

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

REMOTE ZOOM

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2021

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REPORTED BY: DIANE CARVER MANN, CLR, CSR NO. 6008

REMOTE ZOOM MEETING OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE
INTERIOR BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT CALIFORNIA DESERT
DISTRICT ADVISORY COUNCIL, COMMENCING AT 9:01 A.M. ON
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2021, BEFORE DIANE CARVER MANN,
CSR NO. 6008.

MEMBERS OF THE DESERT ADVISORY COUNCIL PRESENT:

RANDY BANIS - CHAIRPERSON

JAYNE POWELL

ED STOVIN

RICHARD HOLLIDAY

ROBERT ROBINSON

DAN TAYLOR

PAUL WHITEHEAD

JIM BAGLEY

PAUL MARTIN

PRESENT FROM THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT:

ANDREW ARCHULETA, DESERT DISTRICT MANAGER

MICHELLE VAN DER LINDEN, PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

CARD BOMBE, ZOOM TECH

RYAN CHATTERTON, EL CENTRO FIELD OFFICE

MIKE AHRENS, NEEDLES FIELD OFFICE

KATRINA SYMONS, BARSTOW FIELD OFFICE

CARL SYMONS, RIDGECREST FIELD OFFICE

APPEARANCES, CONTINUED:

TIM GILLOON, PALM SPRINGS - SOUTH COAST

PAUL GIBBS, FIRE MANAGER

GREG MILLER, ASSOCIATE DISTRICT MANAGER FOR THE
CALIFORNIA DESERT, NEEDLES FIELD OFFICE

AMY FESNOCK, RESOURCE ADVISOR

NOELLE GLINES-BOVIO, MOJAVE TRAILS NATIONAL
MONUMENT MANAGER

MEETING AGENDA

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- ATTACHMENT 2 - E-MAIL CORRESPONDENCE FROM MOJAVE DESERT LAND TRUST

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2021

9:01 A.M.

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DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right. Good morning, everyone. I'm Andrew Archuleta. I'm the district manager for the California Desert District for Bureau of Land Management, and today is our October meeting for the Desert Advisory Council.

I'm really glad that everybody could join us today. You know, we're meeting via Zoom today. We tried really hard to hold a meeting in person, but last week the department just made the decision that all of our resource advisory meetings would be held virtually. So here we are, but we'll work towards that face-to-face meeting at some point.

Again, just thanks for being flexible. I'm really looking forward to our discussion today. We have some great topics to cover. And I want to welcome the public joining us today. There will be an opportunity for the public to speak this afternoon, so if you're wanting to do that, be sure you sign up.

I want to welcome all the DAC members and BLM employees, as well as we do have a BLM Zoom technician

on board today. His name is Card. We have him running things. And we've got our court reporter on as well, Diane Mann. So thanks, everybody, for joining us. Just really looking forward to this.

With that, Michelle Van Der Linden, our public affairs officer, is going to cover some Zoom protocols for everyone.

Michelle?

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you, Andrew.

Good morning, everyone. So as Andrew mentioned, the members of the public will have the opportunity to address the council during the public comment period, which is scheduled for 2:45, and speakers will be able to address the council using audio only.

At the moment we have a number of speakers who have let us know that they plan to speak during the public comment period, so we're going to limit comments to three minutes. If you use more than your three minutes, unfortunately, you will be cut off. But if we have time left over, we will come back to you so you can finish your comments, and that shouldn't be a problem based on registration today.

We ask that all attendees show mutual respect for each other and our DAC members and BLM speakers.

And we ask that you exhibit your best professional conduct. Let's see. To the best of our ability, speakers will be called in the order of when you've raised your hand once the public comment period opens, and we will work through as many speakers as possible before 3:30.

Again, if we have more people wishing to speak than time allows, a written comment can be submitted to me. I'll just put the address in the chat and my e-mail. So if you're wishing to provide public comment and don't have the ability to stay until the public comment period, you can either mail that information to me and I can share it with the DAC and Diane so it gets included in the public record. And again I'll add my e-mail address and the physical address to the chat.

I think that's everything I have. Thank you, Andrew.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Thank you, Michelle. If I could get all the BLM folks to turn your cameras on, and we'll go around and do introductions quick here. I'm going to start off with Greg Miller.

MR. MILLER: Hi. Good morning, everybody. Greg Miller. I'm the Associate District Manager for the California Desert, Needles Field Office.

MR. AHRENS: Good morning. Mike Ahrens, Needles Field Office manager.

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Good morning. Noelle Glines-Bovio, the Mojave Trails National Monument manager.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Great to have Noelle on board. She's our new monument manager. I'm looking forward to doing some great work with the monument down there.

And Brandon? Brandon Anderson is one of our assistant field managers for project support. He will probably be coming in and out. You might see his name on.

And Amy?

MS. FESNOCK: Good morning. I am Amy Fesnock. I'm the resource advisor for the Desert District.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Let's jump over to El Centro.

MR. CHATTERTON: Good morning. Ryan Chatterton, field manager for El Centro Field Office.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Palm Springs?

MR. GILLOON: Good morning. Tim Gilloon, Palm Springs field manager.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Barstow?

MS. SYMONS: Good morning. Katrina Symons,

Barstow field manager.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Ridgecrest?

MR. SYMONS: Good morning. Carl Symons, field manager for the Ridgecrest Field Office.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: How about fire and fuel?

MR. GIBBS: Good morning. Name is Paul Gibbs, fire manager for the California Desert District. Also do delegated authority for the Death Valley, Mojave, and Joshua Tree National Parks.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Paul also has responsibility for the Federal Interagency Communications Center, which is our site over in San Bernardino, which has just a great staff there, a great dispatch organization. That organization is made up of Forest Service, BLM, Parks Service, and Bureau of Indian Affairs, and so they are definitely our eyes and ears for any fire or law enforcement incidents.

That's all of the BLM staff. Did I miss any BLM staff? If you're there, speak up. All right. I think I covered everybody. With that, I'll turn it over to Randy to introduce the DAC members.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Great. Thank you, Andrew. I really appreciate it. First I want to welcome everybody to our virtual meeting, our social distancing

meeting, today. Before I go further with my report, if it's okay, I'll save my report for last, but I'd like to call the roll of the DAC members and introduce them and have them say a few words about who they are.

First I'll call for Jim Bagley. Good morning, Jim. Are you on the line? Jim Bagley, are you on the line?

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: I don't believe that he's joined us yet, Randy.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you. Good morning, Dick Holliday. I see you're there. Good morning. Introductions?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Dick Holliday. I'm here. I don't know what else to say. Continue on.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Also calling for Paul Martin. Paul, are you on the line today?

MEMBER MARTIN: Yes, I am. Good morning, everyone. I want to thank everyone for such an organized presentation, and looking forward to this meeting.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Paul. Good to have you here.

Good morning, Jayne. Jayne Powell.

MEMBER POWELL: Good morning. It's good to be here. It would have been nice to have been in person,

but maybe we will get there soon. And I particularly want to thank Michelle for all of her hard work in getting all of the information out to us in advance and the postings reminding us of all the things we're supposed to be doing. So thank you, Michelle.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Jayne.

Robert Robinson, are you on the line? Good morning, Bob. One more call for Bob Robinson. We hope you'll join us shortly.

I'm going to call for Ed Stovin. Good morning, Ed. Introductions. The floor is yours.

MEMBER STOVIN: Good morning. This is Ed Stovin. I'm president of Off-Road Coalition, and I represent off-road vehicle users on the DAC. Randy, are you interested in stuff going on that we worked on with the BLM? Is this a good time?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yes, of course. Absolutely it's a good time to do a little report and interface with the BLM on activities you're working on.

MEMBER STOVIN: So a few months back we heard that there was excessive garbage on Otay Mountain, and that's a mountain close to San Diego right on the Mexican border, and it's managed by Palm Springs BLM. So we planned an area cleanup, which we held last Saturday, a week ago, and we had 32 people. We picked

up a lot of trash, and we got to see the mountain and talk to Dan from Palm Springs. We filled two pickup trucks pretty full with garbage and the backseat of one of them, so we did a pretty good job up there. There's off-roaders, shooter trash, and international travelers leave stuff behind, so it was just to help out in that area.

Our organization is putting on a poker run in El Centro BLM's land on November 13th, so just a few weeks away. We're also hosting a cleanup during the event, so we're looking forward to that. We have about 133 entries so far, and we're looking forward to 500, 600 entries, so it's a pretty big event for us.

We're also looking to and having a cleanup in Painted Gorge early next year. That's an area that I personally love in that it's kind of a forgotten area. It's really enjoyed by both off-road vehicle users and recreational shooters. And we get a lot of trigger trash out there. So again we want to let the BLM know that we care about the area. So we're organizing a cleanup out there.

Thank you, Randy.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Ed. Go ahead.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: I just wanted to say, Ed, I really appreciate the partnerships from

different groups out there. Not only do you recreate on Public Lands, but you step up to help out, and that means a lot. That really does. Really appreciate that.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: You know, these cleanups in the past have just been sort of something people do on an annual basis to just get together and celebrate and have a good time together, but boy, after the last couple of years and how much love we've seen the public paying to our Public Lands, they're very much in need of the attention of groups like Ed's, to help clean things up. Thanks, Ed.

I'm going to move on and introduce Dan Taylor. Good morning, Dan. Hi.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Good morning. I'm with the film industry. I'm the film commissioner for Riverside County Film Commission and a number of other cities. And I also have a business, Inland Empire Film Services, where I assist film production to film on federal lands wherever it's possible. And my goal is to work with the BLM and to help increase that so that the economic impact within the neighboring communities increases through filming.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Dan. Nice to see you again.

And last on the list I have Paul Whitehead.

Paul, are you joining us today? One more call, please, for Paul Whitehead. We'll hold the line open, and if Paul can join us later, we'll be sure to catch our introductions.

Thank you, everybody. I live in Leona Valley on the edge of the California Desert District. I'm the chairman, the president of Friends of Jawbone and Friends of El Mirage. And these last couple of months have been busy working with the Desert District staff. The first issue really at hand was coordinating with Michelle and with Andrew about what to do on this meeting.

And at the time that we last met, in addition to this group as well as other groups that I had the pleasure of meeting with during August, we were all very optimistic that our public meetings would be coming back on our calendar, our in-person meetings. And boy, were we surprised. And this late summer has been trouble for everybody who's as anxious to get together in person as we have been.

So I'm always disappointed when we don't meet in person, but you know, I'm committed to continue to work with the BLM in getting the DAC back up and at full stride. Part of that is having meetings in public, so we'll continue to work forward with that. Thanks.

Also I've worked, too, with Andrew and Michelle about the importance of filling the empty DAC seats that we have. I don't want to jump on their announcements, but the DAC members, at least, I believe, have seen that the BLM has a call for nominations out, and we'll get more on that, I hope.

I also worked with Andrew and Michelle and Mike Ahrens on the subgroups, mostly with Mike. Always enjoy trading e-mails with Michelle and Andrew, but it's fun also bending Mike's ear for -- what was it? -- about 90 minutes. I want to thank Mike for the work that he did on these subgroup documents, and looking forward to having the council discuss that and talk about our standing up the subgroups again.

Just lastly, a couple of public meetings I've attended: The virtual Central California RAC, the BLM RAC, our sister RAC that's in Central California. It was conducted very similar to ours. I was very impressed by the number of members of the public that attended that meeting. That was the thing that stood out with me the most. So it's always nice attending other Resource Advisory Council meetings to get ideas for things that we can do.

Lastly the Ridgecrest Public Lands Round Table meets on a monthly basis, and we recently heard

presentations about the problems, the growing problems of illegal cannabis grows on the desert lands. And we're finding by and large they're occupying private properties, but these private properties are often adjacent to Public Lands, and sometimes these private properties contain roads and trails that are part of the recreational and travel fabric that we have in the desert. And there's great suspicion over their activities.

And also, with the lack of county resources and law enforcement resources, it's hard to get priorities. It's hard to get the illegal cannabis grow in your neighborhood to be a priority because there's so many and some of them are so very large. The impacts on groundwater is significant, also the impacts on neighboring activities.

I know this isn't a new issue for you at all, but it's interesting that inside the El Mirage Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area that's been designated by Congress, we have a marijuana grow on a private parcel, and it's not on Public Lands. It's not the immediate problem of Public Lands. Of course, if they attempt to transport their product across the Public Land, that's a different story. But at this point it's private property, and it's right smack in the

middle of a designated fenced in off-highway vehicle area. Talk about challenges in management.

With that, I'm just going to conclude my report, thank everybody for your ear. And with that, if there's no objections, Michelle, Andrew, I was going to move on to the next item of business.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Yep, it's all yours.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Very well. I'm hoping that Noelle Glines-Bovio is available and ready to go.

(Reporter clarification.)

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm hoping Noelle Glines Bovio -- that's our next speaker -- G-l-i-n-e-s B-o-v-i-o -- this is Noelle's first presentation with the Desert Advisory Council. She's the Mojave National Trails Monument manager, and she's going to discuss planning efforts for the monument that was designated a few years back.

With that, good morning, Noelle, and welcome to the Desert Advisory Council. It's great to have you here in Brady Bunch style. There you are. Hello.

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Good morning. Thank you for having me. I appreciate this time. So first what I'm going to do is I'm going to introduce myself. My name is Noelle Glines-Bovio. I've been with the Bureau of

Land Management for about 12 years. Under the recreation program, I've worked in multiple field offices in multiple states, and so I've had some experience on the ground. And my recent experience comes from the state of Wyoming, where I was the National Conservation Lands state lead. I also have about four years' experience working with the U.S. Forest Service here in California up at the regional office managing the Special Uses program. Next slide.

So what I would like to talk about today are of course a few updates of what we're planning to accomplish. What we're currently looking at right now when it comes to the planning process or the future of the planning process -- and, you know, it's relevant that we all know that there's a clear interest in the management and in the planning of the monument plans.

So also we are very aware that there's an interest in what resources, objects, and values will be carried through that plan. So today I would like to give you an update of where we are within the process and what we are planning to do next.

We also are aware that access and some resource concerns have been relevant since the passing of the proclamation, and that would be Proclamation 9395. And we're also aware that there's inquiries that are

prominent to the relevance of how we review the information and how that information is going to help shape the planning document. Next slide.

So currently the BLM has been working towards a needed internal data review. The review will help determine the levels of replanning products needed to assist the Bureau of Land Management in formulating our planning process goals. This is an internal task that allows the BLM to better understand our management situation and our baseline data.

We have to kind of do this because we need to have a better understanding of the existing information that we need to gather to help us with this planning process. So at this point this review is mostly a data gap inventory of our geospatial data and a hard look to make sure that the data meets BLM data standard requirements.

This process will amend the past planning efforts, but that's only those efforts that pertain to the boundaries of Mojave Trails National Monument. So anything outside that is something that we're not going to take a look at. We do plan to review those past decisions for the relevance in the relationship of how to manage the goals identified in Proclamation 9395. We are still in the preliminary stages, and there is still

a lot of unknowns at this time.

However, this plan is lucky, and I'm going to say that because I've actually been involved with a few planning processes in the past, and so we have very good landscape-level data that can help us get started in the right direction. And that's due to the recent planning processes, namely the DRECP, and a good example of that is the visual inventory data. Next slide.

So what we currently know is that we need consistent data management support for the data gap exercise. There was a request to help support us through a GIS contract. That will allow for a technician to focus on this planning support effort. A GIS contract, or GIS contractor, will give the opportunity to better understand where if any data gaps might exist. This contractor will also allow the BLM staff to be freed up to work on their general projects, along with supporting a fairly large workload of data-gathering from our agency and possibly flag those data needs that will allow the BLM to move forward with a clean planning process. This support is slated to start in mid October, so fairly soon. Next slide.

Currently we are working with BLM headquarters to initiate assistance of a public outreach and engagement process. This has happened in the past.

Back in 2017 my predecessor, Kyle Sullivan, did put together what was called envisioning sessions, where he invited people from the public to come in and kind of talk about the proclamation and what they thought those objects and values should look like. So currently the BLM feels that, since it's sometime past, it will be beneficial to revisit some of the topics.

And I apologize. My elderly dog is having a barking attack in the other room.

So currently the BLM is working on a list of topics related to the proclamation, and of course we're working on an approach to how we want to kind of, you know, introduce the information to the public along with getting that information and any new information that may have come up since the last time those sessions have happened.

We also hope to update some of our outreach contacts through this exercise because we are aware that maybe some groups didn't get a chance to participate within those meetings, and if we want to use groups as soon as possible. That's the reason why I'm bringing it up to this body today. I'm hoping maybe you can give some information to me, send me an e-mail of what you think or who you think we should be adding to that list. So these outreach events will hopefully be rolled out.

It will probably be on a virtual platform, but we're hoping to roll that out this winter.

So currently what we know now is not the same as what we knew back in 2017. We have a better understanding of what those resources, objects, and values are. We know that there is a higher interest in certain resources over other objects, and in some cases we're also aware that there could be new values of interest that have developed over time. Next slide, please.

So, as identified in the past slides, we are still working towards reviewing our data, which is of course that baseline data analysis, which is also what we would use as parts and pieces of the planning process. We are also in need to review the laws, regulations, past planning decisions, and of course the proclamation. So we're still in the process of formulating our approach when it comes to that.

There is a large amount of information that will need to be covered. And as a reminder, the monument is 1.6 million acres. So that's a large amount of information.

Additionally we need to gather the past planning decisions and all policies that pertain to the basic resources that need to be evaluated. Examples

could consist of allowable uses compared to goals and objectives for conservation. Next slide.

As you can see, the BLM does have a general strategy for moving forward. The Mojave Trails Plan is one of our top goals, and we do want to make sure that the BLM manages the area in a way that allows for these traditional recreation uses but also maintains the ability to conserve those resources, objects, and values identified by the monument's proclamation. Next slide.

As identified in past slides, we are taking the time to revisit our laws and policies. One of those policies is the recreational use of rockhounding. What we know is that the proclamation identifies paleontology. We are still reviewing BLM's baseline data needs for the monument's paleontology classifications.

However for now I think it's reasonable to say that we do have general user guidance that is currently in place. What that means is there has been no change since the induction of the Monument Plan, or I should say -- I'm sorry -- the Monument Proclamation.

I want to make sure that everyone knows that the BLM does have levels of regulation and guidance in relationship to resources like paleontology and, to be specific, the way we rockhound on Public Lands. And I

do want to make sure that I'm very specific that it's on Public Lands. We don't cover private lands.

So there are the types of regulations that the BLM will have to consider when starting the planning process. And as a reminder, paleontology and mineral gemology can go hand in hand when it comes to some of these decisions and goals that we're going to have to make for the future management of this area. Next slide, please.

So as I close, I want to share with you some of the information that is found in Proclamation 9395. What we tend to identify what called Resources, Objects, and Values, and those are the ROVs that we kind of shorthandedly speak about when we're talking about the proclamation and what we're trying to move forward with. This proclamation identifies those ROVs through the conservation of paleontology, cultural resources, and many other types of natural resources.

This proclamation also identifies recreation and many other allowable uses as a part of that list of values. So we have to balance that, and that's what we're tasked with finding, is that balance.

And so at this point I would like to leave you today with a short video about some of those traditional uses found in the Mojave Trails National Monument.

Card, can you play the video.

(Video played.)

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: That concludes my presentation, and I would like to thank everybody for allowing me this time. If you have questions, I'm here to try to answer those for you. Isn't that a great video?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yes. Thank you, Noelle. Thanks very much. I think I recognize that rockhounding place as somewhere the DAC actually had a field trip once.

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Possibly.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Do you recall the name of that location?

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Unfortunately, I'm going to have to say I'm embarrassed. I don't know the exact location. I came on about a year ago during the pandemic, and myself and my other half have spent a lot of weekends driving around the monument kind of just willy-nilly, I should say, with maps. But I don't know that location.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: You shouldn't be embarrassed. I've been there, I know the location, and I still can't remember the name. So there.

I have a couple of comments. Before I take the

floor, are there any questions from advisory council members or comments? The floor is open. Dick, are you looking to make a comment?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yeah. I just wondered when some of these -- I know that they've had public comment periods -- public sessions before on how to use this area. I wonder if in this new planning process when they anticipate allowing for public comment or having meetings about what they're doing.

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: So what we're looking for right now is, I'm going to move forward with some support on holding another three envision sessions like Kyle Sullivan did. That will hopefully gain us some better insight on what's changed when it comes to interest and what hasn't changed.

However, when it comes to public scoping process, that doesn't generally start until the NOI is filed with the Federal Register, and then that starts the actual planning process with Mojave Trails. And we are currently building a schedule, but that schedule is still a bit up in the air. I apologize I can't come up with a better answer, but we are working on it. We are working towards that.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: We'd appreciate it if, as you dial in better on a scoping schedule, that you get back

with the DAC and make us updated so we can get with some more constituents.

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Definitely, definitely.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is open.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: I was going to add to that by saying I'm sure we'll put out a press release. The DAC receives press releases. Keep an eye on your in-box, and we'll share that information from Noelle once it's available. Thank you, Mr. Holliday.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is open.

MEMBER STOVIN: This is Ed Stovin. I'm interested in what you're doing with the Mojave Trails National Monument, and I'd like to be involved in the process of creating the plan. I think you're working on the management plan, so I'd like to be involved. I'm interested in certain aspects of this management, and even if there's anything before scoping, that would be great to be part of that.

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Well, Ed, that's one of the main reasons why I'm here to speak on any of those Zoom meetings that we plan on having this winter. I want to see everybody from all of the different users communities to be represented on most of the Zoom meetings.

I really feel like, you know, being someone who

has been in the field managing outdoor recreation, whether it be kind of the hiking community all the way to the off-highway vehicle community, I like to see everybody's uses kind of looked at fairly. So that's one of those things where I'm glad that you are here today, because I wrote your name down, and I identified who you're with. And my expectation is that I'll get your information from Michelle and you will be a part of that process.

MEMBER STOVIN: Thank you, Noelle.

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm just going to remind DAC members that the discussion could continue in terms of the DAC's specific involvement and involvement of DAC members in our discussions of the subgroups. So I think we'll have another bite at this apple today.

I understand Desert Advisory Council member Richard Bagley has been able to join in. Jim, are you on the line?

MEMBER BAGLEY: Yeah, I'm back. I'm sorry. I actually called in from the Johnston Valley. I was in the car. But I'm also interested on serving on that community. If we're going to have discussion on subgroup, I'll try and participate. My participation is going to be spotty today because I'm out in the desert.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Very well. Thank you.

Yes?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: I just want to add context to Noelle's presentation there. You know, we fully anticipate the planning effort to begin this year. We're trying to preempt and really get ready for it. So what Noelle and the field office has been working on is what has been done in the past. Let's pull that together. Let's see which way we need to go. This administration is really, really interested and focused on us undertaking this planning effort, but they haven't hit the go button yet.

So there will be plenty to come. It's in the very beginning of the process. There will be a lot of opportunity for the DAC to be involved and you as individuals to be involved and the public as a whole. So we just wanted to give you a heads-up this is coming this year. And looking forward to working with everybody on it.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is still open. DAC members? I'll take the floor for a moment, if there are no objections. I'm going to take the floor with a little history.

Oh, boy. You know, the thing that's difficult or going to be difficult for me to reconcile is having

been involved in the genesis of what that monument was supposed to be or going to be and then having to reconcile that with the president's proclamation.

For some of the advisory council's background, the Mojave Trails National Monument and the Sand to Snow National Monuments were originally proposed in a pair of companion bills that, beginning about 2006, companion bills by Senator Feinstein and then Congressman Cook, who represented the larger Desert District. At the time we sort of colloquially referred to it as Desert Protection Act Two. And the stated goal of this was to create a -- not create but maintain a status quo with respect to what the desert looked like at the time prior to the build-out of renewable energy in the desert.

And it was a big bill. The bill had proposals to convert Wilderness Study Areas to Wilderness, and it had proposals to designate off-highway vehicle areas that were just designated by management to actually be designated by Congress for permanency. And in the middle of those two pieces, those two pillars, was the national monument.

And the neat thing about the monument is so many of these issues that the BLM is going to have to decide were already once decided in terms of the construction of the bill, things like vehicle use,

greensticker vehicles, street-legal vehicles. It even went so far as to set forward an initial set of routes. The bill had settled the issue of gem and mineral collecting, and it settled the issue of hunting, and it settled the issue of commercial activities, even utilities. And the tribes and the county and the local governments, all pieces had their concerns addressed within the bill, and that's why the bill enjoyed such broad support.

But it was such a big bill, and lands bills were going nowhere. In the 20-teens, 2010 through 2016, lands bills went nowhere. And at some point the wheels turned in a way in which Senator Feinstein asked the president to break out that monument, or those monuments, and to designate them under presidential proclamation.

Just to fast forward for a moment, what was left when the president took the monuments out of that big, big bill were the two pillars, the Wilderness and the OHV pillars. Surprisingly those were rather well balanced, and the bill continued through to 2019, until it was absorbed, until it was absorbed into the omnibus Dingell Act that was passed by Congress and signed by President Trump in public 2019.

So the bottom line is that all of those pieces

to the puzzle that were envisioned in 2006 in this big desert bill, all of those pieces eventually were put into place. How they were put into place was a little different story, and it's just difficult in that, as someone involved in it to see, to have worked so closely with all of the communities, to sing "Kumbaya" around these decisions, and then to now have them essentially all put back onto the table for an entirely different process.

And that's what's going to be first and foremost on my mind, is, although the proclamation does not in any way require the BLM to follow the legislative intent of bills that didn't pass, I still feel it's important to honor agreements that were made among those who live and work and recreate in the desert and to try to put forward a plan that will work for the proclamation and will work for the people.

So thank you for that. I'm sorry if I took too much of everyone's time. The floor is back open, if anyone else has any comments.

MEMBER POWELL: So Randy, I appreciate the history lesson, because I wasn't aware about that. One of the questions that I have for Noelle is, she listed the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan as one of the elements, I believe, on her slide that was going to

be revisited and studied. I would like to understand a little bit more about what you have in mind for that analysis for the DRECP.

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: So a lot of information was collected through the BLM. Whatever we do on a land use plan or a land use amendment, we normally have to go through and update things. We have to also have to take into consideration what decisions have been decided in the past.

So there are a lot of goals and a lot of decisions that crisscross over the landscape that makes up Mojave Trails. For example, visual resource management. Like I stated earlier, visual resource management, there was decisions made in the DRECP for those visual goals on how to maintain and manage certain portions of that landscape. And we can revisit that and make sure or see if those goals are still in line with the proclamation. That's kind of what I'm speaking to.

Also the data that was gathered in association to help create those goals and decisions in the DRECP is monumentally important because it's data that we don't have to go out and get. It's fairly new data, and a lot of the landscape in the monument is of course fairly intact, and so that data is great data, and we can still utilize it.

Another example is what's called Recreation Management Areas, or Special Recreation Management Areas. There are a few of those found within the monument right now. That is covered through the direction of the DRECP, and we need to kind of take a look at those goals that were identified and find out if those goals still work and if those goals crosswalk through the ROVs found in the proclamation.

So that's the type of information that I'm looking at, and that's the type of information that the BLM is tasked to look at whenever we go into a planning process, whether it be a national monument where a proclamation helps kind of define what direction we should be going towards, or just the general resource management plan process.

Does that help?

MEMBER POWELL: Yes. So what happens with, say, when -- and this sounds like it's becoming a giant spider web with multiple layers. They just continue to build. So what happens in the if the DRECP and the goals of other proclamations or things conflict?

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: So at this point --

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Sorry, Noelle.

Jayne, just to be clear, the only part of DRECP that we would consider amending are things that are

specific to the monument, and it's really just to be sure that those things are coordinated with each other because they were done at different times and we hadn't undertaken the planning for the national monument. And maybe you understand that, but I just wanted to be clear we're not talking about the DRECP as a whole. It's only those items that are specific to the monument.

MEMBER POWELL: Correct, correct.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: There are a couple of other things that complicate things a bit too. One, you know, the monument, before it was named Mojave Trails National Monument, the original name and the concept was Mother Road National Monument because Route 66 runs right through the middle of the monument and was really an important factor in our ability to gain support of the local governments.

We were very fortunate in our coalition to have the Route 66 Association right up in front and forward through this bill. And Route 66 has since received a good deal of attention, planning and other attention. So I think that Route 66 is something that will be unusual to have to fold into the monument planning.

Another unusual thing is that a piece of the monument, the Cady Mountains, is arguably the most visited of the backcountry areas in the monument. And

the Cady Mountains are the westernmost slice of the monument near Barstow, and it falls within the West Mojave planning area. And so the 2019 route designations that were completed by the BLM for the West Mojave, WEMO, cover the Cady Mountains. And we haven't heard yet the report from the BLM, but if you follow the news on the West Mojave, the chronic planning problem of the BLM remains chronic. It's back in the courts again.

And so there will be some reconciling that will have to be done with respect to route planning and recreational activity planning in the very, very popular Cady Mountains. So it's a big monument with a lot of seemingly overlapping projects either that have been completed or are in progress or are on the table. And trying to reconcile all of that and putting it into one plan is -- gee, it's going to be fun.

MS. GLINES-BOVIO: So I definitely understand that, but I need everyone to also understand that this is going to be a monument that creates goals and objectives that are at the landscape level. So when it comes to travel management, that's a very important conversation, and we are still working on that. And Katrina and I speak about it on a constant basis.

We feel like those decisions might end up not

being rolled into a route-by-route decision process, because the one thing we don't want to get involved with is making solid decisions in a management plan that could actually kind of curtail the on-the-ground management decisions for Travel Management Areas. And so, you know, we want to make sure we're fluid enough in a management plan that could last up to 20 years, whereas some of those on-the-ground decisions could be much more fluid in nature.

But great, you know. It's on everyone's mind, you know. It's good to bring that up, you know, bring that forward. And I know a lot of people in the public may want us to move forward with these really kind of site-specific decisions, but the area has been managed for a very long time, and, you know, what we need to do is just need to evaluate those goals and objectives when it comes to the proclamation and figure out how we're going to manage for, you know, that at the top level and give us the space to be more specific, you know, through that management plan.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is open.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I do want to say thank you, Randy, for the history lesson. We can't really know where we need to go without knowing where we came from, so I think it's very important, what you brought up to

this conversation. And I'll reserve my other question when we get into the subgroups.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: DAC members? DAC members, the floor is still open. Well, thank you, Noelle. Thank you very much. It's nice to have you here and introduce yourself to the advisory council. And I get a feeling that we'll be seeing more of you in the upcoming meetings as our process unfolds.

Andrew, Michelle, any objections from the DAC members also for moving forward on the agenda? The next item on the agenda is to talk about our subgroups. Hearing and seeing no objections, thanks again, Noelle. I'm going to open up the topic on groups hoping Mike Ahrens -- I've stalled for him enough to get his mic and camera going, and I'll turn the floor over to our BLM counterpart to help update us.

First of all, Mike, it's great to reconnect with you on these this issue in particular, because between the two of us we seem to remember a lot of history, and I think we're able to put a lot of that down on these pages.

MR. AHRENS: Yeah, absolutely. And for the record, Mike Ahrens, Needles Field Office manager.

And, yeah, Randy, I think Andrew asked me to do this because he knows I've been here in the desert for

quite some time and have been in the DAC group for that entire period and super interested in the subgroups. And I think they've been wildly successful over the years and really benefited the DAC and the public.

I also want to take just a moment before we move on to this to thank Noelle for being on there. She's super bright, a joy to work with, and I think going to do a super job, already doing a super job as a monument manager and doing the preplanning there.

As she said, you know, we really want to have a very broad representation of interests involved in the plan, so I absolutely encourage all of you and your constituents to reach out to Noelle and let her know kind of what you kind of think and how you kind of see your involvement in the future planning.

Okay. So with that, Card is going to work the presentation for me. Thank you. So as I said, Andrew asked me to kind of put this together and kind of walk you guys through how we might reinitiate the subgroups and kind of what the subgroups are about, and so that's what we're going to do. Next slide, please.

So as I said, the DAC has had a really long and successful history with the DAC subgroups. We'll look a little bit at some of the subgroups we've had in the past in a moment. But you know, the purpose of the

subgroups really is to explore specific topics that DAC members might have questions about, might be considering making recommendations to the BLM over, and it's also -- the subgroup itself is a mechanism to be able to involve stakeholders that are not DAC members and kind of better daylight the deliberations on those specific topics. So the DAC bylaws actually allow for three different kinds of working groups. So I just wanted to kind of go over that.

The first is a subcommittee, which is a subset of the DAC. The DAC might do that, where there's a topic that you have specific interest in, you might want to give a recommendation about. But it's something that the DAC members themselves really have a lot of expertise in and feel that they can, you know, debate and develop those recommendations really on their own.

So a subgroup, it's all DAC members only. And they can be set up pretty easily and quickly. You could set one up in this meeting if you wanted to to count the chairs in the room. So that's those. What we're really going to be talking about today are subgroups. They must include at least one DAC member. They can have more, and then has the ability to include other stakeholders and subject matter experts, depending on what the topic is that you're trying to explore, and

ultimately resolve or give some kind of guidance to BLM about.

And then the third type of working group that can be formed -- this one would actually be formed by the BLM at the request of the DAC -- is a technical review team. Technical review team would consist of all federal employees. It would be subject matter experts on whatever that subject might be, and they could deliberate the question that the DAC had identified and help the DAC to understand from a technical sense that topic, whatever that might be.

And then I think it's also good to kind of say that, you know, these groups can be -- you know, they could work together. The DAC could have a subcommittee that works and takes advice from a technical review team, you know, perhaps. So you have a lot of flexibility here on how you might use those three types of groups to conduct your business. Next slide, please.

So as I said, we have had a few different groups in the past. They generally will fall into one of two kind of broad categories, either a standing subcommittee or -- I'm sorry -- subgroup, such as the ISDRA, and the Dumont Dunes that we had in the past. Those were targeted at the management of those two dune complexes and the fee programs within those two

complexes, so it was ongoing discussion about the overall management of the areas and what have you. And so these really became what we call standing subgroups. The members technically have some kind of a term, and so they evolve and what have you with those terms.

And then there's been several different -- and this is by no means an absolutely inclusive list or complete list -- but of like ad hoc subgroups. And so we've had them in the past to explore route signing and what's the appropriate amount of signing. There was one for the West Mojave Travel Management Plan at one time that did a lot of inventory work and talked about that. I'm not sure the DRECP one. I think it did start. But, yeah, I honestly don't quite recall the outcome with that.

And then there's been a lot of discussion about SRPs, both when is an SRP required? You know, when is it casual use? When does it actually require a permit? The permit administration, the DAC subgroup developed a really great planner development we all use today as we permit off-highway vehicle events.

And then the DAC subgroup explored the third-party monitoring, as well, and I think some of those discussions may even be still ongoing. So next slide.

So to help the DAC, presuming that you want to reinitiate some of the subgroups, we went ahead and we put together a template that a DAC member or members could use to propose a new subgroup, and so I'd like to go through that. We sent those to you, I think, last night, and I think we're prepared to put the template.

Display that here, Card. Card will get that up, and then I'd like us to kind of go through how that template works and what you might do if you wanted to propose a new subgroup.

There we are. So pretty straightforward. The template starts with a subgroup title. Obviously that would be an abbreviated title that would describe the topic that the subgroup would be working on. We have a section for the mission. This would be where you kind of describe the topic and the problem that you're trying to resolve, you know, or think you want to get some advice on or recommendations.

And then the goals section, which would help to kind of let the group know, the DAC know, consider what a successful outcome is. How do you know when you've reached the conclusion, the resolution that you're kind of looking for?

So with that we then move into the expertise needed. Depending on the topic, you'll want different

kinds of expertise, whether it's a recreation project or something with geology or any of our programs or uses. So you want to take a little bit of time to kind of identify, you know, what levels of expertise and what flavors of expertise the group really needs to be able to have a broad discussion about the topic and give the DAC an opportunity to have some really well kind of thought of reasoned advice and recommendations that you could pass on to the BLM.

And I should say here also this is a template. I've dropped language in, and some of it is boiler-plate. But really the DAC has an opportunity to discuss any of these topics and formulate as you see fit.

So, like the proposed composition of the subgroup, you know, my recommendation is about seven to nine. I think actually that was in some past subgroup proposals that Randy shared with me. And I think that's a good size, workable group, so I put that in there. But if for reason the DAC thought the group needed to be larger, smaller, have other, you know, sideboards on how it was formed and the composition of it, that would be totally up to the DAC's consideration.

And then the term as well, especially if it's a standing subgroup that's going to go on for year after

year after year, I think it's important for the DAC to consider the lifespan of any particular member's term in the group, and there's a lot of ways to look at that. Randy and I actually had a little bit of a debate ourselves about it, and I'll leave it up to you guys to explore on your own.

But, you know, you want to make sure the group stays fresh. You want to maintain the group's corporate knowledge as it moves through time and -- yeah. So there's a lot of -- again it's something for the DAC to determine.

As far as the selection of the members, again I put some boiler-plate in here. You may or may not want to change that with subgroups. But essentially the way we envision this is a DAC member or members would put this template together, would describe the group and the problem and what have you. If the DAC chose to form a subgroup for that topic, then we obviously would tell the BLM.

With BLM's concurrence we would start working on some public notification and nomination process for people, and that likely would then go to -- any nominees would end up going to the DAC chair, who could coordinate a review with the DAC and then ultimately put together a roster that the DAC could agree to or debate.

Then I think it's helpful to identify the meeting schedules proposed. Sometimes that may be kind of dependent on the members and how that -- you know, so but some idea, do we think it's going to take three meetings? Do we think it's going to be ongoing three meetings a year? What do we think we're going to do?

Then the reporting process is again boiler-plate. Could probably be changed some. However the fundamental point of a DAC subgroup is it's the DAC subgroup. The group reports to the DAC, and then the DAC can choose to accept, reject, or modify the group's findings and recommendations and whether or not to forward those recommendations over to the BLM.

Okay. So if we could switch back to the slides. And next slide.

Okay. So as I said, if the DAC indeed decided to move forward with a new subgroup, you know, we'd know that from the vote in the meeting, and Michelle would probably be the center of this effort. We'd start with the public notification. One point that I know has been of interest, over the years we've really determined that, because the DAC subgroup is a subgroup of the DAC itself and the DAC has been, you know, notified -- the public has been notified about the DAC and the DAC activities through Federal Register Notices and

scheduling, what have you, we don't see any future Federal Register Notices or any kind of formal publications like that for the subgroups themselves.

So we would end up -- if you chose to have a subgroup, we'd put together a call for nominations, probably a press release about those nominations and about that call. We'd accept those nominations for some period of time, and once we receive them, as I said, we'd provide those to the DAC chair, who could then organize a review of some kind with the DAC members and prepare a list of proposed members that DAC then could consider at their next meeting. And, yeah, and you'd select those at your next meeting, and then that subgroup would be officially formed and could start business. Next slide.

So potential next steps. And this really is subject to what the DAC wants to do. You know, we think that the DAC could consider re-establishing the three previously agreed-upon subgroups, the ISDRA Sand Dunes, Dumont Sand Dunes, and we had actually approved or agreed to a Mojave Trails National Monument Subgroup, which never got -- I think we called for nominations but never got anybody seated. So the DAC really today could decide to begin the process of moving forward with one or all or none of those.

I also think that the DAC has the room, in particular with the Dumont and the ISDRA Subgroups, to agree to reinitiate the subgroups. And I think at this point you could actually establish what would technically be a subcommittee that DAC members who had an interest in those subgroups and could actually begin meeting, you know, today, really, if you chose to do that.

And then the subgroup would go through the normal process. We'd announce for nominations and bring those nominees back to, as I said, the chair and then to the DAC for consideration. So the full subgroup could be formulated over that period of time. Yeah, so I think you have that as an option.

And then of course also, if there were additional topics -- I should back up and say you should have these as well -- to help with the discussion, I want to add, we actually went ahead and drafted up proposals for those three groups, so you should have those that you could choose to consider now or later today, however that would work. And/or if a DAC member has another topic that they'd like to propose, you could discuss that, and you'd need to work to develop that using the template to develop that proposal.

So next slide, I think, is questions. And I'm

open to any questions or discussion.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Mike.

Fantastic. Thanks again for putting all that stuff together.

The floor is open for council members. I'm trying to find my grid. There we go. If any council members want to jump right in, you're welcome to do so.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I do have a real quick. Mike, can you explain again the difference between a standing subgroup and an ad hoc group. I apologize. I kind of didn't quite catch it at first.

MR. AHRENS: I'm sorry. Maybe I wasn't clear. The idea with a standing subgroup, it's a topic that really kind of lives on that you expect will go on for multiple years, you know, perhaps maybe indefinitely. Like the two dune subgroups are perfect examples of that. The ad hoc is a more specific question. Streamlining film permitting might be something that you could set up a subgroup to look at and involves some subject matter experts and what have you and in a finite amount of time come up with some recommendations on how we might do that.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good question, Dan.

Thanks.

Others?

MEMBER STOVIN: I think there's interest in starting an Imperial Sand Dunes Subgroup again. I'd like to be a part of that if and when it comes back to life.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Let me jump in for a minute, and let me sort of narrow down a little bit here. Let's start to move some things off the table off to the side. Let's take, for example, Mike's last suggestion first, and that is new ideas, new concepts, subgroups that haven't been done before. And I think we can get this off the table quickly, because, really, thanks to that awesome template that Mike put together. I didn't think of that. Thank you.

Having a blank template is good. So I think now that every DAC member has that template, I have had some correspondence over the last couple of months with DAC members having questions about the subgroups. And I think some of your answers you got today, and I think the template would be helpful to you. If it comes front and forward in your mind that that could be a tool to help you or the DAC or the BLM achieve a goal or a mission, then by all means pull it out and start writing something up and talk to your constituency about it.

So with that said, I'm trying to limit today's

conversation just a tad, trying to find a good focus. We have the three templates -- or I'm going to just say mission statements in front of us that we can actually consider. It's kind of like what I'd like to focus on, but we can focus on these by getting other things off the table.

So any questions about other kinds of subgroups or new subgroups or that blank template? And then maybe we can move on to just these three items here. Any other questions on that?

MEMBER POWELL: So, Randy, could we set a place on the agenda in our next meeting to bring new ideas for subgroups to you that are not one of these three?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'd like that very much. We could do a couple of things. Number one, normally toward the end of each meeting we have our subgroup reports. It's a good opportunity to bring up the overall conversation of subgroups. Number two, if you are brainstorming a specific subgroup, I'd urge you to take the template, fill in some of the blanks that you can, and distribute it to us. And that could even be presented during one's report.

So we have opportunities to bring these up without having to actually schedule a specific agenda item, but if you certainly are looking for action or

would want to cover a number of them, it would probably make sense to put them together into an agenda item.

Let's see how people feel about others.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Randy, can I tag onto that?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Please, you bet.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: I want everybody to be clear that the subgroups have to come from within the DAC or at your interest, and there's nothing wrong with talking to your local field manager or other BLM person about some of the details of it, but it has to originate from within the DAC. And that helps us to avoid any of the need to notice of the Federal Register or go outside of the DAC with information within BLM.

So I just want to make that clear, that it's up to you all to get those started. We're here to assist, but the subgroups work for the DAC itself.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good. That's a really good line. That's a good line to draw.

As a side, generally what we've seen -- just again trying to get the issue of other new upcoming subgroups off the table, what we've generally found is subgroups are good when the DAC has interest in an issue, the overall members of the DAC have an interest in an issue, but it doesn't have the expertise. In

other words, that there are others among the public that could educate a subgroup -- that could be part of a subgroup and help educate the DAC better on issues.

Other times -- and this sounds a little cruel, but it's the truth -- sometimes DAC members may not really have an interest in the subject matter but they do recognize the importance of that subject matter to other DAC members or to good government. For example, the dunes subgroups, they were birthed about ten or so years ago when fees were first able to be charged for recreation areas. So you can see there was a time where the public was queasy about having to pay fees for something they have been always to enjoy for free. Where are those fees going? Do I have any say in it?

But we may have members on the DAC who were not perhaps specifically interested in recreation and the dunes but does feel that good government and accountability and having users have input into how their money is spent is something that is good. So sometimes a DAC member won't have a real interest in it but still believes that it's the mission of the DAC to follow it.

A third thing, though, to consider is there is a lot of care of feeding with a subgroup. I said this before, and I do want to say it again. Most of the care

and feeding is on behalf of the BLM. But we have to make room for those subgroups as well. We have to make sure to make time to hear from those groups. And when they have advice and they would like us to hear that or respond back to it or even issue formal advice to the BLM, we have to take the time to do that. So there's care and feeding involved in it.

So when you're looking at new groups, consider that. And if there's a specific issue that really seems to be mucky that could benefit from advanced participation within members of the public to help educate us, that's a great place to start.

And I'll leave that, the floor open. Any more comments on just sort of general moving forward with empowering subgroups?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I'll make some comments. I've been on a subgroup for decades, and they originally started out years ago as TRTs, and then a few years ago we went through a process of generating more of the same kind of things that are in that template to just explain and codify some of the things the way that subgroups are handled.

And I do think that, as Randy said, there's a couple of -- the two dunes subgroups have better -- have pretty good participation, and we address things that

are more appropriate for the dune-type thing and the fees. There are a couple of other areas where there's fees. So those don't have subgroups, but they're a part of what Randy does for El Mirage, I believe, probably the only other place that has fees --

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Right.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: -- other than campgrounds. So I would appreciate the -- I currently was on the ISDRA Subgroup, and so I think that that probably the idea to reinstate those with the existing people and then let them pick out some new people would be good to get them moving again, because the dunes seasons are opening, and we do have some issues we would like to discuss with the BLM through these organizations.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: If there's no objections, I'd like to transition then to the three that we talked about. And I'd just like to first bring up that we look first at these two dunes subgroups. These are already -- these documents are not from scratch. These have by and large existed, maybe not to the completeness that they are here in front of you consistently across the board, but we as DAC have seen these before. It's my opinion that, because these two were created as standing committees, they still exist. It's just that our members of the subcommittee have termed out. We

have no members, and we need to ask a DAC member to be a part of that subgroup so it can provide the important nexus to the DAC. So again in my opinion these two groups are still alive. We've never voted to terminate them. They're standing committees, and in my opinion until the DAC says, "I vote to terminate these two committees," I believe these two committees are good.

So what I would suggest as appropriate action on this would just be in recognition that the advisory council is meeting again, request the BLM to solicit members to stand these committees back up again.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Randy, there should be -- we've called for new people at least for the ISDRA group several times, and both Ed and myself are on those, and I've put in applications again here asking for the DAC when all these things quit. I'm sure the BLM has some existing requests. I don't know about the Dumont, but I know that ISDRA, and there should be some existing applications. But if not, they should call for new ones also.

I also wanted to make one comment too. I noticed in the template it says they get members from Southern California. Well, as far as the ISDRA group goes, we need to also include Arizona. Our previous one we always included four people from -- two or three

people from California and two or three people from Arizona, because a big contingent of the people that go to the dunes, at least the ISDRA, are from Arizona.

CHAIRMAN BANIS: Yeah, the dunes straddle, essentially straddle the two states. And I can say the same for Dumont Dunes. Las Vegas, Nevada supplies half the visitors to Dumont Dunes, although it's located in California, and we have had user-specific seats for Nevada users on our subgroup. Perhaps we can adjust that, if there's no objections from the council. If there's no objections from the council, we can ask the BLM to modify, make that minor modification.

MEMBER TAYLOR: No objections here.

MEMBER POWELL: No objections.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: No objections, hearing and seeing none. Good point, Dick. Thanks a lot. I'm going to bring up a side thing Mike also touched on. That is the issue of terms. Generally what we find is that for standing groups, those that go on and on having rotating members, having staggered terms, bringing in fresh, having a number of people from the past with institutional memory probably works best in those standing committees.

Probably in an ad hoc committee, which is based on solving an issue or working on one matter, that

probably would be better off having the subgroup members remaining on the subgroup throughout the term of the work product.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Sounds reasonable.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: So for the Dumont and Imperial Subgroups, they are used to the fact of having terms that rotate. I would probably recommend that for the Mojave Trails National Monument Subgroup we have a term that starts with the beginning of the subgroup and ends at the end of the subgroup with a work product.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I would second that, Randy.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The last point I wanted to bring up is one of the problems we've had -- and you've seen it as DAC members. Those who have been here the longest have seen it -- that sometimes we're running like a Swiss clock. Notices are going out, and we're soliciting new members and soliciting new subgroups, and we've got subgroups meeting and duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, duh, and then on occasion over the course of the last couple of decades we have times when we're not running like a Swiss watch, we're kind of maybe running with a motor maybe in need of a tune-up.

And I think the point I'm getting at is, you've seen how difficult it is for the BLM to go through the steps necessary to just stand up our Desert Advisory

Council with 15 members. But when you start throwing in all of these subgroups as well to keep them standing up, especially if you have rotating terms, what I'm going to maybe suggest -- and I don't know why I haven't thought of it or anyone hasn't brought it up before. I'm sure someone has thought of it, but perhaps if there's a way to combine the solicitation for new DAC members along with solicitation for upcoming expiring terms on the subgroups.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: If you go to the DAC web page, that's on there right now. There's calls for members for the groups, and there's calls for members for the DAC.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Okay. Good. Okay. I've touched on all of my notes. The floor is open for comments. And we have seven members present, and that's a majority for our housekeeping actions that we may want to take today. I'm happy to entertain additional comments, questions, or we could jump right in with a motion and discuss the motion and work our way through the remainder of this issue. The floor is open.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Michelle has her hand up.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Hi, everyone. I just wanted to clarify -- excuse me -- on that recent press release that just went out calling for DAC members. So

that press release is looking for two members to fill vacancies in Category 2, but it does not mention subgroups. So if there were to be the desire to form subgroups, that would have a separate call that would go out. I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Just to add to that, Randy, I like your idea. It makes way too much sense, but I don't think we could comply them because of the department requirements for the DAC nominations, and the subgroup nominations are coming from you all, so to keep things, I'll call it easier and maybe more efficient for us, keeping them separate would probably be the best.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I definitely recognize that and had that in mind. I was actually looking at it as being a part A and a part B on a to-do list; when it comes time to solicit for DAC, perhaps work a separate package for group.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: If you do it locally, that makes sense.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah, just so it's done one time a year, every year it just gets done, because the problem before is, unfortunately, you know, we'd solicit DAC members on an occasion and then somebody on a subgroup would realize, "Oh, no, this subgroup is going

to have terms expire"; "Oh, we're already past"; "Oh, wow, we need new subgroup members." And then two months later somebody else says, "Oh, our subgroup is low too; we need members too."

So there wasn't any holistic looking ahead of which subgroup members would have expired terms that would need to be addressed during the course of the year. So my point is more just sort of having a checklist or a to-do that really addresses DAC membership as well as subgroup membership, sort of address that all at one time in the year through whatever separate vehicles it needs to be done. But then it's done, it's checked off, and we wait for next year.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Makes sense.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah. Sorry. Thank you.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I think that I saw someplace in these documents here where the suggestion was that we reinstantiate at least the current subgroups for the existing members and call for new members and set up the schedule for -- we have a schedule already. We had a schedule. I don't know where it is now. We rotated members on our subgroups also.

But I would make a motion that we put the two -- at least the two dunes subgroups back into

service with the existing members that were on and we can contact the existing people and see if they want to complete this and then set up timeframes to re-access those at some period of time like you suggested.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: We have a motion on the floor. Thank you, Dick. I appreciate that. Do we have a second so we can begin needed discussion on that one?

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER TAYLOR: I would second that.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Great. We have a second. I'm going to recognize Dan on that second. Sorry. I know there were others, and I appreciate that.

So with that open, I'll go last. The floor is open, please. Any objections to the motion? Or questions?

MEMBER POWELL: I don't have an objection. I have a question. Who are the DAC members on the respective subgroups?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I'm on the ISDRA one, and Ed Stovin is also on that one.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: And I provided the nexus to the Dumont Dunes Subgroup.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I would like to volunteer to be on the Dumont Dunes as well.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: That's great, yeah. I

could work with you.

MEMBER POWELL: Are you sure?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Uh-huh, uh-huh. We do once a month, so I'm willing to try twice. Any other questions? With that said, rather than me trying to count hands on the screen or do a roll, and since this isn't advice to the BLM, it's administrative housekeeping. The seven of us here and present.

Are there any objections to the motion to resume the Dumont Dunes Subgroup and ISDRA Subgroup and to ask the BLM to call for members for the Mojave Trails National Monument Subgroup? Are there any objections? Once, twice.

Hearing and seeing none, motion passes by consent. Thank you. The floor is still open if there's closing comments or closing questions or suggestions for going forward and ahead. Andrew and Michelle, are we good with this? We have what we need to go forward?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Yes, sir, I think we're good.

Michelle?

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: I think so. So did we have a DAC member who is going to be the ringleader, if you will, of the Mojave Trails National Monument Subgroup?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: We certainly can ask for -- well, we've done that in two ways. One way that we've done this is that during the application process when we call for applicants, advisory council members are free to apply at that point. Another way that we've done it is we've waited until we have stood up the actual subgroup, we've stood up the subgroup, and then we ask for a volunteer. So it's gone both of those ways. I don't see a problem with starting this out right now and asking for interest from our group here.

Now, this is a subgroup of the Desert Advisory Council. We only need one Desert Advisory Council member on that subgroup to provide that legal nexus to the Desert Advisory Council, but there's no limit. And we have had multiple Desert Advisory Council members serve on subgroups in the past. The West Mojave Route Designation Subgroup had three DAC members on it, and one was chair, not myself. That was Dinah Shumway. Still, I'd just as soon call for interest and get this on the record now so that we can reach out to you as this moves forward.

Those interested in serving, go ahead.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Randy, for BLM's purposes we would need each subgroup to have, like you mentioned, either a chair or primary point of contact so

it makes it more efficient for us to work with that subgroup for whatever we're needing to do from the BLM end.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Even right now from the initiation stage, the planning stage as well; right?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Exactly.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Let's do that then. I appreciate that advice. Thank you.

Council members interested in serving on the Mojave Trails National Monument Subgroup?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I would like to do that.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Was that Dick?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Dick, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I see Ed waving his hand, but I don't see everybody on my little screen here. So please speak up if you're interested.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I believe I would be interested in being on that subgroup as well. This is Dan Taylor.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Dan.

Jim, are you still on the line, Jim Bagley?

Jim Bagley, are you there? Okay. Sorry. Just making a specific shout-out to Jim. He lives in the neighborhood.

So let's do this. So getting back to the process, the applications will come to the chair, who

submits nominations to the Desert Advisory Council. You see all the applicants. The council will decide to accept the nominations or exchange those nominations around, and we will set the membership of that subgroup, and then at that time the chair of the DAC, if it happens all within my term, I would appoint the chair of the subgroup.

But at this time how would the council like to proceed on designating its official representative to the Mojave Trails group at this time to assist the BLM in planning and putting that subgroup together for us? Do we want to select among us Dick, Ed, or Dan? Or would you just as soon put that on my shoulders to make a choice? I'm happy to put them up against each other and vote.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Let's go with Dan.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm happy to do so. I'm happy to do so. If there's no objection, there's just one little thing I want to check online. Could I make that selection after the morning break? Any objection? I just wanted one little thing I need to check online. Thanks. I'm creating suspense, aren't I? That way everybody has to come back from the break. Otherwise you won't know how it ends up.

Before we go to break, because that is the next

item on the agenda, we have two minutes, maybe less.

Comments, questions about the subgroups?

MEMBER POWELL: Since it looks like there can be three members on a subgroup, I'd like to volunteer for the Imperial Subgroup.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you very much. I appreciate that. Thanks, Jayne. That's an easy decision. You're on.

MEMBER POWELL: I didn't know you had so much power.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm not hearing a lot of objections either. It's great doing business with you all. This is really good getting back into stride, folks. With that said, I'm just going to end this agenda item on time. Let's go on to our 15-minute morning break. Back at 11 a.m. How about it, folks? Is that good? Once, twice, we're off. We're going to break for 15 minutes. I'm turning the floor back to Andrew and Michelle. Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right. We've got a timer going, so grab your coffee, take a break, and we'll be back here in 14 minutes, 56 seconds.

(Morning break.)

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Great discussion on subgroups, and I appreciate everybody's willingness

to get the subgroups active again. So good work this morning.

Randy, I'll turn it back over to you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: That was nice. Thank you, Andrew. It was a good break, folks. Before we jump in on the update on the bighorn sheep and Devil's Canyon seasonal access, during which we'll hear from Amy Fesnock, I wanted to get back to the subgroup decision on setting a point person.

What this essentially is, if I understand it correctly, Michelle and Andrew, I got you both on the same screen, so it's great. I can see your faces as I say this. What I see is essentially one member of the Desert Advisory Council that will provide the nexus to the subgroup, someone that you can perhaps work with to get that committee started and up and running and rolling.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Exactly.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Now, I know that from experience from time to time everybody misses a meeting here and there, and it also happens to DAC members who are supposed to be present to provide a nexus. I'd like to, if that's okay, also appoint an alternate just someone that we know that, if the point person is not present at the meeting, we have a Desert Advisory

Council alternate that can be there to provide that nexus, and provided that it's done through this meeting and through the process, hoping that would be formal enough to meet that objective. Would that be okay?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Yeah, I don't see any problem with that, you know, to keep the information flowing and give, whether it be Michelle, myself, or another BLM person, just a point of contact. And if occasionally if it's somebody different, that's not a big deal at all.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Okay. Great. Good. That's really great. What I'd like to do then -- we were talking about the point person for the Mojave Trails National Monument. That's the first one we were talking about. If there's no objections from the DAC, I'd like Ed Stovin to be the point person on that.

And let's see. I didn't do that very well at all. I thought I had these notes really well written. Ed, I'd like you to be the point on the Mojave Trails. Dick, I'd like you to be the point on ISDRA. And Dan, I'd like you to be the point on Dumont. The thing I had to check online, by the way, was looking at the terms for people see when their terms are going to expire, just to make sure that I wasn't selecting someone who

will be leaving us very, very shortly.

I have a request to put an alternate as well, and I was going to ask Jayne to be the alternate for ISDRA. That's just the alternate point person. Again, if Dick can't make a meeting or something, at least you can provide the nexus, you know, be the DAC member who's officially here.

MEMBER POWELL: Sure. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: And let's see. I'll serve as an alternate for Dumont. And who did I have for trails?

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Randy, the other names there for Mojave Trails National Monument were Dick Holliday, Ed Stovin -- excuse me. You nominated him as point -- and Dan Taylor.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yes.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I think it should be you. You've got more history there than anybody.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'll alternate on the Mojave Trails.

MEMBER ROBINSON: Hi. This is Bob Robinson.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Hi, Bob.

MEMBER ROBINSON: Hi. I tried to get in earlier, and I couldn't get the darn thing to unmute.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm glad to hear from you.

I'm glad you're on now.

MEMBER ROBINSON: I've been on, but I just couldn't unmute, and I just wanted to express an interest in the Mojave Trails.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm really glad you said that. Okay. Gotcha.

MEMBER ROBINSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Okay. Thanks, folks. Housekeeping over. And let's move on to the issues, the juicy stuff.

Amy, at the last meeting we had very uplifting presentation on the desert tortoise, the status of the desert tortoise. I'm sorry. I mean that jokingly because it's hard to joke about anything when it comes to the current status of the desert tortoise. Amy's presentation last time really hit the nail on the head and gave us a really good picture of the challenges that that species faces. So I'm expecting Amy is going to be frank enough and forward with us on desert bighorn sheep and the Devil's Canyon issue.

Hi, Amy. Welcome back.

MS. FESNOCK: Hey, Randy. Thank you very much.

For those who may not know me, my name is Amy Fesnock. I am the resource advisor for the California Desert District, and my presentation today

will be more uplifting than the desert tortoise story I shared last time as we talk about desert bighorn.

Today's conversation will focus, as I said, on the desert bighorn, which is identified here in the brown color, and the peninsular bighorn down here in the yellow. We will not be discussing the Sierra Nevada bighorn, which is shown in orange.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm sorry.

MS. FESNOCK: I forgot to share my screen. My goodness. I practiced all of this. So now I'm going to start again.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: We can see it now. Thank you.

MS. FESNOCK: Okay. So today our talk will discuss the desert bighorn subpopulation, which is identified here in the brown on the map, and the peninsular bighorn sheep, which are here in the yellow. We will not be discussing the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep as shown in orange.

We have a large update to cover today. I will be covering the first six topics on this list, and Ryan will cover the seventh topic, the Devil's Canyon seasonal access. And after Ryan's presentation is completed, we will then open the floor for questions. While BLM is providing the information today, I would

like to share that this talk would not be possible if it weren't for the support from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon State University, who helped me in preparing these slides.

And then when it comes to management of bighorn sheep, I would also like to point out that we have partners with the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, the Wild Sheep Foundation, and both the national and California chapter.

Moving on to our first topic, California Department of Fish and Wildlife has maintained radio-collared rams in use in different bighorn sheep use throughout the California Desert Conservation Area. In most years they plan captures to add new collars to the herds, and while those animals are at hand, they collect samples and measurements to assist in other studies. There is a fall capture planned. If all goes well, they will capture 115 animals spread across these eleven herds to add additional collars to each of these herds.

Our next topic today is Wildlife Water Developments. Historically there are two kinds of developments, those that are designed for big game, like deer and bighorn, and those that are designed for upland

game, like game birds, quail and dove, and small mammals, like rabbits, hares, cottontails, that kind of thing.

However we need to recognize that water developments support a vast number of wildlife species across all taxon. When you think of water developments, there is no one-size-fits-all. Each development is tailored to its specific geographic location.

Water developments have three main components, the first of which is water storage tanks. Storage tanks can be fully aboveground, as we see here in this photo. They can be partially buried, as they are in this one and this one. Or they can be fully underground, as we see in the middle photo.

Water access is the second component, and it's the drinker itself. It's how the water is made available to wildlife, and again each water development out there has a different style drinker to fit the specifics of that geographic location.

The third component of a wildlife water development is the catchment. This is how water is collected and moved into the storage tanks. These can be natural washes with checked dams like we see here in this photo. They can be paved areas like we see here. Or most recently, we have started implementing these

large tarp-like structures called rain mats that are easier to deploy out into remote locations and to be maintained over the long-term.

Current challenges that we are facing is that many of the drinkers that are out there are more than 30 years old. We are starting to experience failures of those systems, and the maintenance and repair needs are higher than they have been, and in some cases entire components need to be replaced.

Additionally, as the desert is seeing more prolonged droughts, we're having water sources, both our developed water sources and natural water sources, go dry. And that's resulting in our water developments being less reliable if animals go to them and water is not actually present. These drought conditions, besides affecting our ability to capture water, is also leading to the forage that the sheep eat, having less water content. And when there's less water in the food, they have an increased need for surface water.

And historically you would think of bighorn sheep only needing to drink fresh water or large amounts of fresh water during the summertimes. Because of the prolonged droughts, we are actually finding that sheep are needing year-round surface water in order to maintain their health.

Because of the accumulation of these issues that we're currently dealing with, BLM and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife would like to prepare a programmatic district-wide Environmental Assessment that will cover both the big-game and small-game drinkers, wildlife development, water development in Wilderness and non-Wilderness.

Due to the complex nature of this EA, we are breaking it into components that help us think about these actions in a routine or a categorized way.

The first set of actions that we consider is monitoring and then incidental maintenance. Monitoring occurs two or three times a year, where volunteers hike out and check on the water development. And then if while they're there on their routine checks, small maintenance is needed, they go ahead and implement that small maintenance.

The next way that we kind of think about maintaining water developments in our natural areas is this category of in-kind repair. This is something that requires more than one person to fix. It could be something like this photo here, where we needed to replace the drinker and water access for sheep. It could be something like replacing these water tanks with these new larger water tanks. The idea behind in-kind

repair is that you stay within the existing footprint and you maintain the form and function of the existing water development.

The third section that the programmatic EA needs to cover is water hauls. There are some drinkers that are out there where we have to provide water on a routine basis. That's either done via helicopters or gravity feed or pumped water. There are times in the monitoring of drinkers we find that they are dry or near running out of water and we need to do an emergency assist with water in that situation.

Because of the complexity of getting water to these remote locations, water hauls normally involve some kind of mechanical equipment like helicopters, water trucks, even set up water bladders and intricate hose lays and pumps to move water from our brought-in water to where the storage tanks are in the natural areas.

The fourth main component is larger issues, and these are major maintenance and repairs. These actions would include going beyond the existing footprint. We might need to install larger storage tanks that have a bigger base than the original storage tanks. We might need to increase the catchment areas with additional rain mats. Because we are disturbing new ground, these

are much larger in thought process.

The programmatic EA will set up the sideboards and the structure for what steps need to be done in order to approve future major maintenance and repairs. Additionally, as we recognize we are moving into a prolonged drought period and natural water sources become less and less reliable, we are contemplating the potential need of new installations of wildlife water development.

The programmatic EA will not actually do any approvals of new installations but will instead establish the framework and the process by which BLM will consider new installations in the future.

Also related to this wildlife water development topic, we wanted to bring to your attention that there are these five specific projects that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife would like to start working on this fall as far as planning goes with implementation hopefully in 2022 because of the importance of these particular water sources and the relative scale or issue of the problems that were being addressed, as far as why these five kind of float to the top of needing to be addressed sooner rather than later.

Our third topic that we're covering today is Desert Bighorn Sheep Connectivity Studies. These

studies are funded and being implemented by Oregon State University, the National Park Service, and CDFW.

The reason that these studies exist is a very important journal article came out in 2018 that discussed how gene flow seemed to be moving through bighorn sheep populations, and that's this map here, as far as what ranges were occupied and how gene flow seemed to be moving between those populations.

Between 2013 and '15, looking at actual new radio-collared animals, we found that some of the ranges that had been unoccupied were reoccupied, like this section here and here, and that there was extensive movement that had not been seen in the molecular genetic gene flow study. So realizing that gene flow is changing and movement is changing and habitat is changing, OSU with the Park Service and CDFW increased efforts in some new research.

The three research goals that then wanted to focus on was movement near interstates and identification of potential crossing points, whether we could entice bighorn sheep to use existing underpasses to improve connectivity across Interstate 15, and to reassess the current distributions and connectivity.

During this study, which has run from November, 2018 up through today, no bighorn sheep have been

observed using underpasses. We have a wide variety of other animals that are seen using existing underpasses, but no bighorn sheep have used underpasses.

In an attempt to try to lure bighorn sheep to these underpass areas, because working under the assumption of maybe they didn't know that they existed, wildlife water was established adjacent to these underpass areas. These new waters have been used by a variety of different species. They have not been used by bighorn sheep.

Based on the collar data that we have in the last handful of years, there have been no successful at-grade crossings from 2018 to present. What we have found is a variety of data that indicates bighorn sheep approach I-15 but then turn back away from I-15. And as mentioned earlier, they are not using the underpasses that are available, which is leading us to ask, should we be installing something like this kind of overpass?

This overpass is an example from Arizona that has proven to be used by deer and bighorn and has a chance of, if we install a similar such structure, assisting us in getting sheep safely across I-15. So recognizing that the existing underpasses are not working and that at-grade crossing is highly hazardous to bighorn sheep, given the amount of traffic and the

speed of traffic on I-15, we want to propose these overpasses.

All these different colored lines are the trackings of collared bighorn sheep in these populations. And what you find is these sections of highway that are in red, you have zero bighorn sheep approaching those sections of the highway. Where you have these green sections here, you have upwards of 50 to more than a hundred of bighorn sheep approaching those areas -- collared bighorn sheep approaching those areas and then turning back.

So the idea is that, if we focus on these areas that the bighorn sheep are naturally attracted to and then provide them a safe passage over the freeway, we can improve genetic flow and demographics between the herds of bighorn sheep.

So these two particular locations are Soda Mountains up here and Cave Mountain right here. This Cave Mountain is part of the Cady Mountain bighorn sheep population. So often this area is referred to as Cady, or Cave. Just if you've heard about that, I wanted to clear up any kind of confusion.

On this particular map we have a collared animal here in blue. This collared animal was from our 2013 to '15 study, and she did successfully cross I-15

and back in this location up here in the Soda Mountains where we think putting a crossing would be appropriate. This location is also where a young ram was struck and killed in 2020. It was found in the median of I-15 in this upper zone.

Of particular concern is the Desert Express Railroad, that is looking at connecting Victorville-Barstow area to Las Vegas. This high-speed rail is planned to go in between the northbound and southbound lanes of I-15. And if you add a high-speed rail in this already complicated at-grade situation, it becomes even less likely that bighorn sheep will be able to safely cross to maintain connectivity across these different mountain ranges.

So the best available science leads to this management recommendation. We have looked at the genetic research. We've looked at collared animals and how they're moving. We've assessed the existing underpasses and their lack of ability of supporting bighorn sheep. There were four areas that were evaluated for connectivity: the Cave/Cady Mountain area, the Soda Lake mat, an area adjacent to Mountain Pass, which is also supported by the data as a place to put a crossing, and a fourth location at Halloren Wash or Halloren Summit, was initially thought to be a good

place. But based on the collar data, no sheep in the last three years have naturally approached that, what appears to be a good crossing to us humans. Bighorn sheep have just never approached it. So at this point in time, that fourth area is no longer recommended.

But one at Mountain Pass, one at Soda, and one at Cave are supported by the data of the bighorn sheep and, based on our science, the best way of maintaining connectivity across this hazardous landscape.

Moving on to our fourth topic, we have a new survey method that was started in 2020. This is essentially sending a bunch of people out, putting boots on the ground, doing these surveys in a very standardized method, looking for signs of bighorn sheep.

And what this survey found was actually rather surprising. These three mountain ranges, the McCoy Mountains, the Big Maria Mountains, and the Riverside Mountains near Blythe, had all been presumed unoccupied by bighorn sheep. And in getting these people on the ground walking in a very standardized method, we have found pellets of bighorn sheep that were then taken back to the lab and genetically determined to, yes, be bighorn sheep. And some of those pellets were actually fresh enough that we were able to get a full genotype from the sheep poop, and that will allow us to make

genetic comparisons between which mountain ranges we found those in and which mountain ranges those genetics are most closely aligned with.

We also found that most of our sign were up here in the Riverside Mountains, with less sign in the McCoy and Big Maria.

Looking at the Riverside Mountains more closely, we found carcasses of bighorn sheep. We found bedding sites, places that were identified as places that bighorn sheep were sleeping. We found pellets that were of size and shape to make us think that they were a lamb, and those were confirmed as being bighorn sheep genetically. We also found a new previously unidentified or tracked tinaja, so a natural water source that's up there.

At this point we can't say that the Riverside Mountains are officially occupied. We haven't found permanent residents there, but it is clear the bighorn sheep are exploring into and using this mountain range to some extent, and hopefully that will lead to full reoccupation of these mountain ranges.

Our next topic is the Disease Outbreak in San Gorgonio. San Gorgonio is one of the desert bighorn sheep ranges -- herds, sorry -- and is identified here in this red circle area. In 2018 to '19 there was a

very large mortality event. CDFW believes they lost approximately 50 percent of that population during this timeframe. In response to such a dramatic drop of the herd, CDFW closed Zone 5 hunting unit. Historically the Zone 5 hunting unit supported one or two tags each year. But again, given the large drop in population, that hunt unit has been suspended. They did a variety of data collections trying to figure out what was the cause of this mortality event and how it relates to the population as a whole.

So for the first time ever, they targeted the Whitewater subunit seen here as part of that larger red circle, covered both of these areas for the San Gorgonio unit. In 2020 they did capture and mark 13 animals within this area. While they had the animals in hand, they collected a variety of biological samples to assist in their assessment of what was going on with this disease outbreak.

It had been presumed or typically when you see a large outbreak of disease or mortality event, it's assumed that it's the mycoplasma respiratory disease that's taking bighorn sheep out. However, in testing the dead animals that were recovered and then the 13 live animals that were tagged, we were never able to actually identify the mycoplasma. And typically those

PCR tests have a really high effective rate. So the fact that the PCR tests all came back negative is really strong evidence that mycoplasma was not the issue, which has not led CDFW to believe that there may be a novel disease issue on the landscape.

In testing those 13 animals that they had in hand, they did find antibodies related to a couple of different respiratory diseases associated with cows, and the fact that there's a an ELISA response means that the animals themselves have been exposed to those diseases found in cows. There is some concern. There is some concern that this disease transmission may be associated with trespass cattle in the area, so that's being investigated.

When they went back and looked at the ELISA tests from historical archive samples, those antibodies associated with the cow diseases were not present. So again there's something new that's going on in this particular herd area.

We are moving forward and trying to understand what's going on related to this disease outbreak in this particular herd. CDFW is confident that there are at least 75 bighorn sheep still remaining in the San Gorgonio area. That's a healthy enough number that they expect natural birth to be able to repopulate and

get us back up to the herd amount that they would expect that range to support.

When they went out and did their surveys, they are seeing what would be considered healthy lamb-to-ewe ratios and healthy yearling-to-yew ratios. They can't fully get a population number out of those ratios. They're considered more of indices because of the complexity of doing population monitoring in this particular terrain and our lack of being able to use the same standardized techniques that we do in other herds.

Going into the future we are planning on deploying an additional 15 collars in this area. Ten of those going on ewes, five on rams, and hoping that in getting those additional collars out, we will have a better understanding of how sheep are moving through this landscape and help us in more standardized and repeatable population monitoring going forward. And we will continue to watch the area for additional disease responses.

The Update on Peninsular Bighorn Sheep is the sixth and my final topic to share with you today. The peninsular subspecies of bighorn sheep are identified in these six different recovery regions in the Riverside, San Diego, and Imperial Counties. The recovery criteria for peninsular bighorn sheep is at least 25 ewes in each

of those nine regions for at least six years to downlist to threatened. Then to fully delist, we need at least 25 ewes in each of those nine regions for a consecutive 12 years and the range-wide population above or averaging 750 animals in each of those 12 years, as well as having regulatory mechanisms in place and land management commitments from landowners or administrators, like me.

Peninsular bighorn sheep continue to have a variety of threats to their recovery. Respiratory disease, that mycoplasma issue, continues to be persistent and can impact lamb recruitment. There's a wide variety of urban-related deaths, especially in the northern portion of their range near Coachella Valley and Borrego Springs, where we have bighorn car collisions on Highway 74 and Interstate 8, as well as drownings in pools or hot tubs. That always catches me by surprise.

Global warming and the change of precipitation patterns has resulted in water becoming a more scarce and less reliable resource in our natural areas, and that has significant implications for peninsular bighorn sheep. And then there is the continued development of golf courses and a variety of parks and housing complexes and renewable energy. Additionally illegal

off-road driving and unauthorized social trails can lead to disturbance of bighorn sheep. And then we continue to have issues with mountain lion predation.

In 2021 we currently have 100 peninsular bighorn sheep that are collared, 97 females, three males. We plan to add an additional 72 collars this fall specific to the range across those recovery units. The idea is that the recovery plan wants to have at least 25 percent of the ewes in each recovery unit collared. To date we have never been able to meet that recovery plan objective. And that's mostly due to lack of funding.

However, there is good news that I would like to share, and that is in 2016 the range-wide survey estimated the bighorn sheep population across all nine recovery units to be 884 bighorn sheep, so well above that 750 minimum needed for a complete delisting. And there were at least 25 ewes in each of the recovery units.

We are looking at going back out and doing another full range survey in 2022. That's that six-year mark. And if we are still maintaining at least 25 ewes per recovery region, which at this point we have no reason to believe will not be found, the department and Fish and Wildlife Service will move towards considering

a downlisting to threatened.

And I will now turn the presentation over to Ryan so he can share information with you about the final topic, the Seasonal Closure of Devil's Canyon.

MR. CHATTERTON: Thank you, Amy. Great presentation.

For the record, I am Ryan Chatterton, the field manager for the El Centro Field Office, and I'm pulling up my presentation now. Let me get a thumbs-up if you can see it.

MEMBER POWELL: I can see it, Ryan.

MR. CHATTERTON: Perfect. Thank you.

So I wanted to talk today about the seasonal access into Devil's Canyon Trail Area. This is approximately eight miles west of Ocotillo, California. It is on the grade as you head up towards San Diego County along the Interstate 8 corridor, and a lot of the trail actually resides in between the two eastbound-westbound lanes there.

This is a trail that's known for its outstanding destination recreation opportunities. It has some pretty well known four by four rock-crawling opportunities, and also that tied to American history as this was a part of the first Wagon Trail between San Diego, California and Yuma, Arizona with its

historic tie to that historic Plank Road there in the Imperial Sand Dunes.

The trail itself is only approximately 2.5 miles long and is that red section there identified in the picture on the upper right. But to actually make your way through this trail, it can take over ten hours, as just the technical and specialized equipment that's required in order to traverse it takes that extra time.

Motorized use was allowed on this trail previously, but it was closed under the Western Colorado Route of Travel designation process in 2002. The BLM was able to reopen the trail to non-competitive motorized use through our Special Recreation Permit process, as it was analyzed in 2010 to allow that. And the reason why we're tying this in into the bighorn sheep conversation is, this trail is located within critical habitat for the peninsular bighorn sheep.

As Amy's map there depicted during her presentation, the critical habitat runs through Imperial, San Diego, and Riverside Counties. And after being listed as endangered, the BLM went through the process to adapt its management plans to ensure that there was likely no effects to the peninsular bighorn sheep while they're in critical habitat. However the BLM was able to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service to eliminate adverse impacts to the peninsular bighorn sheep through the management of motorized access with utilizing the Special Recreation Permit process, as well as stipulations associated with those events, as well as mitigation measures.

And some of those items are listed here for you on this PowerPoint slide. So the trail is only open for access outside of lambing season for the peninsular bighorn sheep. That is October 1st through April 30th of each year. SRPs are only issued one weekend per month, and that is to allow an extended period of time for which the peninsular bighorn sheep are then able to use the resources within that canyon for that extended period of time. And then size of groups are limited to 15 vehicles per day to help reduce the effects of noise to the peninsular bighorn sheep.

In the past, interest in this trail has been limited to one group, Tierra Del Sol. Typically they would apply for rides throughout the winter months. However this trail is becoming more popular, and we are seeing increases in requests for Special Recreation Permits to utilize this. We actually had enough interest to fill up all of the availability in this last year, and so we actually had to work with our applicants to ensure that everybody had an opportunity to access

this recreation opportunity. And thankfully many of the groups were flexible and were willing to work with us. But certainly there will be a need to look at potential adaptations to our application process if it's needed and we continue to see an increase in interest for this route.

And so also we are working with partners on the Devil's Canyon route. In 2020 we signed and adopted a trail agreement with Tierra Del Sol. And as a part of this agreement as Tierra Del Sol is doing runs under a Special Recreation Permit, they are also collecting debris and trash that gathers in the canyon due to the highway traffic that is up above. The trash in that is not from use of the trail. However it is caused by wind-blown garbage as well as other items falling within the canyon from that highway traffic above.

So in October of 2020 we were able to work with them. We installed signs at both the top and bottom of the trail system and as well conducted one of those cleanup events, and we were able to haul out the trash from along that trail and fill up a pretty large trailer there. So it's great to have their partnership on this trail and to provide those cleanup efforts out there.

With that, I would love to open it up to questions. But just one note, I guess, before we do

that as well, in order for the BLM to consider changes to the management of this Devil's Canyon access trail, certainly we would need to take a look and what those potential changes are. So if there was interest in opening this trail system up, it would require an extensive planning process that would take several months to complete, as well as potential consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure that potential impacts to the peninsular bighorn sheep population could be mitigated as well. That consultation would likely also be required if we were to change some of the current stipulations that we have with our active SRPs if we were to increase the number of individuals in each group or change the number of trail weekends that could be utilized and made available for it. So it would be a pretty lengthy process.

We would certainly want to hear if there is interest from members of the public, but at the same time one that we would have to take some time to really look into to ensure that we are mitigating any potential impacts to the peninsular bighorn sheep.

All right. With that I would like to go ahead and open it up for questions for either Amy Fesnock or me. I'm happy to take questions as well on the Devil's Canyon seasonal access.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you both very much.

Go ahead, Dan. You've got the floor.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Thank you, Randy. I have a question for both Amy and a different one for Ryan. Amy, you were talking about how you have to reach approximately 750 to delist the bighorn in that specific area. How will the increased numbers of bighorn in that area to a point of delisting -- how is that going to impact the food available in the area? Being the desert I'm sure food can be scarce sometimes. Is there going to be an issue if they increase with food availability?

MS. FESNOCK: I don't actually find grazers to dramatically exceed the amount of available forage. So what you end up seeing if forage is lacking or reduced related to drought, the females have fewer births or kids don't really make it past that first year. So there's kind of a natural move that takes care of that.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Thank you. I just wanted to see how that panned out. And then Ryan, if my limited math skills are correct, for that Devil's trail, you're basically only opening it up for six weekends a year. Does that sound about right?

MR. CHATTERTON: I don't have the exact number off the top of my head, Dan, unfortunately. That does sound approximately correct. So it is an extremely

limited access.

MEMBER TAYLOR: You're only open like six months a year, and you only allow one weekend every three weeks, so mathematically it's about six a year. That does sound quite a bit restrictive for a popular area. I would think you would have to figure out how to make that somehow find a way we can share this with the bighorn sheep in a more effective way versus six weekends a year.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Council members, the floor is open. Ed, have you ever gone through the canyon?

MEMBER STOVIN: I've walked a little ways into it. Tierra Del Sol, they're a local Jeep club that pushed the Bureau of Land Management to make it an open trail. It's very, very difficult, and it's very difficult to my understanding. I watched a short video of it. For a short route, it's very rough. I don't think there's a lot of demand to get through it for organizations to get permits, because it's not an easy route. But it's interesting.

I'd love to see it just open, of course. I'm a motorcycle guy, and I haven't heard of any motorcycle groups getting a permit to go through there.

I did want to ask maybe Amy, I would like to go out and see bighorn sheep personally. And I'm from

San Diego, so I think the peninsular group would be the easiest. Where and when would be the best place to go to get a live viewing? Amy?

MS. FESNOCK: Yeah, I'm sorry. I'm trying to --

MEMBER STOVIN: Thinking about it?

MS. FESNOCK: Yeah, so I am not going to be able to give a good recommendation. I'm sorry.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: I don't know if you ever come over to Palm Springs, but on San Jacinto Mountain right outside of town, I see bighorn sheep almost anytime I'm out there hiking, if you're up there early anyway.

MEMBER POWELL: I was going to say drive 74 at sunrise, and they're beautiful standing up on the peaks along 74. Also if you go to the golf tournament in La Quinta in January, they're all over the golf course. The players have to -- the professionals have to wait for them to be clear.

MEMBER STOVIN: That's interesting. I had heard people could see them in Coyote Canyon from the bottom, but there's water down there. But I was hoping to get a better -- I'll contact Anza Borrego. Maybe they'll know.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is open.

Questions, comments?

MEMBER POWELL: So I have a couple of questions for Amy. On the undercrossings where you did not find any of the sheep going under the freeway, do you have any hypothesis as to why that is?

MS. FESNOCK: Well, so it really isn't in bighorn sheep's nature to go under things. They are a mountain-dwelling species and tend to go up and over, not under things. They are very sensitive to -- or very wary of potential predation risks; right? So anytime you're going down into a narrow passage, predation risks are higher. We don't naturally -- right? -- if you were thinking about this as a bighorn sheep -- right? -- those are the places where mountain lions can wait, do a sit-and-wait to do a predation attack. So they tend to not.

If you look at bighorn sheep, all species and subspecies across the western U.S. underpasses are just not -- they're just not used by bighorn sheep. They want to go up and over.

MEMBER POWELL: The predation issue brings me to the next question about the man-made water supplies. I mean, you would think that would draw all kinds of animals, including the mountain lions and other things that prey on the sheep and the other species. Is that

where you find most of the bones and carcasses?

MS. FESNOCK: Generally not. Most of our water sources are placed in a way where there is no hiding for predators to be in. We did have a couple of natural springs that had excessive vegetation growth that then did lead to a couple of bighorn sheep kills by mountain lions, and BLM went out and actually cleared back some of that vegetation to create a more open visual line and less of a place to have those pounce attacks that you would expect at a water source.

But when we're placing or developing a site for an artificial water development, that site line is part of the decision in the placement to not set up situations that mountain lions could take advantage of.

MEMBER POWELL: And in the man-made water supplies, those are all standing water. So how is the BLM addressing West Nile virus and mosquito issues and all of that in standing water?

MS. FESNOCK: To the best of my knowledge we are not. These are standing waters in remote access far away from any kind of human population. So I don't believe we have addressed West Nile or West Nile has ever come as an issue.

MEMBER POWELL: Is that something that it might be worthwhile thinking about?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Rhetorical question accepted. I sure no they do attract bees. The bees very much enjoy that water source. I've seen that.

Questions?

MEMBER TAYLOR: I have one more question for Ryan. SRPs available for the trail, are all of them issued each year, or are there spaces left open?

MR. CHATTERTON: It wasn't until this last year that we actually ran out of the number of spaces available, so we had reservations for every weekend, and this was the first year that we had actually seen that occur. However we did have some organizations apply for more than one weekend, and we were able to accommodate all SRP requests with the opportunity to run the trail throughout it.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Ryan, is there cost for SRPs?

MR. CHATTERTON: There is cost associated with processing Special Recreation Permit.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: What is the cost, and how do you calculate that?

MR. CHATTERTON: The costs are standardized throughout it. I'm going to apologize, Dick. I don't have the cost right off the top of my head. Potentially maybe another field manager would be able to help me with those costs. But generally there's an application

fee that's associated with it that -- I wish I could remember it off the top of my head. That's something I can take a look at.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I think it would be pretty standard. As far as I know, the SRP fees usually consist of what the cost of BLM does to manage the area or whatever or taking a look at it before and after and everything. So I would think, because it would be the same place every time, it would be pretty much a standard fee.

MR. CHATTERTON: Correct.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Sorry, Dan. So essentially you have your application fee, and like all SRPs, first 50 hours sort of on the house. If it goes over, those hours are attributed your small group club. Only running 15 vehicles not competitive, you're not going to get 50 hours. It won't be cost recovery. Certainly you're looking at the application fee, and the club may have costs in order to be able to get into the area and run according to the stipulations.

Dan, are you good?

MEMBER TAYLOR: I'm good. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: This has actually changed a lot. We had a presentation on this maybe ten years ago

or more, and it was when the BLM was contemplating or actually had probably just started the planning process to be able to allow for permitted events, because I recall it was closed in the WECO; right?

MR. CHATTERTON: Yeah, WECO, Western Colorado.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: So it was closed in the Western Colorado. When they were starting to initiate planning to allow it to be used again by motor vehicles, I recall Dan being rubbed, as you feel now, that it was to be a club, organization. You can't just be, "What happened to casual use?" and so on. But you know, a lot has changed. I can see much has changed since then. The program is, in my opinion, like management with a capital M. It really is being managed, and it's got a plan.

And a second thing I just kind of want to transition into is that now that we're seeing the slots being filled, you know, that's certainly interesting to see and interesting from a long-term perspective, but I think also, folks, don't miss any opportunity to put your finger on yet another example of how outdoor recreation and people's use of our Public Lands over the last couple of years is just at a level few have ever seen before.

And I wonder about -- sorry. I'm getting

really tangential, but I'm in Jawbone, and I'm really curious about Thanksgiving this year. Last year our region had an all-time record of some 200,000 visitors. I mean that's like adding Coachella, essentially, 200,000, visitors. And yet it's done with a shoestring team of a half dozen BLM rangers and a half dozen State Park rangers, and yet no major medicals, no major incidences. It was pretty remarkable.

But I wonder if we'll have that same luck this year. Our Public Lands are being well enjoyed by our public right now, very well enjoyed, and I don't say it as a bad thing. It's a really, really good thing. It's great that it's seeing the love, but we've really got to keep an eye on it and make sure it doesn't get too much love in some places.

The floor is open before I move on.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I agree. It's difficult to manage the difference between access and preservation, and then that's a very fine line to walk. And I am surprised at how much work the BLM puts into trying to do that to the best of their ability. So I applaud them for trying to make that happen, but I do understand it is such a difficult line to try to find and to manage.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I want to point everybody's attention to an L.A. Times article September 16th. It's

about the desert terrain that Amy talked about that's that formerly Desert Express train. It's got a new name now, Victorville to Vegas. This is like really happening, sort of. It's like really right there. And if you read the article, you get a sense that the bighorn sheep issue is sort of one of the last things in front of them before this thing really happens.

And they discuss at length of overpasses and the cost. I forgot what the numbers were, Amy, but it had an awful lot of zeroes at the end of it -- I think, in the tens of millions, if not something like a hundred million or 60, 30 million and beyond for crossing?

MS. FESNOCK: So I saw that as well. I can tell you that that is not -- that picture of the overpass I showed you that was in Arizona did not have that kind of price tag. It is unclear to me how the proponents of the train are coming up with such exorbitant pricing. But that doesn't match. I mean, if you look at the wildlife overcrossings that -- because there's numerous of them that have been put into Arizona and Nevada, Colorado, Utah, if they really have that kind of price tag, I mean state Department of Transportation agencies wouldn't be able to afford them.

So there's something going on in those numbers, and we need to really look to other states to find out

if it's changes or requirements that Caltrans are putting in that may not be needed or where that kind of disconnect is, why this is being estimated at such a dramatically higher price than what we've seen in other states.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Dick, do you remember when we all worked hard to get an overpass down at Imperial to get across the tracks when the railroad didn't want people going over it, and didn't it take something like \$110 million or something like that?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Still working on that. They just had a consultant give them a few scenarios for the four different passes. I don't know what the status of that is there.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Wow, so that's still going. Okay. See, that's why need these group and subgroup reports. I'm totally behind it.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Just a few weeks ago they had a presentation by the consultant on the four different ways that they were proposing and which solution they wanted the best. And at that point in time it's about done.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Forgive me, Amy, if I missed this in your presentation. We have over the 15 -- we've got the crossing at Afton, Rasor. I think

Zzyzx has a crossing. Are those used? Were there any attempts, or is it still too dangerous even with the occasional offramp traffic?

MS. FESNOCK: So I don't have any information. I would have to circle back to CDFW and Oregon State to see what the collared animals are doing in those areas.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Just curious. We have the three exit overpasses there. Also that one at Afton is very close to Cave, and that one at Rasor is very close to Soda. I wonder if there might be opportunity to tie that in. But just saying, I wonder if they're using those overpasses at all. I hardly ever see them, hardly ever.

MS. FESNOCK: I was going to say, what I can tell you is that, if we had collared sheep approaching those, that would have been reported by OSU.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Bingo.

MS. FESNOCK: So I don't know if that means we need to look to other populations to see if other sub-herds are using those areas or not, but the existing collared sheep are not.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Boom, the power of GIS.

Thank you.

MS. FESNOCK: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yep, got it.

Anyone else have anything to ask Amy or Ryan or comments or questions?

MEMBER MARTIN: I just have a suggestion on these overpasses in conjunction with the rail. A large portion of the rail would be placed underground because of the gradient of I-15. So the rail can provide you with an outlay of their design, illustrating areas where the track will be underground. And that may coincide with some of the areas selected for potential crossing sites.

MS. FESNOCK: Thank you.

MEMBER STOVIN: I thought it was fascinating that you could identify a potential crossing place based on the tracking of their radio collars. I thought that was kind of amazing that you would know where to put a bridge that you would most likely get animals crossing.

On that bridge by the dunes that we've been talking about to cross the railroad tracks, there was four scenarios, and the cost ranged from ten to \$30 million per bridge. But the biggest holdup is to find an agency. It could be BLM, it could be Caltrans, it could be the County of Imperial, maybe some others. The railroad certainly doesn't want it, so that's a big challenge down there that they're working on.

Imperial Transportation Commission funded a

study to figure out what would be the best way to go crossing the train tracks. And what's going on down there is people at the sand dunes used to be able to go under the railroad tracks, and the railroad decided they didn't want people going underneath, and they filled in the tunnels. So people still want to go to the BLM land on the east side of the tracks to explore over there, so that's what this bridge is about, if it ever comes to fruition.

But, yeah. Fascinating with tracking those sheep and getting an idea where they go. I guess a bridge would not have to be sturdy enough for vehicles. Maybe sheep don't weigh that much. Maybe you could find a way to have a bridge for the sheep and prohibit vehicles on it.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Sorry. We were having a little housekeeping while we listened to you. And do you, Michelle, want to take that comment that you had pending?

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Sorry. I must have missed that.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: In the chat.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Is that regarding the cost of the SRP?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I wonder where it went.

Let's see.

MS. FESNOCK: So there's a member of the public who has information, and he's raised his hand. And there's a question of whether we can give him a microphone so he can share information related to the DAC question.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah, and this is the kind of thing that used to frustrate the other DAC members, because Bob Burke was really instrumental as a DAC member for so long, and he's active in the Society For Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. And if he could bend our ear for two minutes, I think we'd benefit, and then maybe we could wrap-up and hit our lunch break. I still think we'll be able to meet the schedule that we have here today, so I don't think we'll lose any time in the long run, if there's no objections.

Can Michelle make that happen?

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: We haven't done it in the past, but unless, Andrew, you have a concern, I know that typically we do limit public participation and input to the public comment period. But since it is relevant to this topic, do you have a concern?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: I'm fine with it. I agree it's specific to this topic and now is the time to hear it.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Just wanting to field the floor due to specific expertise as well as being a member of our extended DAC family.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you.

Card, can we turn on that particular individual's microphone?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Mr. Burke, are you there?

MR. BOMBE: Bob, you are unmuted on our end. I see you have unmuted yourself, but we still aren't hearing you. I wanted to check with you, make sure you don't have another muting device on your headphones or something like that. You could potentially not have the correct input setting as well. So you can double check that on the bottom of your Zoom window. Just make sure that you have the correct device.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Well, thank you for us trying to extend that. I think Bob would understand right before lunch, but I did my best to fit him in. Maybe we can work on the audio issues and catch him again after lunch, if not before or during the public comment. Sorry about that, Bob. Technology hits us sometimes.

With that, are there any other comments from the council members on this? That's it. Floor is open.

Not hearing any other comments, if there's no objections from everybody, let's take our lunch break. I apologize for 17 minutes late. I think we can still count on a 30-minute lunch. Andrew, Michelle, I think we can do that and say that we'll be back 30 minutes from now.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Let's see.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: 12:47, or 12:50 rounded up. I'd be fine with that.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Perfect.

Everybody, enjoy your lunch.

(Lunch break.)

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right, Randy, I'll let you resume, if you would.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Terrific. Welcome back, everybody. Hope you had a good lunch. And I hope you're all ready to jump into an afternoon session with some more issues, land management issues. I'm going to turn the floor over to Amy again to jump into her second presentation, this one on desert springs, and then we'll take some more comments and questions from the DAC after that.

So welcome back, Amy. You're back on board; right?

MS. FESNOCK: Yes, I am. Thank you, Randy.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Terrific. The floor is

yours.

MS. FESNOCK: Okay. So my talk this afternoon is covering Desert Spring Study Update. The objectives of the desert spring study was to understand the hydrologic and biologic conditions existing at the springs to provide a baseline condition that we can use going forward to understand how water sources may be changing in the evolving changes of uses in the desert, to help BLM focus future work efforts, and to provide recommendations for the long-term monitoring of spring and water resources and recommendations for BLM management of those resources.

There was initial work that was done on springs in the 2012-2014 timeframe that covered water sources in the Palm Springs and El Centro Field Offices. The most recent study that was conducted from 2015 through 2020 when the report was written focused more on Barstow, Ridgecrest, and Needles as the primary study areas, with a handful of springs up in our Bishop Field Office and a revisit of a handful of springs in the Palm Springs Field Office.

The data that was collected, they started with an extensive literature review of all of the springs that they could find documented in the California Desert District area. For a subset of those, we went out to

the field and did an assessment of the functional condition of the spring. If there was water that was flowing, flow measurements were collected. Springs that had water aboveground or surface water we collected water quality samples, we took temperatures, pH, connectivity, total dissolved solids, and oxygen. A water sample was collected to do a stable isotope analysis. The three stable isotopes that were evaluated were tritium, radiocarbon, and deuterium. Those three help us determine the age of the water and whether the water is associated with recent rains or local spring conditions, localized spring conditions or whether the water at a spring is associated with groundwater and is therefore older water that's been accumulating over time.

Notes were made on the animals and plants that were present, and then there was a review and a documentation of water right filings for all of the springs. When it comes to what was found related to water rights, approximately 100 springs had BLM water rights, approximately 40 springs had private water rights, and there were six springs where the California Department of Fish and Wildlife had a water right.

In our survey results for this particular study, 472 springs were identified. 132 of those

springs were only reviewed in the office. They were done as research documentation, reviewing and analysis from aerial imagery that had been collected in 2016.

These 131 springs were not field verified primarily due to access issues or difficulties in getting to the springs, or they were determined to be several days of like backpacking in, and the cost to get to that survey was questioned what value it would have related to the cost that it would be to get the information.

341 of the 472 springs were field inspected. Of those field-inspected springs, 172 of them had surface water. Many of those surface water springs had standing water or flow that was less than one gallon a minute. The largest flowing surface water is the Shoshone Springs at 265 gallons per minute.

Of those of 172 springs with surface water, most of the springs were identified as being fresh water springs, where the total dissolved solids were less than 1,000 micrograms per liter. Thirty-one of the springs were identified as being brackish, where total dissolved solids were between 1,000 and 10,000 micrograms per liter, and none of the springs met the qualifications to be considered saline.

In general the pH of the water that was tested

ran from seven to 8.5. The most acidic spring out there was the lower centennial spring at 6.2 pH. And to give you an idea of how acidic that is, black coffee has a pH of five, where milk and saliva have a pH of 6.3 to 6.6. So slightly more acidic than milk but not as acidic as coffee.

The most basic spring out there was Borax Spring at a pH of 10.31. And again to place that in reference for you, basic baking Soda has a pH of 9.5, and ammonia has a pH of 10.5, so a little less basic than ammonia.

In looking at the radioactive isotopes, stable isotopes, 21 of the springs were identified as being groundwater fed, not having sufficient surface water or precipitation to keep them going. They are purely out there based on groundwater percolating up.

Spring condition. The majority of the springs that were found had been previously used or altered by humans. These alterations include spring boxes, diversion pipes. Sorry for that typo. Check dams, troughs, audits and evacuations where you had cleared out material to make the spring more accessible.

Whether the spring was in Wilderness or not had little bearing on the condition of the springs. And our assessment or evaluation of that is that humans have

been developing water in the desert long before 1965, when the Wilderness Act was created. So that kind of Wilderness label doesn't change whether a spring had been previously altered or used by humans, given the human occupation and development in the desert over time.

And many of the springs appear to have been impacted by regional groundwater usage, as far as flows appear to be less than what they had been previously.

As far as future work goes, we are interested in establishing a long-term monitoring program for the springs in the California Desert Conservation Area. The recommendation is to not continue to monitor all 170 that have surface water but instead to concentrate on a sample size of approximately 50 springs. And the Desert District covers about 11 different eco-regions, so we would want those 50 springs to be distributed to cover all of those eco-regions.

At these 50 locations we would be interested in gathering basic water quality measurements at least once a year and looking at spring discharge being measured probably once a year as well.

Because of the influence that precipitation has on water quality and discharge, we would probably want to focus those annual measuring events later in spring

or perhaps in fall so we're then looking at more of a consistent what's coming out of the ground and not being influenced by recent precipitation.

And by looking at these 50 springs over time, we can then get an idea of whether groundwater usage is having an effect on available water for wildlife and natural uses, and again whether those changes in precipitation are affecting water available for the natural system.

With that I will open it back up to Randy to see if there are any questions.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Terrific. Thank you. Appreciate that, Amy. As you were going through your presentations, I kept writing down questions you kept answering. You have a way of doing that.

All right. I'm going to turn the floor over to our council members and see if they have questions and comments on the presentation. I'm going to try to return to the grid.

MS. FESNOCK: I can end my slide show.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Go ahead. Who wants to go first? Thanks.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I would like to if I could. Amy, some of those springs that you said you found evidence of human interaction pre-1965, are any of those

structures that were built there or used, would they maybe fall into some historical issues where we'd have to try to maintain or preserve what's there?

MS. FESNOCK: So I have to admit that I am not a water specialist. This was a recent assignment given to me. And I was given the overarching reports, but I did not delve -- so a large summary report was prepared, but then for each of the springs, there is a -- each spring has its own file and individual report, and I did not look at those.

So other than giving you the large qualifications that I just gave, I do not have any information on whether those water developments would fall under the Historic Preservation Act and we would need to protect or maintain them as cultural resources or not.

At this point I don't think we are looking at modifying or changing any of the structures that are out there, and it's more a tracking of the water and is the water still available or not.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: To tag onto that, there are aren't a lot of springs in the desert, but they're super important to the different wildlife and different vegetation communities out there. And so we had started this study of what is going, on a couple of

different studies, for years before I came on board, and it was a partnership with the Nature Conservancy. And those studies basically ended, and so what we're trying to do is look at that information and come up to speed ourselves on what's the situation out there, if you will.

And so that was the assignment through the district: Let's take this information and try to figure out what we know about it and what kind of our next steps might be. I thought it would just be a useful presentation to the DAC to understand that this work has been going on and the importance of those springs.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Thank you. I do appreciate it because I think it is an important factor to consider the water source out there and what's been touched what hasn't been touched and its conditions and so forth and how it impacts the environment. I think it's important she brought this together.

Thank you, Amy. I enjoyed that presentation.

MEMBER POWELL: So, Amy, my question is, on the temperature of the springs, were any of them considered hot springs that were studied?

MS. FESNOCK: In the summary report they did indicate that some of the springs did measure upwards of 48 degrees Celsius, which I do believe equals the hot

spring qualification. Based on the summary that I had, I would have had to delve into each individual file to figure out a total count for hot springs. That was not provided in the report, so I can't let you know how many there are. But yes, the surveys did cover what would be considered hot springs.

MEMBER POWELL: And is the spring that had the most gallons-per-minute flow, where was that located? I don't know those by name for sure.

MS. FESNOCK: That is in the Amargosa Watershed, so it's in the Barstow Field Office. That water source starts off on private property, and the private landowner is a huge partner in the conservation of water in the Amargosa River area, and then that water does then flow down into BLM-administered lands.

MEMBER POWELL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: That was the site of another previous BLM field trip.

MS. FESNOCK: Yes. Amargosa is amazing.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: We're looking forward to getting those back on our calendar again. That's the stuff that we've been missing.

Questions, comments?

MEMBER STOVIN: This is Ed. Was there any goals in the study besides factfinding?

MS. FESNOCK: No, no, absolutely not. This really is the establishment of the baseline to understand what's out there and to use that as the kind of springboard or steppingstone to developing what I am expecting to be an assignment to me the long-term management or monitoring plan for the 50 springs that we should kind of be tracking over the next several years.

MEMBER STOVIN: All right. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Might this be able to dovetail into like renewable energy planning, for example, you know, concerns over groundwater, concerns, like in the Chuckwalla Basin, that this study might provide some sort of baseline indicators or conditions that are going on in that greater basin?

MS. FESNOCK: So I'm going to tentatively answer yes, again reminding folks that I am not a water specialist or a hydrologist. I am a wildlife biologist by training. But there are a series of groundwater meters -- I believe it's pronounced "piezometers" -- that are in the Coachella District area that we do use to help track groundwater. We have similar groundwater meters up in the Amargosa Basin.

But yes, pairing those groundwater meters with what is happening at a surface level is important for telling the story as far as what waters are available

for other uses that are out there, mostly wildlife.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is open. Well, thank you, Amy. I appreciate that very much. It was nice of you to come back and share another study with us. After presentations on the waterless desert of the bighorn sheep and the desert springs, that was making me thirsty there.

We're pretty much back on track. Before we launch into the next item, which are the field office and BLM reports, I wanted to beg the pardon of the Desert Advisory Council and see if I can reconnect again briefly with Bob Burke. And maybe if I can throw the floor to him for two minutes with respect to the bighorn sheep issue, I don't think he'll disappoint us with respect to his perspective.

Are you still there? Can you do this for us for a couple minutes?

MR. BURKE: I hope I am. Am I on?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: You're on, Bob. Thank you. Welcome back.

MR. BURKE: Thank you, Randy. Good to see you, Katrina, Carl, Mike. I don't know hardly anybody else, the court reporter. I'm known as the sheep whisperer. And if you want to see bighorn sheep, come see me. I will take you to where they're at. They're within 20

miles of Barstow. I'm past vice president of the Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. I've been involved with bighorn sheep for over 20 years.

Amy, your study about crossings, I actually did that camera study because of the Soda Mountain Solar Project. I have recovered bighorn sheep off the I-15 and the I-40, there at Cave that you were talking about.

The only place that I have actually witnessed the sheep cross under the freeway is that very large culvert. The rest of them all the way from Rasor Road to Zzyzx, no traffic underneath whatsoever.

We did ask for mitigation for two wildlife corridors over the freeway, in fact, when Soda Mountain Solar was trying to get up and running. I know where that information came from with the collars and that. I helped capture and collar those sheep. Thank you for your presentation on that. I think the numbers might not be quite right, but you're pretty close.

And as far as the water goes for your springs, I have a four-inch binder of about 600 pages of springs and wildlife water sources that I may be willing to make available to the bureau again, if you're interested.

We lost close to 600 sheep to a disease in the Old Dad Mountains, and that's finally starting to come back. Your peninsula sheep, I understand from what I'm

getting from Dr. Wehausen and that, that population is rapidly growing again. But I'm a little concerned about the cost for the wildlife corridors or the overpasses. The last thing that we had from California DOT was \$1 million for a small, narrow wildlife corridor over the interstate in the area of Soda Mountain, so if that helps you guys make any decisions.

Again, if you need anything for sheep, get ahold of me and I will point you in the direction. The Newberry Mountains, we're really trying to get that drinker system moved where we can use the new rain-catching system. Two inches of annual rainfall on that 3,000-square-foot Hypalon rain mat.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Bob, I'm going to cut you off here, though. I'm glad you stuck around until after lunch. I got to second that. Bob showed me my first bighorn sheep, so I'm sure, Ed, he'll show you yours. I've seen that binder. He's not lying, a binder of an enormous amount of spring information on the desert spring.

Thanks, Bob. I appreciate it. Hope you stick around. We'll have more time on public comment. And thanks for sharing that. We miss you.

MR. BURKE: All right.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Next item on the agenda is

the BLM Reports. So I'm going to toss it to Andrew, and we're all ears. We've got our printed reports. Thanks, Michelle, for getting those out for us. And we've had a chance to kind of look them over and even forward them around. Thanks.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Just a few opening comments here, but thank you, Bob. Really appreciate the information. And, yeah, we definitely would be interested in anything you've got on springs in the desert. And like I said, you know, I assigned it to Amy. She is not a hydrologist. We do have a hydrologist on our table of organization that we're working towards filling, and hopefully we can bring somebody on board to really focus on springs and water in the desert.

So I'll just open up with a couple of comments for the Desert District and BLM in general. You might be aware that on Thursday the Senate confirmed Tracy Stone-Manning as our new BLM director. We have not had a director for four or five years, so it's nice to see that happen and move forward, so we'll be starting the new year off here with a new director in place. And Nada Culver, who was our acting director, will simply slip into her position as the deputy director for policy and administration, or something to that effect.

So we just issued a press release calling for DAC applications. We have two vacancies in Category 2, so if you know of anybody that's interested in joining you all on the DAC, definitely beat the bush to and get the word out. The more applicants we can get, the better. So we'd just really appreciate it if you would do that. Also take a look at the DAC website. I think there's application information on the website as well.

We also have four positions, four of you whose terms will expire in June of '22. Those folks are Ed, Dan, Jim, and Paul. And if you are interested in reapplying, please reach out to Michelle look at the website and get your applications back in. That would be great.

Like Randy had mentioned, we, the BLM, and the Fish and Wildlife Service are being sued over the WEMO decision and the associated route network and protections for desert tortoise. Just informational. Just want you to know that's going on. We also received a 60-day Notice of Intent to be sued over our management of the Amargosa vole. That was directed at both BLM and the Fish and Wildlife Service. So a couple of active cases going on. I won't say much more than that other than they're out there and we're working on them.

That's it for me. Any questions for me before

we dive over to the field offices?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Gotcha. Go ahead.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right. That's where the work happens, so that's where we'll spend our time. We're going to start off with Barstow.

Katrina.

MS. SYMONS: Hi. Good afternoon. I just want to add to Amy's presentation that, when it comes to springs, the field offices also conduct proper functioning condition assessments of springs. And, at least for Barstow, we also work with USGS on the installation of three water monitoring wells in the Amargosa. And if anyone has been out to Dumont, one of those wells is right after the low-water crossing at the Amargosa as you're entering that recreation area.

And then we also have piezometers placed in Afton within the Mojave Trails National Monument. So BLM really is doing some extensive work when it comes to our springs and groundwater, knowing how precious that resource is.

Let me go to my report for Barstow. I have a few updates. For our Calico Early Man Site the contract for the remediation work for public health has been awarded. We would be expecting to start that work. It will probably be towards the end of this year, the

beginning of next year.

And Johnson Valley Off Highway Vehicle Recreation Area, the Marines have shortened their training exercise, and as such the shared-use area will now be closed from October 22nd through November 1st. It originally was scheduled to get closed by October 15th, but once again that's been postponed until August the 22nd (as spoken).

Even though the shared-use area will be temporarily closed, other parts of Johnson Valley will be open to the public during that time, including the Giant Rock area of Cougar Buttes, Anderson, and North Anderson, and so plenty of places for the public to recreate.

In the realm of the West Mojave, we completed the eighth year of the route monitoring, and we have just started the ninth year. This will be the last year of the route monitoring that we committed to within our Record of Decision. In El Mirage, we've acquired 1600 acres of land in Phases 3 and 4 of that land acquisition project that we've partnered with the San Bernardino County.

And more work around the Amargosa. We also completed the 17th year of bird surveys. Unfortunately we've received the results of the bird surveys for this

year and found a 15-percent decrease in the Least Bell's Vireo territories, and there was only four pairs that successfully raised fledglings in the first nest attempt, and there were no second nest attempts.

It is believed that the decline is due to drought conditions that extended down into the winter range in Mexico, as well as north through the migration path to the Amargosa.

Associated with the Amargosa vole habitat, on September 28th, the second phase of the weir installation at Borehole was completed by the Inyo County Road Department. We are now monitoring that work to ensure that the water level is maintained at the proper level so that -- we want to make sure that vole habitat is protected.

And then for the good news, is for fiscal year '22, we've received \$300,000 in funding to continue the vole habitat enhancement project at Borehole, and that would wind up basically creating a mega-marsh for the vole.

And that is all that I have for updates.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right. Any questions for Katrina?

MEMBER STOVIN: This is Ed. You said that El Mirage is going to gain a few hundred acres. Is that

an inholding, or is that expanding the perimeter?

MS. SYMONS: So in 2019 the Dingell Act expanded the perimeter by about 15 acres. The 1600 acres I'm talking about is actually inholdings.

MEMBER STOVIN: Very good.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I've got a question for you about the Ivanpah Solar Plant. Years ago when I was on the Desert Advisory Council, we went out there before they were building it. And I wanted to find out, does the BLM do any kind of management or review of their operating practices out there?

MS. SYMONS: So that is on the Needles Field Office, and I will turn that response over to Mike.

MR. AHRENS: Thank you. Yeah, there is ongoing monitoring for just the operation in general, water usage, wildlife, the tortoise in particular that that company does through contractors annually, and they submit annual reports to us. And so there is some ongoing information that's gathered through that.

And then also we try to continue to coordinate with them on operational issues and what have you as well. We've actually had a pretty good relationship with them there.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: My concern was that I understood that -- I was reading the EA that they did

when they built that plant, and I noted that they're not using a lot of gas from the gas line that they put in. And I just wondered if anybody looked -- if they ever specified how much gas they were going to use versus generating from solar.

MR. AHRENS: Yeah, I don't have that information off my head. I think it probably could be acquired both through the initial plan and then looking at the annual monitoring reports.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: And does the BLM receive a fee for amount of generation that's generated?

MR. AHRENS: We do. Our solar plants are charged a combination of rent for the use with the land and then also a megawatt fee for the production of energy.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay. Thank you. I'm sorry. I thought that was Barstow, but it wasn't.

MR. AHRENS: It's okay.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right. Any other questions for Katrina?

MEMBER TAYLOR: Yeah. Katrina, I'm sure I probably asked this question before, but sometimes I forget things, so I'm going to ask it again. With the Dingell Act expanding Johnson Valley and El Mirage, especially Johnson Valley, when the military comes in

and does their training, a large portion of that is closed for that period of time. There's not a whole lot left over for -- at least I'm talking specifically for filming right now. When or if will the EAs be amended to include those additional areas so that filming can happen like in Giant Rock or in these new expansion acres for El Mirage, because both Johnson and El Mirage, before this Dingell Act the entire area was open for filming. But at this point now, with this Dingell Act, they're not all open. So I would like to see how can we get this corrected or moved forward so those extra acres can be utilized for filming.

MS. SYMONS: Well, right now both Johnson Valley and El Mirage, those expansion acres are being managed consistent with the existing management plans. We have requested funding to get the biological and cultural resource work done. We did not receive funding in '22 on our preliminary target allocation, and so now it's basically, to get those base clearance surveys done, we're just waiting for the funding, and then that would provide us that baseline in order to go into preparing any type of management plan amendment.

MEMBER TAYLOR: So it all comes down to money, huh?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Very observant,

Dan. All right. Thank you, Katrina.

Anybody else have a question for Katrina there?

Jayne, do you have a question?

MEMBER POWELL: I do. On the renewable wind testing projects, are the test projects the precursors to potentially full-scale wind farms? Is that how that works?

MS. SYMONS: Yeah. So they put up the MET towers first in order to wind up saying whether or not it was going to be feasible in order to put in turbines. But you know, we've encouraged the applicant to talk with the Department of Defense, and right now we are still in that pre-application phase. We've also encouraged them to talk with tribes as well. So we're still waiting to wind up getting feedback from the Department of Defense right now as well as the tribes.

MEMBER POWELL: So when they do the testing project and submit the NEPA documentation, is that just for the test stations, or does that cover the entire project with the test station being the initial step?

MS. SYMONS: Yeah. That will only wind up covering the four tower locations. It's about a 300-foot radius around each tower, as well as short, little access roads off of BLM designated roads.

MEMBER POWELL: Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right. Thank you, Katrina. I really appreciate that.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Andrew, I just wanted to chime in. Ed Stovin brought up El Mirage and acquisition of inholdings. As background, the El Mirage OHV area is unusual. It was checkerboard land several decades ago, and through a partnership between the BLM, the County of San Bernardino, and the Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation division of the Department of State Parks and Recreation of the State of California, the three of those agencies formed a partnership, and monies were made available to purchase from other parties the inholdings.

So over the course of the last several decades owners of those lands have opted to sell that land, and over every so many months through a process of vetting and transferring, those lands are transferred from private ownership to county ownership and then to BLM ownership. I believe that's somewhat how it works.

And just for information, I believe there's about maybe 130-ish parcels still left to acquire, and the fund is very well-funded at about two to \$2.1 million, thanks to the San Bernardino County's wise management of those assets. So there should be plenty of funds to acquire the rest, if we could just get the

rest to accept the buy-out, including that marijuana grow that just happens to be inside the park. I'd encourage them to sell.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Thanks, Randy. That's interesting.

All right. We're going to bump down to El Centro with Ryan.

MR. CHATTERTON: All right. Good afternoon, everyone. Just a couple of updates on the projects that I have listed there on the report in front of you. First we'll touch on East Mesa Solar and Green Hydrogen facility. We did receive notification from the company that they plan to update their proposed project with the Bureau of Land Management, likely to remove the geothermal-only area that has been designated they initially identified as an area they wish to construct solar energy facilities on. So we are awaiting more information from the company before proceeding further with our review. We are still in the pre-application stages of that project and will likely be there until we hear more from the company.

Second project update that's not listed here in your report is for the Imperial Gold USA Project. This is an exploratory plan of operation to conduct drilling activities out in the Indian Pass area that is east of

the Imperial Sand Dunes, for geographic reference. They have also notified our office of their intent to update their proposal as well, and so that project is currently not being processed until we receive further information from the company. So two updates there on projects that have been previously listed.

Another item to update on is the U.S. Marines helicopter mishap at the Salton Sea test base. Our meetings with Marine Corps Installation West have been going well, and we are actually now also incorporating not only conversations on that development of an SOP to work on future mishaps, should they occur, but we are also working with their training department and the FAA to identify that Salton Sea test base Area of Critical Environmental Concern as an area that should be avoided for any unplanned or unauthorized planning activities.

So we are discussing a couple of options there on how to provide those notifications and working through that process. We've received some positive comments with our initial contacts and looking forward to continuing that partnership to keep our members of the public and the military as they're out there training and doing their exercises safe.

Just Friday, yesterday, actually, we did receive also an update for the border feds construction

coordination or entry there. We received notification from CBP as well as U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that their contractors have remobilized out at the site for the border barrier project in the Jacumba Wilderness Area, and they are now conducting what is called make-safe activities. That consists of filling in any open trenches, cutting any exposed rebar, as well as ensuring that conditions out there onsite are safe for operations that they implement with their activities, as well as make the site safe for any member of the public that is visiting Jacumba Wilderness Area. So they are currently mobilizing this week and plan to have all make-safe activities completed by the end of the calendar year in December.

Updates on projects that are not listed there. The Truckhaven Geothermal Lease Area and geothermal exploration, Ormat has identified that they intend to drill the first exploratory well here in October. I don't have an exact date as to when that will be delivered or will be drilled, but it's great to see that project moving forward.

BLM finalized review of these exploratory wells in an EA. Then notice to proceed, or a notice, an NOI was signed on March 15th of 2020. So looking forward for that to happen.

We are also busy preparing for the upcoming off-highway vehicle season, not only including the Imperial Sand Dunes but also in general throughout our field office. We are working through the process of on-boarding staff and working with our human resources department to bring on some career seasonal staff as well as other temporary seasonals to help support what is expected to be a busy off-highway vehicle season this coming year.

Last year visitation in the Imperial Sand Dunes was around 1.2 million visitors during that six-month season. We have not seen visitation that high since around the 2013 season for the Imperial Sand Dunes, so quite an increase. Everybody is wanting to get out and recreate, so certainly we're taking the steps necessary to help prepare and make sure that we are ready to assist, should they need it.

We are working on a few projects out there in Imperial Sand Dunes. We recently completed some maintenance projects to repave a portion of Wash Road. Here in the next year we actually plan to completely repave the Wash Road segments. We've completed two of three projects, and funding has been secured. That is at least my understanding in the upcoming year to complete that project as well.

We've also completed some maintenance out at our campgrounds, at Roadrunner Campground as well as a couple of the pads, and to provide some services for campers to bring in their equipment and be able to enjoy the area.

We are also running a pilot project with our CXT restroom units. We are incorporating some solar lighting into those facilities that will make it possible for folks that are out there to have some light inside those facilities, when typically they can be rather dark, especially in the evening time. So I'm excited to see some innovation happening in providing a way to improve the recreation visitors' experience out there onsite.

Also with the Imperial Sand Dunes we just completed our construction design documents, so all of our architecture and engineering has been completed for the new Cahuilla Ranger Station. It is unfortunate, however, that funding for that project, due to our change in appropriations, has fallen through. And so we are currently working on new proposals and hoping to receive funding to construct the facility that we just finished design for in 2023. So we're hopeful there.

And then the last update for notes, the Ocotillo Wind Energy facility did experience a turbine

collapse. That was around the evening of September 15th or early September 16th. In response to that, the El Centro Field Office has issued a notice to suspend operations to Pattern Energy, dependent upon the outcome of a root cause analysis associated with what's caused that collapse. That is currently under investigation. Awaiting information from the company on that. But unfortunately that's all the information I have associated with that wind turbine collapse at this time.

With that, I'm happy to take any questions.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I have one, if it's okay.

MEMBER STOVIN: Ryan, this is Ed. I've got a couple of things.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Go ahead, Ed.

MEMBER STOVIN: Thank you. The Truckhaven well you've described, the geothermal, is that the one by Salton City Airport?

MR. CHATTERTON: Yes, that is the general location of the area. It will be on the west side of the highway facility, so opposite of the airport.

MEMBER STOVIN: West side.

MR. CHATTERTON: Of the major road that goes out there.

MEMBER STOVIN: You mean 86?

MR. CHATTERTON: Yes.

MEMBER STOVIN: Yeah. I commented on the draft or whatever they did on that. But anyway, I'm following a few issues going on in your district. The Superstition Open Area fence to the bombing range, we're interested in that. By the way, I'm with the San Diego Off-Road Coalition. I worked with Neil quite a bit, and Carrie.

So I'm in contact with Mary Dreusike. She's with the Navy. She sent me some preliminary pictures of the vents, and it was unsatisfactory because it was hard to see. Particularly at night or in a dust storm, we're worried somebody might run into it. Now, she said that they're planning to add some more visibility to it. I'm interested in seeing how that turns out. She's invited to our membership meeting this coming Tuesday. I hope she can make it. We want to kind of hash it out. If they can't put sufficient visual stuff on it, our organization will be willing to work with them on that. That's an important area to us.

Are there any updates to McCain Valley Campground in Lark Canyon?

MR. CHATTERTON: We were working on completing a contract for the upgrades to the water system that were out there. Unfortunately the bids that we received were outside of the budget available for construction of

those water facilities, so we will be going back to the drawing board in the coming fiscal year to come up with an approach to address those water system upgrades.

For modifications to the campgrounds and construction of the new sites, I do not have a timeline yet on when that work would occur, but certainly we'll take that back and provide an update on that project in our coming meetings.

MEMBER STOVIN: Ryan, I go riding out there. If you guys ever need any help, just consider me a resource. You mentioned Wash Road being paved. Is that with the improved dirt?

MR. CHATTERTON: Correct. No. It's just the improved dirt.

MEMBER STOVIN: You guys are adding a glue to a dirt and putting a honeycomb in the wash areas?

MR. CHATTERTON: Yeah. So the process is to bring in the new material. We compact that material. Then we also put a surfactant, which is a binding agent, over the top of that material to help reduce the effects of dust as vehicles are traveling over that area.

MEMBER STOVIN: That work is appreciated. A lot of people use the Wash Road to get out to camping areas. You guys know that, but for the rest of the DAC people, this is on the east side of the Imperial Sand

Dunes, and the road actually goes right along the west side of the railroad tracks, and an awful lot of people camp out there. It's a great place to camp. If you like the sound of the train going by in the middle of the night, it's awesome.

So we understand that Charlotte Teeters is ill and she's not going to be working on the dunes cleanup on Martin Luther King weekend. So the San Diego Off-Road Coalition, we are interested in taking it, along with the American Sand Association and California Off Road Vehicle Association. I talked to both of those other groups, and everybody seems like they're in. We're probably going to split the dunes in half and give the ASA the north side and then SCRC and CORVA take the south side. I talked to Neil Hamada about that, and he seems happy about it.

Although something that I'm not happy about -- and this doesn't have to do with the Bureau of Land Management as much as California State Parks -- is that we can get a lot of volunteers out there, and State Parks gives grant money to agencies that manage off-road areas, and your agency gets an awful lot of grant money. And by the way, it's deserved. You need the money. Thank you guys again.

But in the grants the applicant is required to

provide a 25-percent match on the grants that we like and that hours from volunteers are able to be used in lieu of matching. And Neil said they're not able to use our hours for match out there. I guess it's just difficult with the way the State Parks kind of micromanages it.

And I brought it up to the OHV commission. I'll continue pushing it over there. But it just feels like a wasted asset that, if we can get hundreds of people out there spending hundreds of hours picking up trash, that we can't use that for the grant management. I used to think it was bad to give agencies money to manage lands, and as I grew up and became wiser, I realized that the best way to keep an area open is proper management. Proper management requires money and smart personnel working on it.

Let's see. I guess that's all I have. So that windmill collapse, did you say that all the windmills turned off until it sorted out?

MR. CHATTERTON: Yes, that's correct.

MEMBER STOVIN: Wow, that's something. I saw the windmill a few years back hanging over -- I don't know. It was on the south side of Highway 8, and it was quite stark. Good luck with that. Anyway, consider me an asset and a resource to your office. And Neil knows

how to get ahold of me.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Thank you. I appreciate those comments. That is a great project on the Wash Road, for sure. I apologize I could not find my mute button quick enough.

Dan, go ahead. You had questions or comments.

MEMBER TAYLOR: That's okay. Thank you. I am excited to hear that you're working on filling some of the staff vacancies for the recreational season coming up ahead, because your staff has been working diligently and extremely hard trying to get all the work done for the amount of people you have in your office, so I'm excited to hear that.

But I do have a question that, since they'll be bringing in more staff, will this return the film permits back to their original timeframes? They used to get done in seven to ten days, and now we're being told it takes at least 30 days to get a permit, which is -- in the film industry that's like saying, "We don't want you to film here," if it gets that long. So just curious if the staff will help bring that timeframe back down to its original status.

MR. CHATTERTON: That's interesting, Dan. That's not something that I've heard from my level, actually, to be quite frank and honest with you. So

that's something that I'll take back and see what we can do to reduce that timeframe to ensure that we're able to help with the filming industry here in our field office.

To my knowledge we have been able to assist with all of the applications that have come before us, so if there are some that you're hearing from that aren't being able to successfully obtain a permit from the office, I'd love to hear from you.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Maybe I'll set up another conference call and we'll talk about it.

MR. CHATTERTON: Okay.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Ryan, this is Dick Holliday. Can you tell me the status of the radio tower that's supposed to be going in there?

MR. CHATTERTON: Yeah. So the Navy has actually just reengaged with our office to work on design again of a radio tower and construction of a radio tower facility. So we are in the initial stages of updates to our MOU with the Navy as the California department that was participating in that development for the radio tower out there has actually withdrawn their interest, and BLM has actually identified a alternative solution and will no longer have a need to partner with them to join them on that tower.

So we are working with them to establish that

MOU. They have identified that they've secured funding yet again this fiscal year to continue that project. At this time I don't have any more information other than that, Dick.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay. Thank you very much.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Jayne, do you have a question?

MEMBER POWELL: Yes. On the lithium projects that have been all in the news lately around the Salton Sea, GM and I think it was Controlled Thermal Resources, is any of the project area that they're discussing on BLM land?

MR. CHATTERTON: They are not. All of that activity is currently occurring on private. So our office has not been involved in some of that initial research on that extraction process or what that will look like.

MEMBER POWELL: Okay. Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Randy, you're up. Do you have a question?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: No. All good. Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Great. Anybody else for Ryan?

All right. Well, we'll bump back up north and hit the Needles Field Office. Mike?

MR. AHRENS: Yeah, thank you. So I wanted to update on a couple of the projects in my report and then have one other subject I'm actually looking forward to really bringing up.

So in our written report we talked about the Castle Mountain Ventures developing a well down by Nipton and wanting to test and do a large release of water during that test. So we did get that authorized, and the test actually was completed this last week.

This test went as anticipated. Impacts and what have you as anticipated were really negligible, and it sounded like it went well for the company as well, so it's nice to have that done.

We also reported on requests by the City of 29 Palms to do some small films. These are kind of meant to inspire tourism in the 29 Palms area but using the Mojave Trails National Monument as a backdrop. And so that's a pretty small operation, and actually with the new regulations, or interim regulations, it actually makes it easier for us to respond to those kinds of requests when they're small, casual use like that. So we got that accomplished as well. And they're pursuing to start that work I think in the next week or so.

And then also wrote about the Ivanpah Substation for the Brightline West High Speed Train,

would obviously be located in Ivanpah. I think we wrote that we noted we were waiting on the planner developments from both SCE and Brightline West on those. We received those this week, so we'll start reviewing those next week for completeness and be ready to prepare to do the Environmental Assessment to authorize that as well.

And then finally I have another little project I've been working on actually for several years on and off. And so it's a trail project, actually called the East Mojave Heritage Trail. It's one of the best-kept secrets of the desert. Back in the late '80s and very early '90s, the then Friends to Mojave Road, who are now -- they changed their name. They're now called the Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Association.

First actually in the mid '80s they worked to develop that Mojave Road guide that probably a lot of you are familiar with, an extraordinary piece of work that identified the turn-by-turn directions on the Mojave Road and a great compilation of flora and fauna and history on Mojave Road.

When they finished that, they recognized two things, really. The first was that that trail was going to become wildly popular and we'll get a lot of use on it and having an ability to disperse that use to another

trail would probably actually reduce the impacts from its use, and also that they really enjoyed doing that project. So they set out to put together what then became the East Mojave Heritage Trail.

It's all coordinated with ourselves and -- well, not the preserve at that time, so actually with ourselves primarily at that time, BLM, and so this would be, like I said, very early '90s. Laid out a trail using currently open routes that began and ended in Needles at the El Garces Railroad Station and consisted of a 660-mile loop out of Needles heading north, went all the way up into Searchlight, Nevada and then back a crossover to generally like Kingston Springs over by to almost Dumont and then came back down over by Ludlow, ran parallel to Route 66 for a while and, anyway, wanders around through what's now the East Mojave back down into Needles and down to Barker and back up to the city of Needles itself, 660 miles broken into four segments, each segment having a look very similar to the Mojave Road Guide, same quality and intent and what have you. So it was a really exciting end product back in the early '90s.

In 1994 we got the California Desert Protection Act that designated Wilderness and unfortunately bifurcated that trail in 13 different places. Obviously

a lot of disappointment on the part of the Mojave Desert Heritage and Cultural Association folks. Pretty much everybody put their books down and went off and quit talking to each other about that time.

So a few years ago I got contacted by a gentleman that's involved in overlanding, what we now call that, and he had learned about the Heritage Trail and had taken it upon himself to the use of satellite imagery and what have you to retrace the trail and identify go-arounds for all of the sections that were impacted by the designation of Wilderness and had run that.

And so he came to the BLM looking for somebody in BLM that might still know about that. As it works out, I did, and so we started working together. The first question I asked him was, "Go-arounds that you did develop, did you compare them to our Travel Management Plans?" and it was kind of a blank look. So, you know, we said, "Okay. So let's start there."

And so we spent the last year, almost two really working with him to identify routes that not only avoid Wilderness but align with our current travel management decisions, and that's been developed. He's written supplements that now are sold with the segment books, and people are able to start using that trail

again now.

So most recently in this it occurred to a lot of us that -- back up just a second. Maybe it's obvious. The trail crosses four different jurisdictions, the Needles BLM Field Office, Mojave Preserve, Southern Nevada/Las Vegas Field Office lands and some of the Barstow lands. So we've thought that what would really help enhance the trail and the management of the trail would be one common messaging and theme that we can all kind of promote to visitors so that they know how to behave on the East Mojave Heritage Trail.

And so we reached out to Tread Lightly, who's very excited in the project and beginning to work with us about developing this messaging. The four jurisdictions are working now, and hopefully here in the fairly near future we'll be able to develop that messaging and we'll start putting that, you know, on web pages and brochures in the books, likely even on the ground in the form of signing and what have you.

So it's a neat project, something I'm really excited about. And hopefully we'll get you more information about it as it evolves. So I think that's all I really had. I'm certainly available for questions.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Questions for Mike. Jayne?

MEMBER POWELL: So I was just wondering how that was being promoted, because it sounds like it's kind of all coming back to life and making the public aware.

MR. AHRENS: Yeah. We haven't started any kind of a promotion on it and really, except the Mojave Desert Cultural Heritage Association, it's kind of their trail, so I know Bill Crites (phonetic spelling), the overlander that came in and started working with me on it, he's done several blogs, you know, and what have you, those kinds of things, working in social media. And, yeah, it's starting to become popular.

MEMBER POWELL: Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: It looks like you've got a question. Ed, did you have a question? You're unmuted.

MEMBER STOVIN: Thank you. That trail sounds really great, the Mojave Heritage Trail. So that's not currently marked on the ground; is that right?

MR. AHRENS: Yeah, where there are signs. There are open routes that are signed with route numbers. The Mojave Desert Heritage Cultural

Association has a GPS track that, you know, they'll provide along with the supplements, you know, when you buy the books and what have you. And, yeah, it's going to become more and more available, I think, you know, as it evolves and it really comes into place.

MEMBER STOVIN: It sounds really great. It might take more than two days to ride it.

MR. AHRENS: Yeah. Bill did it in seven, which I thought was remarkable.

MEMBER STOVIN: Maybe this winter or next winter.

MR. AHRENS: I think it's best done in two- or three-day increments. You can do each segment in about three days.

MEMBER STOVIN: How many segments are there?

MR. AHRENS: Four.

MEMBER STOVIN: I ride a motorcycle, so we go a little quicker. That's exciting. Thank you very much for pushing that along. If you ever need a letter from outside, let me know.

MR. AHRENS: Okay. Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Sounds like a great trip, for sure.

Randy, a question?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The original book; right?

Boy, you can't tell. There we go.

MR. AHRENS: That's Mojave Road Guide?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah. Well, it's not going to work so well, a green book with a green screen.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Worth a try.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: First edition.

MR. AHRENS: There's four different books for these Mojave Heritage Trail, blue, red, white, and gold. But that looks almost identical to the Mojave Road Guide.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Jim, it looks like you're hardworking today. Do you have a question for Mike?

MEMBER BAGLEY: I just want to encourage the Mojave Heritage Trail. I'm really glad to see that -- Dennis Casebier is a good friend of mine. He was the guy, the author of a lot of these guides, an historian in the East Mojave. I'm just encouraging you to go forward with that. It's really important. Those guides have been out there for decades. It's an important part of people using the desert prior to the Desert Protection Act, and I'm really glad to hear of it. I think it's wonderful we may be able to enjoy these routes again. I'm sorry. I'm actually out at Dry Lake. If you know where the internet tree, is that's where I

am now.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Glad you could join, Jim. Thanks for the comment.

Anybody else have a question for Mike? All right. We're going to bump across the desert and go over to Palm Springs and hear from Tim Gilloon.

MR. GILLOON: Good morning -- correction -- good afternoon. Nice to see everybody again, second DAC meeting and ready for any questions anybody has but would like to also follow up with a few items from last time, so just to address a few items see if this is going to work. And can everybody see the screen?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: We can see it.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: We can.

MR. GILLOON: Awesome. Thank you. Quick couple of follow-up items. Billy is not here, and so -- but just to close that out, we do have nine historical allotments. They're all pretty much currently inactive pending the SCRMP Management Plan update. Cattle in White Water Canyon of the San Jacinto National Monument, we have new reports of cattle again, so we're going to be engaging with the --

(Reporter clarification.)

MR. GILLOON: -- the Morongo Band of Mission Indians and then also coordinate with the state on some

of our cattle issues.

Dan, for filming I did give guidance to my folks to make sure they're considering that, and again we're reviewing some of our options for including those. Still, follow up with conversation in the next couple of months here.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Anytime.

MR. GILLOON: Okay. So in addition to the items listed in the report, we have again a lot of -- I've been doing a lot of personal involvement in some challenging issues related to some solar projects, Crimson, spent a lot of time on our monitoring and discovery plan. Got that finalized, and we are able to start construction on that first phase for the battery energy storage site, so we'll continue to be working on that and additional issues related to solar and tribal consultation involvement as we get through that one.

Obviously moving on, in the report we highlighted Oberon and Victory Pass and those solar projects. We have additional applications for other solar projects that we're working through. We've had a lot of sort of administrative actions and just trying to get through some of our backlog related to other utilities and plans and special uses. So a lot of work with communications, power and gas utilities, some water

facility stuff.

In the report we indicated where we're at with Chiriaco Summit. Got that EA across the finish line. And, Jayne, did you happen to take a look -- just to go back really quick, did you happen to take a look at the Whitewater recharge facility EIS and confirm there are no new construction posts for that?

MEMBER POWELL: I'm sorry. Were you asking me that?

MR. GILLOON: Yeah. As one additional follow-up item that you asked, last time you had asked about the Whitewater facility, the recharge facility, if there was new construction. I just wanted to check with you on that one to see if you had a chance to confirm.

MEMBER POWELL: I didn't, but I had heard that there was not.

MR. GILLOON: Right. Just work related to maintenance and the enhancing uses they currently have.

MEMBER POWELL: Right.

MR. GILLOON: Also for lands and special uses we're working through the Coachella Valley Link EA. We just have a small portion of that project, so we're working through that.

Moving to the monuments, our Sand to Snow National Monument planning effort is pretty much in

alignment with Mojave Trails, so I'm not going to go into a lot of detail. Noelle did a bang-up job discussing that. So we're just a little bit behind due to staffing, but we are working through that planning effort, as well as getting our statement of work out, also contracting to get that planning done.

Santa Rosa San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, we have some agreements we're working through to update for Forest Service and the staffing operations at the visitor center. Then also with Friends of Desert Mountains, they have a new volunteer coordinator, so we're working with them and also agreements. We just have some challenges to being able to reopen that based on our staffing problems, so we don't anticipate opening that anytime soon.

If we do open it, our plan is to do limited weekend-focused opening for the public. The majority of use is Friday, Saturday, Sunday, so we're trying to get that squared away for the winter season. But more information will come on that.

If some of you travel Highway 74, you may know about the box truck that kind of fell off the side and a little accident there, so I have some pictures to highlight some of that. And for law enforcement I would like to just bring up we're considering a potential

closure for the Minnewawa Truck Trail. I'm not sure if Dan Kasang was able to reach out to you ahead of this meeting at all.

I'll go ahead and move on. So if you're heading up the Highway 74 right after Art Smith Trailhead, you'll see the structure of that box truck that's sort of that rockslide area, California Department of Public Works right-of-way. And if not, then we'll have to address that, but we'll probably be working with them anyways. You can see where that terrain has some challenges for removal. There's some potential resource damage. There's also another vehicle in that same location, much older, and we see down in the bottom right hand of that screen that rusted metal, that's an older vehicle. Again, just some views of that sort of steep slope there. It's not a cliff, of course, but it is a steep drop-off.

I wanted to highlight this. It's not a major issue, but it relates to the next topic. So right now Danny and our staff are working to basically try and resolve this issue and develop a plan to get this material out of there and recover that area.

Questions related to this? Okay. Then I'd just like to briefly talk about the Minnewawa Truck Trail. We've had some requests from law enforcement and

border control, so currently looking at a possible safety-related closure. If you're not familiar, this terrain is located in San Diego County Otay Mountain Wilderness Area. You can access it via the Otay Trail and then get onto this Minnewawa Trail at the Dog House Junction, and you can travel north or you can get to it from off of BLM lands from Otay Lakes Road. The majority of course is BLM land. It's about 3.2 miles in total, and the other parts of the land ownership to the north end of that are Chula Vista and private ownership, Pio Pico Campgrounds, so BLM gates and two gates on private land on the northern end.

So it is a very technical route. It's steep and narrow, oftentimes with only width for one vehicle to go by. With that western side throughout you can see it's got a steep drop-off, similar to what we saw related to the Highway 74 incident here in the Coachella Valley. So again, if you do have an accident with that slope, you'll have a pretty bad accident if somebody falls off the edge there.

And with some of the sharp curves, it definitely presents some challenges to larger vehicles, larger law enforcement vehicles or any fire maintenance people moving through that area. At that one point it's so sharp that you almost have to make an Austin Powers

turn, where you're going back and forth way more than three points.

Other. Increased use in the overall area also comes through the Minnewawa, has increased usage, and when vehicles break down, it causes an issue, blocks the road. And of course if people want to try and attempt in areas where they might be able to, that of course creates a big safety issue up there.

Some of the other issues. There is increased immigration and human smuggling operations in that area. Over two dozen instances documented within the last three months, unknown amount that we don't catch. And again you've got vehicle accidents that occur, injuries to Border Patrol agents as a result of doing enforcement actions and, of course, some unrestrained passengers, obviously.

You know, it's just, again, should there be an accident or go off the side of the road, you can definitely have some loss of life with individuals not traveling safely.

So under consideration is just a temporary closure related to the safety issue for only about six months. It would only be for vehicle traffic. Hiking, hunting, horseback riding, non-motorized bicycle use would still be authorized. We'd replace barriers on the

BLM boundaries, both the north and the south end, and then we'd also reach out and work with Pio Pico Campground owners, who have been supported in the past who have been supportive of partial closure using a gate. We would post signage leading up to that and also notify -- we'd want to reach out to OHV groups and the public prior to any closures, so work with public affairs on that and recreation. So that is it in a nutshell for that issue. I'm sure I might get a couple of questions on this one.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Are you done sharing your screen there, Tim?

MR. GILLOON: Sure.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I do want to say thank you, Tim, for hearing my requests in the past about trying to move forward with any kind of NEPAs or EAs on lands for energies and whatnot for wind power or solar power, that you include film in that. It's exciting to hear that's in the works, so thank you so much.

MR. GILLOON: Absolutely.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Ed, did you have a couple of questions?

MEMBER STOVIN: Yeah. And just for background, I was over there last weekend with your resource for recreation staff, Dan Kasang. I like him, and I talked

to him on the phone a couple of days ago, and he told me about this proposed temporary closure of the road. I really don't like it. I'm really upset about it. This kind of temporary closure can often lead to a permanent closure.

This trail has a high recreational value to people. When we were up there, a lot of people came by. By the way, it's a relatively smooth road, but it's a greensticker route, and we saw people on motorcycles and ATVs out there. That's a lot of four-wheel drive vehicles driving over the mountain on the San Diego side.

On the west side the elevation is just a couple hundred feet, and the top of the mountain is about 3500 feet, so there's a spectacular view from up there. The road is a cherry-stemmed route through the Otay Wilderness.

I do have a quick question, Tim. So I'm looking at a map on my other computer, and there's Otay Mountain Truck Trail, and there's Otay Truck Trail. And Otay Truck Trail begins at the end of the campground, and Otay Mountain Truck Trail begins on Otay Lakes Road. Can you tell me which one is under consideration?

MR. GILLOON: Not seeing exactly which map

you're looking at, I would go back to what I displayed. That's what our law enforcement is covering. It's supposed to be the route from the Dog House Junction all the way up through the Pio Pico Campground.

MEMBER STOVIN: So I don't know the names of them. Dog House Junction, is that at the very top near the communication equipment?

MR. GILLOON: So that would be a little bit lower, I believe. So I can try and get a more detailed BLM map and work with Dan on that to get you a specific answer on the location. But I could hold back up the map and show you what I had displayed. My apologies for not having that in detail.

MEMBER STOVIN: See, I have your El Cajon map here. I'll open that also. I think Dog House Junction is on it. It's not on here at all. I think the route is not even on this map. I don't like it. I hope that -- from my understanding the Border Patrol is asking for this closure, and it's not coming out of the Bureau of Land Management. They're having problems out there. So I would love to find another way to solve the Border Patrol's problem without closure.

Closing areas and routes is an easy way to manage land. You can effectively get everybody out, including anybody who ever brings a problem. But it

doesn't really serve the recreation and public very well to close it. This mountain really only has one way in from the west and east. There's a way from the southwest, but the last bit of it is on private property and it's gated. So it would make access to the mountain really only from the east side. That would be just difficult for people that want to drive over it.

I'd be more than happy to help your office any way I can to try to keep the trail open.

MR. GILLOON: If I understand what I'm hearing, I can let you know this issue has come up a couple of times in the past, and, you know, multiple requests for the Border Patrol. I have pushed back because I've asked for more information of my staff going through this, because part of what I'm considering is, you know, is a temporary thing, because realistically I'm not -- I can tell you for certain the importance of this trail just looking at the road and access to the Wilderness and anything related to the Dingell Act is going to be pretty much a no-go for this.

I know it is too important for a permanent closure. So that to me is a no-go. So I also question what's the goal, and are we really going to achieve the goal with a temporary closure? So those are the things I've asked my staff to go back and look at, and I need

to sit down and talk with the Border Patrol as well as other user groups to figure out, you know, what's the end goal? Is this actually going to serve us? And do we have other options to try and help Border Patrol achieve their goal?

So I think there are some safety issues related to this, just in general, to the public and some potential issues, but I don't ultimately know if a temporary closure is going to meet that goal. So I just wanted to bring it up to your attention that I'm thinking about this, considering it, and I just wanted to get your input and involvement and also the involvement of the rest of the DAC.

MEMBER STOVIN: Yeah. Thank you for bringing it up. I had talked to Dan about it, and I wasn't sure how public we could go with it. But I think it's pretty public now. So thank you very much for bringing it up and working with us. I'll do my best to help outside the agency.

MR. GILLOON: Absolutely. Thank you very much. Yes, it's just trying to be transparent is one of the leadership philosophies I'm imparting to my staff, to make sure we're open.

That would be it for the report for Palm Springs-South Coast. I'll field any other

questions.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Jayne, did you have a question?

MEMBER POWELL: I was just going to support what Ed had to say, that I don't see from what I'm hearing that a temporary closure would do anything except keep the honest people off the trail, and the people that wanted to use it for illicit activities would probably be even happier continuing because they wouldn't have as many eyes perhaps observing what they were doing out there if it was, quote, temporarily closed. That's my thoughts on it.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Thank you, Jayne. Appreciate that.

Randy?

CHAIRMAN BANIS: I understand. Is this route in a Wilderness corridor or lead to Wilderness corridors?

MR. GILLOON: It provides access to a Wilderness area, yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: So I would advise that that's another thing to look at. Often those corridors and cherry-stems in Wildernesses, often they are the result of complex negotiations between stakeholders and parties to, you know, create the political will and the

political environment to be able to have landscape-level legislation that protects so many acres, as some of these Wilderness programs do.

And so often we find the corridors and the cherry-stems are so important that they're often in testimony and other kinds of documents that illustrate the congressional attempt. And so I would advise looking into some of the congressional attempt and stakeholder attempt with respect to that Wilderness, because when there's a road running through a corridor, there generally has a great importance to it.

MR. GILLOON: Absolutely, Randy. And I concur, and that's why I just -- you know, I definitely wanted to get some feedback here back on my decision model. When I looked at the ground, you're looking at a major metropolitan area, and we don't have a lot of Wilderness areas within that area that people can get to. And so it is important to maintain those. Thank you for your comment.

Ed?

MEMBER STOVIN: So years back before that was designated as Wilderness, there was a lot more off-road vehicle use out there, and I still remember when they worked on it. Our organization was pushing to make an off-road vehicle area out there. A guy named

Brian Bilbray was the congressman. He threw us under the bus because he allowed it to all be Wilderness except a couple of greensticker routes out there. It was a major loss to us, and so we did get a little bit of greensticker trail, but it's not what we call a high quality off-road resource, just because it's not enough, it's not rough, and it's -- you know, it's a pretty graded, smooth road that the Border Patrol drives on. They even have mirrors on a lot of the corners so you can see who's coming. It's a pretty well-developed trail.

Nonetheless, we value it very highly. So it was a big letdown when they turned that area into Wilderness, and closing it would be even another letdown. So thank you, guys.

MR. GILLOON: Understood. And I look forward to talking with you in more detail on this and the overall recreation program in the South Coast region.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Tim, do you have a question?

MEMBER BAGLEY: I want to echo the same thing. There are -- cherry-stem routes, especially when they're in the Wilderness Areas are a high value to people. They give access to the public in those areas that wouldn't otherwise exist. It's great sadness to me that

there aren't more cherry-stem routes. I've been locked out of areas that I love dearly, and cherry-stem routes would provide that. So I'm very resistant to any closure to cherry-stem routes. And I think this area is really valuable.

And I'm glad to hear the flexibility within the BLM and the willingness to look for solutions that don't necessarily end up with that being the result.

MR. GILLOON: Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right. Thank you, Tim. We're going to move on to Ridgecrest and hear from Carl.

MR. SYMONS: Good afternoon. I'm going to go over a few things that are outside of the report and update you on some of the ones that are in the report.

As far as grazing goes, we are working on trying to reauthorize Kelso Peak Allotment. That hasn't been grazed for a while. It used to be a combination with Woolstalf parcel in Bakersfield. It got split off. So now we're trying to re-establish that for the grazing, and that's become more important with the relinquishment of most of the Rudnick allotment. About 215,000 acres that got relinquished for mitigation from grazing, so that this area will allow some transfer of cattle from private land across and up to Forest Service

land, where the permittee happens to also graze up there.

And as far as the California high-speed rail Bakersfield to Palmdale, just one update not in there is that the high-speed rail is working with Palm Springs Field Office, even though we're the lead, Bakersfield -- or Palm Springs, that they are working on planning some stuff in Palm Springs. So they've been contacting working directly with them to try to get that stuff worked out.

We do have a number of permits that we've been processing and getting out for the North Haiwee Dam that they have two fiberoptics lines that they're trying to get to caretakers and penstock, in order to bring better information and work out their operations there. So we're working with the company that's putting that in right now.

We are working out -- hopefully it will all be out next week -- but the Notice to Proceeds for the Eland Energy Gen-Tie line in the Jawbone area, as well as Camino Solar, which is over in the Mojave area. And we also just got a 299 and a plan of development for a 400-megawatt solar project that is over also by Mojave, so that one is at the district office. They offered to do the initial adjudication on that, but we're in the

very preliminary stages with that. We just got it in not too long ago.

The mining area, in addition to what I have, we also have finished the comment period for the CDM Mine, which is over in the El Pasos. That one, right now we're entering with the county for SMARA, that the miner doesn't believe that it falls under SMARA, but that's not their version of it. So we do have agreements with the counties that we're working with them with our mining so that we stay kind of in lockstep so we don't get out in front and the county doesn't get out in front for mining, because most of the mines require for the Plan of Operations Authorization. So we do have MOU's where we agree to work together on that.

Another action that we're working on is, we're working with California Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on durability agreement for mitigation. I mentioned the 215,000 acres that was relinquished. In addition to that there is work that will need to be done on that in order to satisfy the mitigation for California Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Amy Fesnock has actually been taking the lead on that and has really been doing a fantastic job of working that through. As far as I know, it's the first one that we're doing here

in California. What it will be is basically, besides relinquishing and removing grazing permanently from the area, that we'll be putting in -- doing stuff like restoration, taking out range improvements, fixing up roads, stuff like that. That will be paid for as part of the mitigation for a number of solar projects that Eland Energy has going. So we're really looking forward to getting that one put together and kind of hopefully set a standard for the next ones that will be coming up.

Then also in as far as the Sky River that's on there, the reroute of the Pacific Crest Trail is pretty much done. We're hoping we're going to -- there's a scheduled field trip for October 5th with the Pacific Crest Trail Association. Forest Service unfortunately couldn't make it, but we'll be going along with them and the company to do a final checkoff of the reroute. Once that's done and accepted, we'll redo the easement, and that was based on because of a road that needed to be built for a wind energy project that's on private land. So that will be going.

Our Centennial horse gather, we did get a contractor this time to bid on it, so we will be trying to gather hopefully up to 250 horses from Navy Air Weapons Station China Lake. The entire gather will be on the base itself. The necessity for this gather is

the fact that they have two very large fires, 40,000 acres or so or more, on the base along with the drought has put the horses in critical condition. So we have been taking feed out there, working with the base to try to hold them over until we can get a gather going in order to remove those animals and then plan a larger one for later in the year.

Also we're working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. I got another call on Monday. I'm working on the Inyo Towhee, trying to put together strategies for how we can help that enlisted species in that it's also been a candidate for delisting, but that's still up in the air as to what's gonna happen there. But we are trying to work together to fund projects and work on the habitat to benefit the Inyo Towhee.

We're also working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on the Randsburg Wash Road. That's the road that connects the two bases actually withdrawn from the military. But it runs right through the middle of Spanglers Open Area, now that it's expanded. And basically what we're doing is we're trying to figure out how we're going to do the take on that road because the base -- it's the base's road. We've got an agreement for two places across, but with the expansion we'd like to go to six places across in order to allow people to

get from one side to the other. But the Navy is also concerned about that they don't want to get the road shut down because the desert tortoise due to OHV, so we're working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the base to try to get that put together for it.

That's about it. I'll open it up to any questions.

MEMBER POWELL: So Carl, this is Jayne. In terms of the Centennial horse gather or the roundup that's going to happen, where will you relocate the horses to, or what's going to happen to them?

MR. SYMONS: They'll go to the Ridgecrest corrals, and they'll be put -- once their conditions are to the point where they're deemed healthy and adoptable, we'll process them and get the okay from the vet, and they'll be put up for adoption. We're figuring it will be after the new year before the animals will be in a condition to be adopted.

MEMBER POWELL: So they sound pretty emaciated at this point.

MR. SYMONS: Some are, and some aren't. Obviously you have some of the dominant animals that will do better than others, but there's some that you can tell that they're in distress; their body scores are down in the twos and threes. So, yeah, it's important

we get out there, and we have a responsibility for a humane management of the animals. That's our main concern at this point.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Jayne, how many can we put you down for?

MEMBER POWELL: I don't think I can keep any in my HOA. My sister might take some in Kentucky, though, if you can get them to her.

MR. SYMONS: We've shipped as far as Germany.

MEMBER POWELL: I'll ask her.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Other questions for Carl?

MEMBER TAYLOR: Yeah, Carl. Again on the horse gathering, is this going to be horses only, or are you going to be also picking up some of the burros as well? How does that work?

MR. SYMONS: In the last one we did a burro gather over between Trona and Darwin, in which we gathered almost 300 burros on that gather. This one will just be horses, but then we still have to put together a gather plan for one that will either be right at the end of the year or early into '22 that, as you see from the numbers, there's a lot more. Two hundred fifty horses is not going to bring us down to anywhere near what the planned level is. We have 700-something,

I believe, is what the estimate is out there, and it's only supposed to hold 168. But those numbers, we have to get approval from the Washington office for the number of animals.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Since they share the same area, I would assume both species are in distress, I would assume.

MR. SYMONS: Yeah. The burros do a little better, but on the base it's mostly horses. There are some burros in there. But in that particular area it's mostly the horses that are having the issues right now.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Thank you, Carl.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Thanks, Carl. I am going to move us on here to the next presenter. We're just a little bit behind schedule and moving forward here, so I want to introduce Paul Gibbs. He's the fire management officer for the California Desert Inter-Agency Fire and Fuels Program. So I'll turn it over to Paul.

MR. GIBBS: Good afternoon, everyone.

(Paul Gibbs presented a slide show entitled
"Fire/Fuels Presentation.")

MR. GIBBS: So I'll just open it up to any questions at this time.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: We're a little bit

behind schedule, but time for just a couple of questions for Paul.

All right, Paul. Appreciate the presentation. We have a great fire and fuels program. Doing a lot of great work out there. I think from today's presentation and the last time, there's just a lot of great fuels work going on.

So I missed the clock on our stopping for our public comment period. So what I'd like to do is take a ten-minute break, so we're going to cut that back just a little bit. Ten-minute break. Then we'll come back. We'll start the public comment period.

My apologies to those members of the public who are waiting to speak, but we will get to you here in ten minutes, and then we will keep that open for the full 45 minutes if we have people ready to speak. All right. Thank you, everybody. Ten-minute break.

(Afternoon break.)

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: I'm going to turn this section over to Randy for our public input or public comment period.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Andrew. Thanks to you and your team for the report that we received and again, especially for the printed report too. Having that in advance is terrific, and we share that with our

stakeholders, and they all like it as well.

Let's move into the public comment section of our meeting, please. It's my favorite part of the meeting. And with that, Michelle, you helped me greatly at the last meeting because you can see all the people who were there. And if you would be so kind, could we depend upon you to call those with their hands up. I don't have privy to that.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Of course. No problem. So Sean Michael is our first person with his hand up for public comment. Sean, just a reminder you have three minutes for your comments, and if we have time left over at the end of the meeting, we can circle back if you have additional comments.

So we'll start with Sean Michael. Then Ruth Hidalgo will be next.

MR. MICHAEL: Sorry. Can you hear me now?

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: We can hear you.

MR. MICHAEL: Hi. Politician Obernolte wants to have Bureau of Land Management release land east of 29 Palms for more off-road usage. Currently my street, my paved asphalt street is daily illegal traversed by off-road vehicles to get to the open desert area and ride illegally further. My big problem with this is that there's not enough supervision now, let alone

providing attractions for more people who come here.

The city and the county officials want the tourists not considering the infrastructure to monitor this situation now. I am requesting that you guys don't release more area for off-roading until the current situations of illegal off-roading activities in my area of 29 Palms are resolved.

I'm a fifth-generation Californian. I have a photographic documentation of the alteration and destruction of California. My grandmother has lived in 29 Palms all my life. I used to come here in search for sound because there was none. Now it is constantly motorcycles, loud engines roaming around. It is destroying our habitat. I don't have a roadrunner that used to come to my grandmother's yard every day at 2:00, because it just doesn't exist. He's gone. The coyotes are crossing across Two Mile Road and 62 highway at 12 through 4:00 in the afternoon, avoiding and running from these motorcyclists.

Nobody is doing anything about this. I'm begging you to please do something for my desert. Protect it. Do not allow more people to come here before the current situation can be monitored and dealt with. I have got daily calls to the sheriff's department on this, so please do something on this

off-road stuff that's illegal. Thank you, and have a good day. And I appreciate everything you guys are all doing.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you for your comment, Sean.

Ruth Hidalgo is next to speak, and after Ruth it will be Thomas Zale.

MS. HIDALGO: Hi. Ruth Hidalgo, recreational rockhound. I just wanted to thank all of you DAC members for your time and being here and representing stakeholders, and I appreciate all of the reports from the field office managers. It's really nice to be able to know what's going on and get an idea and get back into hearing these reports. I've really missed it when the DAC was down. The DAC is really important in connecting the public with what's going on in land use. So again, we appreciate that.

Is Katrina still here? I had a question for her. No?

MS. SYMONS: I am still here.

MS. HIDALGO: Hi, Katrina. There was a report about a solar field out by Pisgah Crater in the last DAC meeting. I've been watching the register. How long should I expect before that comes out for comment?

MS. SYMONS: We are still in the

pre-application phase for that, Ruth. We're just right now waiting for the applicant, so I don't have a timeline.

MS. HIDALGO: Okay. Thank you. I'll just keep watching for it, then. Thank you. That area, as you know, is important to us. We already have issues with it being now within the monument, and obviously the solar field is going to be outside of it, but that will be the only rockhounding left out there if you don't get it in the monument. So I'd like to keep an eye on that one. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you, Ruth.

Next to speak is Thomas Zale. Then following him will be Gary Stiler.

MR. ZALE: Hi. My name is Thomas Zale. Can you hear me?

THE REPORTER: Yes.

MR. ZALE: Great. It's really nice to see some familiar faces and to virtually meet some new ones. I'm a former BLM employee who retired. I used to work in El Centro. In retirement I'm currently volunteering time to serve on the board of directors for the Public Lands Foundation, or PLF, as the state representative for California.

The PLF is a national membership organization

that advocates for the management, protection, development, and enhancement of Public Lands managed by BLM. We do this by remaining current on Public Land issues and policies and communicating our concerns and recommendations through position statements, letters and testimony, comments on rulemaking and special publications. We testify before Congress, submit written testimony on budget and policy matters affecting the BLM and the Public Lands, and respond to media requests.

The PLF maintains an informative website with position statements on a variety of topics. You can find us by Googling "PublicLand.org." We also offer scholarship opportunities and maintain a memorial wall honoring former and current BLM employees who have passed.

In the past year PLF hired an individual, Courtney Lyons-Garcia, who now serves as our executive director and who played an active role in the recent celebration of BLM's 75th anniversary. PLF membership is open to everyone who supports our mission. I invite you and encourage you to check us out on the website.

And with that, again it's nice to see folks, and I appreciate the work everyone is doing. And I'll yield the balance of my time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Tom, great to hear from you. It's Randy Banis. I knew we'd cross paths again very soon.

MR. ZALE: I've been trying to lay low, but I can't stay away.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Great to hear about what you're working on. Thank you.

MEMBER POWELL: Tom, thanks for sharing what you're working on. Since we talked last, I've retired from Granite, so it's nice to still be involved.

MR. ZALE: Congratulations on being part of the Desert Advisory Council. I think that's awesome.

MEMBER POWELL: Thank you.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you, Thomas.

Gary, you had your hand up. Gary, did you still wish to speak? I see you taking your hand down. Did you still wish to speak, Gary?

If not, next to speak is Anitra Kass.

MS. KASS: Okay. Hello. Can you guys hear me? My name is Anitra Kass, and I am the Southern California regional representative for the Pacific Crest Trail Association. So anything and everything that has to do with the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail in the southernmost/best 512 miles, hopefully I have my hand in. That does include the PCT as it runs through

El Centro and Palm Springs office lands. Sorry, Carl. It used to be the best 702 miles when I had Ridgecrest also in there, but I've had to yield that to somebody else.

I am coming to you from the Coachella Valley in my home office, and I'm really excited today because I get to celebrate with you guys the fifty-third anniversary of the National Trails System Act today, and of course the fifty-third birthday of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail and our sister trail on the East Coast, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail.

As you probably know, the Pacific Crest Trail was one of the original components designated with the passing of the National Trails System Act, so I just wanted to say how glad I am to have the chance to listen and to better understand the issues and opportunities on our BLM lands by being on the call today and actually on the last call.

And I really look forward to working with the DAC and our BLM partners as it pertains to our work protecting, promoting, and preserving the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail as it runs through the wonderful California Desert District. So thank you so much. Looking forward to working with you and seeing you guys in the future.

Tim, I'm waving at you because I know that we'll meet more officially, I think, on Tuesday.

MR. GILLOON: That is correct. We'll be talking with you in more detail.

MS. KASS: Awesome. Thank you so much, everybody, and have a wonderful rest of your weekend. And tonight, as you're sitting around the dinner table, whether you're drinking water or a beverage, I hope you raise it and toast to the birthday of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: This is Randy Banis. And thank you for reminding me of the fifty-third birthday and the time of the PCTAT. I was born and raised only a few miles from the Appalachian Trail, northern Maine, and now I found myself living only miles from the PCT and working with Friends of Jawbone, who aligns with the Pacific Crest Trail Association in helping to maintain its alignment through our area. So thanks for coming in and joining us today.

MS. KASS: My pleasure. And we've had a great working history in the past with Friends of Jawbone when I was up there, so we really appreciate your work and partnership over the years.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you, Anitra.

So we did have -- Gary Stiler was raising his hand. He's raised it a couple of times. It's not up currently. Gary, did you have a comment that you wanted to provide to the council? It looks like he's attempting to connect now.

MR. BOMBE: I see I don't have a mute control for the back end, which means you're not fully connected to the audio of the meeting. So if that was something you got when you joined the Zoom event today, there would have been a pop-up box that prompts you to connect to audio. If you want to take a second and make sure that you have that and that you're connected, and you can further check on your audio settings on the bottom of Zoom window, just in case that's something that didn't come up for you.

So, Michelle, he isn't able to talk. But I don't believe he's connected to audio, and I don't have the mute or unmute control for him, so I don't believe he's fully connected. So I can try to work with him and see if maybe he can call in or something like that. Otherwise --

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: I was going to say maybe we could have him switch to phone audio using the up caret next to the mute button.

MR. BOMBE: Gary, if you can hear us -- and if you're connected to audio, you should be able to -- I want to just read out the phone number for you, and you can try to call in on your cell phone if you are still willing to talk. That phone number is 833-568-8864. And once you have called that phone number, the meeting ID we'll need is 1602918632.

I'm going to put that into the chat for you as well. I know that's a lot of numbers. And you should be able to copy that down and potentially try to give us a call.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you, Card.

While we're waiting to see if Gary is able to call in and connect with us, is there anybody else, any other members of the public that would like to address the Desert Advisory Council at this time?

I see Sean Michael has raised his hand again. Sean?

MR. MICHAEL: It was only to write a sign that said, "Gary, call the number," and the numbers you've recited. That's all. I was trying to be helpful. Sorry.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you, Sean. We appreciate that. Hopefully it's working for Gary. We'll give him another minute to call in.

Is there anybody else at this time, any other member of the public that would like to address the Desert Advisory Council? Please let us know by raising your hand. I'm not seeing anybody, but I'd like to give Gary another moment, in the event that he's still struggling with technology. Let's just give him a minute and see if he's able to reconnect.

MR. BOMBE: I do see a phone number on our attendee list, the last four digits "2016." I'm hoping that's you, Gary. If it is, you can use star nine to raise your hand. If you want to dial that into your phone, we will see you have a hand raised on our end. And that, of course, could be another attendee who has joined us. But if that is you, Gary, again phone number ending in "2016," you're welcome to hit star nine on your phone, and that will show us your raised hand.

And I do still see you on your other device in the meeting as well. So the one other thing that you could quickly try, if calling isn't working for you, is leaving the meeting, rejoining via the same link that you joined, and then just making sure that you connect to computer audio when you come back into Zoom. And at that time you'll have the option to call in or change audio devices as well.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you, Card. That

might take a minute or two. Do we want to continue with discussion of future meetings and come back in the event that Gary is able to reconnect with us? Gary, if you're still listening, you're always welcome to e-mail your comments, as well. I can share them with the council and get them included in the final record. That would work as well.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I think it's a great idea. I don't think we'll be long looking at these dates. Before we jump in, thank you to our members of the public who took the time to join us all day and follow along with us, and for just your three minutes. That's really nice of you, and it's much appreciated by the Desert Advisory Council, and we look forward to seeing you again in person soon.

With that, we've been asked to look ahead at our calendar and plan for some dates. Is there a direction I should be pointing, Michelle or Andrew, or am I free to just shoot? I have some dates to toss out, unless you have some to go.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: I think Andrew has some ideas.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: I can take it, Randy. And let's not forget to come back and ask for topics for our February meeting, which is already

scheduled.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Oh, here we are. Oh, yeah. Okay. Good. Sorry. I jumped the gun. Okay. Let's get this one done while we're on it.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Okay. I just want to back up one step and reiterate what Randy said to the members of the public. Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with the DAC and with the BLM folks here. We really, really appreciate the input. And if you have other comments, you can e-mail them. I believe Michelle shared that e-mail address earlier on, but please do that. It's great to hear from you.

So right now in terms of future meetings we have -- our next meeting is scheduled for February. Again we're going to assume we can pull off a face-to-face meeting, and then we'll change accordingly if we have to. But the schedule right now is for February 11th and 12th. That's already on the calendar.

I want to move forward and propose meetings for May, August, and December. And just kind of keeping them in the middle of the month like we have been, we'd be looking at May 13th and 14th, likely in Barstow; August 12th and 13th hosted by Palm Springs, but we're considering something in the South Coast area; and then December 9th and 10th. I moved that one back a little

bit from the holiday, and that would likely be in Ridgecrest or Needles.

MEMBER POWELL: So are we going to Ridgecrest in February theoretically?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Excuse me?

MEMBER POWELL: Are we going to Ridgecrest in February?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Because we were supposed to have met in El Centro today, we're kicking that meeting forward to February.

MEMBER POWELL: Okay. So I'll change it on the calendar, then.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: It fits their recreation schedule just a little bit better.

MEMBER POWELL: For everybody's comfort, I would suggest we not come to Palm Springs in August.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: That's why we're looking at the South Coast somewhere along the actual coast, because we do have the Coastal National Monument out there, and we manage about 250,000 acres within the South Coast area between Palm Springs and the Pacific Ocean, so we are looking at holding it over there, Jayne.

MEMBER POWELL: Okay.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: What was the date in August

again, please?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: I'll start again with February looking at El Centro the 11th and the 12th; for May, the 13th and 14th; August 12th and 13th; and December 9th and 10th. That's a ways out, but if you have a calendar in front of you and if you have a conflict, if you can let us know right now. But otherwise we'll move forward with those dates.

Actually, you know, Michelle, maybe what we should do, and Randy, is go back, check your calendars over the next week, send us an e-mail if you have a conflict with those dates, and then we can propose another one. That might be a little more difficult if we're doing it by e-mail, but we're a ways out. We can make that work.

MEMBER POWELL: So December 9th and 10th was El Centro again?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Likely Ridgecrest.

MEMBER POWELL: Oh, Ridgecrest.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm good with them all.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Good for me.

MEMBER POWELL: Sounds good to me.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I wish I had more plans. I'm still not going to buy an appointment book. I'm still not going to buy one. Maybe next year.

MEMBER POWELL: That's what your electronic calendar is for.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: I'll send out an e-mail to everybody within the next week with these dates with the hope that you all can get back to me and let me know if they indeed work, because the plan would be to put in a request for a Federal Register Notice, at which time we wouldn't be able to move the dates. As we know, that can be a lengthy process, which is why we're starting to get it started now.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Jim, were you able to hear those dates? Jim?

MEMBER BAGLEY: Yes. Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right, Randy. We'll turn it over to you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Were we successful in getting a hand raised from a member of the public who was going to join us?

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: No. Unfortunately I do not see him on the public side at this time. So I know Card was trying to work with him, but either his question was perhaps answered or he is still experiencing technical difficulties. But hopefully he saw my e-mail address I added to the chat, which he can also send comments there as well, and I'll share them

with the DAC. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I appreciate your accommodating the public in getting their comments. I appreciate that.

Well, then the last item on the agenda is the next-to-the-last item on the agenda, but that's the last item on the agenda, and that one is topics for the next meeting. Let's see. I'm willing to open the floor up at any time.

And, Jayne, you had brought something up earlier that I only wrote half down. Oh, ideas for subgroups.

MEMBER POWELL: Yes. So I was curious. One area, people could bring forward their own ideas for subgroups. And secondly, I would be interested in knowing what the various field offices felt their greatest needs were from the DAC, and potentially we could create groups to support those needs, if that would be appropriate.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I've written it down. BLM has too. We got it.

Next ideas?

MEMBER TAYLOR: I don't have an idea, but it was a comment I forgot to make at the very beginning, if I might do so at this time. I did some research about

filming on Public Lands, and this is a very, very conservative number I'm going to give you, but this is just impacting the Barstow BLM offices.

Since 2000 through now, filming has created an economic impact in the neighboring communities of over \$65 million. And that's an extremely conservative number because I am missing a lot of information in this calculation. And I know recreation is even higher than that, and so it shows kind of how important the Public Lands are to the local communities, both in recreation and filming. So I am so pleased how hard this particular BLM office works to make sure that happens. I just wanted to share that.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Jayne, I had noted at the previous meeting we talked very briefly about Special Recreation Permits. But one aspect of it sort of got focused on, and I thought didn't somebody ask for -- I don't know if it was you that asked for maybe just a rundown on how the SRP program works, when is a permit required and when is it not? Does that mean anything, or are we past that?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I think that would be a really interesting thing to discuss.

MEMBER POWELL: I don't recall asking that, but I would very much appreciate learning about it.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I know the issue of cost recovery had your ears.

MEMBER POWELL: Yes, it did. I remember talking about that part.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yes. And this independent monitoring thing, I remember that had your ears. It was a disconnect somewhere along the way, and there was some missing pieces to connecting that.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: There's also -- you know, I'd like everybody to understand that Special Recreation Permits are what we use for recreation, too, in the California Desert District, which is pretty unique country.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Dick, are you referring to the fees that you pay in Dumont, for example?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Those are SRPs.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: We're paying a Special Recreation Permit, and so I think it's good to review what it costs to use the Public Lands in some of these areas. I mean, if you want to have a wedding or a party or a group thing, what you have to go through with BLM to get that in place. I happen to work for a company. We've tried to do a customer appreciation day essentially, and it was like a three-month operation to

try to get that in place. So it would be interesting to have everybody understand how all that works.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Any other comments or questions on future agenda items?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Randy, you had mentioned -- I think you did -- illegal marijuana grows. And our BLM law enforcement program is pretty involved with the campaign against illegal marijuana planting with the State of California, and we definitely have our law enforcement coming in to give a presentation on their activities.

And it's a big topic of conversation right now because we're only touching the law enforcement end of it right now, but there is a whole other land use and impact issue that you referred to associated with, and it is just a monumental problem. But if folks would be interested, we could definitely have a presentation on marijuana grows.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I think it's timely.

MEMBER POWELL: I think it's very timely, and I know that the water boards are very concerned about that from the state's perspective, as well as California Fish and Wildlife. So they do a lot of work on it, and they have their own enforcement. So anyway, if the two entities could team together to address the issues, I

think it would be a benefit to the public.

And while I'm talking, I misspoke on fully having my calendar clear. August 12th and 13th are already booked. I'm going to actually be out of the desert on those dates.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: The following weekend of August 19th and 20th?

MEMBER POWELL: Yes, that's clear, or the week before.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Others?

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Andrew, I would request we don't do that date only because it's my birthday weekend and I've already got plans.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Absolutely. We would be at a complete loss without you here.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Sorry, everyone. But wine tasting is important too.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Later in August might be better anyway. So how about the 26th and 27th?

MEMBER POWELL: That works.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: All right.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good, good. Okay. So last comments on future agenda items, future dates? Three, two, one. Okay. Let me wrap up for us for a minute.

It was great to see us getting our stride and

making plans for the future. Standing up our subgroups today is a big step. And I'll work closely with the points that we talked about today to work with the BLM to get these meetings scheduled and appointments brought to the Advisory Council as soon as possible.

I want to thank Card, the BLM Zoom tech. To keep all of this motley crew assembled together from all parts of the desert and beyond, that requires a pat on the back and more. And thanks for working with members of the public so diligently to get them plugged in.

You know we'll always probably have some remote aspect to our meetings going forward. But that said, hopefully those who are more challenged technologically will be able to join us in person in the future meetings, starting maybe as soon as our February meeting.

I encourage the DAC members whose terms are expiring, please reapply. That's a personal appeal. You're terrific representatives for the stakeholders, and you're, you know, wonderful colleagues to work with. You see things beyond the ends of your noses, and you like to work together, and I think you're a great fit for this group. And, please, anything I can do to help for anybody, just make sure you get your applications in. If you don't reapply, you can't be reappointed, so

please, please do that.

And with that said, also, let's make sure we keep close in touch on the progress of the Mojave Trails National Monument when the application period for the subgroup members opens so that we can all reach out to people who we know that may have expressed a desire to serve on the committee or even just participate at the meetings as a member of the public. So keep in touch with this.

This is kind of a big deal. I think this Mojave Trails National Monument planning is probably the biggest thing to come down since DRECP and as far as the Desert Advisory Council's potential impact, and I appreciate the BLM letting us stand up this committee to help us help them and the American people in getting a great management plan for one of the most special places on earth, I think.

So with that said, any final comments before I turn the meeting over to Andrew?

Hearing and seeing none, it's been a pleasure to work with you all today. I'm looking forward to the next one.

Andrew?

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: I want to reiterate what Randy said. Thank you all again very

much. And, Diane, thank you for your great support here, as well as Card. And, you know, just a hand to Michelle because she does an outstanding job of herding the cats here both internally and externally.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah, yeah.

MS. VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you.

DISTRICT MANAGER ARCHULETA: Thank you, DAC members, for the great input. Really good conversations today. And I agree with Randy, we're moving forward and working toward hitting our stride here a little better. And I do look forward to your input and involvement in the monument planning effort as well as everything else that we're doing.

So with that, we will call it a meeting and officially adjourn for today. Thank you, everybody.

(The meeting was concluded at 3:41 p.m.)

MOTIONS

Maker: Member Holliday

Seconder: Member Taylor

Motion: Resume the Dumont Dunes Subgroup and
ISDRA Subgroup and to ask the BLM
to call for members for the
Mojave Trails National Monument
Subgroup

Result: Carried

CERTIFICATE

I, Diane Carver Mann, C.S.R. No. 6008, in and for the State of California, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing pages were taken down by me in shorthand at the time and place stated herein and represent a true and correct transcript of said proceedings.

I further certify that I am not interested in the event of the action.

Witness my hand this 1st day of November, 2021.



Certified Shorthand
Reporter in and for the
State of California