warnings, and/or citations.

Monitoring of Vehicle-Limited Use Routes

BLM personnel performed monitoring on a portion of the Middle Knob and Juniper Flats Subregions. In response to their observations, additional route signing was completed by the Friends of Jawbone, as well as BLM staff, in an effort to increase compliance with BLM's route designations.

The Friends of Jawbone staff continues to perform daily monitoring and rehabilitation of unauthorized routes within the Jawbone, Rands, Red Mountain, Middle Knob and El Paso Subregions, as well as ground operation and maintenance work, including signing, grading roads, and repairing structures that have been vandalized.

The Transition Habitat Conservancy, with the assistance of the Friends of Jawbone staff, has completed approximately \$100,000 of route signing on both public and private land within the Fremont Peak and Black Mountain Subregions.

Monitoring of Pacific Crest Trail

Within the Middle Knob Subregion, LE Rangers carried out focused patrols around the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT). These efforts focused on ensuring that motorized use was not occurring along the trail. During these focused patrols, LE Rangers did not witness motorized use of the PCT. While motorized incursions do occur on the PCT, these appear to be infrequent incursions originating from and returning to the private parcels of land surrounding the PCT.

c. Maintenance and Restoration Actions – Update from July 2013 Quarterly Report

BLM personnel as well as Partner organizations continue to carry out regular field monitoring, maintenance and restoration efforts. These efforts include, but are not limited to, wilderness boundary checks, trailhead maintenance, fence repairs, route checks, signing and restoration (e.g., rake, mulch). This work was conducted during routine field monitoring, as well as in response to observations reported by other personnel, both written (e.g., Subregion Observation Reports, Work Orders, email) and verbal.

Trail tread repair was performed on route R 43 in the Rand Mountain Subregion following summer storm damage that made the route difficult to travel and navigate.

2. Kiosks – Update from July 2013 Quarterly Report

BLM continues to coordinate with interested organizations to address public education on the OHV route network. The Transition Habitat Conservancy has installed four kiosks in the Fremont Peak Subregion. These kiosks direct users to the designated route network in the Fremont Desert Wildlife Management Area, and educate users on the sensitivity of the area.

BLM personnel continue to work on the upkeep and repair of the existing kiosks located throughout the West Mojave planning area. Efforts performed include replacing Subregion maps, posting of notices, painting, and structural repairs.

3. Proper Functioning Condition – Seeps and Springs – Update from July 2013 Quarterly Report

Twenty Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessments were completed within the West Mojave planning area since June, 2013. Table 2 shows the results of the PFC assessments.

Table 2. Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) Assessments Conducted from June 28, 2013 to September 18, 2013 Within the West Mojave (WEMO) Planning Area				
WEMO Subregion	Unique Identifier and Name	Date	Finding	Notes
<i>Barstow Field Office</i>				
Black Mountain	BM 01 Opal Spring	7/12/13	Nonfunctional	Water table lowered; spring box with exclosure fence; dry with no wetland vegetation
Cronese Lake	CL 01 Jack Spring	7/12/13	PFC	
Juniper Flats	JF 12 White Knob 71A	6/28/13	PFC	
Juniper Flats	JF13 High Road Spring	6/28/13	PFC	
Juniper Flats	JF 14 White Knob Milepost 61 West Spring	8/2/13	PFC	
Juniper Flats	JF 15 BLM Silver Creek Spring	8/2/13	Functional at risk	Road encroachment and water diversion
Stoddard Valley	SV 02 Quail Spring	8/23/13	PFC	
Stoddard Valley	SV 03 Horse Spring	8/23/13	PFC	
Stoddard Valley	SV 04 Horse Spring Southeast	8/23/13	PFC	
Stoddard Valley	SV 05 Amaral Spring	8/23/13	PFC	
<i>Ridgecrest Field Office</i>				
Jawbone	SC10 Willow Spring	7/13/13	PFC	

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WEMO Subregion	Unique Identifier and Name	Date	Finding	Notes
Jawbone	SC 11 Burning Moscow Spring	8/28/13	Functional at risk	Motorcycle/Quad tracks in meadow
Jawbone	SC 13 Tanager Spring	8/28/13	Functional at risk	Motorcycle trespass through riparian
Sierra	SE 01 Morris Spring	9/18/13	PFC	
Sierra	SE 02 Glass Canyon	9/18/13	PFC	
Sierra	SE 04 Lower Indian Wells #3	9/18/13	Nonfunctional	OHV use in streambed; Salt cedar present
Sierra	SE 10 Stone Cabin Spring	9/18/13	PFC	
Sierra	SE 13 Short Canyon Riparian	9/17/13	PFC	
Sierra	SE 14 Indian Wells Canyon	9/18/13	PFC	
Sierra	SE 16 Mid Indian Wells Canyon	9/18/13	PFC	

A GIS mapping analysis of the seeps and springs within the West Mojave planning area was completed on September 19, 2013. This analysis used the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD) streams layer developed by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), as well as BLM Field Office data of seeps and springs that had been assessed for PFC. This analysis identified 231 natural seeps and springs located on BLM land.

To prioritize sampling efforts where impacts are most likely to occur, BLM identified the seeps and springs that are located within 100 meters of any designated or undesignated route. BLM identified 112 natural seeps and springs that are located within 100m of a route (NOTE: There are 206 routes within 100m of these springs for a total of 15.04 miles).

PFC assessments have been completed on 67 of these 112 seeps and springs. Of these, BLM identified nine seeps and springs where motorized vehicle use is contributing to a less than fully functioning condition. Mitigation has been completed on two of those sources through the construction of barricade fencing to exclude vehicles. One of the nine seeps and springs is bifurcated by a San Bernardino County road. Mitigation measures to minimize impacts from this road will need to be developed in cooperation with the County. Two additional seeps and springs where motorized use is contributing to less than fully functioning condition were recently evaluated and corrective action options identified. Follow-up actions on these seeps and springs are scheduled for fiscal year 2014, including construction of barricade fencing at one location and engineering survey/design for route re-alignment at the other location.

4. Status of Planning

The BLM Interdisciplinary Team is continuing with its work in developing route network alternatives. One of BLM's goals in this planning effort is to identify uses, resource conflicts, and management responses on a route-by-route basis. This work is being carried out on West Mojave routes within the 21 motorized access zones (MAZ) in the West Mojave Plan, as well as those not in the MAZ. As part of this effort, BLM is identifying linear features, new or old, that have not been included in previous analyses. This work includes identification of route strategies as they are developed and assessed, and of decisions that are made. This information is being compiled in a format that will allow the incorporation of any additional information that may be collected in the future. All such information will be available for use in reviewing management strategies and developing new management prescriptions in the future. Since this work is being carried out on a route-by-route basis for each alternative, it has taken a substantial level of effort by the interdisciplinary team, including recreation, biological, archaeological, range management (soil-water-air), and GIS personnel.

5. Chronology of Management Actions – Update to July 2013 Quarterly Report

July 10, 2013: California Desert District Manager issued a mineral withdrawal status update letter to Plaintiffs' Counsel.

July 31, 2013: The first year of statistical sampling commenced (e.g., route stratification, random sample selection from each stratum, data upload to GPS Units, and staff training).

August 5, 2013: The first year of field implementation of the statistically significant monitoring protocol commenced.

August 7, 2013: Barstow Field Manager met with representatives from Transition Habitat Conservancy and Friends of Jawbone to discuss the status of route signing within the Fremont Peak and Black Mountain Subregions.

August 23, 2013: A Memorandum of Understanding was established between the Citizens of Wonder Valley and BLM for the purpose of installation and maintenance of a kiosk at the intersection of Highway 247 and Reche Road in Landers, California.

September 5, 2013: Pursuant to the Court's direction during the August 13, 2013 status conference, the parties (Plaintiffs, Intervenors, and Federal Defendants) held a meet and confer session in Moreno Valley, California. Over the course of the meeting participants addressed plaintiffs' requests for additional information, as well as concerns and issues raised in Center for Biological Diversity Plaintiffs' status report and Alliance for Responsible Recreation Plaintiffs' motion.

September 9, 2013: Ridgecrest Field Manager issued letter to Plaintiffs' Counsel outlining intent to review the Lacey-Cactus-McCloud Grazing Decision after the West Mojave Record of Decision is adopted by the BLM.

September 11, 2013: The Desert Advisory Council (DAC) and members of the DAC WEMO Subgroup were notified by email of an update to the West Mojave Route Network Project DAC Subgroup website (<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/info/rac/dac/wmrnp.html>). The updates included the posting of Mr. Mark Algazy's comments to West Mojave Route Network Project Subgroup Report and notification of the availability of Appendix 4 to the Subgroup Report in CD format by request.

September 16, 2013: BLM manager and staff met with representatives from the Transition Habitat Conservancy and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to develop a Cooperative Agreement for the joint planning and implementation of mutually beneficial actions that maintain and enhance the productivity of special status species habitat and provide for an effective transportation network in the West Mojave Desert (e.g., Fremont Peak and Black Mountain Subregions).

September 25, 2013: Western Watersheds Project, Defenders' of Wildlife, and the Center for Biological Diversity sent BLM an electronic copy of an appeal and request for stay of the BLM Ridgecrest Field Manager's Final Grazing Decision for Lacey-Cactus-McCloud Allotment.