

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

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

REMOTE ZOOM

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2022

9:05 A.M. TO 3:25 P.M.

FILE NO. 5014860

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 9:05 A.M. ON
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2022, BEFORE DIANE CARVER MANN,
CSR NO. 6008

MEMBERS OF THE DESERT ADVISORY COUNCIL PRESENT:

RANDY BANIS - CHAIRPERSON

JAYNE POWELL

ED STOVIN

RICHARD HOLLIDAY

DAN TAYLOR

NATHAN FRANCIS

BILLY MITCHELL

PAUL WHITEHEAD

JIM BAGLEY

PAUL MARTIN

JACK THOMPSON

APPEARANCES (CONTINUED)

PRESENT FROM THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT:

ANDREW ARCHULETA, DESERT DISTRICT MANAGER

MICHELLE VAN DER LINDEN, PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

RYAN CHATTERTON, EL CENTRO FIELD OFFICE

MIKE AHRENS, NEEDLES FIELD OFFICE

JEFF CHILDERS, BARSTOW FIELD OFFICE

CARL SYMONS, RIDGECREST FIELD OFFICE

JANET CHEEK, PALM SPRINGS-SOUTH COAST FIELD OFFICE

KAREN MOURITSEN, BLM STATE DIRECTOR FOR CALIFORNIA

PAUL GIBBS, FIRE MANAGER

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

BRANDON ANDERSON, ASSISTANT DISTRICT MANAGER FOR
PROJECT SUPPORT

COLE DURAN, DISTRICT LAW ENFORCEMENT RANGER

KATE MYAMATO, ACTING PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

DANA STEPHENSON, DISTRICT OUTDOOR RECREATION PLANNER

MATTHEW GIBBS, ZOOM TECH

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- 1 - ARTICLE ENTITLED "POPULATION TRENDS IN MOJAVE DESERT TORTOISES (GOPHERUS AGASSIZII)" BY LINDA J. ALLISON AND ANN M. MCLUCKIE
- 2 - USGS OPEN - FILE REPORT ENTITLED "DESERT TORTOISE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, 1991-2015"
- 3 - LETTER TO SECRETARY HAALAND FROM RICHARD SPOTTS
- 4 - SUBMITTED WRITTEN COMMENTS FROM JENNY WILDER

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2022

9:05 A.M.

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MS. VAN DER LIN: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to the February 12th Desert Advisory Council meeting. Sorry we're a couple of minutes late. I apologize for that. All right. I think we're ready to get started.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: All right. Good morning, everyone. I'm Andrew Archuleta. I'm the district manager for the California Desert District. Just want to welcome all the public that's joining us. Thank you for taking time to spend with us on a Saturday. We really appreciate that.

A big welcome to all the DAC members, and a welcome to our newest DAC member, Jack Thompson -- and he'll introduce himself after a bit -- as well as all the BLM staff joining us today. I appreciate everybody taking the time. With that, I'm going to turn it over to Michelle, and she's just going to go over some Zoom protocols for the public.

Michelle?

MS. VAN DER LIN: Good morning, everyone. Thank you again for joining us for this meeting. We

just want to make sure that everybody is aware of all of our Zoom-related protocols so we can have a successful meeting. Our public comment period is scheduled for 2:45. That's the time when members of the public will be able to address the DAC. Members of the public will have the ability to address the DAC during that period only using their audio.

To allow for the maximum number of individuals who would like to address their viewpoints, speakers must finish within the designated time of three minutes. We'll have a countdown timer to assist with that. Provided we have extra time available, you'll have a second opportunity to address the DAC if we do run long. In the event we don't have enough time for that purpose, you're welcome to e-mail me. I'll put my e-mail in the chat, and we will make sure that any comments that are sent to me are included in the final record provided by our court reporter, Diane Mann.

Please show mutual respect for each other and the BLM folks who are with us today. Speakers must not exhibit unprofessional conduct or use inappropriate language at any time during the meeting. Violating or disrespecting any of these rules may result in being muted or removed from the meeting. And to the best of our ability, speakers will be called on in the order in

which you raise your hand, once the public comment period opens. And we will work through as many speakers as possible before 3:15.

We have received three public comments prior to the meeting, and those comments have been shared with the DAC members and will be part of the final report that our court reporter, Diane Mann, puts together for us.

And at any time if the public would like to submit a question to the BLM or to the DAC outside of the scheduled meeting, I will go ahead and again throw my e-mail in the chat, and you're welcome to do that. And I would be happy to share any messages with the DAC.

So other than that, Andrew, back to you. I think we're ready to get started.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: All right. Thanks, Michelle.

Just a reminder, everyone, all the DAC and BLM folks, if you're not speaking, if you would mute your microphone just so we don't catch the background chatter.

We're privileged to have with us our BLM state director for California, Karen Mouritsen. And Karen is going to share a few thoughts with you. I'll turn it right over to you, Karen.

MS. MOURITSEN: Okay. Thank you, Andrew. And welcome, everyone. I'm really glad to be here with you this morning. Today I'm at the Needles Field Office. Yesterday and the day before, I was visiting the field office staff and went to a number of sites around and in the Needles jurisdiction, including the Mojave Trails National Monument, along Route 66, the Amboy Crater, and a number of other areas in the monument. So now I'm here in Needles and glad to participate this morning.

The first thing I want to say is a huge thank you, just like Andrew said, to all the members of the DAC and the committee members. We really thank you for being on this committee, and thank you for taking the time to participate and dialing in via Zoom. They had to give me some remedial Zoom assistance earlier this morning, and so I know it's difficult. So thank you for bearing with us and doing this via Zoom. And I want to thank the members of the public who are listening in also, and thank you all for participating.

These committees are really beneficial to us, and hopefully we will be back having these in person by our next meeting, which obviously -- well, to my mind it's scheduled to be in person. We really thank you for participating and participating via Zoom at this time.

Let's see. I had a couple of other things I

wanted to say. Well, one is I really enjoyed seeing the area and seeing some of the areas that you all will be talking about, I'm sure. Last December I came down to this area when the Secretary of Interior came to Palm Springs to visit the Palm Springs Field Office and the Desert District office, and then she went to see some of the solar projects in the Desert Center area, and we took her to the Corn Springs Campground to show her some of the really neat other resources in this area. And so that was a really fun trip for me.

Later today I'm going to go to the Route 66 celebration of the first anniversary of the designation of Route 66 in California as a National Scenic Byway, and so that should be really neat.

Some other things. I thought I'd give you a quick budget update, which is quick because there's a not a lot to it. But for our fiscal year 2022, which we're in now, the Congress is working on the budget, and they're getting close, but they are doing another short-term continuing resolution. So send good vibes up to Capitol Hill in Washington that they'll resolve that soon. And when they pass a bill, of course the details could change, but we are expecting it's highly likely that the BLM, including BLM California, will get some additional funds for a number of our programs. And if

this happens, our headquarters and all of us in the BLM are going to try to act quickly to go through the administrative processes to get the money and start spending it. So send some good vibes up to Capitol Hill. Hopefully that will happen soon and it will benefit us.

The other budget-type thing out there is the infrastructure bill. And the infrastructure bill was passed by Congress and signed by the president, and we do expect it's going to provide us some pretty good chunks of money in some different programs, probably for BLM a lot in the fire program, both for a workforce and also for doing hazardous fuels reduction projects.

So we don't have the exact numbers quite because they're figuring out -- Congress appropriated the money to the Department of Interior, so they're figuring out how we all share it. But we do expect additional funds there.

We are starting to get funds for remediating the abandoned wells that is somewhat -- it's not as big of a problem on Federal Lands in California as it is in other places around the BLM, but we're going to get some money for that. So stay tuned on the infrastructure bill increases, but it's overall pretty good.

Another update is about how we're operating our

offices and why we're still doing these Zoom meetings. We are still operating under our pandemic mode of operation, but we are planning for reentering the physical offices and getting back to our -- I call it our new-normal operations. And at this time the date is the beginning of April, and we're figuring out how we're going to operate once we come back to the new normal.

And the new way of doing business is we're going to have a lot more people doing a lot more telework. We have found that -- well, I guess you all know, or I hope you know, that our people in the field offices, our employees, they've been doing all their fieldwork this last couple of years, except maybe the first few weeks of the pandemic. So the fieldwork has been going on.

Then most of our employees have been working from home when they had to do their reports or whatever on the computer. And we are finding that it has worked out in most cases really, really well, that people are mostly liking working at home at least part of the time. A lot of people don't have the commutes, whatever, and so we will be going to much more teleworking when we get back to normal.

However I wanted to say that our customers and our partners, we will still be meeting with you all. We

will be meeting you all in the field if that's what a permittee or somebody wants to do, or in the office. So we will be getting back to much more of a normal operation that you all can see. And we will be able to have meetings like this in person, once we kind of get back to the new normal. So I'm looking forward to that, and I hope everyone is.

Then the last thing I'd like to say is making kind of an announcement that is a rather bittersweet thing to announce. It's kind of, you know, a good thing and a sad thing. Our district manager from the California Desert, Andrew Archuleta, Andrew is going to a new job next month, and this is a really exciting and great new job. He's going to be the state director for the BLM Wyoming office, and that's a really, really big job. They've got a lot of tough, tough issues there, and I'm really proud of Andrew. I think he'll be wonderful at that. And obviously other people thought the same thing, because they are stealing him away from us.

And so it's great news for BLM and for Andrew but really sad for us because we all really like Andrew and we're very appreciative of everything he did. And so, you know, you might want to give best wishes to Andrew at the end of this. But anyway, it's sad for us

but great for him.

Greg Miller, who's on this meeting -- and likely you probably know Greg. I see him on the screen here. Greg is going to be acting in the interim. Greg will do a wonderful job running the show after Andrew leaves. And last week we put the job advertisement out on the street, and it will be out for a month, a month from sometime last week. So please let people know that you think might be interested that that advertisement is out there, because we'd love to get a great candidate pool applying for the job. But in the meantime we're in really good hands with Greg acting as the interim district manager.

So I look forward to hearing the reports and hearing the discussions. Back to you, Andrew or Michelle.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: All right. Thank you, Karen. It is bittersweet leaving. The desert is absolutely a fascinating place, and you all have made it just a super experience working with the DAC, and just a lot of neat things going on here in the desert, and always a lot coming our way. So it is bittersweet.

I am looking forward to getting back to the Rocky Mountain area. I'm originally from Colorado, so that part is good, although I have to admit, 90 degrees

yesterday in Palm Springs was pretty nice when I saw the horizontal snow in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

So anyhow, let's see. I kind of got off track here. But we're behind schedule already, so I'm just going to do this. Do any of the DAC members have any questions for Karen? We probably only have time for just a few, but since we have Karen here, let's just open it up real quick for five or ten minutes.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yeah, Andrew, I do.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: Go on.

MEMBER MITCHELL: I'm wondering what we're going to do about the ranching industry here in the desert. There's five, six of us left. But one ranch I have been personally working on for 15 years, year-round Round Mountain allotment, and all the way back to Ed Hastings as a state director.

I don't know how many -- oh, shoot. I lost my train of thought. But I don't know how many people have been through to try to get this resolved, including talking to you about it. So when is somebody -- we got the King of the Hammers. We got all this other stuff being approved, yet for 15 years we can't clearly get off the ground for this family to have a year-round operation. So how are we going to escalate that on your guys's list to accomplish this?

Right now we have no billing for the ranchers since -- what? -- about a year ago, I guess. We're all sitting in limbo waiting to pay our bills. We didn't even get an okay from the area manager -- excuse me -- to even turn out, so I advised him to go ahead and work on the AMP, or the presented AMP. The family has a son that's qualified with the Arizona State for a range conservationist, or range whatever you call them, specialist now. He's going ahead to finish what the BLM was going to start for studies because there's nobody in the Barstow office to do good.

So when is this going to change for the ranching industry? I guess that's my main question. I mean, everybody else seems to be going forward. We're in reverse.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: Let me answer the first part of it. Barstow, like you indicated, does not have a range position filled right now. It's tough to keep somebody there. But I know Jeff and the staff are working on filling that position. There's just a lot of different things going on, so it's hard to have somebody from a different position to cover the range stuff. We do the best we can with that, but hopefully we're going to have that position filled.

Jeff and I have talked about the situation you

described. We're going to be taking a hard look at it, looking at the production on the ground. That's the most important thing. I understand you think year-round grazing is an option, but we need to take a look at the data and just see if in fact it can support that.

So, Karen, I think the bigger question from Billy is really grazing in the desert, which has been shrinking over the years, and a lot of other competing uses. And I'm not sure if you have any thoughts about that.

MS. MOURITSEN: Yeah. I'll just say it's something we're going to have to continue to look at really carefully and look at the conditions on the ground. You know, grazing is one of the uses that is called out in the California Desert Protection Act, so we do need to look at it. But we've also got to look at it in -- you know, look at the range conditions. And I think, you know, it's something we should continue to look at and try to manage it in the most responsible way we can, given the conditions.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: We'll be talking to you, Billy, for sure on the specifics of that, for sure. Okay?

MEMBER MITCHELL: All right. Thank you very much.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: I appreciate that. One more question from any other DAC member for Karen?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'd like to take that shot. I wanted to ask Karen if she knows about the plans for the national office. And I was also wondering how the BLM is looking on the state overall on terms of vacancies. This last year or so has seen a lot of lateral movement throughout all the industries. It's like the year of quitting and the year of taking new jobs. And I'm just wondering if there's been an impact on that on the agencies relating to keeping staffed.

MS. MOURITSEN: Good questions. On the first one, on the national office, they did make a decision that most of the highest level, the assistant directors in the headquarters office, will be moving back to Washington, the assistant directors and their deputies. I think there's five of them, and they cover the different subject areas and set policies and all.

And so they will be moving them to Washington, except for one of them, who is our assistant director for recreation and community partnerships. I'm not getting that title exactly right, but those are two of the big things in his purview. He and his deputy will be staying in Grand Junction so that there's kind of a western arm of headquarters. The others will be moving

back. They're waiting to move until all this pandemic stuff resolves.

And then for the staff that work for them, the administration, our new director said, "Well, you know, I'm kind of reluctant to say. You have a staff person, program lead." We have about 300 of them, I think.

"You know, they moved from Washington to Reno or somewhere and moved, got the family settled. You know, I don't know that I want to make them move again."

So they have gotten a committee of employees to advise them on what they ought to do about that. And Joe Stout from the California office, he's on that committee with some other people. It's yet to be figured out what to do with the rest of them.

As far as the vacancies, we've had about the usual amount of turnover at BLM California. I was kind of worried, if we have an increased number of people retiring at the end of the calendar year -- that's when people tend to retire, the end of the calendar year -- and we did not this year, and so there was -- you know, we all had a few people retire, people we knew who were going to retire, anyway.

So I don't know that, you know, what's happening in the industry has impacted us too much. There has been a lot of movement in the BLM because

we've had some people take a headquarters job that became open because of all that move stuff, but it's mostly the typical movement.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: Thank you, Karen.

All right. I'm going to go ahead and introduce all of the BLM staff that will be joining us today. And I'll introduce you, but when I say your name, if you would just turn your camera on so that folks can see you.

So Mike Ahrens. Most of you know Mike. He's our field manager in the Needles Field Office. And Brandon Anderson. Brandon is the assistant district manager for project support. And Ryan Chatterton is our field manager in the El Centro Field Office.

Janet Cheek is acting for Tim Gilloon. Tim Gilloon is the Palm Springs-South Coast field manager. He's on military duty this weekend. Janet Cheek is the associate field manager from Palm/Springs South Coast.

And Jeff Childers. With Katrina's retirement, Jeff is the acting field manager right now for the Barstow Field Office. Cole Duran. Cole Duran is our district law enforcement ranger. Paul Gibbs. Paul is our district fire management officer. And Kate Myamoto, she is acting as our public affairs officer. And

Michelle is actually on a detail to our Washington office, but I am very grateful that she willingly is helping us out today, because she kind of has things running smooth and keeps us all in line. So Katie is joining us today.

Greg Miller is the associate district manager. And Mitch Owens, are you on? Mitch is the associate field manager for the Needles Field Office. Not sure if he's on yet. And then Dana Stephenson will be joining us this afternoon. She is the district outdoor recreation planner. And then Carl Symons is our field manager for the Ridgecrest Field Office. And if I missed any BLM-ers, please turn your camera on and wave at me.

All right. Thanks, everyone, and thank you, Karen, for taking the time to join us today.

I'm going to have to apologize here. I've had another commitment come up, so I'm going to have to get off of the call at our 10:30 break this morning, and then Greg will take over and work with Randy here to run the rest of the meeting. But I'm glad I was able to join you here to start off this morning.

All right. Let's see. Where are we at? Randy, I'm going to turn it over to you, if you want to introduce our DAC members.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: That sounds terrific.

Thank you, Andrew. And welcome, Karen, to the meeting. You picked a magical week to come to the desert. I'm sure the weather is beautiful in Needles for your visit.

With that, let's walk through the list of DAC members. And if you have anything to report, we'd love to hear from you. I'm going to call the DAC members in alphabetic order, beginning with Mr. Bagley.

Jim Bagley. Good morning, Jim.

MEMBER BAGLEY: Good morning, everyone. I'm Jim Bagley from 29 Palms. I'm a public member. I'm glad to be here. I'm really sad that we're not in El Centro, but I want to thank State Director Karen for participating via Zoom. This would have been an opportunity where we could have been on a field trip with her yesterday all day in El Centro, so hopefully we'll get back to these regularly scheduled meetings.

In my part of the world we just had a very successful King of the Hammers event. It happens for about a week, but it's really about a three-week iteration of people setting up and breaking down. It has a tremendous economic impact here locally.

It was the biggest event I've ever seen. I was out there in person. I've been out there numerous times, but the best way to see it is actually at home

sitting in your living room on the wide screen. You can see live it via their Zoom content. They do drones. It's just a fantastic event. They think that there might have been about 70,000 people, but the BLM district office in Barstow might have an update on that.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: Jim, we'll give a summary of the numbers for this year later on today.

MEMBER BAGLEY: And Andrew, I just want to say congratulations to you going to Wyoming. You've been a real value asset to us here. I have a feeling you might miss us next February when the temperature is different. I work down in Palm Springs too, so I was down there flying. Yes, it was 80 degrees at 2,000 feet at night when I came in at 9:00.

So the Joshua Tree National Park is not in the purview of the Bureau of Land Management, but they've had over three million visitors this year. There's a lot of spillover from that because of the overcapacity of the park. So we have camping out in the Public Lands all the way around. And it's a positive thing, but I'm glad those folks were out enjoying the desert, but it does have impacts on things that happen with the Bureau of Land Management lands around the perimeter of it.

Billy Mitchell's concern about the legacy grazing not getting attention, that's a concern for me

too. This is an important part of the heritage of the California Desert, and I'm glad to hear there's some attention there. I wasn't aware there was an issue, but we're in a prolonged drought. And those families make their living here, and we need to be in a position where we can help them or tell them what the game plan is going to be. So I'm just giving you my two cents there.

Wish we were in El Centro. It would be a beautiful day. I really miss meeting with you in person. And the networking that happens in the all-day field trip is really invaluable, so I hope the next meeting will be in person.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Jim. Good to see you again.

Nathan Francis, good morning.

MEMBER FRANCIS: Good morning. How are you guys? Excited to be here. I'm getting back to the swing of things with the DAC and that. So just happy to be here.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: And you're still representing mineral industry.

MEMBER FRANCIS: Correct, yes. I'm with U.S. Borax Rio Tinto with their operations there at Boron and sites that are scattered throughout the desert area.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Well, thanks. Good to see you again. It's been a while.

MEMBER FRANCIS: Yes, it has.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good morning to Dick Holliday. Dick Holliday, we'd love to hear from you. What have you been up to?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Just not a lot here. I'm glad to be back here, and hopefully we will be getting to an in-person meeting. I enjoy the tours that we always have. They're always very enlightening. Anyway, hopefully we'll be back soon.

And good luck to Andrew in the new position. Haven't really met you in person. Haven't had a real in-person meeting, but I'm glad to see that you have maybe a better job. Talk to you later.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Dick.

Good morning to Paul Martin. I'd like to introduce Paul Martin.

MEMBER MARTIN: Good morning, Randy. Paul Martin here. I'm public at large. I just want to say congratulations to Andrew on his position in Wyoming. I know that's quite a bit of territory to cover. Also I just want to thank Michelle for being so organized and keeping us DAC members informed. You do a great job. And look forward to today's meeting, and

hopefully we'll be able to meet together again this year sometime and get those field trips and in-person meetings going. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Paul.

I'm going to throw it to Billy Mitchell, who you heard from just a few minutes ago. Good morning, Billy.

MEMBER MITCHELL: I'm trying to work this thing. Am I there?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: We got you.

MEMBER MITCHELL: I don't know if the picture is there.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: We got your voice.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Okay, yeah. Well, thank you for -- I'm sorry I missed that last meeting. I'm a fourth-generation cattle rancher. And I do hope that the Barstow resources are not coming here because of me, because I'm the oldest one out here in the desert now. That's why I take care of the rest of the ranchers, because their dads took care of me. Chairman of the San Bernardino County RIAC Board.

The Hammers, pretty nice, but for me it's a nightmare because my ranch is right across the street from them. And obviously 70,000 people running through my road that I maintained for 25 years. So I'm glad

most of the people have fun out there, but we have cattle out right now due to that fact. Gates left opened, fences cut.

But anyway, Andrew, I'm glad you get to go to that cold country. I'm sure not going to. I'm going to stay here where it's hot for the rest of my time. Anyway, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Billy. Good to see you again.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Same here.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Jayne Powell will be joining us this afternoon. I hope she'll raise her hand when she arrives so we can introduce her.

I'm going to call for Mr. Robert Robinson, Bob Robinson, just to see if you're on the line. We missed him during our early check, but I don't want to skip Bob Robinson if you're on the line.

Let me then throw the mic to Ed Stovin.

Ed Stovin?

MEMBER STOVIN: Good morning. I'm here. Good morning, Randy and DAC members, BLM staff. I'm president of the San Diego Off-Road Coalition, and we've had some activities out in the Imperial County desert. We put on a Lost Lizard Fun Run, a poker run that had about 700 entries, and everything went smooth, thanks to

the BLM and all of our volunteers. We had a great day.

We had heard at the Sand Show in September, the Sand Sports Super Show, that there was no dunes cleanup planned. Charlotte Teeters had become ill, the woman who had put it on for many years, so our group decided to bring it on.

And thanks to my vice president, Audrey Mason, we did a dunes cleanup, and we pulled tons of trash out of there. Hundreds of people helped. I forget how many, I think in the five hundreds. People came out to help us. We had a big raffle, gave away a lot of neat stuff, and we're looking forward to another one next year.

In two weeks from today we're going to be hosting a cleanup in Painted Gorge, which is in the El Centro BLM's neighborhood, and we're doing it with a gun range group. There's a lot of shooter trash out there and off-road trash. And it's one of my favorite places to go, so I'm happy that other people come along with me and help keep that area in good shape.

Good luck, Andrew, in your new position. We're going to miss you. Yeah, and we'll send postcards with the sunshine.

Thank you, Randy.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Sure thing. Thanks for

filling us in on everything that you're doing down there.

I would like to toss the line over now to Dan Taylor. Good morning, Dan. There you are.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Good morning, Randy. Thank you. I'm Dan Taylor. I'm the film commissioner for Riverside County Film Commission. I also own Inland Empire Film Services, and I represent the film industry in their uses of public land.

I do want to say, Andrew, you will be sorely missed. You were my favorite person, but now that you left, you're not my favorite person anymore. But I still love you. And you are wonderful. You've always been so responsive. I can e-mail you and ask you a question, and you would respond, and it was just great to have you there. And you listened, and you did everything that you could to try to resolve issues. And I appreciate you and for what you do.

And I am excited that Greg is the interim because Greg has been responsive as well. And I think it's wonderful that you're going to a place that you're more amenable to your weather conditions, hopefully. But I'm sad to see you go. So I just wanted to say thank you. I just want to use my time to throw some love towards you because it's been great having you out

here.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Dan. Nice to see you here again.

And I want to throw the line over to our newest member of the Desert Advisory Council. Congratulations to him for his appointment, and congratulations to the BLM for continuing to do the work to fill our seats and make sure that our council is able to tackle the business that comes in front of us. And that new member today -- good morning -- is Jack Thompson.

MEMBER THOMPSON: Thanks, Randy. I really appreciate it. Nice to meet you all. Really good to be here. Just to give you a little bit of my own background, I grew up in the Pipes Canyon area and have been at the Whitewater Reserve with the Wildlands Conservancy for the past 15 years. Have worked cooperatively with the BLM South Coast office on a number of issues in those 15 years.

The Whitewater Preserve borders the San Gorgonio Wilderness BLM, which is now surrounded by the Sand to Snow National Monument. So we have a really good working relationship with BLM law enforcement and Jihadda Govan, the Sand to Snow National Monument manager.

The Whitewater Preserve sees about 200,000

visitors per year that are recreating largely on the preserve and also on the BLM land. So we've had a good working relationship through, you know, that kind of cooperative management.

I oversee the Whitewater Preserve, the Mission Creek Preserve, and the Pioneertown Mountains Preserve. The Pioneertown Mountains Preserve definitely puts us more in contact with the Barstow Field Office for adjacent BLM lands.

And I'm definitely just a deep lover of the California Desert and really appreciate being part of this group that's working so hard to, you know, get good perspective on how Public Lands are managed. And I'm truly happy and proud to be here, so thank you all very much.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Welcome aboard, Jack. Glad to have you, and looking forward to having you in on our conversations.

I'd like to call for DAC member Paul Whitehead. I didn't hear Paul during the tech check, but again don't want to skip him if he's been able to make his way in. Paul Whitehead, good morning?

With that, the last member of the DAC to introduce would be myself. My name is Randy Banis. In my spare time I occupy myself as president of the

Friends of El Mirage and president of the Friends of Jawbone. We have working relationships with the BLM Barstow and Ridgecrest Field Offices respectively in helping manage the recreation visitors that come to the El Mirage and Jawbone areas.

I first want to call attention to the DAC members. Please check the Desert Advisory Council web page. Michelle has done a great job keeping that up to date with information. The transcripts from the last meeting are there, as well as the application submission statements for the subgroups that we worked together on at the last meeting as well as through the interim period. We'll have an update of the subgroups.

But I want to especially thank Ed Stovin and Dick Holliday and Dan Taylor and Jayne for engaging with the BLM in between meetings to help answer questions and fine tune the subgroup mission statements and applications. So thanks for that extra work, you guys.

Let's see. I'll be speaking at the upcoming Desert Tortoise Council Symposium about OHV route restoration about the efforts that Friends of Jawbone puts in on the ground for restoring OHV routes. It's a different community of audience for us, but we're looking forward to telling our story to our friends in the conservation community and letting them know about

all that we do to try to make the undesignated routes that are flagged for removal, make those go away to extend the critical habitat that we need for our endangered and threatened species.

But the last thing I just want to say and, again, join everyone else in thanking Andrew and wishing him best luck on his way to Wyoming. Forgive me, everybody, for making a nautical metaphor on behalf of the Desert Advisory Council, but when Andrew came to the Desert District, the Advisory Council was practically dry dogged, and Andrew really took the reins and saw that the Desert Advisory Council had great value to the BLM and public. And I appreciate his making the Desert Advisory Council his priority to get us back up to the appointments getting staffed, getting our subgroups going. And soon the good ship DAC will have its subgroup at its side, thanks to all the work that Andrew and Michelle and the state office has done to get the DAC back on the seas. I think the next manager is going to really benefit from all the hard work he put in.

So, as everyone else on the Advisory Council has said and on behalf of those who couldn't make it today, thank you, Andrew, and wish you the best of luck. If there's anything we can ever do to help, please holler.

With that, the next item of business, if there's no questions.

DIRECTOR ARCHULETA: Randy, I just want to say thanks, everybody, for the well wishes. This has definitely been a great ride with all of you here in the desert, and, yeah, turn it back to you, Randy. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Terrific, terrific. Thank you.

If there's no objections, we'll move on to the next item of business. You can see how we make up time when we need to. We're back on time, folks, and I'm going to introduce the assistant desert manager for project support, Brandon Anderson. He'll be making a presentation for us today on renewable energy projects that are going on in the Desert District.

Good morning, and welcome, Brandon. You've got the floor.

MR. ANDERSON: Good morning, everyone. I'm just going to get the presentation cued up for you guys. While I'm doing that, I'm the assistant district manager for project support. So I oversee our renewable energy program as well as some of the other major priority projects. I have a team of project managers, and we have some interdisciplinary staff who can fill in with

the field offices when we have these major projects that come through.

So in my presentation I'm going to kind of go through just the history of the renewable energy program itself, what we currently have on the ground, what we recently approved, and then kind of what's coming next.

So just a little bit of background on the DRECP, the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. BLM has been going through an effort, as many of you may know, to amend its existing land use plan to identify lands that are suitable for renewable energy. And in the DRECP we call these idea phase. But the DRECP kind of does more than that, in addition to identifying DFAs, also identifies areas for conservation and other multiple uses.

And even before the DRECP, BLM has been in the business of reviewing renewable energy projects for decades. Geothermal and wind have been kind of a staple since the '70s and '80s. Then more recently we had applications for utility-scale solar. So I'm going to be kind of focusing on more of the more recent activities that we have, but I'll give you a quick synopsis of what we currently have out permitted in the desert.

So right now we have 25 wind projects. They

are primarily two locations up in Ridgecrest in the Tehachapi area, as well as in the San Gorgonio Pass near Palm Springs. But we also do have -- El Centro does have a couple of projects, the Tule Wind Project and the Ocotillo Wind Project.

There's ten solar projects that we've permitted kind of pre-DRECP. These are the projects that some of you remember back in the 2008 under the previous administration we permitted. And many of those are now getting up and running. And so most of the solar is in the Riverside East DFA, in the Palm Springs area. But we do have solar up in the Needles area, as well as down in El Centro we have some of the geothermal that is not shown on this map.

So under the DRECP, this is post September, 2016, we have permitted four new solar projects and two wind projects, primarily in the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, but there is a solar project within Ridgecrest Field Office. The two wind projects are three repowers of some Legacy Turbines, and I'll go into more details on those projects themselves over the next couple of slides here.

So kind of beginning in Ridgecrest in Kern County, we have the Camino Solar. As approved it's anticipated to produce 44 megawatts of renewable energy.

It has battery storage. It's kind of a combo between Public Lands and private lands. The private lands are north and south of the public land parcel, as you can see here on the map. It's just right now the BLM office is reviewing the pre-construction plans necessary for the notice to proceed, though within our environmental document, we analyzed and required them to produce a bunch of plans to make sure that we have protocols in place to protect the wildlife, air quality, et cetera, so that is currently underway. BLM approved it in May of 2020.

So going to Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office. This is in Desert Center just off of I-10 and 177. There's a series of three projects that we just recently approved, the first one being the Arica Solar Project. A decision record was issued in December of 2021. This is all on Public Lands. There's 1,355 acres of Public Lands, and it's anticipated to produce 265 megawatts. The BLM issued the right-of-way and, like Camino Solar, BLM is reviewing the necessary plans before they would begin construction. It's anticipated they're going to be starting construction sometime in early March, depending upon the plan review and approval process.

And so the Victory Pass is by the same

applicant and approved in the same decision record in December of 2021, and they have the exact same status. They're anticipated to produce 200 megawatts, on 1,310 acres of Public Lands involved, and all these projects have battery-storage components.

And then lastly we have the Oberon Solar Project. This is by Intersect Power. It's on 2,600 acres of the Public Lands, anticipated to produce up to 500 megawatts, and we just approved the decision of record in January of this year. And they're all in the same spot in terms of plan review. And when they do request their first notice to proceed, because this is in Desert Tortoise habitat, the first phase is they're going to be constructing their fence line, which is a six-foot-tall security fence, and then attaching to that fence would be the Desert Tortoise fencing. And this is to exclude the tortoises from coming in onsite while there are construction crews.

The Desert Tortoise fencing, they bury it at least 24 inches under the ground, and then it extends above 18 to 24 inches, and it helps to preclude Desert Tortoises from coming in onsite. And once the fencing is complete, what they'll do is they'll go in and clear the site for any tortoises if there are any onsite, and then there is a plan in place, a Desert Tortoise

Translocation Plan, that would identify what the protocols are if they find that any tortoises and where they will be translocated to.

And so again in the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office there's two wind projects that recently have been repowered or approved for repowering. The first is Mesa Wind. This is kind of near the Whitewater area near Highway 62 and Interstate 10. There were approximately 430 turbines that were older and, I believe, permitted back in the late '70s, early '80s.

So all of those turbines have been removed, and they are approved to construct up to 11 new turbines. And it would produce the same amount of energy as the 400 turbines that they're removing. And so they're anticipating starting construction here in the next couple of weeks on the installation of the 11 new turbines.

And then going to the San Jacinto Wind, this is off of I-10 south just north of Palm Springs. This is Indian Canyon, for folks who are aware of Palm Springs. This one, it approves them to install up to three turbines. They are complete with construction. And between the two San Jacinto Wind Repower and the Mesa Wind Repower, they've removed approximately 600 Legacy Turbines and replaced it with up to 14 turbines.

So this project here is producing energy.

Just kind of a what's going on currently within the California Desert. There are currently nine solar projects under various phases of construction. Five of those projects are the pre-DRECP projects that are just completing construction itself located out in Blythe and Desert Center. And then the other four are the ones I just went over, the Camino Solar Project. There's One Wind. That's the Mesa Wind Project.

And then one of the new trends that we're seeing in the renewable energy industry is stand-alone battery-storage projects. And just a little background. You can see here, this is kind of what the battery storage would look like. It's a CONEX box with a bunch of lithium ion batteries, which is typical for these. They have A/C units on the outside to keep the boxes cool.

What the battery storage does is, it allows projects to collect renewable energy and store that. When the sun isn't shining or when the wind isn't blowing, they can put electricity back onto the grid, and you can kind of produce energy more in the later night when the sun isn't shining. This is kind of the new trend that we're seeing.

There's three battery-storage projects

currently under construction, one at Crimson. There's one at -- I guess it's Desert Sunlight, and then there is a Cabazon Wind Project that they are currently under construction.

So what's kind of coming next? So we have several applications that the district has in the field offices. There's approximately 17 new applications. They're in the very, very beginning stages of discussions. Many of these applications are not perfected, and so I can't really show a map just yet, but we are working with the applicants to perfect their applications. But we should see -- in the next few months we should be further along in processing those new projects.

In the Barstow Field Office, we do have interest in wind, and I believe they offered a right-of-way for a wind-testing facility, which is essentially they put equipment out on Public Lands just to test the wind resources to see if it's a viable site for them, both in a technical and a financial aspect. And that's in the Johnson Valley area. Then there is some interest in geothermal, and we could be seeing some applications for geothermal projects here in the future.

With that, that is the end of my presentation, and I'm available for questions.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Brandon. Much obliged.

I'm going to turn the floor over to DAC members to just hop on in if you have a question. If you raise your hand, perhaps Michelle can alert me to that fact and we can call upon you.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Can anybody hear me?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Hi, Billy. We got you.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yeah, I kind of missed the Johnson Valley area. And what I was going to tell you, I'm very interested in solar. On the first solar plant in Daggett, I set the 233rd mirror, which made it bigger than Spain's. I ran the crane. It's pretty much like the one in Ivanpah Valley, 300 foot. So I spent about a year, year and a half on a job like that.

But the one in Johnson Valley, could you say where is that going to be again roughly?

MR. ANDERSON: Yeah. It's in the Johnson Valley. There's some Public Lands up over there by the military base. There's four MET towers that the BLM has offered to the applicant, if needed, for renewable.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Okay. That has nothing to do with Irene Fisher's lease, does it? Or next to it? It's above the power lines, I guess?

MR. ANDERSON: I would need to take a closer look at that. I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Maybe you can get Billy a project map?

MR. ANDERSON: Sure.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Another thing, Randy, I'd like to say. I mean, I -- and thanks, Bagley, for saying that. You know, it only takes five percent of somebody, even a cowboy, to ruin the other hundred percent or the 95 percent. So I'm not against OHV. It just puts a big strain on my ranch when that happens, so I want people to know that I'm not against it by no means. In fact I rode the -- I have the first OHVs in the desert. I still ride them today. So let that be said. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: He does.

Go ahead, Dick.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I have some questions on some of these solar plants. My main thing was -- the question was, you know, when you contract with these companies to use public land and you have certain qualities or certain operational things that are in those contracts, do people go back and review those contracts and follow all those, make sure they're going with their contractual obligations for whatever they're

using? Like water to wash the mirrors and gas for the central tower projects, those are things that kind of go on that I never hear about.

I hear about all these plants going in, and I don't know if people are aware that almost every day we're curtailing solar and wind plants in California because we have too many. We have too much solar and too much wind to use during the day. So we're actually interrupting those.

There's a website for the California system operator that shows how many hours and how many megawatt hours a day we're interrupting these plants, and then we're putting more and more in, using up more and more land for solar plants that we can't use all day. And the load is going down in California because of solar plants -- or rooftop solar. We haven't had a peak demand since 2006 in California because of all the rooftop solar that's on. It's unmetered, so we don't even know how much it is.

And I keep hearing about we're going to go to solar. If you go online to the U.S. Energy Information and look at how we generate electricity in this country, solar photovoltaic used -- in 2020 generated 2.2 percent of the energy used in the country, 2.2 percent with all these solar plants. And actually the wind does better.

Wind was like eight percent, so there's actually more wind in the whole country than there is solar generation.

Anyway, my question is, perhaps we could have a presentation on what the criteria is and how BLM looks at the criteria for approving these plants that is using up the desert land. When I look at 2,600 acres for 500 megawatts that's only going to be generating power for eight hours a day, it's pretty gruesome to look at that much land being used up for these things. So I really think that we need to re-look at these things and how we're utilizing our land. That's it. I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: It's all right. Thank you, Dick. No. That's good. I appreciate that.

Others want to take a stab? Dan. I see Dan. Also, Jim, you want to be in on this too I. Got you next. Dan and Jim, please.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Yeah, Brandon, I would like to also see where the Johnson Valley Energy Project is going to be located. That is a very popular place for filming, and I want to see how it impacts the view, because they're going out there for desert view, not for solar or wind views.

On the other side of that, I just want to reiterate what I usually say every single meeting, is

that when you are doing these energy projects, that when you do your EAs, once they start that process, to always include filming as part of that EA so we get dual use of those properties once they're built. I'm actually specifically really interested in the Desert Center area because that is actually a popular filming area, and it could be a huge impact economic-wise for the community if it was opened for filming once it was built.

And the last thing I wanted to ask was, what's the timeline for Desert Center, specifically, and Johnson Valley on when it's estimated that these projects would be completed?

MR. ANDERSON: So in terms of the projects that are in the Desert Center, the ones that we recently approved, Victory Pass and Oberon, they're looking at about a two-year or so construction schedule, and so they're looking at coming online in 2024. And then in terms of the Johnson Valley, I don't believe they have accepted the right-of-way grant, so we don't have a construction schedule for them.

And just to be clear, the Johnson Valley is just a testing. It's not for any turbines.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Jim, Jim Bagley, you have

the floor.

MEMBER BAGLEY: That was my question too, Johnson Valley. So what I would like to see is a little more detailed maps maybe in the future. These are the sorts of things I like to see on the field trip when we get to go. Johnson Valley is one of the few areas under the jurisdiction of Bureau of Land Management that really has multiple use management now.

Where these projects are sited, how the gen-tie lines are going to come in, all are complicated issues, but they affect other users, like film and recreation. Grazing is really close there, too, so it's really important to have a map to take a look at these things.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Jim. The floor is still open.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Let me ask, too, on the maps I noticed in the El Centro area that they were looking at, in the East Mesa Solar facility, they were going to have some public meetings, pre-application meetings. And I wonder if we could get a map of where that particular area is going to be for the East Mesa Solar facility in the El Centro area.

MR. ANDERSON: Yeah, I can provide a map on that one as well.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Could I open the floor to

Jeff Childers, acting field manager for the Barstow Field Office. I think he has some insight to add. The floor is yours.

MR. CHILDERS: Yes. I just wanted to address the Johnson Valley question. The MET towers, there's three of them. And we just got the signed right-of-way grant in yesterday, so that has been authorized for them to put MET towers. We are not ready to move forward on the development application at this point. The MET towers is just a testing application. They're not in a position to start laying out locations for solar. This is just for MET towers.

And we can get map out to you guys. It's three or four MET towers, and it's located between the shared use area of 29 Palms and 247.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Jeff.

I have Jack Thompson. Jack?

MEMBER THOMPSON: Yeah. Hey, Brandon, I'm wondering if you can tell us when the Oberon Solar Project is slated to break ground.

MR. ANDERSON: So they're looking at March sometime. Like I said before, there are still quite a few plans we're working through on perfecting. So it's looking like that first couple weeks of March is what they have targeted.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: With that, I'd like to roll with a couple of questions, if I may. First, the solar projects that you presented, are those all within DFAs, Development Focus Areas, from the DRECP?

MR. BRANDON: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: For me, it would be interesting to see at some point a footprint map of the DFAs, vis-a-vis the projects that have been sited, approved, and such so we can see how much of that DFA footprint is actually left before projects start looking outside the Development Focus Areas or until the agency reviews and redraws the lines.

Another suggestion. I liked the metadata breakdown on the side of your sides. It could be interesting to add a category for battery, just to see if there is a battery-storage component or not and what that ratio or capacity would be.

Battery storage is really going to be the key going forward, as others have pointed out. In the evening those uses won't be supported by renewable energy unless there's a battery component.

And, you know, I don't know how many more electric cars I want to see plugging into the grid in the evening and getting recharged with fossil fuel. I know at some point it's going to kick over and go the

other way, but I just can't get past the incongruity of charging our electric cars with gas-powered generators in the evening. So battery is really very important to me.

Also I'm concerned about the -- this isn't a BLM action, but I'd be curious if the BLM is having conversations with the State of California with respect to the -- I believe it's the CPUC's proposal to cut some of the interconnect fees that have been supporting development of rooftop solar.

You know, if we didn't have rooftop solar -- Dick, Billy mentioned how many more projects would be out there now. What we have now is in addition to that great reservoir of rooftop that California has been able to install. And I fear that we're not near what we need to be at with respect to rooftop solar capacity, and by making rooftop solar that much more expensive and taking much longer periods of time for rooftop solar to pay off for the homeowners, I'm very concerned about the impacts of those cuts driving more people to look for more swaths of land in our desert to install yet more solar projects.

Thanks for letting me have a minute of your ear on that, Brandon. I appreciate your information and your slide show today.

Just wanted to open the floor up to other DAC members. If you have further questions before we move on, much appreciated, on this update.

Ed Stovin, I see.

MEMBER STOVIN: Thank you. Are there any applications for geothermal in the Ocotillo Wells area in Imperial County?

MR. ANDERSON: Let me get back to you on that one.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Pardon me. Go ahead.

MR. ANDERSON: No. I was just saying I don't have the details on that, but I can get back to you on that.

MEMBER STOVIN: Thanks. I know there's a project that's in between --

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Go ahead, Ed. Sorry.

MEMBER STOVIN: There's a project. I don't know where it's at. I haven't seen much about it in a while, but they wanted to do a few wells right on the northeast edge on the park and on some private property. So I know that one is in the works. I don't know if anything is happening, and I don't know if any other projects are being applied for, so please get back to me.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Hi, Jack. Another bite at

the apple.

MEMBER THOMPSON: Yeah: So I was just thinking about circling back to a comment Richard made regarding the public's ability to see what contractual obligations these solar wind projects have to abide by. You know, I live very close to the Mesa Repower Project. And, as Brandon described, the previous project was about 400 wind turbines that were permitted in the late '70s, early '80s.

And I know I evacuated my home several times when those caught fire and kind of watched that site just kind of degrade. The infrastructure just got older and older. And I know, as a member of the general public, I would just be curious if you have any comments about how, you know, the public could be able to review what those obligations are of these leaseholders and make comment about the conditions if it looks like those obligations are slipping.

MR. ANDERSON: For the right-of-way grant -- this is just maybe a little background on the compliance aspects of it. When BLM, it grants a right, we have a right-of-way grant, which then comes with the terms and conditions. A lot of those terms and conditions comes from our environmental analysis, and so that right-of-way grant and the conditions and the plan of

development are all public information that is available.

And then in terms of, if you do see anything for Mesa Wind specifically, the Palm Springs Field Office has jurisdiction over that. If you do see something, you can always reach out to the public field office, and we can always take a look.

MEMBER THOMPSON: Sorry. So general advice for the public would be to use the internet to try to find those documents themselves? Is there a website, like generally, that you can direct the public to see if they were kind of unaware of where their field office was or who is the leaseholder, who's managing the project that they'd be able to best find that information?

MR. ANDERSON: So we have -- it's available to the public, is LR2000, which is a database that has all of the right-of-ways that we have in the system. We don't have all right-of-ways posted on a platform where people can just view online. So if you do have a question, I think the best advice would be to reach out to the field office. If you are interested in looking at like the right-of-way grant or any terms and conditions, then we can get copies and things like that made.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Let me ask another question

too, then. When we're talking about these requirements, I was on the DAC years ago, we went to the Ivanpah Solar Plant when they were just starting to do the engineering. And I had some experience with a test facility in Daggett for the same type of plant. And so I asked these people how they were going to handle clouds flying over that, because we used to trip that plant at Daggett when a big, puffy cloud came over.

So the engineer said, "We got that problem solved. We're going to have a gas boiler going there." So they have a gas boiler running all the time. I don't know if they run it all the time, but they have it, so when a big cloud comes, they're doing it. What I understand now, they're using much more gas than they originally thought they were going to use to operate that plant.

So I'm wondering, does the BLM look at how much gas they were allowed to use in their original contract and how much gas they're really using to generate electricity, because now they're using natural gas to cover their areas when they can't make generation. So that's why I brought that up, because I'm pretty familiar with those plants and how they operate.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Last call for comments and questions on Brandon's report before we move on to the

next agenda item. We're still doing well on time, folks. Very good.

Thanks, Brandon. We appreciate it, and perhaps at the next meeting we can hear more. And in between, don't forget to get back to our DAC members with the help they need on that Johnson Valley project. Thanks.

Before I throw the floor over to Greg Miller, I wanted to introduce DAC member Paul Whitehead, who's just joined us for the meeting.

MEMBER WHITEHEAD: Hello.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Hi, Paul. Do you have a minute to say hello to everybody and introduce yourself?

MEMBER WHITEHEAD: Hello. My name is Paul Whitehead, and I'm in Palm Springs. And I just want to say hello to everybody. Sorry I was a little late. I had something come up this morning, but that's it.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Happy to have you. Thanks for joining in.

MEMBER WHITEHEAD: All right.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks to Greg Miller for joining us today. He's going to help us with a presentation on the status of mining in the district.

So Greg, the screen and floor is yours.

MR. MILLER: Good morning, everybody. Good

morning, DAC members and members of the public. Thank you for joining us. Let me know when you see my screen, Randy.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: It's up, and it looks great.

MR. MILLER: Wonderful. So again my name is Greg Miller. I'm the associate district manager for California Desert District and want today to talk about status of some mining projects in the California Desert District.

(Greg Miller gave a slide presentation on
Status of Mining Projects.)

MR. MILLER: That completes my slide show. And for any questions on that one, I'll have to direct you to Carl Symons, who's the field manager for Ridgecrest.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: That last picture was the previous Conglomerate Mesa drilling pad, wasn't that, that final picture on the questions slide? Or have I got it wrong?

MR. MILLER: I think you're right. I think that's the previous.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Well, very good. Let's just leave it at that, and I'll take comments and questions from the Desert Advisory Council members. The floor is open.

Billy, I see your hand first. I'll look for other hands and start a speaker list. Billy?

MEMBER MITCHELL: Okay. My secretary, my youngest daughter, is gone. So if you happen to lose me, I'll be gone for the rest of the day because I do not know how to work one of these things and these two little deals.

But, yeah, mine was for Castle Mountain. What side of the 15 is that on, the north or south side? For Mike Ahrens, I guess.

MR. AHRENS: Yeah, it's on the south side. It's actually quite a bit south of the I-15, south of the Nipton Road there right kind of at the Nevada boundary.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Oh, is that the old gold mine or adjacent to the old -- right at Searchlight?

MR. AHRENS: Segovia, the mine outside of --

MEMBER MITCHELL: Exactly. Is that what it is?

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MR. AHRENS: Yes, sir.

MEMBER MITCHELL: All right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BANIS: And the old townsite of Hart was in the neighborhood there. If I remember right, Mike, when I was taken there, we had to go through Nevada to get there.

MR. AHRENS: Yeah. I mean, it can be done without going through Nevada, but the most direct route from our office is to go up to Searchlight in Nevada and then come back around.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I found that interesting and unique.

DAC members?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: The last one that he mentioned there, is that mining for rare earths, or what are they mining there?

MR. SYMONS: They're mining -- the principal is gold, but there's also other materials in there. I thought I heard him mention that they're finding more copper and some other stuff also there as well, but the primary is gold.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay. Thank you. I'd like to see us get some rare earths out there.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: "Thar's gold in them thar hills." The Conglomerate project is one that's of particular interest to me. The Cosoas and the area on both sides of the Inyo Mountains, all of that area is very special because it has some very unique qualities with respect to backcountry recreation. Although I'm known for working to help the off-highway vehicle areas of Jawbone and El Mirage accommodate the off-road users,

boy, really my most passionate places I visit are those in the deep, dark backcountry, and that's -- Conglomerate Mesa qualifies as that for me. So just letting the DAC members know that I also participated in the scoping period, not my best letter, but I participated.

Other comments or questions? Thanks, Greg. I think your presentation had all the dotted "i's" and crossed "t's." Everybody seems to have the answers they need. If there's other questions, please reach out to field members, as Greg recommended, if you're looking for more maps or information about it.

MEMBER BAGLEY: Randy, I just have a comment. This is the sort of thing that -- having a DAC meeting in the future, this is a very controversial item. It got a lot of comments. This is a reason that we should be in that area and having a field trip looking at exactly these projects. Then we would have more useful ability to comment on it and participate as DAC members, including engaging the public, which is our primary function. So that's just a suggestion.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Maybe a helicopter tour. Thank you, Greg.

If there's no objections, that takes us to -- let's see. It is 9:40. We're only five minutes early

for our morning break. Rather than jump into the next agenda item and wait, why don't we take that 15-minute break at this time, if there's no objections. We would come back here at -- let's stick on time. Let's do 11:00. We'll get an extra five minutes because everybody was short with their questions. We'll do a break until 11:00 and stick right on the schedule.

No objections? Great. Thank you, everybody. Members of the public, please stand by. We'll be back for the rest of some really wonderful presentations.

(Morning break.)

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Welcome back, everyone. I think we're all assembled and ready to start the late-morning session of the Desert Advisory Council meeting. I call this meeting back into session.

And we're going to start with an update from Mike Ahrens. You recall the Desert Advisory Council has been working on reactivating the subgroups and making the appointments and getting the agendas and meetings up and running. So Mike Ahrens has been the point person from the BLM on that, and I'm very grateful for his work in getting that horse on the track.

Mike, the floor is yours.

MR. AHRENS: Yes, sir. Thank you. And yeah, you'll remember that, when last we met, we gave a

presentation on DAC subgroups and kind of the history of that and how they were fashioned, and that led to the DAC starting to reactivate, reinvigorate two subgroups, Dumont Dunes and Imperial Sand Dunes Subgroup, then establish a new subgroup for the Mojave Trails National Monument planning.

So with that, a decision from the DAC, we -- and by "we," I mean Michelle and the DAC members that had chose to show some leadership for each of those groups -- have worked together and have developed a description, mission statement for each of those subgroups. And they're now published on the DAC web page. If you look at the links on the left-hand side of the web page, you'll find links to each of those subgroup mission statements there.

Then additionally they've developed a nomination kind of application, which on the DAC web page is in the lower -- on the lower right-hand corner there's a category for DAC openings, and you'll see a link to that. It's a Word document that you or any of your constituents, of course, could use to nominate themselves or others to participate in one of those subgroups.

So at this point -- I checked with Michelle earlier -- we have a few nominations coming in. You

know, that's kind of the nature of things. Of course, I've learned over the years is that everything happens at the end of the assignment period or comment period, not at the beginning. So I'm sure there's more to come. But we absolutely encourage the council members to work with their constituencies and people that might have an interest and might have knowledge to help represent on those subgroups and so we can get a good selection of people to consider for the subgroups.

Let's see. So where am I here? So with that, yeah, we're kind of waiting to see how that will progress. And then at the end of this month, in February, the nomination period ends. We'll collect up all of those nominations and sort them by subgroup, obviously, and provide those to Randy to be considered. He'll provide the distribution to the DAC members and the process for consideration.

Then I suppose at the next meeting -- I'm not sure if we can do that at that next meeting or in between meetings -- hopefully they'll be able to identify the subgroup members and start that subgroup process again. So that's the hope on that.

And with that, I don't know if there's any questions. I'm happy to help.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: You know, before we

started, Mike, I should have summarized for the benefit of Jack Thompson, our new member, and some of the members that might have missed last month's meeting, subgroups, you recall, are a tool of the Desert Advisory Council to receive more focused and more expert advice on particular topics, more specific topics. They include members of the public or members of the stakeholder groups essentially around those subgroup topics. And a DAC member -- one or more DAC members can serve on the subgroups as well and actually needs to serve on the subgroup in order for it to have the required nexus to the Desert Advisory Council.

The subgroups provide advice to us, the Desert Advisory Council. Subgroups do not provide advice directly to the BLM. So again, it's an entity of the Desert Advisory Council, a way for us to dig deeper on some issues that we may not have individual expertise or time to go deep on.

So I hope that helped explain it a little bit. And what we have now, applications are due at the end of the month. And we have -- what? -- these subgroups seat as many as -- some of the subgroups, I've seen five or seven members, maybe a little larger. So that's really a large pool of applicants that we need from the public and from stakeholders so we can get all these seats

filled and so the Desert Advisory Council can hear from the broadest representation of voices from the people who are experts in different areas of expertise that the subgroups cover.

MEMBER WHITEHEAD: Randy, I have a question for Randy or Michael. I have a friend who's interested in being on a subgroup, but she wonders, if we go back to in-person meetings, does she have to attend the meetings, or will she be able to attend by Zoom? And will those meetings for the subgroups only meet during this time or, you know, maybe a Tuesday night or some other time?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm going to take a bite at the second one, because I think others may have a better look at the crystal ball than I do for the future. But generally the subgroups will schedule meetings according to their own schedules after they're appointed. There's an honest effort on everyone's part. We've had evening subgroup meetings. The WEMO group met on evenings. The SRP Subgroup met on evenings. The Dumont Dunes Subgroup met in the middle of a Tuesday afternoon, but we found that was really good because to try to meet on a weekend or an evening was taking away from their time. So each subgroup has found a way to get their meetings scheduled.

It doesn't have to be published, I think -- I'm not sure. I'm going too far there. But, Michelle, you don't have any indication of where we're going to go in the future with respect to in-person meetings?

MS. VAN DER LIN: At this time we're being told that in-person meetings are still on hold due to the protocols the department is still observing. We're in wait and hold, but absolutely, Randy, you're correct as far as the subcommittees. Whatever schedule they determine to meet is great.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I can tell you a little bit about the Dunes Subgroup for the ISDRA is, we typically met in the mornings at the BLM offices during the week so that the BLM staff can be there and answer questions to us. We always had a call-in. We had many people that did call in. This was probably before Zoom got really used a lot. But I'm sure we can set up Zoom meetings too. But we typically met in person at the BLM office in El Centro.

People have talked about trying to meet, you know, at the dunes or -- but that doesn't worked out. We tried a couple of times, but it never worked out because people didn't want to take their time from recreation to go to their meetings. But that's the way the ISDRA has worked for many years.

MR. AHRENS: Yeah, that's how I really anticipate it to work out. Dick, I think that's spot on that in the future, subject to COVID restrictions and what have you, that it's really up to the subgroup itself on where and how it wants to meet, and, you know, the members would try to work with each other to best accommodate the needs of all of the members and still get the work done.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Other questions, comments? Again, make sure you check the Desert Advisory Council web page. For members of the public, it's easy to find. Literally just open your browser, type, "Desert Advisory Council," and your first search result will bring you to the DAC web page.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Randy, you're going to get these applications in, and then how are you going to -- you're going to just float them out -- send them all out to the DAC members?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah. I plan to send them out with my recommendations, and then at the next Advisory Council meeting, the council will act on recommendations or substitute and fill the seats as they see fit.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: When is the next DAC meeting scheduled?

CHAIRMAN BANIS: We have it as May 13.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Terrific. Hearing and seeing no further questions, if there's no objections, first I would like to, on behalf of all of us, thank Michelle for her work in helping get these together, Mike for his time shepherding our business project so expertly.

And also I want to alert -- let's see who's coming up next. We have Cole coming up next, our law enforcement ranger, Cole Duran. So let's get the microphone, or the floor, shifted over to Cole. Let's get the screen shifted over to Cole if he wants it. And we're going to hear a law enforcement coordination update from him.

MR. DURAN: Just a second as I pull this up real quick. It will be just one moment. All right. There we go. All right. So thanks for inviting me over to talk to you guys. I was asked to give a quick briefing about some of the coordination efforts I do here at the district level concerning operations in the California Desert District. With that, our main two things I'm going to discuss right now are going to be one, SABR, Securing America's Border Resources. It's a tandem operation between Bureau of Land Management

rangers and border patrol. And I'll get into some of that, more information, how it developed, and where we're at and kind of some things we deal with when we're working SABR.

Next thing I'm going to talk about will be CAMP, which will be a California task force state run by the California DOJ against marijuana planting and how BLM fits into that and exactly what we deal with here and how that impacts California Desert District BLM rangers. And then at the end I will get some questions if you guys want any more information.

So first off, SABR. We're going to talk about some details, some of the staffing needs, some of the ways it's transitioned, and how we got to where we are now. That picture there is of the Jacumba Wilderness, which is the main portion of where we run our operations here in the CDD.

Some history. We started out with trident SABR, and I don't know exactly how it got started, but I know that there was a focus with border and some of the illegal actions and activities along the border and how that impacts our southwest border region, specifically BLM lands. We started out, and I think it was a pretty quick run up and they pretty much shotgunned us out along the southwest border between California, Arizona,

and New Mexico -- or Arizona and New Mexico.

And we rode tandem with Border Patrol. They were in their vehicles. We would sit next to them. We pretty much did Border Patrol jobs along the southwest border. After that first operation I think management realized that wasn't exactly what they had intended for BLM law enforcement, so they pulled it down to Arizona, changed the name to just SABR, and we focused on two national monuments, the Ironwood and the Sonora National Monument.

And all our rangers went there. We worked on really trying to attack the illegal activities dealing with smuggling, whether it be drugs or human trafficking, in those two national monuments. We did that for several years, and statistics ended up showing that it was helping, I guess, and they got funding, and national approval to spread the operation to include California and New Mexico.

After this I'm going to limit this to the California, how it impacts us and what we're doing here. But essentially it's three annual details we do here in California along our border, primarily in Imperial Valley at the moment.

So staffing. Of those three operations we typically would staff upwards of around 19 personnel

that consists of rangers and special agents throughout California. We typically try to stick with California personnel because they have the PC 832 and the state authority to be able to have a more broader range of tools that they can use to insert into these tactics.

Sometimes we'll bring other folks from out of the state, but primarily it's California rangers. More than that, it's California CDD rangers that staff that. Probably 75 percent are from the California Desert District. Those staffing or operations will have two shifts, a swing and a dayshift, where we'll be working operations with Border Patrol. We'll have some single-unit BLM people focusing on specific BLM issues.

The operation splits into two parts within those shifts, being road interdiction, which are BLM units pulling traffic stops, trying to develop PC, working the IE corridor right there around the Jacumba Wilderness all the way through Imperial Valley. And then one unit we started working, which is probably the larger of the units, is the mountain disrupt unit, where we'll put BLM units with Border Patrol units in the Jacumba Wilderness on foot hiking through some of the rugged mountain terrains.

As you see in this picture here, we'll be focusing on not only the Border Patrol stuff like the

illegal transportation of personnel and drugs but also some of the impacts they have with trash, just dumping all over the place in the different waterways. We've noticed and have documented several historical artifacts or just ARPA stuff that we pass on to the field office and try to educate some of the Border Patrol on what they can look for if they happen to come across it, since they really are in that area more than we are.

And we actually developed that relationship to a point where we will get information from them when they find sites that they believe, based on our training with them, have historical value. And then we'll coordinate with BLM resources there in El Centro to have it documented and just see what's going on there. But this operation is mainly run by the Office of Law Enforcement and Security, and we are there mainly to assist with staffing.

Next we're going to get into CAMP, California Against Marijuana Planting. We're you going to talk about the staffing requirements, some of the training mission operations and hazards. That picture right there is us short-hauling, it's called, where we hang under the helicopter on a hundred-foot long line, where we'll run operations and they'll insert us and exert us from the different sites, from the different growth that

can be pretty treacherous to get to.

So our staffing, the way it works for CAMP is they run three separate birds, three separate helicopters: Nor Cal, Cen Cal, and Southern California. They really run into staffing issues and coordination issues between the different agencies. And the Forest Service used to run a much larger portion of this operation, and as they started to withdraw, the BLM has started to fill that void, at least on the southern section.

So in the southern section here, we staffed the regional operations commander. It's a ranger out in Needles. That individual is responsible for that helicopter, contract management, booking different resources, and getting mission plans and all that kind of stuff. Pretty much they're the focal point for the entire Southern California region. They will have an assistant regional operations commander that is always a California State Fish and Game warden. And the reason they have the two is because we deal with federal and state operations and they want somebody in the lead capacity to be able to orchestrate both type of operations.

And then we'll have a helicopter crew member, a crew set of about four people. They're BLM rangers that

we'll put through various amounts of training to be able to fulfill those roles. And all those three people are there to manage the helicopter asset and the resource primarily.

Then we'll have our labor partners and some of the worker bees and some of the other folks that are interested. With marijuana operations, primarily sheriff offices. Sometimes we'll get some local PD, Again, Cal State Fish and Game where it has the state resource involved. And then the Forest Service also is involved from time to time when they have operations on the forest.

So some of the training our people have to get. That CAMO training is a 40-hour course. What it is, it's a state-managed training certification for people to be helicopter managers that actually deal with the contracting and all the management part of the helicopter. Then once they get certified through that, they'll move on and they'll do three or four separate training courses for certified personnel to do short haul. Those consist of a two-day initial certification and a one-day recertification. And during those periods of time we'll certify 4- to 500 law enforcement personnel throughout Southern California over a period of a couple of weeks. We'll have a couple of operations

or training spots up north in Central California, but the bulk is really here in So Cal.

The helicopter manager course and helicopter crew member course are federal courses that we've begun sending people through to be able to get federal coverage to make sure they're versed in both state requirements for management of the helicopter and federal requirements.

So the different missions we run. As I said before, we have federal lands and state lands. And the way these come in, we'll have our partners with Forest Service. There are tribal lands and union lands around here that are dealing with marijuana that have identified these type of problems on their particular area of management. And the helicopter resource is really what they're calling for; right?

It gets difficult to be able to extract a lot of these plants and get in there in some of these rugged areas. As you can see there, a trailer full of marijuana that we extracted, all that gets pulled out by the helicopter. So we'll work with our federal partners. They'll talk to our regional operations commander, and they'll pretty much work between July 1 and the end of September, September 30th, to be able to book a time slot to be able to utilize the helicopter

resource to attack whatever mission they have in their areas.

We'll work again, too, with state lands, with our state partners, our county folks, and some of our city people or the municipalities there if they have something going on. And they'll pretty much fight for a slot on this calendar in that 90-day period for the resource to be able to go to.

So this CAMP team is a very mobile team that runs everywhere from Kern County. We've had all the way up to Bishop at times, all the way over to the beach down in Tulare County, and a big chunk of this is done actually up by Anza, with a growing area there in Landers.

So it's a pretty busy team. They stay busy all year long. I want to say last year we pulled something in the neighborhood of 500,000 plants off federal and state land combined. Federal lands, we were down -- 130,000 were specifically on Public Lands, whether Forest Service or BLM. So it is a major issue as far as growing.

And I know that a lot of people -- I don't know what your guys's thoughts are as marijuana is legalized, but it's always illegal on federal land. State land, it's all permitting issues, so it's all driven a lot by

code enforcement and stuff like that. But one of the bigger issues surrounding marijuana is not necessarily the plant itself but some of the other hazards we deal with; right?

Environmental is always there. We deal with the terrain, which is why we started doing helicopter transport, because we noticed a huge reduction in injuries for officers. The poisonous plants -- right? -- the poison oak, the poison ivy and all that kind of stuff. I'm going to skip that pesticide for now, but the human aspect is always there. We have weapons in there, booby traps. People try to protect their stuff.

But our main concern when it comes to marijuana cultivation on federal land is this pesticide, specifically carbofuran, and that is an illegal pesticide that is illegally smuggled in from Mexico. And these people that work in the grows liberally paint that stuff on the plants. I mean, they will literally take a paintbrush and brush it on, which is obviously not the directed use. But the EPA has said that, if they follow the recommended dosages, it's still illegal by that standard in the United States.

And the way this works is the chemical there overstimulates your nervous system, causing nausea,

diarrhea, dizziness, confusion, and at high volumes respiratory paralysis and even death. We have videos of this stuff, obviously not in the United States, but a tablespoon of this stuff has in a video taken down a full-grown lion. They've taken down bears just with this pesticide.

And during some of the EPA studies for DOA's information, they were testing on birds trying to figure out a minimal use -- right? -- for this. But they weren't able to come up with that because every level of concentration they used caused mortality in the test subject. So any level of this will kill birds.

And then the chemical doesn't break down. Once in the system or on the plant, it sticks around for a long period of time. So there will be a chain reaction. You'll kill a bird, bird will get eaten by a fox or whatever else, and it will kill that, and then a bigger animal will eat it. And then it will just continue down the line killing bigger animals.

And the chemical builds up in the system. So one bird may not do it, but if they eat one, two, three, four, whatever, then we start to see larger and larger animals dying. EP also says that it's highly toxic in any freshwater marine life, which unfortunately is where most of the illegal marijuana planting is done. It's

right near a, whether it be dry or flowing, river bed because water is a big need while they're growing. So we start to see a lot of this pesticide flowing into the natural streams and waterways, which is again a big reason why we have State Fish and Game on board, because they have the primary responsibilities on the waterways.

So with that brief introduction on kind of what we do, some of the coordination efforts with CAMP and SABR, do you have any questions at this time?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Floor is open.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yeah, I do. I don't know if you can see me or -- or can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Gotcha.

MEMBER MITCHELL: You said about Landers. I actually worked with the state at the present time. They call them hoop houses. Well, anyway to make a long story short, I've lost 15 cows by dogs because they actually -- and I looked at one with the sheriff's department, you know, because all the community around, five or six different communities, they know because of the ranch is right in the middle. And the dogs, they just turn them out, because they busted people, and the dogs have actually killed my cattle, you know.

I've had them with their noses ripped off, their ears ripped off, I mean, their udders ripped.

It's terrible, and we had to put them down if they're not dead when we find them. So not only is -- I mean, it's glad they busted the illegal ones, but then you have code enforcement, somebody to clean up the trash, somebody to take care of the dogs. So virtually I have to take care of it myself, because I got the right to defend my animals, you know.

But dogs are worse than coyotes, worse than mountain lions. A feral dog will even eat you. I don't know if you dealt with them, but I almost lost one grandson to one in the middle of the canyon. They tried to set up a trap one night, and the dog almost got him. He didn't even get a shot off. And I'm still dealing with it.

It's a very bad situation down here for my place, my ranch. And anybody that goes up, your kids get out or you walk out, I mean, they'll take you down in two seconds. It's a done deal, you know. All they want to do is kill. They don't even eat them half the time. They'll leave them for the coyotes. It's just the taste of blood. And they're all kind of crossbreds, you know. I mean, it could have everything in them.

I actually tracked the dogs all the way to a hoop house that had two Spanish people staying there, two guys, and obviously I was pretty mad because I just

had to put down one of my cattle. And of course I had my rifle sticking out the window, probably didn't help things, or maybe it did. Tracked them all the way inside. They finally came out, because I speak a little bit of Spanish, so they couldn't use that "No habla Ingles" on me, you know?

So I haven't seen -- but I gave them an option of either they do something with the dogs or I'll be back the next day and I'll do something with the dogs. So I haven't seen those particular dogs. I haven't been back yet because I've still got cattle out. I mean, they waited to spring, pushed the cattle outside, and they just sit there and wait for them to come in. They'll take the weakest or the smallest.

So were you guys involved in any of that -- I guess that was my question -- with the Landers area with the sheriff department or the marijuana team, I think they call it?

MR. DURAN: Last year we worked there a total of three weeks that we were specifically there in that Landers area. The way it works out there on private lands, it's all the sheriffs' show; right? They identify the areas, they identify the problems, they write up the missions, and then they reach out to us for the helicopter resource.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yeah, I go out with them to identify the different portions because I've been there, you know, way longer than I should have, I guess. But anyway, the difference when federal land comes down and they don't know where the private is so they know exactly what's going on so they can set that up.

But the dogs are the issues now. I don't know. I've asked code enforcement. They called a number. They said they'd set up traps, but I have no idea if they've done it or not. But it's cost -- it's not just the cattle I've lost and not just the humane thing. It's the production of the cow for ten years. It's devastated. This last year has really put a hurt just because of those grows and the dog issue.

So I'm hoping -- I'm working with the sheriff's department now -- if they bust any more, they'll get rid of the dogs or call somebody to get rid of them.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah, the feral dogs are no friends to the Desert Tortoise either.

MEMBER MITCHELL: No, no, not -- I mean, they --

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: So if it's okay, I was going to call on Jack. He had a question.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yeah, go right ahead.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Billy.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, you bet.

MEMBER THOMPSON: My name is Jack Thompson. We've definitely supported a number of marijuana-eradication efforts here in Desert District out of Whitewater Reserve. And, you know, one of the things that we're finding is that in San Bernardino County at the Pioneertown Mountains Preserve, public have identified what look like signs that grows are active, like tubing and piping and things like that coming in. And the sheriff's departments don't seem to want to work with us to get those out.

And I saw that on the list, you know, of operational areas that private lands was on there. Is that county dependent? And are the law enforcement agencies that are, like, local -- like, let's say sheriff's department -- are they the lead that bring you guys into operations that they're instigating when it comes to private land operations?

MR. DURAN: Yes, everything on private land authorization is going to be under the jurisdiction and authority over whatever law enforcement organization has control; right? So it could be sheriff's department, local PD, it could be State Fish and Game. It just depends. Once it's identified on their land, then yes, they take control, they coordinate whatever resources

they need. And they're the ones that actually run everything that does that. CAMP is pretty much only dealing with the actual helicopter resource at that time.

MEMBER THOMPSON: Okay. Thank you very much. I had one other quick question. You know, I was asked recently with the legalization in California, you know, why these illegal grows on Public Lands are still a thing. And, you know, I think I assumed that these public land illegal grows were being trafficked to states where it was still illegal, but I didn't know that for a fact. I was just curious if you could comment on that.

MR. DURAN: Yeah, a lot of it does get sent out of state. But when we talk about illegal -- right? -- I mean, just whether or not the plant is illegal, I mean, you can't grow corn on federal land. You still need the permit. Either way, on federal land, regardless of the legality of the substance they're growing, they're stealing water and all the different chemicals and the actual impacting the land -- right? -- without a permit and all that stuff. So no matter what it is, it's still illegal, so feds goes after it. But yes, the marijuana is still getting shipped out of state.

But my thoughts on it, personal thoughts, probably are, you know, taxes come into it when you start growing on personal property; right? Limits -- like a lot of our private grows, when you get the code enforcement involved, they'll have a valid legal permit for 99 plants, but they'll grow 3,000 plants; right? So it all comes into that. And then it probably gets a lot less bureaucratic when you're just continuing the known way of doing what they're doing on federal land; right? So it's always been illegal, and we still target it.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Jack.

Others? The floor is open.

MEMBER STOVIN: Randy?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Go ahead, Mike. Go ahead, Ed.

MEMBER STOVIN: Cole, thank you for the presentation. Are you doing any work on Otay Mountain?

MR. DURAN: Specifically on Otay Mountain, I don't recall being out there in my time on the team. But again, if it's on Otay Mountain, that's on BLM federal lands. That's going to fall under BLM Palm Springs office. They would identify it, they would develop the plan, and they would coordinate with our CAMP unit to go out there and eradicate it. As of now, I haven't seen it.

MEMBER STOVIN: I've been talking to the Palm Springs field office. There's the problem out there that the Border Patrol wants to close the one road that goes over the mountain, and I'm concerned about it. It's a nice road. And their justification for wanting to close it is that there's too much illegal activity in the area. There's been chases and regular problems. I still want to keep the road open, so I was wondering if you had been out there or knew about it.

MR. DURAN: I haven't, but actually that probably would fall under the SABR operations. That's exactly what that's intended for -- right? -- is securing our border resources. The whole intent is to find those BLM areas around the border that are heavily impacted by illegal activity that take that resource away from the general public to enjoy it -- right? -- because whatever dangers that brings with it.

I know that speaking with SABR and talking with the office of Law Enforcement and Security, specifically our assistant special agent in charge here, I know they've been talking with the San Diego Border Patrol section trying to build a relationship so that they can expand those SABR operations to include San Diego County, which would then be that Otay Mountain area.

MEMBER STOVIN: Okay. Yeah, I spoke to

Tim Gilloon yesterday about it, and he's making progress. He's working on it, but it's still -- it's a large piece of BLM land, and the Palm Springs office manages lots of small parcels in that region, but Otay Mountain is one of the large parcels. It's a real big -- I forget the acreage, but it's many miles. And then that's where the problem is located, and that's where the roads that we -- we cherish these roads. They're really fun, and it's kind of a heartbreak that the Border Patrol wants to close them.

So Tim is working in our favor, but I bet he could use some help from you guys. Thank you.

MR. DURAN: Yeah, sure.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Others? Floor open.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Randy, could I ask one more question, please.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah, sure, Billy.

MEMBER MITCHELL: What color was that stuff you said, carbo- -- how do you pronounce that?

MR. DURAN: Carbofuran. I've seen it in white and pink. And typically you'll see it on the actual plant just painted on there, or you'll see it around the base of the plant. It but it will dry like a white or pink substance on the bottom. It looks pasty.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Is that harmful to any of the

animals, dogs or cattle, if they get into it?

MR. DURAN: Super bad stuff. I mean, it will take down a human, which is why a lot of the Forest Service people have been pulling out, because it really gets difficult to control contamination.

MEMBER MITCHELL: If you get it physically on your hands or something, you're in trouble then; right?

MR. DURAN: Physically on your hands? Like, I mean, I've cut stuff down with it on before. You just want to decon fairly well; right? You don't want to have it work its way into your body; right? So I mean, if you have your gloves on, if you have your clothes, you wash those immediately. You don't want to track it into your house. You know, you want to probably wash it down with whatever chemical-type solutions you have to be able to deal with that.

I know that we send our rangers out to these grows with chemical disinfectants and wipes and different body sprays, stuff like that, to be able to decontaminate after they go into the grow, because the longer the exposure is, the more your body ingests it, the bigger the harm.

MEMBER MITCHELL: I really appreciate that. I wish I had known that before I went into a couple of them, but okay. Thank you, sir.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: So I just want to emphasize the complications with the private property issues. It's not always so easy to think of it as a grow on public or private land, or the stuff on public land, you know, we think of maybe as on a large contiguous base of Public Lands. But really the stuff most complicated and hardest to address are those checkerboard lands on the outlying areas of BLM ownership, the checkerboard lands that are outside of communities and cities that can provide resources to the growers.

Sometimes it can even be just one little chunk of private of private property amongst, you know, an inholding, for example, within federal. And it's complicated with respect to jurisdiction in getting it on the list and getting it attended to. So the public-or-private-land issue is very complicated, and the checkerboard areas of BLM lands have always, always had like -- this is like another, another complication with respect to checkerboard lands; right? I mean, this is, you know, forever.

And so just reminding Advisory Council members, when you see the BLM maps, where it's not all contiguous is often where you see the ambiguity of these kinds of activity.

Other comments, questions? The floor is open.

MEMBER STOVIN: Is that chemical that they paint on the marijuana, is that toxic if people smoke it?

MR. DURAN: I would think so. I mean, if you ingest it into your body, it's supposed to be pretty bad. I don't know how their decontamination process is as far as when they send it out, but yeah, yeah, I have no idea. I would probably err on the side of safety and not --

MEMBER STOVIN: It sounds terrible that they don't care about people that way. I don't smoke it, but a lot of people like it. I would hate to see people smoke pot with that stuff on it and get sick from it.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Ed.

Others? The floor is open. We're about 15 minutes ahead of schedule. Just trying to see if there's some quick housekeeping or something we can jump into. But I don't see that. The rest of our afternoon is pretty well loaded up.

Michelle or board members, any suggestions with respect to how you want handle this time between now and the break? Should we come back into session a little early, or should we just stay right on schedule with respect to our return?

MS. VAN DER LIN: Randy, I would suggest if we

stayed on schedule with the time return, only because if we have people joining us from the public that haven't joined us yet this morning, then we can try to stay on track as much as possible, if that makes sense.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Appreciate that. Others? Sounds like the way to go. Thanks to everybody. If there's no objection, let's go ahead and break for our lunch break. We'll be back at 12:30 p.m. There's a great little place I know just around the corner called "Your Kitchen." So after that, I'll see you back at 12:30 p.m. Thanks, everybody, and thanks to the members of the public for holding on the line.

(Lunch break.)

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Terrific. I think I see just about all our DAC members are back and present and ready to go. I hope lunch was well. Thanks to the members of the public sticking around for our afternoon session. Reminding you we'll have public comments on our agenda at 2:45 p.m. today. That's not long, and I appreciate you sticking with us.

That said, let's reconvene at 12:31 p.m., and we'll start with the BLM reports, please. This would be the district reports and then the field office reports followed by the fire and fuels operations report. So I'll throw it over to Greg now. I'm going to put it

over to Greg Miller, who can share the floor and screen as he and his team sees fit. So thanks for joining us again, Greg.

MR. MILLER: All right. Randy, thank you very much and welcome back, everybody, this afternoon for the DAC meeting. As I mentioned before, my name is Greg Miller. I'm the associate district manager for the California Desert District. I will be taking over the meeting for Andrew from this point forward. He has another commitment.

As he announced earlier today, this is his last meeting for the DAC, and he will be moving on to Wyoming as the state director for Wyoming. It's a big loss for us. However, I'm excited to fill in behind him for the temporary detail for a few months and really excited about moving forward with the progress that Andrew has made over the last couple of years, so looking forward to that.

With that, like Randy said, we're going to have a district field office and fire overviews for the Desert District. I'll got ahead and start with -- let me mention that we have four DAC positions coming up in June of 2022. Ed Stovin, Dan Taylor, Jim Bagley, and Paul Whitehead, those four positions are up for their tenure. But if you are interested in reapplying, please

work with Michelle in getting your name back into that hat.

Okay. With that, let me go ahead and start with some district -- or actually it's a state director type of report for the district. And as you recall or know, we have new leadership in Washington. Our leadership in Washington is Tracy Stone-Manning, the director of the BLM. Nada Wolff-Culver is our deputy director for policy and programs, and Mike Nedd is the deputy director for operations.

You met Karen Mouritsen earlier today. She's our state director, and Joe Stout is our associate state director for California. Andrew Archuleta is our outgoing district manager. I am associate district manager. We have Jeff Childers as acting Barstow Field Office manager, Mike Ahrens as Needles field manager. Tim Gilloon could not be on the call today. He is the Palm Springs-South Coast field manager. Ryan Chatterton is our El Centro field manager. Carl Symons, Ridgecrest field manager.

Then we have a couple -- actually three monument managers. Dani Ortiz is our Santa Rosa/San Jacinto Mountains Monument manager. Jihadda Govan is our Sand to Snow National Monument manager, and Noelle Glines-Bovio is our Mojave Trails

National Monument manager.

Karen already mentioned a bit about the budget. We haven't had a budget yet. We have a continuing resolution until March 11th. If you kept up with the news on that, we expect hopefully to get a budget soon after but right before that. It will be excellent for us, and we expect to see some additional funds coming for fire for sure and maybe even for monument planning when we get to that.

Some of the state line issues we're looking at in the district are renewable energy development. You saw that presentation from Brandon, and so that's still one of the larger priorities we have on the district. Many interests, a lot of interest in developing solar and wind facilities out in the desert. The biggest couple things is that it's crucial that we kind of help out the state reach the goal of a hundred percent renewable energy by 2045, so we're helping with those goals.

We have established what's called a project management support team in the California Desert District. Brandon mentioned that during his presentation. And that's going to help us be able to process those applications more efficiently and more effectively.

The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan is still our number one priority for land use planning here in the desert. It's an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Plan. The two main goals for that, of course, are streamline the process for development of utility-scale renewable energy, generation, and transmission and also provide long-term conservation of management of special status species and desert vegetation communities.

Wildfire and fuels are another hot -- bad choice of words -- hot topic in the desert. But that is one of our priorities, especially as it goes to wildland fire preparedness, resilience, and mitigation. And there's a lot of fuels treatments being done now across the desert to help to reduce those fire risks around wildland urban interfaces and also to improve on special status, especially status species habitat. That's another thing our fuels folks do. I'm sure Paul will mention that in his presentation.

The National Conservation Lands Monument Planning is another big push for us. Of course BLM manages approximately ten million acres on National Conservation Lands in California. The program is incredibly diverse. It stretches from the rugged mountains, the Joshua Trees of the Mojave Desert to the

Pacific Coast.

We have the Mojave Trails and Sand to Snow National Monuments, which were designated by the presidential proclamation in February of 2016. Mojave Trails is 1.6 millions acres and includes 350,000 acres that is designated Wilderness Areas. Sand to Snow, which is located in San Bernardino and Riverside County, has about 83,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management-managed Public Lands in the California Desert District and includes one already congressionally designated Wilderness Area.

We are hoping to initiate monument management plans this year, and the Whitewater River Comprehensive Recourse Management Plan will aid in completion of the respected Monument Plan. That's a big overview of the district in general.

We're going to go now to the specific field offices, and I'm going to call on Mr. Childers, Barstow field manager, at this time to report out for Barstow.

MR. CHILDERS: Thanks, Greg. Good afternoon. A lot of the stuff we had popped up after that and a few things that we've kind of been working on the side. One that some folks may be familiar with is the Dumont Road paving project. Federal Highway Administration has gotten funding for us to pave Dumont Road from 247 to

the crossing at the river there, at the Amargosa River.

That project is ongoing. We've gotten most everything in line. The NEPA is completed. All the consultations are completed. We have one hundred percent construction package, and what Federal Highways is waiting for is final budget or some allocation of budget, either continuing resolution or final resolution in March to require the funding to finish. Hopefully built this year. If we don't get it built in summertime this year, we're going to hopefully push that to next year, 2023 with the same funding.

With that, we're also working on community compliance with the recent IMs for electronic pass sales for El Mirage and Dumont. We're working on that so we can have passes available through rec.gov so folks won't have to worry about trying to find a pass at the office or trying to buy a pass onsite. They can buy a pass at rec.gov, have it on their phone, and print it out if they'd like.

We're also working with some of the infrastructure funding that's coming in the infrastructure bill. We're hoping to put together a package to potentially construct and study the Afton Canyon Bridge over Betty Ford. We're hoping to move that forward. That's still really early in the

planning phases, but we are starting to work on that.

And then the last topic is we're going to put in for a OHV grant this year for the Razor Road OHV Management Plan, and if that gets funded, we'll start working on that process over the next three years. That's about all for Barstow.

MR. MILLER: All right, Jeff. Thank you very much, and we appreciate that information.

And let's move on to El Centro with Ryan Chatterton. I'm sorry. Dan?

MEMBER TAYLOR: Yeah, I have a quick question for Jeff. On the Dumont Dunes Road, when you did the NEPA, did you include anything about filming on there when the NEPA was processed?

MR. CHILDERS: Negative. The NEPA was done through a Federal Highways Administration categorical exemption.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Okay. Thank you.

MR. MILLER: All right. Any other questions for Jeff?

All right. Let's move on to El Centro with Ryan Chatterton.

Ryan?

MR. CHATTERTON: Good afternoon, everyone. It's great to have the opportunity to address you. We

do have a lot of our updates there on our DAC report for you. I'm not going to touch too much on the topics that are presented there within the report, however, certainly happy to answer any questions that you have on those related topics that are in there.

I do want to just mention, you know, Ed Stovin mentioned one of those partnership events, one of many partnership events that occur within our resource area, and we really do appreciate our partners and the positive impacts that they do have on Public Lands out there.

We also are currently working with the Imperial Valley Desert Museum to lead interpretive hikes throughout our resource area. There is a great opportunity for members of the public to come out and enjoy Public Lands and visit with our park rangers and to be able to learn about the various resources that are within our area.

Ed also had a question about the geothermal development associated in the Ocotillo Wells area. That is generally known as our Truckhaven Geothermal Leasing Area. Within there we do have a company, Ormat ORNI 5, who has proposed exploratory activities within that area. They do have a geothermal drilling permit for one exploratory well at this time. It was actually

scheduled to be drilled this spring. However, the company just notified us this past week that they are delaying their planned drilling of that well as they reassess their plans for that area. So all drilling in that area currently is on hold at this time.

I wanted to provide an update on a sand and gravel operation out in the Jimenez Mine area out towards Shell Canyon just north of the town of Ocotillo in California. This is where we had a sand and gravel plan of operation that was held under mining claims that were in place prior to the Surface Resource Act of 1955.

Back in 2020, the claimant did fail to pay their annual maintenance fees for the claims out at that site, and they became void and forfeited after a 30-day appeal period associated with it. We did have a sand to gravel operator processing material out at the site, Imperial Valley Aggregates. They did continue operations for some time after the forfeiture, which requires us to work through a mineral trust pass process to resolve any material that was taken out without having a proper contract in place.

We have prepared a fair market value evaluation report, which is currently with the Department of Minerals and Valuations for concurrence, and that report will be utilized to help us resolve that outstanding

mineral trust pass and then to also move forward with a new sand and gravel contract, should the company pursue one.

Last update for the group is, efforts that have been taken on by our wildlife biologist out at the office, some data gathering. He has been working on implementing bat surveys within the abandoned mine lands out at our Tumco Historic Mining District that's out there east of the Imperial Sand Dunes.

We have done this in coordination with volunteers and efforts to help us gather data to help us better understand how bats are utilizing these abandoned mines and adits so that, as time progresses and we need to make some decisions associated with those abandoned mines and adits, that we have this data to help us make informed decisions as we go forth with anything that may come associated with that. There are currently no plans in our purview, but it always helps to have this data gathered.

So with that, I see many hands. I don't know who was first, but I'll work my way from left to right on my screen. So we'll start with Dan Taylor.

MEMBER TAYLOR: I apologize. That was my hand for Jeff Childers, and I forgot to take it down. I apologize.

MR. CHATTERTON: No worries. Jayne?

MEMBER POWELL: I'll take my hand down now. So on the concerns with IBA, is that for the Jimenez Mine site?

MR. CHATTERTON: Correct.

MEMBER POWELL: Okay. And the land -- the people that owned the mineral resources, the Jimenez family, can you speak to how that affects them?

MR. CHATTERTON: So the claims which they had for the Jimenez Mine site became void and forfeited when they failed to pay those fees.

MEMBER POWELL: So when IPA failed to pay, the Jimenez family lost that. Is that what you're saying?

MR. CHATTERTON: So it's the mining claimant that has responsibility for maintaining those mining claims, and so I can't speak to who held those mining claims, whether it was the Jimenez family directly paying for those mining claims. And those mining claims are handled directly out of our state office, so apologize for not having a lot of the details just offhand associated with it.

But the rights associated with those mining claims that they held were forfeited when those annual fees failed to be paid, and they did not appeal that forfeiture.

MEMBER POWELL: Okay. I understand the rules you're talking about, and I didn't know any of this until just now, but I was just curious if there was any kind of process after that 30-day appeal period, because I do know there was a death in the family.

MR. CHATTERTON: I see. And I can certainly reach out to our state office, Jayne, and try to track down some additional information associated with those mining claims. But that, again, is handled directly out of our state office, and I don't have a lot of the details associated with the processing of those mining claims.

MEMBER POWELL: I mean, it's not my job to represent them. I just happen to know that did happen down there.

MR. CHATTERTON: I appreciate the information.

MEMBER POWELL: Thank you. Oh, I have one other question on the bats. I thought there were bat gates, if you will, or bat doors, something that was supposed to keep the bats from going into the underground mine areas that were being put up, particularly out in the American Girl Mine area out there on the east side of the county.

MR. CHATTERTON: So it really depends with the mines on a case-by-case basis what type of treatment is

applied to the entrance of each mine associated with it. A lot of the times when we are installing gates out there to ensure public safety and prevent unwanted access to these sites, they are designed in a way that allows for bats to continue to utilize those mine sites if they are present. If there are abandoned mines and those sites are not being utilized for bats, generally the treatment for those sites would be to plug them and cover them with earth for public health and safety associated with them and then to prevent use.

So really it helps us. These surveys help us to better understand how bats are utilizing these sites and if there is a resource out there that we need to be aware of. You know, we do have multiple BLM-sensitive species out here. There's the California Leaf-Nosed Bat, the Palid Bat, and the Yuma Myotis, just to name a few there. We need to have an understanding of how they're utilizing those sites and the type of treatment that should be used or prescribed for each of the locations.

MEMBER POWELL: Thank you.

MR. CHATTERTON: Ed?

MEMBER STOVIN: Thank you. Yeah, I got two questions. First of all, is the Ormat project the only geothermal project in the El Centro's office currently?

Do you have other applications or anything?

MR. CHATTERTON: None that I am aware of at this time. That is the only activity that we're currently actively working on. It's just exploratory at this point. We do have established geothermal production at other sites in the area. The East Mesa is an example of that, where Ormat has a plant and also several wells throughout the area, but that is the only active geothermal lease that we are currently working on.

MEMBER STOVIN: Okay. Thank you. There's rumors that there's lithium down below the Salton Sea, and, like, the Ormat site is pretty close to that area. I don't know if you would call it an aquifer, the area where the hot water is. I didn't see anything in their preliminary environmental work on lithium. If they want to move forward and they -- there's talk about doing geothermal and extracting lithium at the same time. And I certainly don't oppose that, but I would like to know exactly what's going on when that happens.

And I almost feel like they're pulling a fast one, that they're saying they want to do geothermal but they're really wanting to extract lithium. Do you know anything about that or how that would play out?

MR. CHATTERTON: Yeah, unfortunately I don't

know much about the current efforts that are out there. I know there is a study that is currently ongoing for lithium extraction from these geothermal wells. I've recently heard that there is a high lithium content in those waters that are being brought up to the surface and then, once utilized, that whatever is leftover is pumped back down through other wells in the area.

So a lot of the studies that are occurring in the exploratory type of work happening in the lithium development on the Salton Sea is happening on private lands, so there has been no federal involvement associated with it, so I don't have a lot of information, unfortunately, on what is currently happening.

I know that it certainly is an interest. It's something that we're following that, as information becomes available, we'll be looking into. Certainly we'll want to understand the potential impacts to natural resources and ensure that, you know, as these proposals come forward, that we have the information that we need to understand what is involved in that development.

MEMBER STOVIN: Can I ask you a question? I don't think you've touched on it. Is your office working on the general plan portion of the

Ocotillo Wells Management Plan, the federal side? I know there's a federal and a state side of it. Do you know where that is at right now?

MR. CHATTERTON: So currently we are waiting for the state to reengage with BLM on moving that general plan forward. It was my understanding that the state had interest in picking back up the effort. However, we have not seen any formal notification come from the OHV division or from the State Parks side of the house to reengage in that effort.

MEMBER STOVIN: Really. So they stopped it, and you were ready to keep moving?

MR. CHATTERTON: Well, we are willing to react certainly to the effort that they would like to move forward with. And so it's not to say that, you know, the BLM has --

MEMBER STOVIN: You're not dragging your feet.

MR. CHATTERTON: Yeah. It's not on our side at this time.

MEMBER STOVIN: Okay. I'm part of Friends of Ocotillo Wells, and I know the people there. And it's weird that it's been ongoing for -- I don't know -- eight or ten years. They started working on the new plan, and it just sort of stopped. I thought it was from the federal side. I thought that it was on your

side, but maybe not. Yeah, I kind of thought that, when Trump was president, they didn't want to give up geothermal possibilities out there. They wanted to hang onto the land and maybe didn't want to move forward with cooperating, but I don't know. I'm interested.

MR. CHATTERTON: Yeah, unfortunately that hasn't had movement since my time here in the field office, so I don't have information on that.

MEMBER STOVIN: It was years before you started. It was years before, I remember. But I did hear rumors that they're going to be starting again soon, so you'll probably hear something. Thank you very much, Ryan.

MR. CHATTERTON: Absolutely. Then Mr. Dick Holliday?

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yes. I have two questions. One, are you still waiting for money from the budget for the Cahuilla Ranger Station rebuild?

MR. CHATTERTON: We are. So the current proposal is a funding request being submitted through the America's Great Outdoors Act to secure funding for the site. The current proposal from my understanding is with our 2023 year planning cycle. So my hope is that we'll start seeing some movement on that next year, next fiscal year.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: The other question kind of is triggered by the Barstow talk about looking at a phone way to buy SRPs for Dumont and El Mirage. Is that being looked at for ISDRA?

MR. CHATTERTON: We have not investigated into utilizing the rec.gov platform at this time. Really, if we were to shift from our current method or proposal, certainly we would want to ensure that we maintain access to those permits so folks can buy those permits offsite from their local retailers or other sources. That way they have them in hand when they're coming out to the site.

The other concern that I would potentially have with an off-line type of sale would be the opportunity to provide the physical permits that are required for posting on the vehicles and windshields. So we're not currently investigating it, but that's some of my initial thoughts on that, but certainly happy to continue conversations.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yeah. I hadn't heard that before, and that's been kind of an interesting thing. Years ago we looked at these things, and it wasn't going to work right either because they needed something to physically see. Rangers wouldn't be out there asking to look at everybody's phone to see if they got a permit.

Thank you very much.

I also wanted to thank the officers out there working on the ghost-camping thing. I'd like to see that work harder, more on that as far as for all the abandoned vehicles that are out there. Thank you very much.

MR. CHATTERTON: Thank you. And then, Jayne, I see your hand up again.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: She's muted.

MR. CHATTERTON: Yeah. She's working on it.

MEMBER POWELL: There we go. So on the Salton Sea, I believe the state is going to be having a workshop again in the next few months. At least that's what I heard. Is the BLM involved with that?

MR. CHATTERTON: So that is the first I'm hearing of that workshop. So my answer would be no, but I'm certainly interested in learning more about when that workshop will take place and what information they will be presenting there.

MEMBER POWELL: Okay. I'll see if I can get the dates for you.

MR. CHATTERTON: Thank you. That would be excellent.

MEMBER POWELL: Thank you.

MR. MILLER: Thanks, Ryan.

Any other questions for Ryan before we move on?

MR. CHATTERTON: Thanks, everybody.

MR. MILLER: Thank you, Ryan, again.

Let's move on to the next person in line, in the Needles Field Office, Mike Ahrens.

MR. AHRENS: Yes. Thank you. Good afternoon. So I think I covered actually in my report, just briefly, that today not only is important to us because of the DAC meeting, but we also have the first anniversary celebration here in Needles for the designation of the Route 66 as a National Scenic Byway, the segment from Needles to Barstow. And so I took Karen over to there actually during the lunch break, and she's actually still there enjoying that event and will be heading on home later on.

It looked like a really good event, well attended, a lot of good information being provided to the public from that. So that was great. It was great to have Karen come and visit our office and have two full days to kind of look around. We concentrated primarily on the Mojave Trails National Monument and let her see some of those kind of iconic places, Camp Iron Mountain, Amboy, and some of the other areas that have spurred discussion, Bonanza Springs and the Marble Mountains and what have you. And so got to have

her actually physically set foot on some of those sites, see them, appreciate them, understand the complexities of management on them. And look forward to her help as they start moving forward on the Monument Plan and, you know, teasing out really how we're going to move forward with those sites.

And then so kind of updating on that as far as the Mojave Trails National Monument Plan, our attention is definitely captured by that right now, and working real hard in the preplanning stages to try to get that ready to go. It sounds like we're seeing some estimated budget estimates for the planning effort. They look pretty positive, and so if that all comes to pass, we want to be really well prepared to move forward.

We've actually already taken some funding we had from last year and entered into had a contract with a GIS contractor to help us to identify all the current spatial data that we have, get it all organized into one place with its metadata so that we can know really what information we have, have it available to all of our staff and public when that's right, and identify gaps in data that we need to try to refill.

One of those that we're also working on with a new contract now is cultural resource information. Actually initiated a contract to do a class one survey,

which is a records survey. That will help us get all of that information together in one place as well. And so, again, it's kind of a preplanning exercise.

Also we're working with another set of contractors. Noelle reported on this at the last meeting, that we're planning to do some prescoping outreach, probably via Zoom, meetings. Currently looking at three general kind of public meetings and probably a fourth for the tribe, if it's something they're interested in -- tribes, I should say -- if it's something they're interested in. Trying to give folks an opportunity to really understand Mojave Trails, the planning process moving forward.

And if we get really good feedback, we're looking to maybe hear from you all on, you know, what's important and, you know, what the discussion points are. Wanted to make sure we cover all of those throughout the planning area.

And then just starting to initiate some of the contracting. And things like the producing NOIs and Federal Registers takes a lot of effort and a good span of time, so we're starting to prepare, drafting the planning grants, so contracting for a planning outfit to help us with the heavy lift of writing the plan itself and working through that process. And we'll soon start

thinking about crafting the NOI, which will actually kick off the formal planning process, once we get there. So lots going on with that plan there.

And then I did also wanted to address -- it came up earlier -- the cultural resource center, visitor center in 29 Palms that Park Services is building with the city. Yeah, we've been very much engaged with Dave Smith on that side of the Joshua Tree National Park, and he's been very interested in cooperating and working with us on that.

It's actually identified space that BLM will be able to utilize in that center. Noelle is currently working with interpretive people to comingle the BLM's message with the message from the Park Service on that, and they're interested. It was noted their visitation has skyrocketed. They're really very much interested in providing other things for their visitors to do, and Mojave Trails seems like a good alternative for them, with a caveat noting that we provide much different levels of service than does the National Park Service and requires really a different preparedness on the part of the visitors to really enjoy our field office and our types of more dispersed recreation in a safe manner.

So a lot of the interpretation we're working with them on is being able to help them understand what

you can do in Mojave Trails, you know, the kinds of recreational experiences you can have there, and how to be prepared for that, because, you know, it's a 1.6-million-acre monument. You can be very much by yourself there, even when you don't want to be.

So that's, I think, all I really wanted to talk about. We did submit a report as part of the main report. Happy to answer questions about that or anything else.

And, Billy, I see you have your hand up, I think, first.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yeah, Mike, do you know how the meetings are going with the corrals and stuff? You know, I didn't make that, first county meeting I missed since 1986. But what's the status on the corrals for the Kingston Ranch?

MR. AHRENS: For the corrals, for like the Horse --

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yeah, Horsethief Springs. Yeah, I call it the Kingston Ranch.

MR. AHRENS: Yeah. You know, it's been a little bit stagnant here the last year or so. As you know, we lost our range specialist Jenna, and we're working hard to refill that. And then Ron's had some -- with the pandemic and what have you, has been distracted

from it as well. So we actually have a fairly complete design. I think the only now that we're looking forward to working with Ron on again is the water issue, how to transport water up to the corrals. And then I think we'll be ready to complete the environmental compliance work and start construction on those.

So probably still a little while because we both kind of have our hands dipped into too many other projects. But we haven't lost our focus by any means.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Thanks, Mike. I appreciate it.

MR. AHRENS: You're very welcome.

Mr. Holliday? I think you're muted there, Dick.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Sorry about that. Does your area cover the area north of Joshua Tree, or is that Palm Springs?

MR. AHRENS: So yeah, north of Joshua Tree is a combination really of ourselves and the Barstow Field Office.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay.

MR. AHRENS: So everything in San Bernardino County is ours, and then Riverside ends up into Palm Springs, yeah.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Well, what I was trying to

do, I was trying to go to some of the mines in the Gold Crown Mine area there north of Joshua Tree, and there's a lot of route signs there, but I can't find any route maps to go with the route signs.

MR. AHRENS: Okay. I'm not sure I'm familiar with the Gold Crown Mine. That might be -- so we're west of -- yeah, west of that Old Iron Age Road and Dale Mining District, that's actually in our Barstow office. Jeff might have that. And that was within the WEMO route area as well. So it's signed and what have you appropriately from that.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay. I'll try to look on the BLM site for Barstow. Maybe they handle that. I want to thank you for working on those mission statements. Got those down where we think that they're a little bit better for the people.

MR. AHRENS: Yeah. Real excited to see the subgroup process get started again and to be working with a group on our planning effort. Okay. Thank you.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Thank you.

MR. AHRENS: Absolutely.

MR. CHILDERS: Dick, if you look for the West Mojave Travel Network Management Plan, that will have the PDFs with the maps for that particular area.

MR. MILLER: All right. Well, thanks, Mike.

Any other questions for Mike? All right. Thank you, sir. And thanks, Jeff, for helping out Mr. Holliday there. I appreciate that.

Let's move to the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office. Janet Cheek is representing Tim Gilloon today. Janet?

MS. CHEEK: Thank you, Brad.

Yes, Tim had a prior commitment today, but he did give me some notes that he wanted to mention to a couple of the DAC members. Of course he wanted to convey that we definitely want the advice on projects, and anybody can reach out to him or one of the staff members at the office. But Jack -- and not to call anyone out and certainly not to preclude any other members, but he was really interested if you had any recommendations or advice on the Sand to Snow feral cattle issue.

And then he also mentioned Dan with filming. I know a lot of entities come out and apply to the office for field permits outside of engagement with you. And of course our issue is very stringent timelines. You know, they'll come in and say, "We want to be out there Friday." And it just takes more time than that and to ensure that resources that are protected for other authorized users.

So he just wanted for me to mention to make sure to say, if entities do reach out to you, to stress as much forward planning as possible. We would greatly appreciate it so we can, you know, certainly do our best to comply with their requests to utilize Public Lands for filming.

And then I want to circle back with, Ed, you had mentioned Minnewawa Trail pending temporary closure during Cole's presentation. Tim did acknowledge that he has recently spoken to you, and he did want me to convey that him and staff are looking to meet with OHV users with the concerns out there with a potential temporary closure.

And yes, Customs and Border Patrol has subsequently requested again for temporary closure of that trail due to safety concerns with the illegal usage and, of course, speeding and ill-appropriate vehicles along those roads just creating a safety hazard for all users, not only OHV. But he certainly welcomes engagement from you, Ed, as well on that issue.

And so with that, I would like to share that the office is in the midst of hiring some staff and really across the board appreciate the support of the district and then the state office as well. We are recently adding an outdoor rec planner, some office

administration staff. We've had one. And so we have been relying on the district and other field office staff to help us limp along. So that is greatly appreciated. Of course, law enforcement and as well as the management team. So hopefully we can be more responsive going forward.

And with that, Dan Kasang, who is our outdoor rec planner -- we're soon to onboard another one -- he did want me to share that the field office applied and was awarded a \$529,940 grant through the California Department of Parks and Recreation for off-highway motor vehicles to restore OHV-related resource damage in Coachella Valley and NECO, which is Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert Coordination Plan.

But the resource areas from starting January 1st of this year and run through the end of 2024, and those monies will go to restore the areas affected behind existing and newly proposed barriers, trash abatement, graffiti abatement, activities, you know, in regards to the OHV-user areas, and funding for a replacement of a power washer to remove graffiti. So of course the rec program is very excited about that to certainly mitigate those over-extended uses and illegal uses.

Also, as Greg alluded, the Palm Springs-South

Coast Field Office is certainly assisting Jihadda Govan, who is the Sand to Snow Monument manager, with the planning efforts there, those two planning efforts. And then also the office is working on our reentry for the office, as well as the Santa Rosa/San Jacinto National Monument Visitor Center.

And also a shout-out to the Friends of the Desert Mountains, working in conjunction with BLM, is certainly engaged with this effort of the Coachella Valley Wildflower Festival and Safety Fair being held at the Palm Desert Civic Park on March 5th. I have had the pleasure of attending that. It's a lot of fun and lots of great information and resources to the public in utilizing Public Lands.

And that's all I have to share. Any questions? You're going easy on me. Thank you. Please reach out to either myself or Tim or any of the staff members, and we will certainly address any comments or concerns. And again, we welcome any advice on our projects. Thank you.

MR. MILLER: Thank you very much, Janet. Thank you for stepping in for Tim.

Let's move along and go to Ridgecrest with Carl Symons.

MR. SYMONS: Hi. Good afternoon. I won't go

through the stuff in the report other than a few updates on some things. But I'll start off with personnel. Tom Acostas, my associate field manager, is back now. He was on just about a six-month detail as the Arcata field manager. So glad to have him back. And so he's just now getting back into the swing of things. He's been back -- this is the end of his second week back.

We did hire a range person, but however -- we hired her. She started on Monday and on Tuesday went to the hospital and had her little baby girl. So she'll be out on maternity leave for a little while, so it will be a little while before she actually gets started back in. But she has worked in the office for about two years with contracts and interns and stuff, so she is familiar with the area.

We also hired a new administrative officer, who started at the beginning of this pay period, so just about two weeks ago. So we're happy to have her in place and running the front administrative office area and the budget stuff there.

Some update things on range, is that we are working with Deep Spring Colleges up in Fish Lake Valley. I approved a range improvement DA. Now we're in the process of getting the supply list and working with the permittee to start the implementation that --

buying some of the supplies and things with our range-improvement dollars and getting the agreements together there.

We're also working on -- we're just about ready to put out an EA for what we're now calling the Upper Cortez Creek out in the Kelso area that was an allotment that hasn't been grazed for a while. It got split off. It used to be managed by Bakersfield, but they split it, and Bakersfield is now doing a separate one for their pasture, so we're trying to get that back online. Hopefully we'll get that done here this year so they can utilize that allotment again as far as the range goes.

Some of the things in realty. We're actually trying to get -- we issued one fiberoptics line. We have cultural work to do on a second fiberoptics line, in relation to LADWP's operations out there. They need those fiberoptic lines for their monitoring equipment and stuff like that, bringing them up to speed so they can actually process the data as they're building their new dam in that area.

The mining. We're having a lot of little mining things as well as a big ones you saw in the report. We are dealing with, like, the Devil Dog Mine. When they expanded the Spanglers OHV Area and congressionally designated it, it also put a withdrawal

on there, so they were under a notice that they let expire. So we're bringing them in, that now we're going to have to figure out if they want to put in a plan of operation. It's going to require a validity exam and that part there.

So we've got several of those that are happening that we -- they're trying to decide whether or not that they want to go and do a validity exam. One of the things with the validity exam is, if it comes out negative, then the claims would be gone, whereas until we do a validity exam, they still have the claim and they could do casual use, but they just can't use equipment or go anything beyond casual use. So it's just part of the Dingell Act that we're implementing.

The two wild and scenic rivers that we have, we're working on the plans. We actually just got word from Forest Service is the lead, and we're working with them on the Cottonwood Creek. And we've gotten the draft CRMP and EAs for review, so we're supposed to have that review done by the 25th and get that back to them, so hopefully that will go out soon. Surprise Canyon, we're finishing up visuals and still moving forward with that going there.

Some of the other things we're involved in. We are involved with the Illinois Valley Wells Groundwater

Authority (as spoken). We're an ad hoc member, so we don't vote, but we attend meetings and provide technical expertise and the fact that we have quite a bit of the ground in the area for the overdraft of the Ridgecrest area.

We are working with the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee on our Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area. We help fund the naturalists every year there, as well as getting trailers and stuff set up. That's going to be starting up next month. The naturalists will be at the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area for visitors and outreach and education for that.

And also we're engaged with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a couple of different avenues that, when the Dingell Act expanded the Spangler open area, it crossed over a Navy road that's withdrawn from the Navy. And they have the take, but in order for riders to get from one area to the other, they have to cross that road. So we're working with the Navy and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on how we're going to handle the take on that as far as whether we decide if there was to be a tortoise taking.

Also working with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in regards to efforts for the Inyo Towhee, the

listed species. We've been doing -- the biggest thing right now is fencing off riparian areas for habitat and also doing burro gathers, and we have a few more coming up -- it's in the report there -- to try to check the habitat and try to help the recovery of the Inyo Towhee.

And we're also trying to fill some other positions besides the ones that we had. Getting ready to make a selection for an outdoor rec planner. Got two wildlife biologist positions. They're both vacant, but the positions have closed, and so hopefully we'll get a list of names from HR here shortly to go. And then we got a few others.

We did lose a wrangler from the corrals as well as their administrative assistant up there, so they're kind of shorthanded, and we'll be looking to fill those positions as soon as we can.

And that's most of the stuff for Ridgecrest. I'll open it up to any questions.

Jayne?

MEMBER POWELL: So on the HR side of it, approximately how long from the time the position is posted until it's filled? How long does it take the agency to do that, typically?

MR. SYMONS: Typically -- I hate to say it because I don't think there's a typical, but it would

probably be three months from the time it closes. It all depends. If they have to move from somewhere, that of course takes a lot longer to get it. If we fill it locally, it of course shuts that timeframe down a little bit, but on average about three months. Unless, Greg, you handle them all across the district, if you have a different take on that.

MR. MILLER: Yeah. You know, Jayne, it depends on the position as well and where we're getting that person from. Right now we're seeing a really long time for background checks. That's one of the major issues that we've been working through as far as trying to get new people on board. No matter where they're from, even if they're a BLM employee, if they haven't had a background check in a while, they have to go through that background check again if it's a permanent position. For the details, it's not so much, but for the permanent positions, it takes quite a bit of time for background checks.

They are going to the -- I can't remember the name of it. Maybe, Carl, you know who it goes through. But it's an outside -- not an outside agency. It's Department of Defense. It goes through their agency that we just don't have control over the timing of that. We just try to hopefully get those through quicker.

So it's, like I said, depending on where we're getting the person and who the person is and what the position is, and that can delay that person's onboarding date up to four to six months.

MEMBER POWELL: Wow. So something like that in this hot job market might impact our candidate pool?

MR. SYMONS: I was just going to say that is one of the things that we have run into, is that we take and hire people, and then it's taken long enough that, depending on their situation -- for instance, if they are looking for a job, sometimes they just take another job because they can't afford to stay afloat long enough.

I've had them processed in a matter of less than a month, but then I've got some background checks that are hanging out for over a year. It really depends on the person and what the situation is if it was cleared. But yeah, it does sometimes become an issue.

MEMBER POWELL: Thank you.

MR. MILLER: So let me just go on a little bit more about that, too, is that we're working really hard with the human resources hiring staff at the state office to process these vacancies as quickly as possible. Karen Mouritsen mentioned -- our state director mentioned we have a rate that's equal that has

been across California. We've seen the positions vacancies week in, week out type of thing where a law enforcement ranger will be hired in Palm Springs and then one will leave El Centro and then another law enforcement ranger will be hired in El Centro and one will leave Barstow or other situations like that.

Our natural resource positions, we try to send out one announcement for all of the areas we're looking for filling vacancies for, and that can take in itself a little more of a concentrated coordination effort to make sure that we are including all of those locations into one announcement. And then when we get a list of individuals who are available for maybe three out of five field offices, most those field managers work together to try to see who is the best fit for their office then work with each other to see so we're not pulling the rug out from somebody else. So it might take a little longer with those. And we had those vacancies out for a while and will go out again for natural resource specialists hopefully relatively soon.

But that's one of my goals is to continue to try to fill vacancies as quickly as possible working with the human resources staff at the state office on getting those done as efficiently and quickly as possible.

MR. SYMONS: I would say the other issue is just getting the candidate pool. You talk about the natural resources. I forgot how many we went through, Greg, but we were only able to hire a couple out of that, and we've got to go back for four or five more. It's tough.

MR. MILLER: Like Carl was saying, we might offer a position to an individual but they've already committed to another location or another agency or something like that. So it's a very competitive -- really, it's a competitive world out there where folks want the job but they're really being picky about where they're going and whether or not they can work from home, too, so that's another thing we're looking at.

So, all right. Any other questions for Carl? All right, Carl. Thank you.

MR. SYMONS: Thank you.

MR. MILLER: All right. Let's move on to our fire and fuels update with Paul Gibbs, our fire management officer for the district.

Paul?

MR. GIBBS: Thanks, Greg.

Good afternoon, everyone. I'll give you a brief update, since we turned in the DAC report, on some of our activity that we've had and some other things

that are going on.

So since January of this year we've had eight fires that have been on our lands. That includes the Mojave Preserve. We do have an interagency fire program. They did have one fire there. But most of those fires are all pretty small, less than an acre. The one that did get a little larger was last week the Border Fire down in San Diego County, about nine acres.

With the weather this weekend, we shifted quite a few of our folks that were working on the fuels projects this week, and they're staffing or engines, so we do have a large staffing pattern we're doing for this time of year, especially through this weekend with the warmer weather and the winds that have been occurring. And so that's kind of what we've been doing there as a preparedness item thing.

On the fuels side of things, as Karen mentioned, we had been expecting some additional dollars, and those dollars may be coming. We've been told around \$2 million in our fuels program. But it's really tied up in the continuing resolution right now.

So we had a meeting on Thursday with our state office, and they let us know that they had a meeting on Tuesday with the national office, and as long as we're in a continuing resolution, whether it's a shorter one

or a longer-term one through the end of the year, we probably will not see those fuel dollars until 2023. And so that's a little update that just happened here this week. So hopefully we'll see a budget, but if we don't, we may not see that increase in fuels dollars until 2023. So we'll just wait and see how that goes.

Our folks are continuing to work on fuels projects. They already have projects in the works with some contract work that is going on. And before this weekend most of our folks were also helping out doing fuels and prevention and mitigation work, so we'll continue that. So that work just -- it hasn't stopped. It's still ongoing, but the additional acres we wanted to accomplish, especially in the fuels program, kind of on hold for now.

And also we just talked about hiring. So we are in the midst of our hiring for our seasonal workforce that starts late April or early May. And I'll just share the cycles that someone was asking, or we were talking about. Typically we announce those jobs in October and November. Then the time to apply usually closes in December or so, either late November or during December. Then usually by mid January our HR people have given us the list of folks who are interested in those positions, and so we start going through

applications doing reference checks and doing interviews for those folks.

And we're in the midst of that right now. Most of our job offers have been made. There's a few additional ones we are in the process of making now, and so we're continuing working through the list for the last few positions that we have up on our engines and on our helicopters. So that gives you a time that those people will show up, like I said, late April for the helicopters, early May for engines. So that's kind of the cycle we run through for our seasonal hiring that we bring on each year kind of during the peak summer months when we're most active.

And I do want to let you know we do have a new mitigation person, prevention person working down at Imperial County out at El Centro. So that person is -- before the fire season starts, they'll be working with communities down there as far as making sure the -- you know, being as fair safe as possible and also be doing prevention, you know, going out and meeting in public school programs and that type of stuff to talk about fire safety and those things. We're happy to see that.

And one of the challenges we do have in our fire and fuels organization is just the geographic size

that we have; right? So anywhere from the border down there by Mexico in Imperial County, all the way up into Inyo and Mono County. So we cover a large area. And so, you know, there's lots of opportunities for us to do prevention and mitigation, and those are some of the positions that we're hoping with the infrastructure bill, that with additional funding down the road, we can kind of restore that program. That's one of the programs that really struggled over the last ten years, the last decade or so. So as funds come in, we'll be looking to expand that program further and throughout the district.

And just so you know, for the fire season, also right now, this is the time where we start looking at all of our plans and looking at the cooperators on cooperative agreements. Every year we go through those. You know, interagency-wise we make sure if there's any adjustments we need to make, work with the cooperators, have meetings, see how things went last year. What do we need to tweak this year to be better prepared, work better together as cooperators to, you know, serve the public the best we can?

And so we're in the process of doing that, our staffing and our response plans, you know, all of those things that give us guidance before the fire starts to

help us be as prepared and ready as we can.

So that's kind of what's going on right now. I didn't have any further updates. I'll take any questions if anyone has any.

MR. MILLER: Any questions for Paul?

Paul, thank you very much.

MR. GIBBS: Yep.

MR. MILLER: Just for information, when I start filling in the role behind Andrew in the detail for district manager, my e-mail is GMiller@BLM.gov. It's pretty easy, and the number you can try to get ahold of me at is (760) 833-7100. Because we're co-located in the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, you can call that number. That's the office number, and they can get ahold of me.

All right. And with that I wanted to thank the field managers very much for the reports. And Paul, thank you very much. And I'll turn the meeting back over to Randy.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Terrific. Thank you, Greg. Thanks to your team for the update, and I'm really glad to see the reports that we received in advance. Those PDFs are a lasting tradition. They're super helpful, and the stakeholders and interest groups that I have the privilege to circulate them to really enjoy seeing

everything that you all are up to, because some of this stuff you don't always hear about, but when you read it in those reports, it really gives you an idea of the volume of things that are going on in our Public Lands in the BLM universe.

With that said, are there any other questions? Let's move on, if there's no objections, to our 1:45 item a little bit early, and that's going to be the OHV recreation update.

And it's nice to see Dana Stephenson, the outdoor recreation planner for the district, who's joining us to take over our screen and make a presentation for us today. Thank you, Dana. It's all yours.

MS. STEPHENSON: Thanks, everybody. Sorry I missed the morning half. I appreciate you guys giving me that off. I had softball this morning with my daughter so had to go coach.

That being said, I'm going to go ahead and share my screen. All right. Can everybody see it, the slide show?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Looking good.

MS. STEPHENSON: All right. So last time I presented just more on the overview of the whole outdoor recreation, and this time they asked me to maybe

specialize more on the SRP side of things and how to apply for an actual Special Recreation Permit.

So we offer Special Recreation Permits throughout the California Desert District, also just throughout the whole BLM. I would say we specialize more down here on some of more of the motorized events. Up in Northern California would be more non-motorized field trips, Jeep tours and stuff.

So there's different types of recreation permits or Special Recreation Permits to get. Commercial permits are required with anyone who intends to make recreational use of Public Lands for a commercial operation. So if you're going out there to make a profit, receive money, obtain goods, collect fees and then -- sorry. Went blank there. So an example would be like fundraising, outfitter guides, the Jeep tours that I was talking about, those would be commercial permits that you could apply for.

Competitive permits. These are more if you're registering, entering an event, a pre-determined course, or it's kind of going for speed or endurance. This is when you would apply for competitive permit. This would be your motorcycle races, your big truck races, horse endurance rides, bicycle races. All those would fall under a competitive permit.

And then you have your organized group activities. So these more fall if you're planning decisions, resource concerns, user conflicts, public health and safety, and is there a need for resource monitoring? So these would be more of your scout campouts, your Boy Scouts, or your weddings or family reunions. And some of those as well, depending on what the activity is, you could potentially just get an authorization letter from whichever office you're working with. So if there's no exchange of money, you're not advertising, you could potentially just get a letter of authorization for some of those smaller organized events.

So other types of permits. We have our vending permits. So they're short-term temporary, and they usually are in conjunction with one of the other types. Either commercial competitive or organized event is when you would do most of your vending permits. So these would be your t-shirts, motorcycle t-shirts that they're trying to sell on Public Lands, or there could be food vending permits. If that's the case, then they have to get certain licensing out there. They have to get with their local county and get a health permit.

Then you have your special area use. These are required for individuals, private or non-commercial, in

special areas.

So cost recovery goes into play when -- if you are doing a permit and it's going to exceed over 50 hours, then we'll go into a cost recovery. We usually see these procedures mainly with lands relating to cadastral. But we do them with SRPs. A large one, as an example, would be King of the Hammers. And then we do an evaluation, see what staffing we need, how many staff we're going to need on the ground to monitor those types of the events, and we send the proponent a cost recovery agreement where they can review or argue it.

So these are all the authorities for the issuance of SRPs. I'm not going to read through them all. You guys can see them here. And I'm happy to share this slide with anybody at the end.

So consequences for operating without a permit is \$100,000 and 12 months of incarceration. I don't know of any of those that have actually happened throughout my duration at the CDD, but there are consequences. Most people do know to get an SRP with whichever office they're going to be having their event in, though.

All right. So here's the SRP process. You can see you're usually going to do a pre-application, get with your local office, with your outdoor recreation

planner that you plan on having your event in. I'll go through each of these steps so you guys don't have to try to read through this, but this is kind of our little way to go through the process, make sure that everybody is submitting what they need to and BLM is also.

They are looking at doing an online SRP program in the future called RAPTOR. I have not seen it yet. They're still kind of working out the kinks, so hopefully one day it will all be digital and some of the paper side will go away.

Of course this is a federal action, so NEPA is required depending on what type of permit you're getting. That could be a CX, an EA, a DNA. Just all depends on the type. And some of them don't require NEPA either. It's just if there's going to be ground disturbance, then we have to usually go through the different checklists.

So the role of the permittee. If you're operating a business or providing a service on Public Lands, we require licensing, education, conduct business. So food-handling permits, like I talked about earlier, for vendor permits are required, workers' compensation insurance, and business licensing. As a permittee, you hold a great level of responsibility for your client as well and for the resources your business

relies on. And then the safety, the safety of the visiting public and the spectators and everybody that's part of your event.

So when to apply. Permit applications must be submitted a minimum of 180 days. I think across the board, that is not always applicable. But please work with your office, and most offices will work with you on that. But 180 days is what we would like to see just because we do get so many permits through all the offices. So it's a big undertaking.

So step one. It's highly recommended that you schedule a pre-application consultation with your office or whoever you're working with prior to submitting your application. You just want to open that clear communication of, what is your activity? What are you doing? Are you advertising? How many people do you plan on having out there? Where do you plan on having this event? So having that first step and just really building that communication with your office is really key.

So to apply for a commercial, competitive, or organized group permit, you have to complete the 2930-1 form. So you'll complete 1 through 16, and this form is your name, where you plan on doing it, what type of activity you plan on doing, have you ever had a

permit with the BLM, Forest Service, National Park Service? Is this a commercial, competitive, organized? Are you vending? And then, who's applying for it? Is it an individual? Is it a business? Is it a government agency? So you'll fill all this out and sign and date and submit it to the outdoor recreation planner that you're working with.

So your next step would be, once you get that submitted, you need to complete an operations plan. We do have blank templates for both non-motorized and motorized operation plans, and in this operations plan you want maps, type of equipment you're using, how are you going to make sure your spectators are safe?

Hazardous materials. So if you're using fuel, are you going to put the tarp down? Parking and staging areas, sanitation. Are you going to bring in Porta Potties? How are you going to take care of everybody out there? What's your communication plan? And if it is a race event, monitors. You have to have monitors on the ground to make sure, not just for the safety of the spectators, but for the safety of the drivers as well.

So like I said, you need to submit maps. There's all types of ways to kind of submit your KMZ or KML files to your office, and then we usually convert

them over to our own mapping system. This is an example of the Rebelle Rally. She has in there base campsites then her routes. You can see Day 5, you know, she's going through the Needles Field Office and then coming down into the Palm Springs.

So with that, your map needs to have where you're racing at, where is your location? Where are going to be your road crossings? Where are going to be your spectators areas? You need to identify all those areas and submit those to the field office so that we can start reviewing and making sure your route is on existing trails, or if they're in an open area, those are usually where we try to push most folks to have any motorized events, but then we can go ahead and review those and get back to you guys.

So to apply for a commercial, competitive, or organized, like I said, we would like you to submit 180 days in advance. You'll complete your 2930-1 form, which we talked about, a map for the course and staging and camping areas, an operating or business plan, and any other documentation that we require, and then the minimum \$115 annual permit fee.

And then if and when your permit is approved, you need to submit a valid insurance policy identifying the United States government as additionally insured.

Submit current copies for necessary first aid, CPR, or depending on what your activity is on that, a cost sheet that displays to customers what you're charging.

If you're doing vending permits, we usually like to see photos of what you're selling out there. We try to stay away from anything that is, you know, gun related or political. So we usually like to see photos of what you're actually selling.

And then we also require signed additional stipulations. So those stipulations cover numerous, numerous items. It's about, I would say, 13 pages long. We ask the permittee to review those and then initial next to the ones that really apply to them that we check off and then sign it. And this is for medical attention, sanitation, fuels and fluids management, let's see, Desert Tortoise, wildland and fire precautions, if you're having aircraft, if you're doing a commercial or something to that nature, media. The list goes on.

So we make sure that they're covering all their bases, and then we actually have monitors on the ground to make sure that they're doing what they said in their stipulations as well.

So here's just an example of an insurance. You can see down here you have the California Desert

District as the additionally insured, U.S. Department of the Interior right here, and then their minimum insurance that they have to have.

So here are the insurance requirements. Like I said, depending on what you're doing and your activity, whether it's low, moderate, or high risk, this is what we require from the promoters. So for example, Rebelle Rally, probably a moderate risk, King of the Hammers, high risk. Anything that has speed would be a high-risk insurance.

And then like I said, I talked about the fees. Once you turn in your 2930-1, your minimum fee is \$115. If your permit is rejected, this is refunded. And then this fee typically changes every three years, but that's not always the case. And then -- sorry there. Once you get your gross receipts after deducting the permitted activity, whether it be the sales, the clothing, or just the entry fee, the competitive recreation use is six dollars per participant per day or three percent of the gross receipts or the 115, whichever is greater.

And then other considerations. We talked about the cost recovery. We usually send an estimate cost recovery, and it's paid by the applicant, and then whatever we do not spend we refund back to the applicant.

And then bonding may be required. I have actually never done a bonding, so I don't have a lot of experience with this one. But I have the handbook, and I'm happy to answer any questions on that.

So here's your permit. Once you guys submit all your documents to your office, this will be your 2930-2. We'll fill this out, have you sign it, and then the authorized officer will sign it, and that's usually the field manager for each office.

With that, you'll have all your general terms. Those are kind of the basic stipulations. And then you'll also get your permit package, which is all the stipulations that you signed. You would get a Desert Tortoise Observation Form. You'll get a Death and Injury Form, and then some offices have fliers that they hand out as well, such as information about the Mohave Ground Squirrel, the Desert Tortoise kind of handling. So depending on which office you're getting your permit with, they will supply you with all the flyers necessary.

Once your activity is completed, you will submit a Post Use Report to the administrator, and I have an example for you. And then you will be billed for the amount of use calculated from your post use report, and that's that six dollars or three percent.

So here's an example of your Post Use Report. So you put participants, how many spectators, how many employees, what was the prepaid event or activity amount. And so you'll do all those calculations and submit it.

So once you do that, we will then send you guys an evaluation form telling you how you did. We do have options to do multi-year permits. It depends on, you know, how you've done on past permits. We do have some five-year permits. It depends on if your course is going to change. If your course is going to change, you usually need to supply all of that information in a NEPA so we can have options in there. But the biggest thing is just working with your office.

So just to summarize, if you're kind of wondering if you're going to do an SRP in any of the field offices, are you charging a fee? Will there be a competition? Will you be advertising? Will you mark the course? Are you expecting vehicles? Will anyone be paid or organized? And then will your event involve Public Lands?

So this is kind of just the summary. If you're kind of asking yourself, "Do I need a permit?" this would be the flyer to look at. And it's also available online too. It kind of goes through these same

questions. So that is the SRP side of things.

They also asked me kind of just to summarize a couple of the large events we had this year, one being King of the Hammers, which just ended last weekend. The 2022 King of the Hammers, the total number of paid spectators and competitors was about 35,799. I would say there was probably closer to 40,000 folks out there, just that did not pay to come in. Those were the people camping outside the closure area or just outside the welcome gate.

But overall it was a successful event. I had a great team working with me. Barstow worked well with us, so I thought overall it was a great event. I issued this permit. Then I'm also the incident commander on the ground. And yeah, it was good. So I was happy with it.

Let's see my time. How am I doing on time? Well, I have a video. I'm going to close this screen.

MS. VAN DER LIN: We don't have sound yet, Dana.

MS. STEPHENSON: Okay. I might have to have Matt do this one.

ZOOM TECH: One sec. I'll cue it up.

MS. STEPHENSON: All right. The sound is not working for some reason on my side either. All right.

There you go.

(Rebelle Rally video from YouTube was played.)

MS. STEPHENSON: Thank you, Matt.

So that was the Rebelle Rally. That event occurred both in the Barstow, Needles, and El Centro Field Office. They started actually in Nevada and finished in the dunes, in the Imperial Sand Dunes. That one would be both a commercial and competitive permit, same as -- King of the Hammers is both permitted for commercial and competitive because they are filming and then also doing a competition.

And that is it. Do I have any questions? Sorry. That was a lot of information. And like I said, if you work directly with any of your field office staff, they will have all the information for you as well, and I am happy to assist as well. I'm not seeing any hands. All right.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: You know, a couple of meetings ago I remember Jayne was kind of confused about the different permits and how it was run and who gets a piece of what and where they do it and the whole deal. So this was really an A-to-Z primer, the best one I've seen for the how-to's of a Special Recreation Permit.

And also, to let folks understand that, when people are purchasing a permit for Imperial Sand Dunes

or Dumont Sand Dunes or the El Mirage OHV Areas, those are individual Special Recreation Permits. So they're a similar animal but just a little different species.

MS. STEPHENSON: Those fees that are collected during your post use, those fees go back into the land to improve it as well. So they're used for a good use.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: And on the individual Special Recreation Permit side, the fees are that are collected at an OHV recreation area go back to that area as well. They don't go to Washington.

MS. STEPHENSON: Correct.

MS. VAN DER LIN: Dana, I see Mr. Mitchell has his hand up for a question.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Am I unmuted?

MS. STEPHENSON: You're good.

MEMBER MITCHELL: On that King of the Hammer, you're talking about putting it back into the land. 35,000 people. I'm across the street, 29,000 acres. I run a hundred head of cattle. Well, not in the drought. We're down to about 50. I have a road I maintain for four miles to get to Rattlesnake Canyon for 25 years.

Now, where do I get that money back for everybody that gets to use that road before they get into the canyon? You know, there's two pieces of state land before you get to the cow guard where BLM land is.

So where do I put in for something to help me for that cost? That's four hours and a quarter tank of fuel.

MS. STEPHENSON: Yeah, I mean I --

MEMBER MITCHELL: Do you want a hundred Jeeps across that in front of your house and tear everything up? I think you would be pretty upset. You know, I don't mind that they do it, but why isn't that OHV money coming back to help me maintain the road? They get to use the damn thing at my expense, at my ranching expense. At my family's expense they get to use that, and that's where I'm upset.

MS. STEPHENSON: Yeah, I understand.

MEMBER MITCHELL: It's not only me either.

(Reporter clarification.)

(Simultaneous speaking.)

MEMBER MITCHELL: People in Burns Canyon, they're trying to shut off that because half of the people have private land. They don't have a county easement. Then most people go up and then come down through there.

And another thing is, those people come through there. I have cattle, I have my family, and I have safety that I'm concerned about, even theirs. They've hit my cattle, and nobody has done anything about it except Mark Brown. Two years ago before he left, he

wrote a hundred tickets and slowed everybody down.

This year I've seen two people over there for the whole race, was in front of my road slowing people down, two people, and that was it. Now, where do I get that cost recovery? I mean, what do I have to apply for? I mean, all year long. I mean, there is not one time, one day that there's not anybody that goes up Rattlesnake Canyon. I guess they don't have jobs anymore, because 25 years ago I might have five Jeeps on a weekend go through it.

And that's my livelihood. You know, it's not like I just dropped off the sky and did this. That ranch dates back to Hart Barr 1900, when the OHV was a horse and wagon, and nobody is even helping me with it. I ask everybody. Nobody wants to say nothing. All they do is they want to collect the money from the Hammers, and I got to eat the dust. I was going to say something else, but I'm being polite.

You tell me what I need to do about that. They shut off -- how many acres did they shut off for safety? How many acres did they shut off for safety?

MS. STEPHENSON: I would have to go back and refer to the closure map, or maybe Jeff has that number. But as far as the fees for those permits, they have to go back into Public Lands. They can't go for private or

state. But I'm sure we can work with Jeff, or if you work with the proponent of the King of the Hammers and talk to him, maybe he has some options for you as well.

MEMBER MITCHELL: He don't like me because he killed one cattle. I charged him for it, and he got a little irate. But the bottom line is, if you're talking about safety, how are you letting people run through my ranch, not at 15 miles an hour, at 60 miles an hour, 50 miles an hour, and there's a cow and a calf sitting here jumps out.

Now, you talk about safety. I don't even want to hear safety from you people. I want to hear safety for my animals, because they get hurt. There's plastic everywhere I have to pick up. Do you think they're going to stop and tell me about it? Heck no, they're not, because they're going to have to pay for that cow. They have people tow them out.

That's why I'm upset. I don't care if they do this. But when you bring all those people -- if I brought a thousand head of cattle into Johnson Valley for a roundup like they did in the old days, do you think people would be mad if they would be walking through their yards or you would be mad and I collected all this money for people to ride their horse just like they did in the 1800s? Bet there's a lot of people that

want to do that. Everybody would be upset about that, whether I paid for the permit from you or not.

This thing is only going to get bigger, and it's only going to get worse for my family and my operation. So what I want people to do now is start figuring out what's going to happen. I'm 74 years old. I never had to deal with this before this King of the Hammers. I'm glad he's making money, but he's costing my family money now, and the OHV people are costing me money now.

Let me tell you, there's a lot of good people. Only five people probably kill it for 90 percent or 95 percent. I've met a lot of good critique clubs. They go on whatever you call this thing. They say slow down for the cows in Rattlesnake Canyon. I've got to go through Rattlesnake Canyon. But nobody thinks of this operation that takes care of the springs in Rattlesnake Canyon that has to do all this. That's why I get upset.

Everything is about all this stuff, but there ain't nothing about ranching happening, you see? And I need that to change, I really do, you know, or figure it out. Shut that road down for King of the Hammers. I'd be fine with it. Open it up when he opens his stuff up. Then we have no problem. The safety will be covered

right there. Everything will be safe. My animals will be safe, my kids, my grandkids. We're there on horseback.

Do you know how that two years ago I had to shut that canyon down for six hours to drive my cows from the top ten miles to the bottom? Six hours they had to put people and shut that canyon off. And I may have to do it every year. Can you imagine taking 60 head of cattle, driving them down that canyon that sometimes is not three vehicles wide, and have them through it? Your cattle going up the mountain, your kids are getting out of the way, the horses. I've had motorcycles slide right underneath my horse.

You know, it's getting serious now. So I need somebody to talk to, and if I got to go when -- you need to go to the Hammers with me, shut that thing down so it's going to be safe. They let it down for everybody else. That's all I got to say. Yes, sir, that's all I got to say.

MR. MILLER: I appreciate that, I really do. I appreciate your concern. And I've worked with ranchers in the past in other places. And yes, you know, I understand, you know. They've said the same kind of things with different types of situations and stuff like that. And it is a concern, it really is.

So listen, I'm offering my time for you to sit down and talk about this, and let's work on maybe a way to kind of come together and figure out what we can do in the future, because you're right, this is not going to go away. That's an area where they have a use, and even more so the promoter is looking to make it more of a permanent situation there where he can purchase land in the area.

But let's talk about this, you and I, and we can bring Dana in at a later date, and we'll start talking about this one on one with her. How does that sound?

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yeah, that sounds good. I just have one other thing about -- I'm really torn between two groups. You know, I have not only mining people have talked to me up here and off-roaders, believe me. And I've got the people at Burns Canyon that in the old days -- there's no county maintenance on that road. They got to maintain theirs. And they're wanting to block it off. They're wanting to do this, and we got a major problem coming up.

I don't know if anybody's -- I told them when they can talk about it, and I told them I would bring it up. So everything that comes out of Rattlesnake has the got to go down Burns Canyon or it's got go to Big Bear.

So we got a major issue coming up because, again, like I say, I don't want them people not to have that right. And I need somebody to respect my rights and my safety and my family. So somehow we're going to have to deal with this; okay?

MR. MILLER: Yeah. Let's talk.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Thank you.

MEMBER BAGLEY: Billy, I would like to come out, take a look too. If you have that issue, I'm happy to come out on the ground and look at it with you. Love to connect with you and actually see what the issue is.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yeah. Once you go up there and see what I'm talking about and see what I have to deal with, you're going to say, "Man, I don't even know how you made it this long." It's getting to be a serious issue.

The thing I'm worried about is, I can show you three points that one day somebody is going to get killed because the hills come up like this (indicating). The people in Burns Canyon, I've had one guy -- one of my ranch hands got hit head on by a motorcycle going up Burns Canyon with a horse trailer, got hit head on last year. We were gathering cattle.

So I mean, it's going to get serious. And those people worry because they got to use that road

back and forth, you know? So I don't know if they're going to have to put more patrols on it. I don't know. I wish I could solve the problem. I wish I could.

Yes, I'll make time with you to take anybody through it and let them see it. Thank you very much.

MS. STEPHENSON: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Any other questions? The floor is open. Once, twice, sold.

MEMBER BAGLEY: I want to make a comment. The King of the Hammers is actually an international event. It's major. It's just getting larger, and it's a major economic benefit to the local economy. But when I hear concerns like Billy's got a local impact, those things need to be addressed, too. And some of those things aren't going to be necessarily on BLM land, but I'm happy to hear from it. Dave Cole's operation is just getting massive. And so it's a major event.

MEMBER MITCHELL: Yep.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Okay. Thank you, Dana. I appreciate that. Thanks very much.

We're a little bit early. Let me see. I've got a message that just came over, and I think I know where we're going. Pardon me. Yeah, we're only about 15 minutes early. I think public comment will definitely take longer than that. I would recommend

that we start with public comment. It will roll past the 2:30 period, and then we take our break before the final stretch.

Is there any objection to that? Thank you. Would that be okay, Michelle, that you could begin calling for hands from the public?

MS. VAN DER LIN: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm not sure what the members of the public are seeing on their side, but as we did before, I think I would like to let you handle the calling of the names.

MS. VAN DER LIN: No problem.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, because I don't see the hands. Thanks.

MS. VAN DER LIN: Give me one second here. So I know that we have one member of the public that's with us, Lisbet Thorensen. She has messaged me about a topic that she would like to discuss. Lisbet, if you're ready, we will slide you in there first. Lisbet, are you able to turn your mic on? Okay. We'll give her a minute. Let's go. She may have stepped away here for a second.

MS. THORESEN: There we go. Can you hear me now?

MS. VAN DER LIN: We can hear you.

MS. THORESEN: Thank you for this meeting.

Thank you for all of you being here.

Regarding the concerns that were raised about the proliferation of the renewable energy projects in the Desert District, as well as matters related to public accountability by some of the DAC members, I want to say that -- you made these comments this morning. I want to say thank you so much. They resonated really meaningfully with me, and I see that you're championing those concerns.

To Jack Thompson's concerns regarding the public accountability for safety and maintenance of the renewable energy utilities, the problem of it being so completely opaque to the public and resources hard to find online, if things are being built in Public Lands where there is a taxpayer component associated with that, it seems there ought to be DOI, BLM, somebody that can provide a portal for messaging in realtime during realtime events and not just postmortem review of events that happen.

So perhaps with some of the BLM's recent budge budget windfall, which was reported this morning by Karen Mouritsen in the early part of this meeting, perhaps some resources can be dedicated to providing better information, more easily accessible information

in one place.

I'd like to say also I agree heartily with Randy Banis's remarks about the incentive programs for rooftop solar, which alleviates the need for more industrial-scale renewable energy projects in the desert. And it's really dismaying that the State of California is currently implementing disincentives, which are pro-industry and anti-consumer, and surely when private utility companies are using Public Lands to reap profits in part at taxpayers' expense, the BLM should not be enabling energy policies that by design drive up costs to consumers because the business model for the projects are necessarily monopolistic.

So I also appreciated Randy's comments about the battery component to sustainable energy, and I would like to see that be a more central topic of discussion at a future DAC meeting. It's really, really important that he raised that.

The thing that resonated most strongly with me was Randy's request for an updated map of the DFA footprint for the siting of renewable energy projects. I've already submitted a separate written comment about specific areas of interest to rockhounds, and I look forward to feedback that I can share with the rockhound community in the near future.

And then I wanted to thank Dick Holliday for the two points he made about the proliferation of our RE projects, which I think are terribly, terribly important. The public --

MS. VAN DER LIN: Lisbet, I apologize. You reached your max time there. We did have to mute your mic, but I think we'll have time to circle back to you for a second three-minute period, so I apologize for that.

Ileene Anderson, you are next to speak. If you would like to go ahead and turn your mic on.

MS. ANDERSON: Do you hear me?

MS. VAN DER LIN: We can hear you. Thank you.

MS. ANDERSON: Great. First I want to thank all of the advisory committee members for serving. I've been there. I know that it's a time commitment, and I just want to recognize, you know, your public service. Greatly appreciated.

I'm going to try to talk about two things in my three minutes. The first is Conglomerate Mesa, which is where the Mojave precious metals exploration is being proposed. We're so concerned about that ongoing exploration up in Conglomerate Mesa that we felt forced to file a listing petition, actually two of them, both at the state and federal levels, requesting Endangered

Species Act protection for the Inyo Rock Daisy. This is a plant species endemic primarily to Conglomerate Mesa and adjacent Cerro Gordo. We hope and expect that the Ridgecrest Field Office's EA will address this in its upcoming NEPA review and fully implement the DRECP. So we'll be watching that closely.

And then the second thing I wanted to bring actually to the attention of the DAC is a very rare species called the Amargosa Vole, which I'm sure you've heard something about because there's much useful research going on to help this state and federally endangered species that's been under protection for decades and was still declining.

And our concerns is the destructive public activities around the Borehole Springs, which is purportedly managed by the BLM, that essentially threatens the very existence of this species in its remaining meadow habitat. So we strongly urge the DAC to explore the situation on a near future agenda.

We're in an extinction crisis and a climate crisis, and we must do everything we can possibly to control this keystone desert marsh species. BLM must take control of the mayhem that occurs there at the borehole, and we request that they do so.

And that really is my comment. So thank you

again so much. And it's been an interesting conversation today. Once again, thank you for your service.

MS. VAN DER LIN: Thank you.

Susie Boyd is next on deck for public comment. Susie, if you want to go ahead and open your mic. Susie, are you there?

ZOOM TECH: Susie, you should see the mute/unmute button on the bottom left of your screen.

MS. BOYD: I think I've got it.

MS. VAN DER LIN: We can hear you.

MS. BOYD: Thank you for waiting. Thank you, Desert District Advisory Council members. And I want to start with saying best of luck to you, Andrew Archuleta, if he comes back on. We've enjoyed having a very positive working relationship with him.

My name is Susie Boyd, representing Mojave Desert Land Trust. Our mutually beneficial working relationship with BLM's Desert District office has included the Women in Science discovering our Mojave internship program and ongoing partnership work to convey lands to the BLM's desert region.

Conveyances of our acquisitions to BLM has protected desert habitat and wildlife connectivity acreage, enhanced biodiversity, promoted climate

resilience, and provided much needed recreation and local access opportunities for the regional public.

In an effort to support the 30 by 30 effort at both state and federal levels, we encourage BLM's support for desert conservation. Specifically we hope to see an increase in enforcement staff to address searching illegal OHV use and marijuana grows across desert lands. Our field technicians have reported widespread OHV activity and expansion of illegal marijuana grows. We are working as advocates to increase state and federal funding so that BLM can be adequately staffed to address our illegal trespass concerns.

We look forward to continued engagement with BLM desert field offices. And thank you for your time today.

MS. VAN DER LIN: Thank you.

Next to speak is -- I'm hoping I'm not going to butcher this name too badly -- Maricela Rosales. You should be getting a note to turn on your mic. There we go.

MS. ROSALES: Can you hear me?

MS. VAN DER LIN: We can hear you.

MS. ROSALES: Great. So good afternoon. This has been a wonderful day just learning so much. It's

been quite beneficial to me. My name is Maricela Rosales. I am the California program associate director with Conservation Lands Foundation.

I don't believe Andrew is on the Zoom anymore, but for the record I'd like to congratulate Andrew on his new role and wish him the best. I look forward to connecting with Greg Miller moving forward. This virtual public meeting, like I mentioned, has been beneficial and informative.

And with that said, I'd like to ask BLM to really think about what K2 Gold and Mojave Precious Metals is doing to Conglomerate Mesa and their proposed exploration of it. The project has received, as you can tell, national and local opposition due to the threats of permanent damage to the region.

And, you know, Conglomerate Mesa comprises approximately about 23 acres of the Public Lands designated as California Desert Conservation Lands in an Area of Critical Environmental Concern for biodiversity, cultural significance, and recreational opportunities. The project has received just so much pressure, but I believe that the BLM has sole responsibility to help to protect this area.

Conglomerate Mesa is teeming with rare desert plants that connect Joshua Tree and wildlife that

provides sweeping vistas of the mountain ranges, and it's right next to Death Valley. Any exploratory drilling and road construction would significantly deaden this botanic oasis and damage the scenic beauty of this land.

I had the pleasure of visiting it for the first time. I popped a tire, but nonetheless it was beautiful, and it was a great experience, and to work with partners who are protecting these places are vital.

So according to the tribal representatives, the drill sites in Conglomerate Mesa are located amongst significant and cultural resources, including pinyon woodlands, nut gathering, hunting grounds, mule deer migration routes, potential burial sites, and numerous individual artifacts.

So permitting a large-scale gold mine is inappropriate in the Conglomerate Mesa region, and the values of conservation far outweighs the benefits of an open pit mine. So, you know, if we're looking at what the president has been asking, I think we really need to take into consideration of protecting 30 percent of our Public Lands by 2030 in order to mitigate the impacts of climate change and save our biodiversity. Because they are in crisis.

And that is my comment. Thank you so much.

MS. VAN DER LIN: Thank you. Our next speaker -- and again, I hope I don't butcher this name too badly -- I believe is Moises Cisneros. You should be receiving a note to unmute your mic.

MR. CISNEROS: Yes. Hi. Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide comments. My name is Moises Cisneros. I'm with the Sierra Club. I live in San Bernardino, and together with my family we've enjoyed coming up to the Lone Pine and Bishop and other nearby areas to enjoy the beauty, the beautiful outdoor activities and iconic landscapes.

I understand that the K2 Gold and Mojave Precious Metals have touted the economic benefits that their activity will bring to the local community, and I'm talking in regards to the exploration in Conglomerate Mesa.

I just want to reiterate that, what others have said in other meetings, K2 Gold and Mojave Precious Metals did not hire any locals for their work on the scoping of this project. All jobs have come from outside of the local area. They're not hiring neighbors down the street from the Conglomerate Mesa for this work. They're certainly not hiring from within Inyo County. We do know that K2 Gold has hired two staff members from the San Bernardino area.

Their lead driller and drill assistants both come from Midnight Sun Drilling, which is based in Canada. The helicopter pilot the and mechanic both came from outside of Inyo County. They've hired a Canadian-based geology firm called APEX Geoscience to do ground sampling work.

So what we do know is that having an open cyanide leach mine will negatively our outdoor hospitality and tourism industries that rely on keeping our landscapes free of major eye sores and toxicity. So please take heed of these messages. And please don't trust what K2 Gold and Mojave Precious Metals say, because they're just after their own profit.

Lastly I want to just add that the Conglomerate Mesa is going to be absolutely critical in our fight against climate change. And as we've learned, scientists expect Joshua Tree National Park to lose many of its Joshua Trees within this century, if not all. However Conglomerate Mesa is able to reproduce Joshua Trees at nearly 7,000 feet in elevation, which really is a true sanctuary for all desert plants and animals that need cooler environments.

Thank you so much for your attention, and we appreciate all that you do. I'm complete. Thank you.

MS. VAN DER LIN: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, should we break at this time for our scheduled break and come back and 2:45? We do have at least one more person that would like to make a comment. My concern is if we have some folks from the public who are not joining us for the meeting who were only zooming in for the 2:45 comment period, so I want to make sure we accommodate them.

Oh, Randy, you are on mute.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you.

Is there any objections, gang, to taking that break now and resuming, should there be any other public comments lined up for us? Hearing and seeing no objections, let's take our 15-minute break now. I'd like to thank our speakers. I have comments at the end on your comments. If you have time to stick around, I'd like to potentially engage with you. Thanks.

(Afternoon break.)

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Well, it looks like we've got most of the gang back. Most of the band is back. Let's see. We left off in the middle of -- we're at the end of one of the best public comments sessions I've heard in a long time.

Michelle, do we have additional requests to hear?

MS. VAN DER LIN: We do. Lisbet Thoresen is

requesting a second three-minute period. But before we do that, I'm asking if there's anybody else that would like to address the DAC before we go back for a second opportunity. So if there is anybody else that would like to speak, please raise your hand now. And if not, we will return the floor to Lisbet to finish her thoughts.

All right. Seeing none, I'm going to open that mic.

MS. THORESEN: Thank you, Michelle. Thank you, DAC members. I'd like to loop back to the comments that Dick Holliday made this morning, which I thought were so important. One of the issues he raised that was that during off-hour production a tremendous amount of fossil energy is required to run these renewable energy facilities out in the desert.

And I'd like to add to that water resources too. We don't hear much about where do the water resources come from? I don't think they're trucked in. Are they tapping aquifers? This has implications for the flora and fauna of the desert and the careful, delicate equilibrium that exists there to sustain that living landscape. And we don't hear much about that, and it would be nice to get more reporting on that.

I'm reminded of the discussion about the

tortoises presented, I think, at the last DAC meeting or perhaps the preceding one. It was a marvelous presentation on the impacts of drought and these RE projects on tortoise populations and especially in the light of the proliferation, the prodigious proliferation of permits for these renewable energy projects out in the desert that's requiring tortoises to be relocated. It seems to be having the most spectacularly disastrous impact on this population, and yet it continues.

And so what is the inevitable consequence? Based on data, which is now quantifiable, has been gathered now for years, that these populations will be designated to extinction if it continues in the manner that it has.

And so to Randy's point from this morning, rooftop is an alternative that deserves more attention and support, the siting of these utility-scale projects in places where there are disturbed lands and not on virgin land and on parking lot canopies near population centers. And I just would like to hear more.

When we hear about these permits and how many megawatts that these industrial-scale projects are going to produce out in the desert, what are the actual costs, not just physical costs, but also what are the costs to the environment, this irreplaceable, beautiful

environment that is our desert?

Whether we're recreational users or we're conservationists or OHV, we all love this landscape, and we want to preserve and protect this as best we can. And I'd like to hear a little more emphasis on that in future DAC presentations. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you. That was a great public comment session. I would like to thank Lisbet because she's such a friend of the DAC, and she listens to what we're saying, and I appreciate having her support of the DAC.

Also it was nice hearing from Ileene. I remember it was over 20 years ago that I went to my first DAC meeting, and Ileene was a member of the council. And I think that's when I really first thought that maybe this is someplace that might be a good fit for me. Something else interesting. Also on that same council was Dan Taylor's associate, Sheri Davis, who's legendary in the film location permitting, if you will. So that was quite a time at my very first DAC meeting. I'll never forget that.

So today I just thought everybody was very well prepared, and I thought the comments were very well focused. And the one thing I really want to take from that is, as we continue to have our DAC meetings, having

the materials in advance allows us a chance to also be prepared. And I appreciate everybody taking the time, not just our DAC members -- that is, I appreciate our DAC members taking the time, not just here at the meeting here today. Yes, this is a commitment, but also over the course of between meetings the materials we receive, I know you're looking at it and studying it, and I appreciate you're all doing everything you can to be prepared as well, because you can see that those who come to listen to us and advise us, they're quite prepared themselves. So this has really been a great meeting and a great set of public comments.

Would any other DAC members like to speak to today's comments? Any follow-up questions?

MEMBER BAGLEY: Randy, I would just make a comment, that's our primary purpose. This is the public engagement vehicle for the Bureau of Land Management, and that's why we exist. And historically these in-person meetings had much larger public engagement and participation, and I hope to see that in the future. And I understand people's resistance on doing these Zoom meetings, and I feel like we've been cheated in the last couple of years that I've been on the DAC in that capacity. But hopefully we're going to be able to go forward with it and get more engagement.

I also appreciate the people who take their time. I've done it. I've done it myself. When you're a public advocate for causes you believe in passionately, you take your time on a Saturday to go to a meeting somewhere. It often involves travel. So it's important that we have this opportunity. I appreciated everybody who spoke today.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Jayne, I saw your hand up. Please.

MEMBER POWELL: I wanted to talk about the consideration for -- it's called mitigation land -- and when the large-scale solar projects are being considered, the various permits that are issued either by the Federal Government or the state governments oftentimes require the applicant -- i.e., the energy company that wants to build these solar fields -- to obtain mitigation land. And also as part of the environmental analyses that are performed on the federal and the state level, questions on the water usage, where it comes from. All of that is also considered.

So I would encourage the people that have input that they would like to make on those topics or other topics -- everything from, you know, air emissions, you name it, there's a huge list of topics that are addressed in those documents -- to participate in the

review of the documents, submitting the comments, and helping to shape the future of how we address the renewable energy requirements that the Federal Government as well as the State of California has basically put in place.

And I'm very sorry that I didn't get to hear the presentations this morning. I think it sounds like they were excellent. And I would really like a copy of them. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Jayne.

Dick.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yeah. I would like to, yeah, thank the people that took their time and waited to have a chance to speak also. I know our next thing is going to talk about public items to consider on our next meeting, and I think -- after some of the people who have spoke today, I think a good thing would be to have a little more information on the criteria and the monitoring for renewable energy projects.

As that gentleman spoke today -- Mr. Cisneros, I think his name was -- you know, that there was a requirement to have some local people hired for a project, but it didn't happen. So is the BLM looking at how the requirements of these projects are completed? And if they're not meeting the requirements that they

signed up for, is there anything that has to happen to them? You know, do they get charged more money or something, because obviously they're making money.

These people that are putting in these big plants are making money. And what really bothers me is, here, we're interrupting them. And from my other history and when I worked for the Edison Company, I know that, when we interrupt somebody, we have to pay them for the lost energy that they didn't make while we interrupted them for whatever reason. So it's kind of a double-edged sword there for the consumer. You know, if they're paying extra money for these people to make business, then they can't make it, and then we have to pay them anyway.

So I think some of these things need to be looked at. As these other people have said, I don't know what the criteria is for improving one of these plants, especially the photovoltaic ones, because they do take a tremendous amount of water to keep the mirrors clean so they can make as much money as they can. And that's it for me.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I would think any discussion that touches on the edges of what Dick brought up should come with maybe a little refresher on the DRECP, because I don't think -- we can't even really

begin to address the criteria for approving projects and siting and so forth without talking about where our hands are already tied with the DRECP.

Obviously there's a lot that can be done going forward, but yet some of what good could have been done needed to be mailed back when those actions were open for comment. And it's interesting how sometimes it takes so long before we really start to feel and see it right in front of our eyes, the effects of big things like a DRECP.

When that was being considered out there in Desert Center, there weren't any, or very little projects were out in the area. And now if you drive out there, it's the predominant viewshed. This is the time in which the chickens have come home to roost, and we're seeing them, and this is where I believe the iterative of the adaptive management and monitoring and innervations of refining that plan is something that's probably of quite interest to us.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I remember when I was on the DAC before and they were starting this DRECP thing, we used to sit down at dinner and say, you know, these people that are doing this stuff, it's going to come back. In ten, 20 years they're going to say, "What were we thinking when we did this? What were we thinking we

were doing to the desert and the land?" with some of this stuff that we're talking about.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Dick.

Council members? With that, perhaps we should make that a segue into the next agenda item, which is items to consider for our future meetings. It doesn't necessarily have to be for this upcoming meeting. The next one will be May 13. At the May 13 meeting we'll have to consider the subgroup applicants. That will take some time and some discussion. I'm looking forward to that very much. Aside from that, Dick brought up a topic with respect to permitting criteria and the monitoring of projects.

Are there some other hands on issues that are timely and ripe for discussion and perhaps advice?

MEMBER MITCHELL: Randy, yeah, I'd like for them to keep us updated on the Kingstons, the corrals and the house for the one ranch, what they've done about the year-round operation we've been working for 15 years on Round Mountain, and also the Rattlesnake annex that has an EA already written and they've had. But I chose to be second for them to do it to get that other family year-round.

And what people don't realize is I've been running 25 years on a proposed AMP. Never been

finalized. Now, can you imagine that? Barstow resource, you know, all the area managers, everything I've dealt with. So now you know why I'm so upset about what's happening to these ranches. But if that could be on the agenda just to inform us and keep us updated, I would love that. Maybe by the time I'm 90, I'll get a permanent AMP, ha?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Council members, the floor is still open.

MEMBER POWELL: So going back to the discussion about the land use documents and the public involvement, I think it might be interesting for all the DAC members as well as the public that participate in our meetings to kind of have a high-level refresher on the process from the beginning, from land use, the entitlement of the land, the permitting, the mitigation requirements. Is that something that you guys would find beneficial?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Well, I think that, you know, that's why I tie that into DRECP, because, you know, what I brought up earlier, people were asking questions about whether or not the projects were going into Development Focus Areas. That's essentially in my mind already, land that's set aside for that purpose and that project. It just hasn't been infilled yet. And all of the recent ACECs in the NCLS, National

Conservation Land System lands that were designated were to offset having put these zones aside for renewable energy, and these zones were supposed to be targeted in places that were easiest to get transmission. They were lands that were the least sensitive with respect to this, that, and the other thing. And there was also a recreation component with this land, to help recreation avoid impacts of siting.

But inside the DFAs -- inside the purple, is the way we call it -- inside the purple solar wind or renewables is just going to be king. And that's sort of what I'm alluding to now is, I'm curious as to where we are with respect to those DFAs we've set aside.

The projects that you're hearing about earlier today in Desert Center are in there DFA, and in my head I see it filling up. How much is there left, you know? What about the other DFAs, Barstow, Riverside? You know, how much room do we have to go for siting projects before they start needing or requesting to site outside the DFAs, where they're going to run into, you know, having to go back to the way of not benefiting from a programmatic action, because that's what DRECP is, it's programmatic.

And if you're a project that meets these criterias and you've got your purchase agreement and

this, that, and the other thing and so forth, then you can make a project in these DFAs. That's where the streamline of permitting is offered.

MEMBER POWELL: Right.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: If you want to go outside the DFAs, you're in for a long hoe, a difficult fight at this point because, at least in my mind, I think there's still room left in DFAs. But once you brought up DFAs, there's always still going to be -- and if we don't do this rooftop, this really knockout rooftop, when the percentage standards for the renewable component of our energy that we get, when that continues to get higher and higher and higher by regulation or the law, it only puts more and more pressure on the desert lands or other lands, any lands now, somewhat, and more pressure on the rooftops.

If we have to meet it one way or the other, I'd rather meet them on the rooftop than meet them out in the desert. But it, you know, could come up. And the reason -- pardon me for going on and on. Just my last closer here is that the previous administration even reopened the DRECP at that time to potentially look at, gee, do we need to make the DFAs bigger? Because I'm hearing from renewable energy that they feel they're going to need more options if they're going to meet the

targets that they're told they need to meet. And so I think how all this stuff dovetails in is key.

MEMBER POWELL: Well, what I was trying to say is that just because the project is located in the DRECP, it doesn't necessarily mean it's going to get approved.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: No.

MEMBER POWELL: Because there's a lot more that has to go into it than just putting together a plan of operation. It has to go through -- I'm also on the Colorado River Basin Regional Water Quality Board, and that board was the lead agency for one of the big renewable projects in Desert City that was just recently approved, and there was opposition to that as well in terms of, you know, mitigation land requirements and where the mitigation land was located and a number of things.

And I just -- maybe I'm mixing my federal and state up too much, but I just feel like that there's that opportunity for the community to participate in the decision-making process for the approval on federal and state level for these projects that maybe the community isn't fully aware of and that it might be worthwhile to have a refresher on it. But that's one person's opinion.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yes. Dick is next.

I just want to punctuate, with the projects situated on private lands, I think those are the projects that you're still seeing more mitigation land purchases in other places. In my understanding of the DRECP, those sited on Public Lands in the DFA by and by largely your mitigation is taken care of. It's site specific. But I'm sorry. I'm done for this part. You've heard enough from me.

MEMBER POWELL: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Dick and others, you've got it from here, folks. Thank you.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I have one other idea that might be interesting. The big thing now that seems to be coming out is batteries, you know. And I would like to see if we're going to be -- if the government is going to be accepting batteries and putting them in and that's a big deal, then we should be looking at what the recycling is of that battery, what's going on with recycling, how do we handle the recycling of those batteries when they're no longer efficient?

Also, when you put it in -- say you have a 200-megawatt battery. How long does a 200-megawatt battery last? I mean, does it last an hour? Does it last two hours? I see these numbers. The plant is

going to serve 35,000 houses, but is that for an hour? Is that for a day? Is that for a month? You know, what exactly are we doing? What are we putting out there?

We're putting out these batteries. And if you have a car -- I get a big kick out of this because people have batteries in motorhomes. I have a motorhome. People say, "Oh, I have this battery. Yeah, it's going to last." How long is it going to make my refrigerator last? It might take it last an hour, you know. But people just don't understand how long it's going to last. And what are we going to do with it?

This battery thing is -- I'm hearing they've got cars overseas that are in junkyards because it's cheaper to throw the car away than it is to put a new battery in it. So we've got all this stuff we've got to get rid of. How are we going to do that?

Anyway, so the BLM, they're approving these plans to put batteries out in the desert, and we should be looking at that. Anyway, I'm done. I'm done rattling at you. Like you, I'm done.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you, Dick.

I've got Jack and then Ed, please. Jack and then Ed.

MEMBER THOMPSON: Yeah. So a question I had certainly that I knew came up from a lot of people who

were stakeholders in the DRECP that, when the plan was open for review during the Trump administration, you know, I definitely wonder, you know, what the durability of the plan is as we pass through various administrations. And that's been a question mark on my mind, and I know it's in the minds of some of the public as well.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you. Thanks, Jack.

Yeah. I have Ed, and then did I just see another one? Ed, go ahead. I got you, Ed.

MEMBER STOVIN: Thank you. Some of you spoke about you like rooftop solar. I also prefer rooftop solar. What I really don't like is these large-scale renewable energy projects in the desert. It just breaks my heart to go out there and see that.

If everybody on this panel agrees with that, maybe we could write a letter to the president or, you know, to the top of the BLM and just make our wishes known. I think it was a presidential proclamation or order that told the BLM to look at renewable energy and process acceptable permits to allow this to happen. So maybe we should send a letter collectively saying we don't like it. We don't think it's the right thing for the country and the state, that we should put a higher emphasis on rooftop solar and other ways of solar.

I don't know. What do you think, Randy?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I'm hearing sort of just a lot of retouch back on renewable energy. I don't know how to say it, how to phrase it, but very much a general update on where we are versus where we planned to be with respect to all of that, battery disposal, the durability.

The Trump administration said they could pull back on NCLS, but the BLM said it couldn't. So all of that could be a piece of it. Go ahead.

MEMBER STOVIN: I think it was second President Bush that wrote the presidential order telling the BLM, so it's been out there for a while. I read that order some years back.

I don't know. Is there anybody here that really loves solar, big solar facilities in the desert? It's hard to imagine anybody does. I can't imagine anybody here likes it. That's the kind of thing this body can do as collective thing, is we could let our wishes be known to the higher-ups at the BLM. So maybe we can take care of it now, or maybe in the next meeting we can get together and write a letter, or we can vote on do we want to move forward with something like this.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Next off the speakers' list I've got Dan. We can keep going on from here. We've

got time.

MEMBER TAYLOR: Yeah, I would like to see maybe a more detailed presentation on what goes into a programmatic EA or a categorical exclusion so we can kind of see what the BLM is required to do, how they do it, how long it takes. There's some details on that, what takes to work with any kind of commercial use. Whether it be mining, filming, grazing, whatever it might be, what is all that's entailed in that? I think that would be good for some of us on the board and would absolutely be good for the public to hear.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Right on. Thank you.

Billy, I see you pointing. I don't hear you. I still don't hear you, Billy. I still don't hear you, Billy.

Oh, Jim, you've got your hand up. Jim, I've got you.

MEMBER BAGLEY: That's fine. Dan's suggestions are a really good idea about the durable land management processes. And I would just remind everybody that the original concept for large-scale electrical projects in the desert was a political mandate by environmental interests, and it didn't take into account all the unintended consequences.

And so review of what the DRECP process is and

where we are would be a really good idea. It could be very lengthy, but as we've seen, since the inception of a project, technology has just changed dramatically, so we do need to have these discussions about where we are and what the possibilities are. So I'm glad to see that on the agenda.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Floor is still open. Are you there now, Billy?

MEMBER MITCHELL: Can you hear me? I can tell you how it's set up for the last ranchers here, is about five or six years ago I went to Washington, DC with another friend of mine that got that solar plant on his ranch, and we went with Feinstein and Lewis and talked to them. And that's the only bill they passed. And I think it's -- I want to say it's AB112. And as far as any solar going on any ranch that's left in the Mojave Desert, the people have to come to us, make a deal to move us to wherever we got to go before they can even get a permit from the BLM on our ranches. And that bill was passed by Feinstein and Lewis. I think it was over five years ago.

So that's why I'm watching this, because they're going all around these ranches with federal land because there's only five ranches left of federal land. Eleven western states. All the federal land are

ranches, but there's only five of us left because they've been mitigated out. Every ranch except the five of us have been mitigated out for solar or other projects.

That's what saved Jay Moon on Stateline. They were going to take his ranch because Secretary of Interior has the right. They call it high and best use. So if my cattle only make a couple hundred dollars a month, or herd, and the solar can go make them 5,000 a month, they can take it from the rancher back then. And this bill is only for the ranchers of the Mojave. It's not for any other state.

And I don't know what those people are going to do, but we're pretty well set if we don't want to go. They have to mitigate us out, whatever we need, because they can't have it. Now take, for my ranch there's two wildernesses. Big Horn Wilderness is about the only 6,000 acres they could use in my lease. So they're not going to really go after mine yet, you know, or Irene Fisher. And the other people, it's all set up for everybody to build, but the other kids don't want to sell. They don't want to pull out. They want to keep it for grazing. So that's basically how it works for the grazing part of it. That's all. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Very good. We're still

open.

Is that you, Bill?

MEMBER MITCHELL: You got me?

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yes.

MEMBER MITCHELL: What you don't want to do is go to Washington, DC and pass a bill, because I got steel shanks in my boots, and I almost had to get dressed every time you go from building to building with all those machines, because you got to take all your stuff off, put it in a box. Finally I ended up carrying my boots all the way up to Feinstein's office because I got tired of putting them on and off.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I like it. I like it.

Very good.

If there's no objections, I'll compare my list that I took from here today with Michelle's and the BLM's. We'll also benefit from Diane's. Hi, Diane. Thanks again for all of your help and all of your work. And it's wonderful to get your recordings and read them over. And you do us justice. Thank you.

So I'll make sure that coordinate with these, and the BLM will find a way to accommodate what they can get into our agenda schedule.

With that said, this is the point where we wrap up and conclude. And obviously I share everybody's

concern. I'd love to be wrapping up a field trip right now. I'd love to be saying, "We went to such-and-such spring and then had lunch under the trees and so-and-so then climbed down to a volcano, and so-and-so couldn't get back out. We had a really wonderful time, and the bus broke down." You know, I mean, I've seen it all. We've done it all. "The sandwiches arrived kind of warm and gooey." All of it has happened over the days, and then other times we've just had amazing adventures together as a DAC, and I look forward to when the group can do that all together again.

Thanks for keeping us aware of that fact, that we really do a better job in the public. I think it's stronger in its role when we all get together in person and we can see each other and the microphone is live and anything goes.

MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Randy, when we do have a tour on the 13th, which is a Friday, is it scheduled for a location yet? I know I wouldn't want to go to El Centro in May, but --

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: You know, I don't know exactly, but I do know the Bureau has tentative locations and field trips thought out, and we get real close to having it and doing it, and then something happens and we get back on the online. So maybe this

next time. Maybe this next time is the one; right?

MEMBER POWELL: The calendar says Barstow.

MEMBER BAGLEY: The calendar says Barstow.

MS. VAN DER LIN: Yes, that is correct.

CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Terrific. Well, thank you, then. With that, I won't keep you any longer at today's meeting. With our thanks to the BLM and the staff, the public for taking their Saturday off, I'll adjourn at 3:25 p.m. Look forward to seeing you again. Goodbye, everybody.

(The meeting was concluded at 3:25 p.m.)

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MOTIONS

(No motions were made, and no votes were taken.)

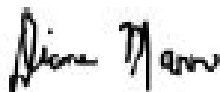
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I, Diane Carver Mann, C.S.R. No. 6008, in and for the State of California, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing pages were taken down by me in shorthand at the time and place stated herein, via Zoom technology, 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 12th day of March, 2022.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Diane Mann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

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Reporter in and for the
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