

Summary Meeting Notes
Central California District Resource Advisory Council
Oct. 20-21, 2016
El Dorado Hills, CA

ATTENDEES

RAC: Jeffrey Froke, Roger Mitchell, George Armstrong, Blair Knox, Mary Gorden, Matt Kingsley, Reb Monaco, Bob Schneider, Carl Twisselman, Laurie Collom.

BLM: Este Stifel, District Manager; Ruben Leal, Associate District Manager; David Christy, District Public Affairs Officer; Dale Johnson and Jeff Starosta, Bishop Field Office representatives; Gabe Garcia, Bakersfield Field Office Manager; Erik Zaborsky, Central Coast Field Office representative; Bill Haigh, Mother Lode Field Office Manager; Amanda James, Ukiah Field Office Manager.

PUBLIC: Martha Twisselman, Jill Monaco, Pete Andrews, Ron Lintley.

RAC members toured forestry projects in the Calaveras County area on a tour before the business meeting.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Este Stifel provided an overview:

1. Leadership in Washington

- Neil Kornze, Director
- Steve Ellis, Deputy Director for Operations
- Linda Lance, Deputy Director for Programs and Policy

2. Leadership in California

- Jerome "Jerry" Perez, State Director
- Jerry has been continuing to meet with partners and stakeholders.
- Jerry recently joined Secretary Jewell for signing of the DRECP in September.
- Joe Stout is the Associate State Director.

3. Leadership in CenCal

- Amanda James, Ukiah Field Manager
- Rick Cooper, Central Coast Field Manager Retiring in December

4. Budget

- Congress approved a continuing resolution until December 9, 2016

5. 114th Congress and Legislation

- The 114th Congress will be coming to a close at the end of the year. All legislation that is not enacted will be dead.

- A number of legislative proposals of interest to the Central California include:
 - Alabama Hills National Scenic Area Establishment Act (H.R.496), was introduced in January 2015. BLM/DOI testified in support of the bill at a committee hearing on June 16, 2015.
 - California Desert Conservation, Off-Road Recreation, and Renewable Energy Act (S. 2568) was introduced at the beginning of February 2016 and includes a provision to designate the Alabama Hills National Scenic Area, similar to H.R. 496. BLM/DOI supported a similar proposal (S. 414) in a committee hearing in October 2015.
 - Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R.1865 & S.1423) was introduced in spring 2015. In a Senate committee hearing in April 2016, BLM/DOI testified in support of the bill. No hearings have been held in the House.
 - Clear Creek National Recreation Area (H.R. 1838) was introduced April 2015. BLM/DOI testified in support of the conservation designations in the bill but did not support expanding recreational opportunities in the Clear Creek Management Area at a committee hearing in December 2015.
 - Lake Berryessa Recreational Management Authority (H.R. 4521) was introduced in February 2016. No hearings have been scheduled.
 - California Coastal National Monument Expansion Act (S. 1971 & H.R. 3565) was introduced in summer 2015. In a committee hearing in the senate October 8, BLM/DOI testified in support of the Senate bill. The House bill, which excludes the Lost Coast provision in the Senate bill, was introduced in September, and in a House committee hearing on May 12, 2016 BLM/DOI testified in support of the House bill.

State Issues - Priorities Statewide:

I. *Land Use Planning*

- **NorCal Land Management Planning:** The Northern California District (NorCal), the Arcata and Redding Field Offices have just begun undertaking the revision effort of their respective Resource Management Plans (RMP). This effort is incorporating the spirit of Planning 2.0 seeking early public engagement, providing more transparency, and encouraging more collaboration among our stakeholders.
- **National Monument Planning:** During the last three years an additional four National Monuments (Berryessa, California Coastal - Point Arena-Stornetta, Sand to Snow and Mojave Trails) were established by President Obama through Presidential proclamations. A group has been established from the State Office to work with the Districts and Field Offices in beginning this planning effort.

II. *Implementation of Landscape Level Planning Documents*

- **Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan:** The Record of Decision (ROD) and Land Use Plan Amendment for the DRECP was signed on September 14, 2016. The focus is now towards implementing this monumental Landscape level planning document. Russell

Scofield in the District Office has been named the DRECP Implementation Coordinator to help lead this endeavor.

- **Sage-grouse:** Continuing the good work occurring within NorCal on implementing the Greater Sage-grouse plan within the Great Basin and providing support to the larger planning effort in this sub-region. In addition, continuing to support the Bishop Office (Central California District) on the Bi-State effort with Nevada on this distinct population segment and successful work the Bishop Office has had on this important effort.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting tentatively set for March or April with Coast Dairies focus. David Christy will send a doodle poll. Mother Lode may be interested in a RAC subgroup on community forestry (Jeffrey Froke interested) and Ukiah may be interested in a subgroup on Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument (Bob Schneider interested).

ACTION: David Christy to send copies of the RAC Charter to the RAC.

PUBLIC CONCERNS

Pete Andrews and Ron Lintley are property owners near Placerville. They are concerned about dead and dying trees near a powerline and road. Dead trees already have fallen in the area.

ACTION: Mother Lode will follow up with them.

BISHOP CAMPGROUND FEES

Jeff Starosta presented the proposed campground fees (attached).

ACTION: Following discussion, Reb Monaco moved to accept the fees as presented and Carl Twisselman seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTHER LODE FIELD OFFICE

Bill Haigh reported:

- Forest health is a major issue in the Sierra. The office has dead or dying trees from near Yosemite to Nevada County. The office has applied for additional funding and three staff are working on the issue.
- Mother Lode has rebuilt the bridge at Briceburg, improved the South Yuba facilities, redone the Cosumnes River Preserve and purchased a tractor for the preserve.
- About 500 students attended the Canoemobile event at the preserve through Wilderness Inquiry.

CENTRAL COAST FIELD OFFICE

Erik Zaborsky reported for Central Coast:

Fort Ord National Monument

The Fort Ord National Monument is looking forward to getting a new Park Ranger; an important position that the National Monument has been without for several months. The lack of

classic Park Ranger support for on-the-ground visitor safety and recreational experience has been a challenge for Fort Ord NM but they have been able to continue in their mission.

The Monument has also nearly completed the “Dog Management” Plan which will address the off-leash issues related to recreational use associated with pet dogs [see “Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendments” section below for more details].

Coast Dairies

The Coast Dairies Management Area located on the North Coast of Santa Cruz County includes approximately 5,800 acres of BLM land acquired in 2014 for the purpose of providing public recreation opportunities and contributes to the local economy.

In May 2016 the Field Office entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Amah Mutsun Land Trust. The Amah Mutsun Land Trust is a California Indian based land trust entity which represents the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band; a non-federally recognized Native American Indian tribe affiliated with the Costanoan – or Ohlone – California Indian tribal groups. The MOU will (1) provide tribal members access to Coast Dairies to foster traditional practices, research, and educational opportunities including efforts to regain traditional tribal knowledge; (2) permit the collection of plant materials on Coast Dairies (traditional ethno-biological resources, collections for scientific research and education/interpretation); and (3) facilitate collaboration between BLM and the tribe which will help guide management planning of Coast Dairies.

Resource Management Plan (RMP) Amendments

The Fort Ord National Monument has nearly completed the “Dog Management” Plan which will address the off-leash issues related to recreational use associated with pet dogs. The plan will institute new Supplementary Rules necessary to support the mission of the BLM by protecting the natural resources and other Monument values while enhancing the health and safety of those using and enjoying the Monument. On May 17, 2016, the BLM released the Draft Dog Management Plan and associated Environmental Assessment (DOI-BLM-CA-C090-2016-0021-EA) for a 30 day comment period. The proposed supplementary rules were included with the draft plan and were analyzed within the Environmental Assessment. On July 5, 2016 the BLM approved the Final Dog Management Plan and associated Environmental Assessment. The creation of designated “Off-leash-opportunity-routes” will allow for a specific road or trail on the Monument be designated by BLM to allow some opportunities for dogs to be off leash under specific circumstances.

The Hollister Oil & Gas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) continues to move forward. The Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and EIS describe and analyze alternatives for the management of oil and gas development on public lands and split mineral estate lands administered by the BLM, approximately 284,000 acres of surface estate and 793,000 acres of Federal mineral estate. New circumstances and information regarding oil and gas exploration and development including unconventional reservoirs and well stimulation techniques prompted the BLM to prepare this Draft RMPA.

The San Joaquin Desert Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern Resource Management Plan Amendment is also moving forward. The process considers expanding Area of Critical Environmental Concern and Research natural Area designations to existing and acquired public lands, emphasizes recovery of special status species, and identifies lands available for disposal. Under the Preferred Alternative, the name of the existing Area of Critical

Environmental Concern would be changed to the “San Joaquin Desert Hills” and would include a total of approximately 114,500 acres of public lands; of which approximately 10,800 acres of Research Natural Area(s). Area of Critical Environmental Concern management goals are to (1) achieve the conditions that will satisfy the recovery criteria for delisting; (2) protect and prevent irreparable damage to scenic values and important historic, cultural, or paleontological resources; and (3) encourage research and provide protection of Research Natural Area(s).

New Office Building and Location

The Central Coast Field Office has moved from Hollister in northern San Benito County to Marina in northern Monterey County. The Hollister Field Office was located at the former Park Hill CCC site in the early 1980s and moved to a business/industrial park on Hamilton Court in late 1989, shortly before the famous Loma Prieta Earthquake that damaged much of the San Francisco Bay area. This past March 2016, the Hollister Field Office moved westward to Marina and changed its name to the “Central Coast Field Office” to reflect the new location and shift in land management direction and expand the communities BLM serves (similar to the Folsom Field Office changing its name to Mother Lode Field Office).

The new office building finally co-locates the Fort Ord National Monument staff and Central Coast Field Office staff together which is important because the Field Office provides critical support for the Monument in the capacity of Realty compliance, Geology, Hazardous Materials, and Cultural Resources, and to a lesser degree Recreation permitting and NEPA analysis. The office also is home to the California Coastal National Monument and their staff of two (Manager and Natural Resources Specialist), one Central California District employee from the FIRE Program (Mitigation Education Specialist) as well as one National Operations Center employee for Internet Technology services (IT).

Other

Clear Creek Management Area

The Record of Decision (2014) for the Clear Creek Management Area Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan has been affirmed after a series of challenges were brought forward; twenty-three to be exact. The challenges were brought forward by a series of appeals from various public groups and individuals (e.g., American Motorcyclist Association) to the Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA number 2014-130). The nature of the challenges was cited under the Administrative Procedure Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and Revised Statue Section 2477. The Clear Creek Management Area is located in southern San Benito County and western Fresno County for a total of 75,829 acres of public land (63,197 BLM; 1,964 State of California; 10,668 private) inclusive of the Clear Creek Serpentine Area of Critical Environmental Concern and the San Benito Mountain Research Natural Area.

BAKERSFIELD FIELD OFFICE

Gabe Garcia reported for the Bakersfield Field Office: Bakersfield is developing recreation plans for Keysville and the Temblors in accordance with the RMP. The BLM has been holding meetings at Keysville for about 1 ½ years and should complete the plan in 6-8 months. BLM is working at the Temblors to get legal access for recreation. People have been trespassing on oil company property for access.

The Center for Biological Diversity, Los Padres Forest Watch and Earth Justice sued BLM over the oil and gas portion of the RMP. The court said BLM needs more analysis of fracking and BLM may need to do a supplemental EIS.

Bakersfield usually processes about 250 O&G permits annually, Last year Bakersfield processed 25.

BISHOP FIELD OFFICE

Dale Johnson reported:

- The Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan includes 1 ACEC in Bishop and 7 in Bakersfield. The boundary for the Alabama Hills in proposed legislation to designate the area a National Scenic Area is the same as the boundary in the DRECP.
- Bishop had a quiet fire season. The Forest Service had larger fires.
- Bishop is in the second year of a commitment contained in an implementation letter with the Forest Service and BLM. Work has been done in Long Valley, the second largest lek area and one used for grazing and recreation.
- BLM is working with Mono County to stop people from developing roads.
- A programmatic Environmental Assessment was done nine years ago for vegetation management in the Bodie Hills. The first Record of Decision to remove pinon under the EA was done last year. It was appealed, but the appeal was withdrawn and BLM has started to do work. BLM has issued a second ROD for work in the Bodie Hills.
- BLM has 15 state off-highway vehicle grants for law enforcement and restoration.
- BLM will issue a decision on the CD4 geothermal project groundwater monitoring plan. Ormat drilled a test well, but ran into equipment problems.

UKIAH FIELD OFFICE

Amanda James reported:

- Ukiah had four major fires last year. Crews from the Northern California Indian Development Council are doing rehab work funded by grants.
- This year there were two fires with about 200 acres BLM.
- There has been no action on the Walker Ridge wind energy project, so BLM terminated the right of way. Facilities are being removed.
- BLM and the Forest Service are working on the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. There have been three envisioning meetings where the public expressed interest in travel management and other issues.
- Rebecca Wong starts as the monument manager Oct. 31.
- Scoping for the Point Arena unit was held last year but is on hold due to the potential addition of other units to the California Coastal National Monument.

FOREST SERVICE FEES

Teri Drivas and Joanna Wilson (phone) briefed the RAC on a proposal to use the RAC as a Recreation RAC to approve Forest Service fees. Terms expired for the joint Forest Service/BLM Rec RAC and seats haven't been filed.

The RAC discussed the proposal and made comments:

- Hold the RAC meeting in areas where fees are proposed.
- Would the Forest Service help pay for the RAC meeting? (Joanna: This is done in other areas and the Forest Service has made in-kind contributions.)
- There are concerns about the amount of BLM staff time and the amount of time this would require at the RAC meetings.
- RAC members should get proposed fee information 30 days in advance to have time to review it.
- In areas where both agencies have facilities, the BLM and Forest Service fee requests should be coordinated.

ACTION: Roger Mitchell moved the RAC review Forest Service fees contingent on staff working out the issues discussed by the RAC. Staff should report back at the meeting, with the possibility of the RAC considering a Forest Service fee request. Reb Monaco seconded and the motion passed.