

Summary Meeting Notes
Central California District Resource Advisory Council
March 18, 2016
Sacramento, CA

ATTENDEES

RAC: Roger Mitchell, George Armstrong, Trent Rosenlieb (phone), Blair Knox, Mary Gorden, Matt Kingsley, Reb Monaco (phone), Sally Miller (phone).

BLM: Jerry Perez, CA State Director; Este Stifel, District Manager; Ruben Leal, Associate District Manager; David Christy, District Public Affairs Officer; Steve Nelson, Bishop Field Office Manager; Gabe Garcia, Bakersfield Field Office Manager; Rick Cooper, Central Coast Field Office Manager; Bill Haigh, Mother Lode Field Office Manager; Priscilla Rayson, EEO Manager.

PUBLIC: George McCloskey, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers and Anglers; Amy Granat, CORVA; Laurie Collom; Jim Gorden; Martha Twisselman; Ken Clark, CORVA.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Jerry Perez made brief opening remarks.

Notes of the October 2015 meeting were approved.

Matt Kingsley was elected chair and Trent Rosenlieb was elected vice chair.

Este Stifel reported on state/national issues:

- Rich Burns, Ukiah Field Manager, received the Jeff Jarvis Conservation Leadership Award.
- BLM is starting a Planning 2.0 process. The new approach will make future land-use planning more collaborative, transparent, and effective. The changes will increase opportunities for early engagement by state and local government, Tribes and other stakeholders in BLM's land-use decision-making while adopting a broader landscape-scale, science-based approach to managing public lands and incorporate modern technology into the agency's planning process.
- Amanda James is the new Ukiah Field Office Manager. Rich Burns will retire at the end of April.
- The new Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument will maintain opportunities for off-highway vehicle recreation.

ACTION: Send FACA vacancy report to RAC.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting tentatively set for Sept. 28-30, location TBD.

ALABAMA HILLS SUBGROUP

Alabama Hills NLCS legislation is through House Natural Resources Committee. Alabama Hills Day will be held again this year.

TEMBLORS SUBGROUP

Blair Knox said there have been meetings including Chevron, TRC and BLM about access to the trail system. A meeting was held in March to discuss an MOU with the City of Taft for Taft police to patrol the area. Amy Granat said there is not a problem at this time, but law enforcement presence is needed.

Amy Granat said CORVA has been getting emails from people asking why gates are closed at Campo Seco public lands. There is no sign on the gate. BLM should install signs on gates with a clear message about what access is allowed.

Mary Gorden asked BLM staff to see what information is being provided on the web regarding closures and access.

BISHOP CAMPGROUND FEES

Steve Nelson presented the fee proposal to the RAC for comment.

Reb Monaco said he supports the proposal, but would like a further detailed look.

Sally Miller said the fire pits at Tuttle are a problem.

Blair Knox said the fee structure encourages people to get a six-month permit since it costs the same as three months.

Laurie Collom asked why BLM doesn't develop potable water at all campgrounds.

Steve Nelson said it's a question of cost.

Blair Knox said he supports a broader range of fees – some seem low. He suggested long-term fees be revised since three and six months cost the same.

George Armstrong suggested a cap on long-term permits.

MOTHER LODGE FIELD OFFICE

Bill Haigh reported:

- Forest health is a major issue in the Sierra. The field office is participating in numerous groups working on the issue. The BLM did a forest health project at Lily Gap. There are dead trees around it, but the treated area is green,
- A restoration project was done at Horseshoe Lake and Badger Creek at the Cosumnes River Preserve for giant garter snake habitat. About 5,000 youth visit the preserve annually.

- The Butte Fire burned about 12,000 acres on BLM-managed land. Mother Lode got \$3.5 million in emergency stabilization and rehabilitation funding. Most of the work is done.

Carl Twisselman asked if the chips and shreds used to stabilize the slopes washed off. Bill Haigh said different types and sizes of material were used, depending on the slope, to avoid that.

CENTRAL COAST FIELD OFFICE

Rick Cooper reported for Central Coast:

- Scoping was done for a proposed leash ordinance for Fort Ord National Monument. There will be a 60-day comment period on the proposed rules.
- The Army continues to work clearing ordnance. Brush needs to be burned to do that, which is challenging due to a variety of constraints.
- For Coast Dairies, the BLM is building connections with Santa Cruz County and trail organizations. The planning effort will be starting and Jerry Perez will meeting with State Natural Resources Director John Laird and State Parks. The BLM plan will be coordinated with State Parks. Access is a major issue, with traffic on Highway 1 and another busy county road. Central Coast Archaeologist Eric Zaborsky got funding to do a study of the cheese barn on the property.
- San Joaquin Desert Hills has blunt-nose leopard lizard, kit fox and giant kangaroo rat. If habitat could be managed for sustainable populations, the Fish and Wildlife Service could delist them. Junipers have been found in the Griswold Hills that are 550 to 700 years old, the largest known. The BLM has ongoing land acquisitions there.
- Comments are being taken through May 10 on proposed shooting rules.
- The San Clemente Dam on the Carmel River has been removed, the first on the West Coast. The BLM expects to acquire 978 acres along the river corridor next year.
- The BLM has issued 1,400-1,800 permits for access to Clear Creek Management Area. Eleven appeals were filed on the Record of Decision and the Interior Board of Land Appeals is just starting the process.

BAKERSFIELD FIELD OFFICE

Gabe Garcia reported for the Bakersfield Field Office:

- There have been a high number of retirements from the field office.
- The Center for Biological Diversity and Los Padres Forest Watch have file litigation on the RMP ROD.
- Keysville receives a lot of multiple use including mining, river use and high-impact camping. There are OHV trails that don't go anywhere. Bakersfield is working with the Sierra National Forest on a loop system.
- An inspection and enforcement position is being added to oil and gas staff.
- There is not a lot of interest in drilling new wells. Bakersfield typically issues 125 well permits annually, but has issued 25 for the year to date. Fifty is the record low.

- A parking lot has been put in at Case Mountain on a parcel BLM acquired. Additional parking with room for horse trailers also will be added.

BISHOP FIELD OFFICE

Steve Nelson reported:

- The BLM has issued a management plan for the greater sage grouse that has been appealed by numerous environmental groups.
- A joint Forest Service-BLM conservation award that usually goes to a large conservation group has been awarded to Mono County.
- The BLM is talking to Bridgeport as the initial step in planning a fuels treatment project.
- The Mammoth Water District has a pending appeal before the state on the Casa Diablo IV geothermal project. The BLM is working to get the district and project proponent to agree on a groundwater monitoring plan.
- There is a 60-day comment period on the Area of Critical Environmental Concern portion of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. The DRECP includes 1 ACEC in Bishop and 7 in Bakersfield.

UKIAH FIELD OFFICE

- **Fire and Fuel Projects** – The Ukiah Field Office has a prescribed vegetation management fire project scheduled for Cow Mountain this spring.
- **OHV Grant Funding** – The Field Office has asked for OHV grant funding for law enforcement, maintenance and an acquisition project to allow access to the South Cow Mountain Recreation Area from Highway 175. Our total request will be \$1.7 million.
- **Knoxville** – Though we have hit some more bumps, the land exchange with Homestake Mining Corporation is scheduled to be accomplished in 2016. Work continues with the NRA to identify specific areas within the Knoxville region to be available for shooting. There is ongoing maintenance being done by the Norcal Indian Development Council to protect sensitive areas from OHV trespass exposed by the Jerusalem fire.
- **Cow Mountain** –The Field Office has completed all meetings associated with the Cow Mountain Recreation Area Management Plan (CowRAMP). The Office will have a draft plan for public review by spring 2016. Once completed, the Field Office can better accomplish maintenance and management.
- **Mount Konocti/Black Forest** –The Field Office completed the land exchange last December. There is a significant die off of pine trees within the Black Forest Boundary. The Ukiah Field Office and CalFire are looking into fuel reduction projects to better protect the subdivisions surrounding Mount Konocti.
- **Walker Ridge Wind** – AltaGas continues to stay involved with a 67-megawatt wind energy development project for Walker Ridge. It is unforeseen at this time when a draft EIS for the Walker Ridge Wind project would be available for public review. AltaGas is to be completing work for increasing the range of alternatives for the intertie site, and work associated with a more accurate road survey necessary to keep the project on public lands.
- **Cache Creek** – We are totally in debt to our partners, volunteers, and friends who have stepped forward to help us maintain and restore this area back to natural conditions.

Work continues with plan development, habitat improvement, riparian restoration, and trail projects. The Norcal Indian Development Council has also started on restoration and rehabilitation activities.

- **Stornetta Brothers Coastal Ranch-Point Arena Ranch/California Coastal National Monument (CCNM)** – The Ukiah Field Office will host its third annual “Discover the Coast” Event to be held in August. The Field Office is to have the draft CCNM Plan amendment for the Point Arena-Stornetta Unit completed this FY.
- **Cedar Roughs Wilderness** – Through partnership with the Wilderness Land Trust, Napa County Regional Parks, and BLM, an inholding of 160 acre with lands adjacent to Lake Berryessa have been acquired.
- **Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument** – There will be a dedication event on March 19th recognizing the commitment of the many partners involved in making the Monument happen. Work is under way to hire a Monument Manager who will support the entire monument for the BLM and Mendocino National Forest.
- **Lake Berryessa Proposed Land Transfer** – Congressman Mike Thompson reintroduced legislation (HR 4521) to transfer the lands and management of Lake Berryessa from the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to BLM. The BOR concessionaire contracts were put out for bid but there were no qualified applicants.
- **Geysers** –The Ukiah Field office continues to work with CalPine and NCPA to bring these companies to full production after the Valley Fire. The Field Office is also accomplishing the Bureau’s first geothermal permit renewals for 2 power plants.
- **Marijuana Eradication Efforts** – Outside of Cow Mountain and Walker Ridge, wildfires took out most of the illegal gardens. It will be interesting to see how and where this season goes.
- **Employee Changes** – After over 25 years as a field Manager, 19 of which were in Ukiah, Rich Burns has finally decided to step aside. Amanda James is to be the new Field Manager and will start in the position on March 21.