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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT
DESERT ADVISORY COUNCIL

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS
REMOTE ZOOM MEETING
SATURDAY, AUGUST 27, 2022
9:03 A.M. TO 3:29 P.M.

JOB NO. 5415432
REPORTED BY: DIANE CARVER MANN, CLR, CSR NO. 6008

1 REMOTE ZOOM MEETING OF THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
2 DESERT ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE CALIFORNIA DESERT
3 DISTRICT, COMMENCING AT 9:03 A.M., ON SATURDAY,
4 AUGUST 27, 2022, BEFORE DIANE CARVER MANN, CSR NO. 6008.
5

6 MEMBERS OF THE DAC PRESENT:

7 RANDY BANIS, CHAIRPERSON

8 RICHARD HOLLIDAY

9 NATHAN FRANCIS

10 PAUL MARTIN

11 JACK THOMPSON

12 BILLY MITCHELL (PRESENT FOR A PORTION OF THE MEETING)
13

14 MEMBERS OF THE BLM PRESENT:

15 SHELLY LYNCH - CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT DIRECTOR

16 GREG MILLER - CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT ASSOCIATE
DIRECTOR

17

KATE MIYAMOTO - CALIFORNIA DESERT DISTRICT PUBLIC
AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

18

19 NOELLE GLINES-BOVIO - MOJAVE TRAILS NATIONAL MONUMENT
MANAGER

20

CARL SYMONS - RIDGECREST FIELD OFFICE MANAGER

21

MIKE AHRENS - NEEDLES FIELD OFFICE MANAGER

22

BRIAN CROFT - BARSTOW FIELD OFFICE ACTING MANAGER

23

TIM GILLOON - PALM SPRINGS-SOUTH COAST FIELD MANAGER

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JEFF CHILDERS - BARSTOW ASSOCIATE FIELD MANAGER

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APPEARANCES - CONTINUED

FREDDIE ESPINOZA - ASSISTANT DISTRICT FIRE MANAGEMENT
OFFICER

STERLING WHITE - ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SPECIALIST

MATTHEW GIBBS - ZOOM TECH

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SATURDAY, AUGUST 27, 2022

9:03 A.M.

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DIRECTOR LYNCH: Welcome, everyone. Good morning, and thanks for joining us today. We really appreciate your joining us. Go ahead and call the meeting to order. And Kate, if you could give a brief overview of Zoom protocols for our public attendees.

MS. MIYAMATO: All right. Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the DAC meeting. So this information is for members of the public who want to participate in the public comment period, which begins at 2:45 p.m. You will have the opportunity to address the DAC during the public comment period only, and you'll be able to do that via audio.

So to allow the maximum number of individuals, we're limiting the comment period length to three minutes, and we'll have a timer up for that. If we do have time at the end, we'll offer a second three-minute opportunity to address the DAC.

Please show mutual respect for each other and the BLM, and please do not use inappropriate or unprofessional language during your comment. If you violate or disregard any of the rules, it may result in

1 you being muted or removed from the meeting. But we
2 appreciate your cooperation in maintaining these rules
3 and for the benefit of all involved.

4 To the best of my ability I will call on people
5 in order of their hand being raised. So once the
6 comment period opens, if you could raise your hand,
7 we'll try to do that in order so we'll work through as
8 many speakers as possible until that 3:20 mark. If we
9 have more people than the time allows, I will put my
10 e-mail in the chat, you can e-mail me your written
11 comments, and those will be provided to the court
12 reporter to be included on the record.

13 And you're also welcome to submit questions and
14 comments anytime to the Bureau of Land Management and
15 the DAC outside of this scheduled meeting using the
16 e-mail. So it's going to be my e-mail, and I will put
17 that in the chat right now.

18 We are going to show you the agenda right now
19 of what we'll cover, and then I'll turn it back over to
20 Shelly.

21 MS. LYNCH: Thanks, Kate. So we'll do
22 introductions on the BLM side. And I'm Shelly Lynch.
23 I'm the new district manager in the California Desert
24 District. Been here for about two months already. Got
25 right up fast already for the first two months. I came

1 from the state office. I was the branch brief of Lands,
2 Planning, Recreation, and Cultural Resources at the
3 California state office in Sacramento for about two and
4 a half years. And prior to that I worked with the
5 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in their Clean Water Act
6 regulatory program for over nine years. And I have
7 experience working for the State of Oregon Department of
8 Transportation, as well as the Forest Service and BLM up
9 in Oregon. So that's my background in a nutshell.

10 I'm super excited to be here. It's great to
11 see everyone and meet folks, and looking forward to
12 getting out in the field when the weather cools off a
13 little bit more and see all the things that are going
14 on, as well as the partnerships we have and the efforts
15 that we have going on with our great partners.

16 So that's me, and I'd like to introduce the
17 rest of the staff. So we'll start with Mike.

18 MR. AHRENS: Sorry about that. Mike, BLM
19 Needles field manager.

20 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Jeff?

21 MR. CHILDERS: Good morning. I'm
22 Jeff Childers. I'm the associate field manager of the
23 Barstow Field Office.

24 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Brian?

25 MR. CROFT: I am Brian Croft. I'm the acting

1 field manager at the BLM in Barstow.

2 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Freddie?

3 MR. ESPINOZA: Good morning. I'm
4 Freddie Espinoza. I'm the assistant district fire
5 management officer.

6 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Tim?

7 MR. GILLOON: I'm field manager for the
8 Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office.

9 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Noelle?

10 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Good morning. My name is
11 Noelle Glines-Bovio. I am the Mojave Trails National
12 Monument manager.

13 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Greg?

14 MR. MILLER: Good morning. Welcome, everybody.
15 My name is Greg Miller. I'm the associate district
16 manager.

17 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Kate?

18 MS. MIYAMATO: Hello. I'm Kate Miyamoto, and
19 I'm the California Desert District Public Affairs
20 specialist.

21 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Carl?

22 MR. SYMONS: Hi. I'm Carl Symons. I'm the
23 Ridgecrest field manager.

24 DIRECTOR LYNCH: All right. And I'll hand the
25 meeting over to Randy.

1 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Well, thank you, Shelly.
2 Good morning. First thing I'd like to do is welcome you
3 to the California Desert District, even though you've
4 been working for a couple of weeks. I'm sorry I missed
5 your swearing in this week, but I know Dick attended,
6 and maybe others did too that can talk about that during
7 the introduction. So welcome aboard. And I know that
8 the DAC is looking forward to working with you through
9 your term.

10 With that let me call on other DAC members and
11 introduce them, please. Take a minute or two and tell
12 us about yourself. And first one I'm going to call is
13 Nathan Francis.

14 Good morning, Nate.

15 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: My name is Dick Holliday, or
16 Richard Holliday. I have been a user of the group, or
17 at least for the dunes out in Imperial Sand Dunes and
18 Dumont for 50 or so years and been on the DAC previously
19 from 2008 through 2011. I'm glad to be back here on the
20 DAC. And hopefully we'll get some new members so we
21 have enough to do some real work. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Nathan. Nathan Francis,
23 good morning.

24 MEMBER FRANCIS: Yes. Good morning. My name
25 is Nathan Francis. I've been on the DAC previously as

1 well. And my work consists of working with U.S. Borax
2 Rio Tinto. I've been with them for eleven years in the
3 mining sector.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you.

5 Good morning, Paul. Paul Martin.

6 MEMBER MARTIN: Good morning. Yes, Paul Martin
7 here. I'm a retired mining engineer and DAC member for
8 many years, several years, public-at-large and
9 nonrenewable resources. Pleasure to work with the group
10 and look forward to our meeting today.

11 I have reviewed the DAC field reports on the
12 draft Barstow Field Office Business Plan with a proposed
13 plan approval by the DAC team. So glad to be here
14 today.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Paul. Good
16 morning.

17 Is Billy Mitchell on the line? Billy? Hope he
18 gets to make it today.

19 Let me turn it over to Jayne Powell. Good
20 morning, Jayne. Jayne is not present.

21 I'm going to call for Robert Robinson. Good
22 morning.

23 And then lastly for Jack Thompson. Jack, are
24 you on the call today?

25 MEMBER THOMPSON: Yeah. Hi. Nice to see

1 everyone. Yeah, my name is Jack Thompson. I'm the
2 Wildlands Conservancy's California Desert regional
3 director. I have been a land manager in
4 Whitewater Canyon for the past 15 years. I oversee
5 Wildlands Whitewater Preserve, and work with Pioneertown
6 Mountains Preserve, had a very long cooperative
7 relationship with BLM, in as much as those lands I
8 manage with Wildlands share borders or are surrounded
9 with BLM lands in the South Coast Field Office.

10 Wildlands has a very long relationship with BLM
11 with the longest-serving California director of BLM,
12 Ed Hastey, once being a board member of Wildlands
13 Conservancy, and some large conservation projects at the
14 California Desert over the years. So it's great to be
15 here representing conservation and great to see all the
16 DAC members. And welcome, Shelly. Really looking
17 forward to getting to see where your priorities are and
18 work with you on a whole host of issues.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good to have you here
20 again, Jack.

21 With that, I'll introduce myself. I'm
22 Randy Banis. I'm representing the public-at-large. I'm
23 a periodic regular member of the Desert Advisory Council
24 either fortunately as a member, or even more fortunately
25 as a member of the audience. I've been a part of the

1 DAC family for a couple of decades now and really enjoy
2 this part of my life very, very much.

3 I want to just say first, pardon my voice. I
4 hope it lasts all day. COVID finally caught up with me
5 at the beginning of the month. Yesterday was my first
6 day testing negative. I got to break out of jail. But
7 it did affect my attention over the last couple of weeks
8 as well, and I don't feel as well prepared as I usually
9 do for our DAC meetings, so please bear with me, folks.

10 One of the things I wanted to touch on -- and
11 thanks, Dick, also for mentioning this -- is the state
12 of the DAC in terms of its vacancies. Right now the
13 Advisory Council lacks the regulatory quorum to be able
14 to issue advice to the BLM. Our category three is
15 underrepresented and is in dire need of an appointment
16 from the interior secretary.

17 I know it's a long and winding road for
18 applications to make their way from the Desert District
19 into the state office and to Washington, D.C. for final
20 vetting, but I do know that there are a number of
21 applications in the pipeline. Hopefully they're in the
22 Washington, D.C. stage and can be made ready soon for
23 the secretary's signature and for appointment. And I've
24 got my fingers specially crossed that those appointments
25 will contain members from category three. We're going

1 to be called upon to issue advice, and I want to make
2 sure that we have the body that can do that and do it in
3 a way in which our advice is long lasting and even
4 durable.

5 That said, last thing, I do want to continue to
6 call for in-person meetings. I'm taking over the voice
7 of Jim Bagley, who was a DAC member until just this
8 meeting. I hope he's reapplied. Jim was the leading
9 voice for having meetings in person, and I don't want
10 that voice to go away, so I'm going to echo Jim's voice.
11 We really do our work much better in person, and the
12 public engages more in person as well. And besides
13 that, again, the field trips, you know, truly were at
14 times the highlight of our weekend and probably some of
15 the most educational parts of the weekend. And we do
16 miss those.

17 So thanks for letting me take your ear for a
18 while in my introduction. I'm glad that everybody is
19 here, including the members of the public, for the
20 meeting.

21 And with that, I'm going to turn to the next
22 item on the agenda, if there's no objections. And
23 that's a presentation by Mojave Trails National Monument
24 manager, Noelle Glines-Bovio, to talk about the
25 Mojave Trails National Monument planning process. And

1 I'm looking forward to this presentation very much.

2 So thank you for joining us here, Nicole --
3 Noelle. Thank you. Again, COVID haze.

4 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Okay. Well, thank you,
5 everyone. So what I'm going to do is I'm going to go in
6 and share my screen real quickly. Good morning,
7 everyone. As I mentioned, everyone, my name is
8 Noelle Glines-Bovio. I am the Mojave Trails National
9 Monument monument manager. And let's see here. I came
10 here in late 2020 and started kind of gathering a bunch
11 of information in association to what were the next
12 steps when it comes to this particular monument.

13 Please let me know if you can see my screen so
14 I can get this going.

15 MATTHEW GIBBS: We can see your PowerPoint app.
16 We just need you to start presenting.

17 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Okay. Thank you so much.
18 Let's see here. As I'm looking for the presentation
19 part, sometimes I lose it here.

20 MATTHEW GIBBS: Top middle of that slide show
21 button.

22 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Thank you so much.

23 MATTHEW GIBBS: Yeah, no problem.

24 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: All right. Okay. So today
25 I'm going to present on just some updated information.

1 Basically we have started gathering information in
2 association to our planning effort. So today I'm going
3 to talk about the planning effort, what we have
4 accomplished so far, and then I'm going to kind of go
5 over some of those accomplishments maybe in a little bit
6 of detail. And then after that I will then go into what
7 our next steps are, where we would possibly go next.

8 Some of this might actually be a review. Some
9 folks on this call may have heard this before. But I've
10 noticed we do have a few new folks, and I want to make
11 sure that they're also given the most up-to-date
12 information that I can give, so bear with me. Thank
13 you.

14 So probably about a year ago we started the
15 idea of what it would look like to move forward with a
16 planning effort. The Mojave Trails National Monument
17 covers three landscapes. It's one gigantic landscape,
18 but it cover three landscapes in accordance to the three
19 field offices. So we have parts of Barstow, a large
20 portion of Needles, and then a smaller portion of the
21 Palm Springs-South Coast Field Offices that created
22 Mojave Trails National Monument.

23 So, you know, for education purposes, I work
24 basically out of the Needles Field Office, but I work
25 with and for three field office field managers. So I

1 try my best to keep everybody updated, and sometimes
2 it's a little harder than it should be, but just because
3 there's so much going on.

4 I am, of course, the sole source for the
5 monument planning effort right now. We do have a team,
6 and we have -- most of the team members consist of folks
7 out of the Needles Field Office, the Barstow Field
8 Office, and the Palm Springs Field Office, so you can
9 understand that in some cases that can be a little, you
10 know, just overwhelming.

11 Also, when it comes to this planning effort, we
12 have a lot of great information that already exists, and
13 that's something that I really kind of want to get into
14 today a little bit, and that's kind of a part of our
15 preplanning accomplishments.

16 So when we started this effort back in -- I
17 want to say early '21, I was tasked with identifying
18 what we currently have when it came to information,
19 because you can't really do a planning effort if you
20 don't know what you're planning for. So, you know, we
21 do a review of the proclamation, the resources, objects
22 and values. The past monument manager did a great job
23 of identifying what those are, and, you know, putting
24 that down in kind of a couple of documents. He went
25 through a public process back in 2017 called the

1 envisioning sessions and presented that information to
2 folks. That report you can actually find on the
3 Mojave Trails National Monument website right now.

4 So I picked up where our previous manager left
5 off. And basically we did a data source evaluation, how
6 much -- you know, what do we have in our data? We have
7 a lot because we recently did another planning
8 revision -- or another planning amendment not too long
9 ago to the CDCA called the DRECP. And so that
10 particular plan is rich with a lot of great basically
11 varied new inventories, and that's a lot of the
12 information we're planning on using because it is so
13 fresh.

14 For example, we have a lot of great habitat
15 information that we feel pretty strongly that, not only
16 is it fresh, but it's constantly refreshed because we
17 are doing, you know, a lot of -- you know, there's a lot
18 of information, association to species and our partner
19 when it comes to that information, so, like Fish and
20 Wildlife and, of course, the California division of Fish
21 and Wildlife. So we feel really strongly that that data
22 is fairly, fairly good.

23 We have other data that we need to go out and
24 data source. We did go out for contracting for some
25 other information. We are currently looking at some

1 cultural contracting just for kind of a literature
2 search, and we also in the past had a GIS contract to
3 help us kind of organize our data and get ready for the
4 planning process.

5 Another thing that we kind of realized back in
6 '21 and as we were moving into '22 is that it had been a
7 while since we had reached out to our friends, our
8 partners, and even just the public that has a real
9 interest in this particular landscape. And so I kind of
10 put together -- got some help from our headquarters
11 office and went out with a contractor to do some
12 education sessions that were public based. They were
13 Zoom as well.

14 But we did what we could to reach out to
15 basically our partners and the general public that had
16 interest in certain plans in the past and to help us
17 kind of educate them on what our plan is, you know, our
18 strategy for our next steps and what we're planning to
19 do and also build more of a collaborative communication,
20 more transparent process by gaining information now on
21 who's interested, building that contact list, giving
22 people the tools in understanding why we're planning the
23 way we're planning.

24 We're structuring our plan as, you know, an
25 amendment, and a lot of folks were kind of wondering

1 why. And so we had put out three sessions in April of
2 this last year, and we had a pretty good turnout, a lot
3 of attendees. And we structured it with kind of a
4 partial education, partial Q and A, and we are working
5 on that video right now.

6 The transcript is currently under process, and
7 we should have that available also on our BLM website
8 within the next month. We also have a report that will
9 be generated. We're working on that as well. We're in
10 the final draft, and once we get that finalized, that
11 will also sit on the same website. And that is the
12 Mojave Trails Bureau of Land Management website.

13 So for those that are interested, I will give
14 you my e-mail address at the end. It will be at the
15 very last side slide. And then contact me, and I will
16 send you the path to my web page. It's pretty simple,
17 so, all right.

18 And so with that, we also needed to kind of
19 figure out a subgroup. We have a proclamation that
20 directs the BLM on not just, you know, what values and
21 what resources -- or what resources, objects, and values
22 are important when it comes to this particular monument,
23 but it also has other direction as well; for example, of
24 course, the direction to plan, the direction to put
25 together some type of resource advisory group that will

1 help with the planning process. And so that was another
2 accomplishment that we had this year.

3 We worked with, of course, Randy from -- well,
4 first we went out to the DAC, and we presented that
5 need, and then, of course, the DAC went through that
6 application process, and the subgroup was put together.
7 And more information on that will be coming later on
8 through Randy and Mike Ahrens, of course. But these are
9 the main accomplishments that we kind of have been able
10 to kind of get across so far.

11 So kind of to give you an idea of where we're
12 at, so this is kind of a structure in which we created
13 back in early 2021. This is basically the first portion
14 of our timeline in association to our planning process.
15 So if you can see, you will see some of the green, and
16 the green identifies kind of where we're at. We are
17 actually very close to our actual NEPA contracting. We
18 have prepped that. We are probably looking at being
19 able to bring on a contractor for our actual planning
20 process hopefully sometime at the end of this year.

21 We are close to at least a selection and
22 reward -- or award. That will probably happen within
23 the next couple of months. We've got our project
24 management plan in place. We have assembled our
25 existing data, and we are currently going out to collect

1 any new data that came up during our data analysis
2 process that we did last year. We kind of made sure
3 that we are under the Dingell Act compliance. We are in
4 the process of redrafting our MOUs for our cooperating
5 agencies and then, of course, hoping to initiate that
6 before the end of this year.

7 We haven't quite gotten to our preliminary
8 alternatives, but we are working on that right now. So
9 our ID team is currently in kind of a preplanning phase
10 where we're working on what's called our analysis of our
11 management situation, which will help us with the
12 preliminary alternative developments. And that's what's
13 going to help us when we actually initiate the NOI and
14 go out for scoping.

15 So we are working on the Notice of Intent.
16 That is expected to go out to our headquarters office
17 within the next month. We are looking at a January date
18 for the Notice of Intent to be in the Federal Register,
19 and at that point we will go out for scoping. So that
20 is, of course, the update of what we've accomplished so
21 far and where we're at.

22 Now I'm going to kind of cover some of those
23 things of where we're heading. So like I had stated
24 before, we've got the draft NOI -- that's that Notice of
25 Intent -- getting ready to go up to our headquarters

1 office for review. We are expecting a review process to
2 kind of land us somewhere more like the winter. The
3 fall is where it's going up, and we're thinking that
4 once we get through all of the review process with them
5 and back and forth, we should see something come out,
6 we're hoping, in January.

7 We are also in the process of helping to stand
8 up the MAC. Like I stated, we did, of course, get that
9 process, the application process, with the help of Randy
10 and some of our DAC members, and more information on
11 that will soon to follow.

12 We are finalizing our report when it came to
13 our Zoom Webinar and education sessions, you know, when
14 it comes to the type and structure of planning process
15 that we would like to follow up on. So for those that
16 missed that, it will be available within the next month
17 on the Mojave Trails National Monument BLM's page.

18 And so for those folks that are interested,
19 please contact me. Some folks have been contacting my
20 contractor, which is fine. But we're now moving away
21 from that contractor, and everybody needs to kind of
22 just start contacting me. So that would be fantastic.

23 Let's see here. Let's see here. We are, of
24 course, keeping our open communications with interested
25 parties. I am always interested in taking a tour, a

1 field trip, an onsite, whatever we want to call it, to
2 those objects of interest when it comes to the monument,
3 the proclamation, any of those things. Just give me a
4 call, and we'll set up a time.

5 The weather is going to get really nice
6 outside. We've got one more month of probably some hot
7 weather, but then we're going to be in some great
8 weather, and I think it's the best time to get out there
9 and start kicking rocks. So please contact me, and
10 let's do that. I want to meet with folks. And then, of
11 course, 2023 is when we are thinking we are going to
12 start our planning process.

13 So to kind of give it to you in more of a
14 standardized project timeline, this is the rest of the
15 project timeline. So, as you can see, we're kind of
16 still here in '22. We're hoping to -- you know, we've
17 identified the -- oh, I should probably move these. But
18 we've identified the scoping to go out January of '23,
19 and then we will, of course, have our scoping, and then
20 we will start to respond to scoping probably February or
21 March, and then we will start to develop the document.

22 We will hopefully publish the document --
23 actually, we're going to be here in '23. I should have
24 moved those around, my mistake. And we've kind of got
25 all of the public comments and the public FRN time right

1 here, in the draft portion.

2 We don't plan on doing too much when it comes
3 to the ACECs, except we are going to reviews those ACECs
4 to make sure they are protecting the resources, objects,
5 and values that are associated with the proclamation.
6 And so I'm sure a lot of folks are going to be very
7 interested in what that looks like and how that shakes
8 out. And so I think that's going to be probably a large
9 part of those comments.

10 And then moving forward, of course, into '23
11 and '24 with these blocks here with kind of response to
12 comment, then the publishing of the monument management
13 plan, EA, you know, and then moving forward with
14 everything else.

15 So our target goal to finish is sometime in
16 2024. So that should give us enough time. So that's
17 kind of where we're at right now. Now, as we all know,
18 things are fluid. Not everything moves according to
19 plan, but this is what we're hoping for.

20 All right. Thank you so much. That would be
21 my update. Any questions? Oh, let me stop sharing.
22 Stopped sharing. Thanks.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Great. Thank you. Thanks,
24 Noelle. That's a good PowerPoint, and I like seeing the
25 progress charts too. It gives us a good idea of the

1 timeline.

2 Before I open it up for comments from the DAC,
3 just going to do a reset as to where we are. The next
4 presentation is sort of a follow-up to this, a
5 continuation of this, by Mike Ahrens, and I'll chime in
6 on that as well. So we'll have an opportunity to have,
7 you know, broader discussion on this and continued
8 discussion. But I don't want to let Noelle get away
9 without an opportunity for the DAC members to ask a
10 specific question about her presentation. So the floor
11 is open for DAC members to ask questions.

12 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I have just a comment on your
13 presentation. I think it would be really good
14 especially -- well, for me and for people that are on
15 the public comment, public period, that some of the
16 acronyms you used, it would be good if you could do
17 those. I don't know who that presentation was designed
18 for, but it doesn't look like it was really designed for
19 the public, because there's so many acronyms in there
20 that -- I don't know what the MAC is. You raised the
21 MAC. I don't know what that is, and so I think that if
22 you do another presentation for the public or for the
23 DAC, that somehow we get some definitions on those
24 acronyms.

25 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Definitely. Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is open. Well,
2 good. Thanks again, Noelle. I appreciate that. We are
3 a few minutes ahead of schedule, but hopefully Mike is
4 well rehearsed enough to be able to jump in right now.
5 I can say that we have coordinated our presentation very
6 deeply; right, Mike?

7 MR. AHRENS: Absolutely. Thank you, Randy.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Why don't you take it
9 first, Mike.

10 MR. AHRENS: I will. Thank you so much, Randy,
11 and thank you, Noelle, for all the work you're doing
12 with the monument. Yeah, and so this agenda is an
13 opportunity to update on our progress with the MAC, the
14 Monument Advisory Council. Thank you, Dick, for putting
15 us in check there.

16 So you'll remember that at the last meeting we
17 had -- last couple of meetings we had come to the
18 Advisory Council recommending an Advisory Council for
19 the monument. You all agreed with that. We went
20 through a nomination process, got really good results
21 from that process. And the DAC at the last meeting made
22 selections of members for the MAC and told us to go and
23 do good work.

24 So we did that. We planned our first meeting.
25 I believe that was in June, and I would say, you know, I

1 could say that that first meeting was really about an
2 opportunity for the members to meet each other and to
3 begin to understand everybody's interest. And I'd say I
4 was really impressed with the breadth of the both
5 experience in the Mojave Trails Monument by the MAC
6 members, and also the variety and diversity of
7 interests, I think, is going to be a really neat group
8 to work with.

9 We're going to get to hear a lot of different
10 kinds of opinions, and I think once the group really
11 gets formed and starts to really pull the wagon all in
12 the same direction, it's going to be a really strong
13 group. So I'm very impressed with that.

14 As I said, we went through, gave everybody an
15 opportunity to kind of meet each other and find out what
16 their, you know, backgrounds were and what have you and
17 then went through kind of the roles and expectations
18 just so everybody really kind of understood what the
19 business of the MAC was and what we hope the members
20 could provide. And Noelle gave another planning update
21 similar to this, although there's a whole bunch more
22 done today that wasn't done back in June. So thank you
23 for that.

24 And then we set our next meeting date for
25 September the 13th, which we hope to meet face to face

1 and hope to be in Barstow, I believe. So Randy is
2 working on that, I think.

3 Randy, that's probably all I had to share. So
4 I don't know if you want to share more about
5 Mojave Trails Advisory Council and/or the other
6 subgroups. I think it's all yours. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah, let me refresh the
8 DAC members' memory of the appointments to the subgroup,
9 or the MAC: Ashley Lee; Linda Castro;
10 Monica Argandona; Marco Leal, L-e-a-l; Steven Reyes;
11 Gregor Losson, L-o-s-s-o-n; also former DAC members
12 Jim Bagley, Ed Stovin, and Dan Taylor. And representing
13 the Desert Advisory Council to provide nexus, the
14 required nexus, to the subgroup, three of us are teaming
15 up for that duty, and that's Dick Holliday,
16 Robert Robinson, and myself.

17 So I appreciate this team, the time that
18 they're willing to take to help with this, because I'm
19 excited that the Advisory Council is taking up this
20 issue and taking up this matter now. I knew it would
21 come, when it would be time. But I think it was over
22 eight years I worked on the Mojave Trails National
23 Monument as a centerpiece of a larger desert bill that
24 included Wildernesses and OHV areas and also
25 Sand to Snow National Monument. It's interesting that

1 all the components of that smorgasbord -- get that on,
2 Diane -- with the smorgasbord, all of the dishes made it
3 to the table. They just didn't get there in the form of
4 a Desert Protection Bill that we had all worked so hard
5 on.

6 Nonetheless, all the pieces as I said, made it,
7 but they made it through different journeys and
8 different pathways. And the way in which the
9 Mojave Trails National Monument made it to the table was
10 through the executive branch and through a proclamation.

11 So the sideboards that make up this monument
12 planning process are going to be very important. And I
13 think that's something that we'll want to look at and
14 focus on, because the sideboards sort of represent, I
15 guess, sort of like the bumpers that you put in the
16 gutters at the bowling alley so you make sure that the
17 bowling ball is always going to at least go down the
18 middle of the lane. So the sideboards are going to help
19 guide the planning process of what's possible and
20 probable.

21 And I think, you know, for us as the
22 Advisory Council, it will be important for us to
23 familiarize ourselves with those sideboards so that we
24 have realistic expectations with respect to what we'll
25 see out of this planning process, and also so that we'll

1 understand not just the timeline but understand how some
2 of our more favorite issues or the things that really
3 have us interested, where the decision-making points,
4 where those -- where in that process your issues or your
5 interests will be in play.

6 Everything is not on the table starting day
7 one. It's a long process. And I also want to bring
8 back the five-letter acronym that was with the DAC for
9 many years as well, and that's DRECP, the Desert
10 Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. This is going to be
11 a big test for the DRECP. A lot of the sideboards that
12 will be in place for the planning process will have come
13 from that DRECP. And I also think it would be good for
14 the DAC, particularly if we see new members coming on
15 board, to have another refresher in DRECP so that we can
16 understand how that can affect the process. So that's
17 what I've got on my plate.

18 I'd like to open the floor up to the other DAC
19 members for comments, questions, suggestions. The floor
20 is open.

21 Jack, what do you think?

22 MEMBER THOMPSON: Sorry. Oh, yeah, I'm really
23 excited, and I really appreciate -- really appreciate
24 everything everyone has done up to this point in the
25 planning process. You know, I share some of the history

1 with Randy with regards to the long process to establish
2 Mojave Trails and really appreciate everybody's time and
3 energy on the subgroup to bring perspective there. And
4 Randy, I really appreciate, you know, the guiding light
5 that you've been in the whole collaborative process that
6 represents a wide group of communities. It's such a
7 wonderfully special landscape to so many of us.

8 And it's really great to see this moving
9 forward. Really looking forward to taking a field trip
10 with you, Noelle, to get out there. I've really fallen
11 in love with that place.

12 Just a quick question. You know, I'd heard
13 that the flooding that had happened with some rainstorms
14 recently east of Cadiz had washed-out bridges along
15 Route 66, and I was just curious if west of Cadiz to
16 Amboy, if the travel route there had been likewise
17 affected by those rainstorms.

18 I know that there have been some kind of
19 crossings cleared as the bridgework had been done from
20 storms that had damaged those crossings, those bridges,
21 you know, even further back. But I'm just trying to
22 understand the access a little bit now, if people want
23 to, you know, potentially go out there.

24 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: So actually I believe the
25 county went out and they were doing all of their

1 infrastructure evaluation. They have a timetable in
2 which they, you know, go out with their engineering crew
3 and look at the infrastructure. And they had identified
4 those bridges to the west of Amboy to not being able to
5 hold the weight of certain vehicles, and so they decided
6 to close that portion as well. So we do have a lot of
7 closures on U.S. Route 66 right now.

8 You know, as a reminder we are a partner with
9 the county, and the county is trying their best, of
10 course, to remedy everything that they can, but
11 everything takes time. You know, they have to kind of
12 go through a whole entire process when it comes to the
13 design of those particular bridges because of the byway
14 itself being historic. So now they are under those
15 historic design features, so it makes it a little longer
16 of a process for them and possibly even more costly
17 because of the location.

18 Two, everything has kind of gone up with
19 inflation. And three, it's not considered a main
20 highway in the eyes of the Department of Transportation,
21 you know, with the overall department. And so these are
22 the things that we're all tackling, you know, we're all
23 kind of dealing with when it comes to that particular
24 object of the monument.

25 So we're working together, aren't we, Mike?

1 MR. AHRENS: Absolutely, yeah, and I had not
2 heard about any new bridge washouts. The county closed
3 that section between Amboy and Ludlow a few months
4 really before the monsoon season started, or right at
5 the beginning but prior to any big rains and what have
6 you. And as far as I am aware -- well, so most of that
7 section around 66 is now actually closed.

8 You can get from Amboy itself to the
9 Amboy Crater, and of course you can get through -- oh,
10 my goodness. Is that Amboy Road that comes down from
11 29 Palms? And you could use Route 66 to get to Kelbaker
12 and back up to 40 still. And there is an allowance for
13 some local traffic between Amboy and about Chambless.

14 And then after that it's technically closed in
15 that section, but they allow some local traffic for
16 that, for citizens there and people with businesses
17 there. So you can still get down to, like, the Cadiz
18 Dunes and all that.

19 MEMBER THOMPSON: Great. I really appreciate
20 that heads-up about that status. Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Jack, I think it's cool you
22 brought that up because, you know, when we keep
23 thinking -- a lot of times we think of just the
24 Public Lands part of this puzzle because, well, we're
25 Desert Advisory Council, our mission is chartered to

1 advise the BLM. But, you know, there was a time that
2 the Mojave Trails National Monument was called the
3 Mother Road National Monument in the early days of the
4 proposal because the Route 66 was such an important
5 centerpiece of that region. And it's emphasizing this
6 conversation about the importance of partnership we'll
7 have to have with San Bernardino, because every monument
8 needs its main access road.

9 I mean, let's look down the line here. You
10 know, we're maybe right now just sort of talking about
11 the next baby steps in the planning process. But that
12 planning process is eventually going to lead to a vision
13 down the road, a visitor center and parking area and how
14 to accommodate visitor traffic that usually results from
15 designations of monuments, because it becomes important
16 on people's travel plans.

17 And it's going to be another destination
18 between, you know, Las Vegas and Death Valley and
19 Yosemite and the Sequoias and Grand Canyon. It's just
20 going to be another one of those must-sees along the
21 way, so it's going to be important we have the
22 infrastructure.

23 And those bridges, I don't think I can remember
24 a time in which there hasn't been a bridge that has been
25 of concern, that's been out or a piece closed or

1 something on Route 66, in the last two or three decades.
2 It seems like there has always been something. So
3 that's going to be a long-term issue to look at, is
4 public access and how they're going to get to the
5 monument.

6 MR. AHRENS: And Randy, I would also just offer
7 just for clarity, that the county is actively pursuing
8 funding through Federal Highways for those bridge
9 replacements. I think they've actually been fairly
10 successful in different ways. But there's 128 of those
11 bridges that need to be replaced, so it's going to take
12 a number of years to gather that money together.

13 We continue to support the county, you know, on
14 every one of their requests, you know, and actively work
15 with them to try to secure that so they can move forward
16 and replace -- I think they replaced two bridges now
17 already, and they have funding for a large number of the
18 shorter bridges. So eating an elephant here.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Did you say that 128 have
20 been bridges identified for replacement?

21 MR. AHRENS: Well, there's 128 wooden bridges
22 along --

23 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Okay. 128?

24 MR. AHRENS: Yeah. And they were all built in
25 the late 1920s and had a life expectancy of about 25

1 years. So, yeah, pretty much they all need to be
2 replaced at some point. So --

3 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Wow, wow, 128 bridges,
4 that's a lot.

5 MR. AHRENS: Yeah, but the San Bernardino
6 County Public Works director has been heard to say that
7 the only reason those bridges are still standing is
8 because the termites are holding hands.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Well, you know, there's
10 just such a broad -- because this is such a large
11 monument -- it is, you know, how many millions? --
12 1.1 million acres?

13 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: 1.6 million acres, the
14 second largest in the bureau. The largest number in the
15 bureau is Grand Staircase located in Utah, and that was
16 just recently, and so we are the second largest in all
17 of the BLM.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: So one-point million
19 acres --

20 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Yes, 1.6.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Sorry. 1.6 million acres
22 is going to -- is going to drum up a lot of issues under
23 the rocks. I mean, you've got a lot of things in that
24 1.6 million acres, not just the roadway and the bridges.
25 But out of all of those things, you know, that which I

1 think has the attention of the public the most, I
2 believe, obviously, is going to be -- is going to be
3 more the allowable activities, recreational activities
4 for the public, backcountry access to locations in the
5 public, for the public.

6 Those are really sort of -- we all know those
7 are the issues that are on the tip of the tongues of the
8 people who really are expressing the interest in this
9 process, well, also from the conservation side. I've
10 got to say I'm hearing more and more about their desires
11 to see those pieces that were pointed out, those
12 identified features. What do we call those?

13 Protected --

14 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: Objects.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: -- objects, and I'm hearing
16 more about interest in those objects, protecting those.
17 But aside from all of those obvious sort of things that
18 are up front, there's just so much more to look at in
19 that 1.6 million acres before you can even drill down to
20 that.

21 And so that's why I urge patience among all the
22 participants, all the wonderful members of the public
23 and the DAC and everyone who wants to participate and
24 needs to participate. Just, when you bring your oxes to
25 be gored, just keep them quiet keep, them patient. It's

1 going to be a long time coming before we really start
2 talking about those nitty-gritty items.

3 Is that fair to say?

4 MS. GLINES-BOVIO: I think so, yes, yeah,
5 because it's such a large landscape. And, you know,
6 first we need to make sure that we have the appropriate
7 planning -- overall umbrella planning language that
8 mirrors, of course, the proclamation. That's the first
9 step in the process, for sure. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: And when you identify
11 objects that are going to be protected, one of the most
12 important things you have to do is figure out what is it
13 you're protecting them from so that you can adequately,
14 you know, draw up the plans to address those specific
15 things. So it is a long road. And we've been on long
16 roads before, WEMO. So hopefully this is graced with
17 more luck than we hope.

18 The floor is open. Dick?

19 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Randy, is the subgroup
20 meeting in Barstow on the 13th -- is that going to be
21 open to the public?

22 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I don't have the details.
23 I'm really sorry. Part of my lack of attention during
24 this month of taking sick was not being able to firm up
25 any details. So I'm back in the saddle starting this

1 weekend, and I'll have those details worked out soon.
2 I'm fortunate that I had a good team behind me and we
3 were able to at least get the -- everything else going
4 in my life has been going pretty, pretty solid. But
5 sorry I haven't been able to spend enough time on this
6 next upcoming meeting.

7 But the date is correct for the next meeting, I
8 will say, and the geographic pin of Barstow for
9 September 13, I think that's correct, that's all
10 correct.

11 The floor is still open. We're in just a
12 little bit of an awkward position where we have a break
13 scheduled in 15 minutes, and it would be great -- what
14 we generally try to do is keep on our breaks, and if we
15 have to keep moving through the agenda, we do. But it's
16 just this next presentation on the business plan, I hate
17 to see that interrupted midway from a break.

18 So let me see. How about this? Would there be
19 an objection to the Advisory Council taking its break at
20 10:30 instead of 10:15? And Kate, please holler if I'm
21 going rogue. But if we have our break at 10:30, we
22 could fit in our 30-minute presentation on the Barstow
23 office business plan and then take some questions after
24 that. Is that a problem? Is there any objections to
25 doing that?

1 Well, good. Hearing and seeing none, I'm going
2 to wrap up conversation on the Mojave Trails, give
3 Jeff Childers a minute to get organized for the next
4 presentation. Putting him on the spot, I know. But
5 thank you, Noelle and Mike, for advising the subgroup as
6 you have.

7 And Kate, thanks for supporting all of the
8 background work, the care and feeding, so to speak, of a
9 subgroup. Thanks for helping support that. The three
10 of you are really -- I'm happy to have the three of you
11 working with our subgroup. We've got good leadership
12 from the BLM on that.

13 So with that I'm going to turn the floor over,
14 I think, to Jeff. I don't see his -- is he up on the
15 screen yet? Calling to Jeff, one, two, three. There
16 you go. All righty. Thanks, Jeff. I appreciate it.
17 This is a presentation on the Barstow Field Office
18 Business Plan. The floor is yours.

19 MR. CHILDERS: Right. Let me just give a
20 little introduction on what's going on, and then I think
21 Randy alluded to it a little earlier, was the quorum of
22 the DAC and the necessity of that to provide guidance
23 and backfeed to us.

24 And the last time the DAC charter was
25 renewed -- and Randy can correct me if I'm wrong, if I

1 speak out of turn on this, but it was concluded that the
2 DAC can act as a Recreation Advisory Council for the
3 BLM. And so as the BLM has a number of different
4 policies, and I am not an expert on all of those
5 individual policies as far as making the business plan
6 operational, there is a requirement that the Recreation
7 Advisory Council have a chance to review it maybe once
8 or twice. But then also an approval by vote of that
9 Recreation Advisory Council is required before we can
10 move further on down the line to Federal Register
11 notices and a bunch of other things.

12 So this is my first opportunity to bring this
13 to you guys. I've had some side conversations with a
14 number of people about it. This is the first time to
15 actually bring it out to y'all to take a quick gander
16 of. I really wanted to include the draft one, and I
17 wanted to make sure that everybody had a chance to read
18 through it.

19 I do want to give kudos to Dave Kotlarski, who
20 is our recreational branch chief. He's the one who
21 drafted a lot of this, along with Debbie Flores, who was
22 our outdoor recreation planner before that, and then
23 Cecelia Franklin, who is our ORP right now. They all
24 had a huge part in getting this for us at the time. So
25 I truly thank them and give them kudos for this. I'm

1 just here to present it. I didn't write a lot of it. I
2 did help with some of the cost functions, because that's
3 kind of my specialty in the office is the budgets and
4 such and so forth.

5 So anyway, I just want to go over -- I've just
6 got a few quick slides, and then we can have some
7 questions, or if there's any kind of questions, let me
8 know. And let me see if I can do the share screen
9 thing. I worked on this yesterday, and it worked, so
10 let's see if we can do it. It might take a minute for
11 me to broadcast. I'm working on an iPad, so it's a
12 little bit different than most. Here we go. We want to
13 do this, and we want to do that.

14 Can everybody see that?

15 MATTHEW GIBBS: Looks great.

16 MR. CHILDERS: Great. It works this time. So
17 let me just get started. Again this is our Draft
18 Recreation Site Business Plan, which is required for us
19 to charge fees and to maintain fees and to operate fees
20 in our office. And Barstow has four active fee sites:
21 El Mirage OHV area, the Owl Canyon Campground, the
22 Afton Canyon Campground, and the Dumont Dunes OHV area.

23 So, as on this slide, it talks about our
24 current fees. El Mirage has three sets of fees, or
25 three types: a daily entrance fee of \$15, which is

1 missing a zero. I ran out of zero space on that one.
2 They only give us a certain number of zeroes, and I ran
3 out of my quorum on zeroes. So the weekly is a \$30
4 pass. That's for a seven-day pass. And then there's an
5 annual pass for El Mirage for people who want to go out
6 there a lot and do a lot of activities out there, so
7 there's a \$90 pass for that.

8 Owl Canyon Campground, Afton Canyon Campground
9 are both six-dollar nightly fees. Right now those are
10 collected via ranger. We are hoping to continue to move
11 them forward and up onto Rec.gov, just like we did the
12 passes for El Mirage and Dumont. We're hoping to do
13 that.

14 Owl Canyon has a number of different
15 campgrounds and facilities out there, and Afton Canyon
16 is a pretty popular place for a lot of people. Both
17 those campgrounds are staging areas to go to
18 Mojave Trail and get out into the monument. To get out
19 into the monument, you gotta go to both of those.

20 And then Dumont Dunes OHV area, we've had
21 number of passes in paid in Dumont for a number of years
22 and the weekly pass, weekly holiday pass, annual pass
23 with no holidays, and then annual pass with holidays.
24 So Dumont is a little bit confusing. As we worked
25 through the system, we figured there's a way to do this.

1 I'll also caveat -- and Randy can jump in later and talk
2 about comments -- there were a lot of things done with
3 the Dumont Dunes pass program that had to relate to the
4 sunset date for the OHV Grant Program. That sunset date
5 has been removed from the legislation per the
6 regulations, so there's no sunset on that, so we need to
7 reformulate how the passes are working on the Dunes and
8 what facilities and services we're providing out there.

9 So this is a map. It's kind of hard to see.
10 It does cover all of the of the OHV recreation areas,
11 both Stoddard and Johnson, Rasor, Afton, Owl Canyon
12 Campground, Sawtooth Campground, and all the different
13 pieces in this. You can see it's kind of scattered
14 around. It takes a while to get around to them all. I
15 don't think you could do them all in a day. I guess you
16 could, if you really, really, really -- if you didn't
17 loop back, you might get them in all in one day.
18 Johnson Valley is a day trip by itself.

19 Anyway, there's a recreation area. You can see
20 the Barstow boundary in there. Dumont Dunes is on the
21 far end of the north end, and the new extension of
22 Johnson Valley on the south end towards Giant Rock is on
23 the south end, El Mirage on the far west side, and
24 Rasor Road on the east side.

25 Also just a sidebar, the OHV Grant Program did

1 offer -- or is going to hopefully give us a grant for
2 the Razor Road OHV area management planning activities.
3 We won't get that funding or start that activity until
4 January of 2023. But that will be an activity that the
5 Barstow Field Office will work through -- starting next
6 year in January and work through until -- it's a
7 three-year grant, so it would be '23, '24, '25, '26 --
8 January, '26. We'll probably be able to finish it off
9 in December of 2025. Anyway, that's kind of our map of
10 the geographic location, as you can see, spread out in
11 the areas.

12 So we are on proposing a new fee site.
13 Sawtooth Canyon Campground, also known as "New Jack
14 City." For people who are rock climbers, this was one
15 of their favorite places. I've had a number of
16 different people tell me that there are as many climbing
17 routes in Sawtooth Canyon, or New Jack City, as there
18 are in all of Joshua Tree National Park.

19 And I think this is a different type of
20 climbing versus, you know, more of a remote climbing.
21 This is more of a sport climbing thing. I'm really not
22 certain actually of the difference in those. I'm not a
23 climber, so I apologize if I speak in -- I'm not sure
24 what that nomenclature are.

25 But we are proposing a new fee site at

1 Sawtooth. We have a number of shade ramadas and picnic
2 grounds and toilets and CXTs. We maintain those from
3 general fundings. We don't have specific funding to do
4 this. We would like to, with the proposed fee, bring it
5 up to the same standard as the camping fee for overnight
6 camping, which would be ten dollars, and then propose a
7 new day use fee of five dollars.

8 And the reason for that is, we get a lot of
9 in-season climbers who come up from L.A. for the day to
10 climb. They'll come in and grab some coffee and head
11 out and climb for the day and then leave and utilize
12 facilities and maybe even use a campground site for the
13 day and then leave, and then we've lost the funds for
14 someone else to camp there.

15 It's very, very popular. There are a number of
16 local days and a number of weekends in winter and fall
17 season where you cannot find a campground spot in
18 Sawtooth. And as this continues to grow in popularity,
19 we're going to need to address the overcrowding.. we're
20 going to need to add additional sites and do some
21 capital improvements as far as gravel and structures to
22 in. So we're looking at trying to get enough fees
23 together to pull that off.

24 The long-term goal would be to do some other
25 improvements, depending on what the visitor surveys tell

1 us, see what the users actually want and need. So
2 that's our new fee site, that Sawtooth Canyon
3 Campground. We're hoping to include that as our fee
4 program and really just improve the quality of that
5 resource for the public.

6 So the two biggest campground fee changes would
7 be for Afton and Owl, just to increase the overnight
8 camping fee from six to ten dollars. One, it makes even
9 a ten dollar bill convenient, and also it will increase
10 the ability for us to provide for bathroom cleaning and
11 trash pickup. We just awarded the contract for the CXT
12 cleanings for a year.

13 In a combination between the OHV areas and
14 campgrounds, it cost us a little over \$100,000 to get
15 the bathrooms clean, to keep them clean, and then get it
16 cleaned up for folks to use. So we're hoping to recoup
17 a little bit of that cost and also to allow us to
18 provide for some capital improvements up there as well.

19 I think also as the monument planning becomes
20 stronger, Afton will increase in popularity and we need
21 to have facilities available for that and clean those
22 facilities up. We have done some capital improvements
23 for Afton in the past, which are really, really good,
24 and we need to do the same to Owl Canyon. We need to do
25 some additional work out there. A lot of things that

1 were transitioned out of Owl that we need to fix.

2 Anyway, that's the campground fee changes.

3 Dumont Dunes, this is probably the one where we
4 have the most challenging changes. Because of the
5 structure and the way that the structure was built, I
6 think we need to really look at how to make that better
7 for the users and more fair. One thing we never had at
8 Dumont that we really, really want to do is institute a
9 day use fee. We get a lot of day use out of Dos Picas
10 and around, where people will drive up for the day, even
11 from Barstow. I've had a -- I was working the front a
12 couple of years back, and a lot of people will come up
13 from Barstow, like on Thanksgiving or the day after
14 Thanksgiving. They'll come up and bring up their UTVs
15 for the day to ride in the sand, and they end up buying
16 a whole week pass, and they only need it for one day.
17 So we have had a number of comments about instituting a
18 day use fee.

19 We want to remove the non-holiday weekly pass
20 and just keep one weekly pass for the whole thing. So
21 this idea that we needed additional funding for the
22 holidays, we kind of figured out a way to mitigate that
23 and pass on some savings to the community, to the
24 public, is remove the 30-day -- to remove the
25 non-holiday weekly pass and just give one weekly pass of

1 \$35 so, if somebody does come up for the whole day, it's
2 basically five dollars a day to come up out there and
3 use the facilities out there.

4 If you haven't been to Dumont, we do have a lot
5 of facilities available. People out there have done
6 work inside a couple of bathrooms, and then, of course,
7 the Dumont Dunes, the main area has 11 or 12 bathrooms
8 up there. I'd have to check again.

9 And then we'd like to remove the non-holiday
10 season pass. It just seems to be that the majority of
11 pass sales have been in the annual pass realm. We
12 haven't had a lot of the non-holiday passes sold in the
13 last two or three years. And of course, it's been kind
14 of weird with COVID. But even going back for or five
15 years, we haven't seen a lot of non-holiday season
16 passes being sold. So we think that's just kind of a
17 placeholder, a legacy thing we can probably get rid of
18 that wouldn't hurt us too bad. And I think it's fair to
19 the community too.

20 One big one that we've heard a lot -- and we
21 keep hearing a lot of this -- is keep the annual pass
22 but add additional vehicle decal. This will get a
23 little bit tricky with Rec.gov, but I think we figured
24 out a way to manage it and we can definitely accommodate
25 folks who drive their rig and equipment out and they

1 have someone else coming out with them. There's just an
2 additional vehicle decal that will be available. There
3 will also be additional vehicle license plate available
4 to them on Rec.gov. So I think we have a solution to
5 this one. This is really another popular one people
6 have asked for for a number of years to process forward,
7 so that's what we're really looking forward to.

8 And we'd love any feedback or comment on these.
9 We just kind of did this based on some informal surveys.
10 We also did a visitor survey two years ago out of
11 Dumont, where we had a contractor come up, or staff did
12 a visitor survey. So this is all the stuff that was
13 generated from the users. We're hoping it just makes
14 the use of the permit better.

15 And a just little note or sidebar. The paving
16 project for Dumont Dunes Road is underway. Surveyors --
17 I've been out there the last two weeks. The surveyors
18 were out there just surveying the road, and they're
19 getting ready to start replacing gravel from the road
20 crossing up to the top of the hill past the ICP, and
21 they'll start working on the water crossing. Then
22 hopefully we can have the whole thing paved by
23 October 24th. That's our goal, anyway. So that's it
24 for Dumont Dunes.

25 And then I guess this is kind of our ask, kind

1 my reason for asking for time, your precious time on a
2 Saturday just to have you review the business plan,
3 provide feedback and comments. If you want to redline
4 comments, send them to me in an e-mail or write out your
5 e-mail, print it out, send it to me, however you want to
6 do it. We'd love to have feedback. Give us chance to
7 respond to them. It's kind of the process we want to go
8 through now, and we're still working out the exact
9 steps. But I'd like to compile those into the business
10 plan, send this up through our internal organization for
11 approvals, get that all cleaned up, ready to go, and
12 then bring it back to the DAC for action. And then
13 there's some public notification requirement stuff and
14 some Federal Register stuff that is to be done and some
15 timeframes after that that we would need to follow in
16 order to implement any changes.

17 Changes in fees are one timeframe. I'm not
18 going to quote the timeframes because I'm not familiar
19 with them, but I should be. But new fees, I think we
20 have to wait a year or six months. I can't remember the
21 number. But those new fees for Sawtooth, we have to be
22 on hold until we wait for that time period to pass. And
23 there will be a couple of different notifications. I
24 think there's two registered notices that have to go
25 out.

1 So that's it, but I really, really thank you
2 for your time. I really want to hear if anybody has any
3 comments or concerns or questions. And if there's any
4 other suggestions, we'd really love to hear them. And I
5 think that concludes my part of the presentation.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Wow. Thank you for that.
7 I appreciate it. Jeff, why don't we -- since it is
8 close to the 10:15 morning break, let's go ahead and
9 take a break, and then we'll do our questions and
10 answers after. So let's take our morning break.

11 I'm changing the plan again but always, always
12 flexible in responding to the time on the clock. So
13 let's take a break. We'll be back at 10:30 a.m.,
14 10:30 a.m. Thanks, everybody. Restrooms are down the
15 hall.

16 (Morning break.)

17 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: All righty. Thank you,
18 everybody, for getting back after our break. And just
19 to refresh where we are, thanks, Jeff. You just
20 presented the Draft Recreation Site Business Plan. And
21 before I open up the floor, I know Dick has some
22 questions and comments.

23 But I'd just like to frame this a little more,
24 please, for our DAC members. You know, a couple of
25 decades ago these fees were not in place. They may have

1 been at some of the campgrounds. I'm not completely
2 familiar with that. But I know that it was a couple of
3 decades ago when Congress passed a law that authorized
4 Interior and Agriculture, Forest Service, and BLM and
5 Interior to charge fees for recreation areas. It was a
6 time in which budgets were being cut immensely, and
7 there was a growing philosophy that those user
8 facilities should pay for the facilities. And as a
9 result, Congress allowed the agencies to charge user
10 fees places that had appropriate levels of development.
11 There's a certain threshold of development necessary for
12 it to qualify as a fee area.

13 But the core of it was that the legislation
14 created another layer of advisory councils. They were
15 an Advisory Council that was regional that was stood up
16 for the purpose of considering or providing public input
17 and feedback on fee proposals by the -- primarily by the
18 Forest Service and BLM. And about 15 years ago maybe,
19 or so, that committee was stood up under the
20 Forest Service's guidance under an agreement that they'd
21 run that show.

22 And I know a number of people who have served
23 on that board. Ed Waldheim, who used to come to our DAC
24 meetings all the time, was a member of it. And the BLM
25 was -- whoever wanted charge a new fee was required to

1 put a business plan together and a dog and pony show,
2 publish in the newspapers, get public support, so on and
3 so forth, and gain general consensus of support that
4 these fees were reasonable or necessary. So during that
5 period of about four years this board was very active
6 and very, very busy. It saw a lot of fee proposals. A
7 lot of the fees that are out there user fees for
8 campgrounds or these OHV areas were the result of that
9 process.

10 But then it seemed that once the majority or
11 most of these proposals sort of got off the plate, got
12 taken care of, the agencies had a hard time keeping up
13 membership on this Advisory Council, this fee council,
14 and it sort of died due to attrition, too, because there
15 just weren't any proposals to consider. In part, again,
16 budgets kept just getting cut back more and more that
17 agencies weren't able to do the background necessary to
18 bring up proposals.

19 For example, I know that at Dumont Dunes we've
20 talked for years and years about simplifying that fee,
21 that complicated fee structure. I've got to say, I
22 mean, I was one of the culprits on the Advisory Council
23 at the time, you know, that supported the holiday
24 surcharge. But when you look at how many different
25 kinds of passes have to be printed and so on and so

1 forth, you really realized, gee, that really probably
2 wasn't smart on our part. But nonetheless we weren't
3 able to make a revision to this for a very long time
4 because there wasn't process to do it, and the agency
5 had other big ones to work on.

6 But there was a time in which this
7 Advisory Council was not active but the BLM Desert
8 District and the El Centro Field Office, in particular
9 with the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area, it was at
10 the time having -- I think it was a million visitors a
11 year or more. I mean, it was an enormous number of
12 visitors, and the money that was being brought in was
13 substantial, but it wasn't cutting the muster at all and
14 was losing money due to an enormous amount of
15 popularity, and the BLM proposed a fee increase.

16 There was no regular fee committee in place at
17 the time, but the interior secretary and the ag
18 secretary agreed to let the Desert Advisory Council
19 serve as the fee committee to consider the ISDRA fee
20 increase at that time. This was probably eight years
21 ago. In fact, Dick, you were on the DAC at the time. I
22 think you and I were together at the time that was
23 brought up. And that was a different experience for the
24 DAC because we had to convene under a very strict set of
25 guidelines to make sure that our decision was done

1 correctly and would be durable throughout any challenges
2 and so forth.

3 And so what's happening here is the BLM is --
4 Barstow office is having an opportunity to look at the
5 fees and make adjustments and changes, and in the
6 meantime the Desert Advisory Council, as Jeff pointed
7 out, has been chartered to serve as a fee advisory
8 board. Now, this isn't something that we do often. As
9 I said, it's only happened, like, once before in the
10 time I've been involved, and that was a long time ago.

11 And I know it's not really our -- you know,
12 look. The transportation representative to the DAC,
13 it's probably not their biggest thing. To Paul, as a
14 mining rep, probably not a big issue. And some of our
15 DAC members understandably this is -- you know, the fees
16 that entire pay is to go to Dumont, for example, may not
17 be, you know, something that they think about often.
18 And that's why the fee committees were set up, is
19 because these were people who really had input on it,
20 really had interest in it and so forth.

21 With that said, the law has to be followed.
22 There needs to be an advisory process for this, and the
23 DAC is going to be called upon to do it. And I hope
24 that in time will have a full enough number of seats so
25 that we can issue the advice at that time. It's great

1 that we're just in the draft stage now, but I hope that
2 kind of brings it up for the DAC members here and
3 members of the public as far as the framing, as I see
4 where this is and the DAC's role in where this is.

5 My last thing I just want to say on the
6 specifics of this, the Dumont stuff, it's been a long
7 time coming. Thank you. This is good. I fought for a
8 day pass way, way, way back, and it didn't get any
9 traction. The Sawtooth Campground thing, that's an
10 example of a campground that was created by the BLM
11 after this fee process had been really running and
12 happening, and there wasn't any fee committee, and so
13 the BLM hasn't been able to charge a fee there.

14 Unlike other campgrounds that have
15 considerable, considerable infrastructure and
16 visitation, they weren't able to just -- they can't just
17 go out and say, "Hey, we're going to charge a fee."
18 They have to go through this process to do it. So I'm
19 glad to see that Sawtooth is going to be brought into
20 the fold as well, because I remember the DAC, when we
21 were taken to that campground, we were really blown
22 away. It is one of the coolest campgrounds ever.

23 So with all of that said, I'm going to open up
24 the floor. I guess I'm going to point to Dick first
25 because we've chatted on this the other day, and I want

1 to give him a chance. Dick, I'll recognize you first.

2 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I appreciate the presentation
3 and everything for the fees. I'm quite happy to see the
4 changes being made for a day pass. We've been working
5 on that for a long time. I have a couple of questions
6 about how that will be processed, how you're going to
7 sell those.

8 The other thing, I'm glad to see you moving to
9 one yearly permit. I'd just like to make the comment
10 that I think in your proposal you need to make it
11 understood that the fees paid at the Dumont are Special
12 Recreation Permits, they're not amenity fees. You can't
13 charge amenity fee if you don't have all the
14 installations that are necessary for that.

15 The reason they do charge a Special Recreation
16 Permit is because you don't have any other way to charge
17 a fee. The BLM is not allowed to charge an entrance fee
18 anyplace in the country. You can only charge three
19 things -- one of three things, an amenity fee, an
20 expanded amenity fee, or Special Recreation Permit. The
21 reason they use a Special Recreation Permit is because
22 there is just no other way to charge a fee.

23 So over the years at -- I've been involved with
24 the fees for, like Randy said, for several decades at
25 the Dunes at Glamis, and one of the things that's my big

1 thing that I tried to work with the BLM in Washington
2 and other things is even the Special Recreation Permit
3 is not a valid way to charge the fees, because there's
4 no way to charge the fee. We should be had where -- I
5 know they use a Special Recreation Permit. They tell me
6 at El Centro the reason they are doing that is because
7 it's easier to do, you know, and they should have a --
8 you should be paying a fee for the recreation vehicle
9 that you're using in the Dunes, not the camping thing
10 you came in there with. It's not a camping fee. It's a
11 Special Recreation Permit for using the recreation area
12 for off-road recreation.

13 And if you look at the -- and it fits in with
14 Section h in the -- FLREA 6802(h) is what defines what
15 you're using there. Anyway, but I agree. We have to
16 have a fee, and so there has to be some way to have a
17 fee, and the way you're doing it is with a Special
18 Recreation Permit that's there, and at El Mirage, that's
19 only a few places in the country the BLM uses a Special
20 Recreation Permit for fees. That said, I know that's
21 the only way you can do it, and I approve or -- I don't
22 approve -- I accept this is a better way to do it.

23 My main questions are, you know, when you say
24 you're going to have a daily pass and you say that's
25 good until 12 p.m. the next day, what happens when

1 somebody comes on a Friday night, and is it good for
2 Friday and Saturday, or does it only cover Friday, or
3 does it cover Friday and Saturday? That's going to be a
4 big issue with people that roll in there on a Friday
5 afternoon or a Friday at noon and are staying until the
6 next day. So that's something you need to look at and
7 then figure out a way to handle that and answer that
8 question.

9 And I agree, the \$15 is a good value because,
10 if you have to buy two of them, that's less than having
11 to spend 35 for a weekly permit. That's the problem.
12 I've been trying to get -- I've been trying to get
13 El Centro to do this exact same thing for 20 years,
14 because we have the same issue. We have to pay \$35 or
15 \$30, whatever it is, 35 or \$40 now for a day if you
16 don't show up for the day. So we really need a daily
17 permit too.

18 The other issue is, how we are going to provide
19 the visitor with his daily permit? Do they have to get
20 it online? Is there going to be somebody there that
21 sells it to them on a Wednesday afternoon? And that
22 brings up an issue, too. We need to make sure there's a
23 way that you've looked at that.

24 So with that said, I approve. I think it's
25 great for the visitors to pay some of the fees and the

1 costs. I understand exactly about the cost we have at
2 ISDRA. We have probably over a hundred -- a hundred
3 restrooms, and \$100,000 is probably a cheap deal, for us
4 anyway, for getting those taken care of, so it's
5 definitely something that needs to be done.

6 And, as Randy pointed out, we used to have to
7 go through the RRAC. The RRAC hasn't been in service
8 for several years, and so the BLM has allowed the -- and
9 actually the FLREA actually says they can use another
10 Recreation Advisory Council if there's no RRAC
11 available. And we need to -- the people on the DAC need
12 to understand what these fees cost, how they're utilized
13 and how they're used and make an approval for it.

14 So hopefully I'll send you any comments that I
15 have so that you have them in writing, and hopefully we
16 will get a copy of the final draft -- or final thing
17 that you want us to approve of so that the members of
18 the DAC can access that data.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Dick.

20 Other DAC members, questions, comments? The
21 line is open. If you're still gathering thoughts, just
22 a couple more items, if I can take another bite at the
23 apple.

24 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Randy, let me say one thing.

25 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Go ahead.

1 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I just noticed that
2 Thomas Zale, the retired manager from El Centro, is in
3 the attendees list. And obviously Tom must have just a
4 day off or really slow day to call in and do the DAC
5 meeting online. Nice to see you, Tom.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I agree. I agree. I hope
7 he's still playing guitar too. Maybe we'll hear from
8 him a little later on the public comment. Good to point
9 out, Dick. Thank you.

10 One thing I wanted to point out that's
11 important, these fees that are collected, the law
12 requires them to go back to the area that collected
13 them, the fee area. So this is not a case of the fees
14 being popped in an envelope and mailed to Washington,
15 D.C. The money goes back to the area for which they're
16 collected. That was an important condition of the
17 legislation.

18 Also I do want to touch on something that Jeff
19 said when he brought up Rec.gov. All the fees and all
20 the passes and stuff that Interior charges throughout
21 its organization, I think they all have to go on Rec.gov
22 now. There's a requirement to sell them on Rec.gov to
23 make it easier for people to purchase.

24 But I know that there are certain structures.
25 There's a structure to Rec.gov, a fee structure to

1 Rec.gov and other little parameters that sometimes
2 affect -- that can affect the amount you charge or how
3 you charge it. And so sometimes it's really -- what I'm
4 sort of pointing out is, something one of us may come up
5 with that seems like an obvious good idea may not be
6 something that's supported exactly by Rec.gov. So
7 coming up with ways to charge fees, being real creative
8 isn't necessarily going to be helpful, unless it's
9 supported by Rec.gov.

10 A silly example -- I think I'm right on this,
11 too -- is, for example, one of the passes in El Mirage
12 is a dollar cheaper, a dollar less expensive on Rec.gov.
13 And I think that's because it's priced under a certain
14 threshold where a fee would have kicked in, a Rec.gov
15 charge to the BLM that would have made them have to
16 charge more for the pass than what was authorized. And
17 the BLM has to be careful. We can't go over what was
18 authorized. And so I just want to point out that
19 Rec.gov is going to have some handcuffs to how things go
20 forward, too.

21 Another point I do want to bring up, we haven't
22 see the -- I call them the yellow reports. We haven't
23 seen the annual fee summary reports in some time. Now,
24 sorry. We had COVID. We had offices close. I get it.
25 But I think we're getting back into a crawl, walk, run

1 now that I think we should be seeing those reports on an
2 annual basis for the fee areas like we used to get. And
3 so I'd urge the BLM to maybe make this fiscal year, as
4 it comes to a close, maybe make it the year that we get
5 back on the train with providing those reports.

6 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: We used to get reports on law
7 enforcement and any medical things, too, each year.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah.

9 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I think we do need to get
10 back to that, too.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: To refresh the DAC members,
12 the law also -- not only does it require the fees going
13 back to the fee area that it was collected, the law
14 requires the agencies to report on an annual basis how
15 those fees were expended. And it's broad categories and
16 a standard form that's set up by the agency. It's sort
17 of a one-size-fits-all form for the different needs, for
18 their need. But it's still helpful, nonetheless, so
19 just I'll remind the DAC members. That's why I call it
20 the yellow form, because there's a bunch of yellow
21 columns on it that's part of the template that the
22 agency uses.

23 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I think that I'd just like to
24 say, too, the recreation community, you know, has not
25 pressed the issue of the Special Recreation Permit used

1 for fees because we understand fees are required and
2 that they should be used for, you know, for the area
3 where they are. So that's not been something that we
4 really pressed too hard on.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: So floor is open. I've
6 said all I have on this. I appreciate it. Thank you,
7 Jeff. Really nice of you to share this today. But the
8 floor is open for another minute. DAC members?

9 Okay. With that --

10 MR. CHILDERS: Randy, can I go back?

11 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Please, go ahead and close.

12 MR. CHILDERS: So Randy kind of scratched
13 off a -- it's kind of like using a scratcher from the
14 California lottery. He scratched off an issue we had
15 with El Mirage and the fee charges. And there was a lot
16 of argument back and forth between the Barstow Field
17 Office and the national office about exactly who was
18 responsible for these fees, and it wasn't the fee for
19 the activity or the resource area, it was the Rec.gov
20 fee.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Right.

22 MR. CHILDERS: And the field office made a
23 decision we would not and we couldn't because it was --
24 even though the Washington office was telling us that we
25 could have added the convenience fee for Rec.gov onto

1 the pass without having to go back to this process, we
2 did not feel -- that would have been disingenuous on our
3 part, having not gone through a process of disclosure.
4 So we take that -- we pay for that fee out of those
5 funds.

6 It just depends just a little bit on how much
7 we get back to work on, but we thought it was fairer to
8 the recreation community do that. And then, like Randy
9 said, we are mandated to move to Rec.gov. We will
10 continue to have the pass machines available for as long
11 as they'll let us keep them. We want to give people all
12 the opportunities to buy passes in different ways as we
13 can until such time as we're mandated not to do that
14 anymore. So we're going to keep fighting those.

15 Dick, a really, really great thought on the day
16 pass and how that's going to work. I'll work with Dave
17 on how we're going to get that ironed out, but I do
18 believe we will be very liberal in that, because it is a
19 pass that everybody has wanted for a long time. And I'm
20 really excited to bring it forward. I think it's going
21 to be huge for the users and huge for people who go out
22 there.

23 And the FLREA reports, I -- when Katrina was
24 here last year, I thought we did them for 2021. If we
25 didn't, I will provide any of the FLREA reports that you

1 need. Just let us know, and we'll get them over to you
2 guys. I apologize if you don't have them already.

3 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Awesome. Thank you, Jeff.
4 Thanks very much.

5 We have a message. It's good timing. We have
6 a message from Jack. Jack is having -- has entered a
7 satellite internet connection and it's unstable for him,
8 so if we lose him from time to time, letting the members
9 of the public know he's trying his best with his
10 connection. So let's bear with him.

11 We're still a little early today. Our lunch
12 break is not set for another 30 minutes or so. If I can
13 improvise, I think that would probably give us time to
14 at least cover -- if I may put Shelly on the spot, at
15 least we could cover the California Desert District
16 Report. I think that also includes, like, a State
17 Office Report, too. Maybe we can get through that and
18 get through some questions, and that might take us to
19 lunch, and we can continue moving forward on the agenda.

20 Let me point out, we're a lot ahead of
21 schedule, and I've talked a lot more than I usually do
22 at DAC meetings, although some of you guys might dispute
23 that. But that said, the reason we're so ahead of
24 schedule is we only have half the DAC members. If we
25 had a full slate of DAC members, trust me, each agenda

1 item would have twice as much comment. So if it appears
2 to the public and others that we're moving through this
3 faster than we usually do, it's only because there's
4 fewer of us here on the dais to participate. I think,
5 as we get more full, the meetings will, for better or
6 for worse, extend on so that we have more comment
7 participation.

8 So with that, may I reintroduce Shelly Lynch,
9 the new Desert District manager for her report a little
10 early.

11 Hi, Shelly. Thanks.

12 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Thanks, Randy. Yeah, I can go
13 ahead and go over the district -- we can maybe start --
14 depending on timing, we'll see where we're at with the
15 field office and fire overviews as well. But I can
16 certainly start with the State Director's Report, just
17 going over that.

18 There's no real changes in leadership in
19 Washington or in California. Leadership in CDD, we did
20 introductions. Of course, I'm the new district manager.
21 We went through the field managers. El Centro couldn't
22 join us today. Carrie Sahagun is the acting El Centro
23 field manager, and then Dani Ortiz is the Santa Rosa
24 San Jacinto Mountains National Monument manager. That
25 hasn't changed. Jihadda Govan is the Sand to Snow

1 National Monument manager, and you just met Noelle
2 today. So that's the leadership in CDD.

3 Moving on to budget, as of August 8th BLM
4 California's operating budget for fiscal year '22 is 273
5 million, both new and carryover funding, and that's an
6 increase of around 40 million according to the April,
7 2022 report. These increases are due to additional
8 appropriated funds received at the annual work plan, the
9 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding allocations for
10 fire and non-fire, and more revenue funding from fee
11 reimbursement, cost recovery, and contributed funds.

12 Let's see. Touching on some highlights. So we
13 requested funds, OHV funds, and our grants and all of
14 the offices in CDD were successful in the grants they
15 applied for. So there's a 30-day trial period. Then
16 final awards will be September 1st. So Barstow got
17 about 1.7 million; Ridgecrest, 1.5; Palm Springs,
18 474,000; Needles, almost 400,000; and El Centro,
19 922,000, for a total of 5.1 million dollars for CDD.
20 And that's combination of restoration, ground
21 operations, safety, education, and law enforcement. So
22 we're excited about that, to get those funds.

23 Let's see. Moving on to renewable energy
24 development, the BLM currently has eight authorized
25 undeveloped utility-scale solar projects with the

1 potential to deploy up to 2200 megawatts, and this
2 includes the recently authorized right-of-ways for
3 Oberon, Arica, Victory Pass, and Crimson right-of-ways.
4 So some of you guys might have seen the press releases
5 about those in the news.

6 And then under DRECP, the Desert Renewable
7 Energy Conservation Plan, most recently the BLM,
8 California Department of Fish and Wildlife approved the
9 first project under the Innovative Conservation
10 Agreement that restores wildlife habitat in the
11 California Desert Conservation Area in Kern County. It
12 balances renewable energy development and biological
13 conservation by directing private land projects
14 to conduct habitat restoration and enhance them on
15 BLM-managed Public Lands.

16 And the first project under the durability
17 agreement known as the J.B. Eastern Slope Mitigation
18 Project will restore 158,000 acres of BLM-managed Public
19 Lands as part of state-required mitigation for the Eland
20 Solar Project developed by Eight-Minute Solar Energy on
21 private lands. So we're excited about that opportunity.

22 And then U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is
23 beginning its process for the General Conservation Plan
24 for the desert tortoise. Fish and Wildlife Service is
25 at the initial stages beginning public scoping for the

1 General Conservation Plan, and the BLM will be a
2 cooperating agency on that effort.

3 Moving on to Wildfire and Fuels, for fiscal
4 year '22, the BLM California has received approximately
5 11.5 million dollars to reduce hazardous fuels on both
6 federal and non-federal lands. BLM California treated
7 approximately 26,500 acres of Public Lands statewide for
8 this fiscal year and is planning to treat up to 50,000
9 acres in the next fiscal year, so making some progress
10 on reducing those fuels.

11 And then CDD fire-specific information, the
12 California Desert Interagency Fire Program is comprised
13 of the Bureau of Land Management and the Parks Service
14 and includes the five BLM field offices within the
15 California Desert District. It also includes three
16 national parks, the Death Valley, Joshua Tree, and the
17 Mojave Preserve. BLM has completed about 6400 acres of
18 fuel treatment to date and have fully funded -- the plan
19 to treat 30,000 acres. That funding is part of the
20 infrastructure funding, the bill money.

21 We already covered the National Monument Plans.
22 Noelle talked about Mojave Trails, and then Sand to Snow
23 are also -- the National Monument Plan is expected to be
24 initiated later this year as well. So those are my
25 State Director updates.

1 As far as California Desert District goes, for
2 workforce, we're in the process of interviewing for the
3 El Centro and Barstow field manager positions, and we
4 also are in the process of processing and renewing the
5 applications for the DAC submitted in May for the call
6 for nominations. So it's pretty much what we're doing
7 at the district level.

8 Greg, do you have anything to add?

9 MR. MILLER: Only on the personnel side of
10 things, California is going through a workforce review
11 process that is looking at different positions, needs
12 for each of the field offices, so in the future there
13 might be some additional positions added to the tables
14 of organization for each of the field offices. Also a
15 national effort is going to be put into place as well to
16 look at the entire bureau and the workforce review for
17 that.

18 So we're trying to line up those two processes,
19 and we might see some additional positions in the near
20 future for some of these different fields offices, so
21 I'm looking forward to that.

22 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Okay. Thanks, Greg.

23 Looks like we've got time. Randy, you want me
24 to go ahead and keep moving through the field --

25 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I think so.

1 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Let's go as close to 11:30
3 as we can.

4 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Okay. Sounds good. First up
5 is Barstow. Brian?

6 MR. CROFT: Thanks a lot. This is my first DAC
7 meeting. I've been filling in as the acting field
8 manager in Barstow since the beginning of the summer.
9 It's been a great experience. I've learned a lot.
10 Appreciate BLM putting up with me for the last three
11 months.

12 In terms of updates, I've broken things down
13 between resources and recreation. On the grazing side
14 we have a new natural resource specialist,
15 Kelly Sanderfield (phonetic spelling), that is going to
16 be taking on a lot of the range conservation role in our
17 office. So I don't think we've had anybody
18 concentrating on range-con duties since Anthony Chavez
19 left. So it will be good to have her focusing on that
20 work and helping with the allotment monitoring and
21 management needs.

22 We released an EA -- it's on E-Planning right
23 now -- for the Round Mountain pasture fencing. It's a
24 project that's going to install some fencing within the
25 Round Mountain Allotment to allow for rotational grazing

1 within that allotment area.

2 In terms of minerals, we're currently doing a
3 plan of operation from St. Cloud Mining for some
4 exploratory drilling they want to do up near Death
5 Valley Junction. We're also working a lot on abandoned
6 mine land remediation work. We've identified 16
7 abandoned mines in the Pinto Mountains area for AML
8 remediation. And our geologist is continuing to do mine
9 inspections on existing mines within the Barstow Field
10 Office area.

11 For wildlife and habitat management work,
12 continuing to do a lot of habitat restoration work in
13 Ord-Rodman, Fremont-Kramer, and Superior-Cronese ACECs.
14 The work in Superior-Cronese and Fremont-Kramer is
15 funded through OHV grants, so it's a lot of work going
16 on in Kramer Hills, Coolgardie Mesa, and some other
17 locations to restore translinear disturbances and other
18 disturbances in those locations. We're also working
19 with Preservation Ranch down at the Ord-Rodman ACEC.
20 They're doing a lot of restoration work down there in
21 partnership with us.

22 And then we recently over the last year or two
23 have gone into partnership with DOD, particularly
24 Fort Irwin, MCAGCC, and the National Fish and Wildlife
25 Foundation under the Recovery and Sustainment

1 Partnership Initiative. So this is an initiative where
2 there's some funding coming from DOD that will help to
3 augment some of the restoration work that BLM is already
4 doing. An RFP request for proposal was released earlier
5 this year under that program, and there should be
6 funding coming out fairly soon to fund some additional
7 restoration work in Superior-Cronese ACEC.

8 Still doing a lot of work up on the Amargosa
9 and in Afton Canyon when it comes to saltcedar control
10 and habitat restoration for riparian areas. Still have
11 a good working relationship with California Fish and
12 Wildlife and UC Davis on Amargosa vole recovery work
13 near Tecopa. A lot of work we've done over the past few
14 years on stabilization of important marsh habitats up
15 there. And we've recently got some funding to do some
16 additional marsh-expansion workup there.

17 For cultural resources we've started quarterly
18 meetings with Old Spanish Trail Trails Association to
19 work on the different work we need to do for Old Spanish
20 Trail. We're currently working on designation of a
21 segment of Old Spanish Trail near Emigrant Pass as a
22 National Historic Trail, and we're working on evaluation
23 of other segments of the Old Spanish Trail for
24 designation under that as well.

25 On the planning side, still working on the

1 Amargosa Wild Scenic River Comprehensive River
2 Management Plan. We've completed the scoping report for
3 that planning process, and we're hoping to have the
4 comprehensive River Management Plan and a NEPA drafted
5 and ready for public comment by the end of the calendar
6 year.

7 On the recreation side, we have a few vacancies
8 that have come up over the summer in our recreation
9 branch. We've lost a couple of our outdoor recreation
10 planners, and we're working hard to try and fill those
11 positions. We have some vacancy announcements that have
12 been going out. We're going to try and bring out three
13 new outdoor recreation planners to help with a lot of
14 the recreation planning needs and Special Recreation
15 Permits and other permitting needs that we have out of
16 that branch.

17 In terms of OHV area issues, Jeff already
18 mentioned the Dumont Dunes Road paving, so that's going
19 forward. Hoping that's going to be done and ready for
20 use by October 24th. Jeff already mentioned our
21 Recreation.gov pass system that that's live. Went up
22 in -- it's been up and running since end of June, I
23 believe.

24 And then down at Johnson Valley we've been
25 discussing with the Marine Corps a training exercise

1 they're going to have to do next year over
2 Presidents' Day weekend. So I think in our field office
3 report to the DAC, it indicates that they may end up
4 having to close the shared-use area within the
5 Johnson Valley OHV area for that exercise. We're still
6 in discussions with them. There's some potential they
7 may not need to close it. They're still trying to
8 figure out what that exercise is going to look like.
9 There still will be Marines in that area during
10 Presidents' Day weekend. There's some potential they
11 just might need to access the inclusive military use
12 area further to the north and they might just need to
13 transit across the shared-use area. So we'll see how
14 that develops and keep everybody in the loop.

15 In terms of management recreation events, we're
16 working with the district on a big recreation event in
17 Stoddard Valley OHV area. That's probably going to
18 occur -- I believe it's the second week of October,
19 called Cal 300. So it's going to be a large event, up
20 to 10,000 spectators we're anticipating. So that's
21 coming up. And those are the major highlights that I've
22 got for Barstow.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Nothing going on.

24 MR. CROFT: There's always lots of stuff going
25 on in Barstow, I've come to realize over the summer

1 working there.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good thing it slowed down
3 for you turning the summer, huh?

4 MR. CROFT: Yeah. They told me it's slow in
5 the summer.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Shelly, in jumping right
7 into Brian's report, we generally call for questions or
8 comments on the report. And so before we move further,
9 I just want to see if the DAC members have comments or
10 questions for either Shelly or for Brian on their
11 reports before we move on.

12 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Sounds good.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is open. If
14 you're thinking of some, I'll jump in first, if I may.

15 Great news on the OHV grant awards. Better
16 than last year, and good work. That said, this was an
17 unusual year in the OHV Grant Program, for those that
18 are interested. This year all applicants made it
19 through the process and met all of the requirements and
20 provided everything they needed to. All the applicants
21 were funded this year. I call it the Oprah edition:
22 "You get a grant. You get a grant."

23 We're happy about that, obviously, because we
24 hate seeing good projects go unfunded. But I do think
25 that the program requirements have stiffened greatly in

1 the past few years much in part to additional assurances
2 of compliance with the regulatory requirements of the
3 applicants with respect to soils, conservation, and
4 habitat monitoring. And I think that that just can be a
5 little too cumbersome for some applicants. I think
6 they're going to have to take a bow-out for a year or so
7 to figure out how to write all those plans and put those
8 plans into action before they can come back and apply
9 for the program.

10 So those are just some observations about the
11 OHV Grant Program this year, which is so important to
12 the desert because it's not only the BLM that receives
13 funding. A lot of their partners in conservation and
14 recreation also receive funding. So it does put a lot
15 of money on the ground in the Desert District, that
16 program.

17 But for Brian, real quick, any inkling as for
18 when Calico might be reopened? I see good progress
19 being made.

20 MR. CROFT: I'm not sure on that. I'd have to
21 get and get back to you, unless Jeff knows. I don't
22 know if Jeff knows off the top of his head.

23 MR. CHILDERS: Right now we still have a number
24 of safety things that need to be addressed. And our
25 office crew is running really low on staffing. But as

1 soon as they get safety things fixed, we'll get it back
2 open, hopefully before it gets too cool, so hopefully in
3 that band of time it's going to be perfect for people to
4 come out and visit.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks.

6 I also want to put out a red flag on King of
7 the Hammers. Although your report on the permits just
8 touched on the King of the Hammer vendor permits, I
9 think I'd be remiss if I couldn't put a big red flag out
10 on behalf of our ranching representative who's not
11 present today.

12 But the impacts of King of the Hammers
13 increased visitation to that Johnson Valley area during
14 that time has become more and more of a headache for the
15 neighboring ranching operation. And I think,
16 unfortunately, we always just sort of hear about it
17 after the fact. I think other DAC members will agree
18 it's pretty typical for us to hear a report from the
19 ranching operation after the event has been held about
20 all the mayhem that they went through. I know that
21 every year that is something that's on the radar.

22 I do know that is on the radar, but I'd like to
23 see if it can get a little more up in front, because
24 Billy's not here today to bring it up, and I just want
25 to speak for DAC members who may not be here but whose

1 voice has been very clear in the past.

2 Just curious, the Afton Canyon, is there still
3 talk about a potential bridge over the crossing? Or has
4 that talk gone away?

5 MR. CHILDERS: We're in the process of
6 developing an EA to analyze potential impact of a bridge
7 in that area. We do not have the funding, but in order
8 to get the funding, we have to have NEPA have done some
9 of the outreach and stuff like that. So we are still
10 working on that project. It's not really in the
11 forefront based on the fact that we still need to finish
12 the CRP for Amargosa, which is mandated by lawsuit. We
13 still have a timeframe to get that done. That's going
14 to be our main priority, and then Afton will be right
15 behind that.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Got it. So for
17 four-wheelers who are looking for one last opportunity
18 to get stuck in four feet of water, they should probably
19 go do it now. I tell you, I hold my breath through that
20 crossing every single time. And is Apple Valley really
21 still working on their HCP? Is that still moving, or is
22 it just taking a vacation?

23 MR. CROFT: They're still working on it. I
24 think they're even planning a site tour that they
25 invited our field office to coming up. So they're still

1 working on it. There's a lot of different sections that
2 still have to work through with Fish and Wildlife
3 Service on the planning document, but it's still moving
4 forward. They haven't pulled out or anything, so --

5 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good to hear. Good to
6 hear. I've consulted with them early on in that
7 process. Thanks. That's all I have.

8 The floor is open. DAC members? With that, I
9 guess we'll put Mike on the spot. Hi, Mike. Back at
10 you in Needles, if that's okay.

11 MR. AHRENS: Yeah. There we go. Get
12 everything turned on and all that. Thank you.

13 So kind of in keeping with the discussion about
14 staffing, we too have been without any range support for
15 about a year and a half. We've actually advertised that
16 position three times during that period, and but -- so
17 we were actually successful now in acquiring two new
18 natural resource specialists. We actually upgraded that
19 position.

20 And so the first one is actually for the
21 Mojave Trails National Monument. She actually reported
22 a few weeks ago and will be helping with the management
23 of the Lazy Daisy Allotment and certainly helping with
24 the Mojave Trails Monument planning. And then we have
25 an office-wide project we're working on to do some

1 spring enhancements at a number of springs across our
2 office that she'll be involved in, and then certainly
3 other duties as assigned as they come along.

4 And then our second natural resource specialist
5 will be coming on at the end of September. We did
6 successfully fill that, and she'll be really taking on
7 leadership for our range program, helping with that
8 spring enhancement project, and, again, other projects,
9 you know, as they come along there. So super happy to
10 have that vacancy and one more of those vacancies filled
11 and being able to add some additional support to the
12 Mojave Trails National Monument. So that was really
13 good.

14 Quarterly update on the Brightline electric
15 train. Did a report on that in the written report, but
16 since then we had a dialogue with the SHPO and the
17 Railroad Administration about the National Historic
18 Preservation Act Section 106 clearance and process.
19 Determined through that consultation that the Federal
20 Railroad Administration is actually the lead on that
21 process, and the process is going well. They're
22 actually developing a Programmatic Agreement with the
23 SHPO on how to further go through that process as the
24 construction of the train occurs and what have you.

25 But what is relevant to us is, as the lead,

1 it's been determined that they actually need to complete
2 that process before we can complete our assessments of
3 the substation. So that means that's pushed back until
4 this winter, it sounds like. So actually it's kind of
5 best for us. It gives us a little more time to do that
6 work, which we are very much still staying engaged with
7 that project with a goal to have that all wound up
8 really before FRA finishes that other historic resource
9 process.

10 So also want to update the Primadonna Well I
11 talked about in my report that's been completed. That
12 right-of-way has been renewed and issued, so that's
13 super good.

14 A few months ago we completed a Memorandum of
15 Understanding with the Mojave Desert Heritage and
16 Cultural Association to help provide some monitoring and
17 light -- you know, hand maintenance on the East Mojave
18 Heritage Trail. For those of you who might be familiar
19 with it, it's a loop trail around much of the
20 Mojave Desert. As it lies now, it crosses four
21 different jurisdictions and is about 730 miles long.

22 So we've done an MOU to help us with our
23 maintenance and monitoring of that trail within the
24 Needles jurisdiction, which shoulders the lion's share
25 of the trail. So really neat, for identification, and

1 very dedicated to that to the trail and to the
2 Mojave Road and all that information and the guidebooks
3 that go along with that. So we're excited to be working
4 with them on that.

5 And then the last thing that I haven't reported
6 on in written report kind of came across over the summer
7 here, which isn't a new thing, but Wild Horse and Burro,
8 we have a couple of herd area in the
9 Paiute Mountains, which has really only one permanent
10 spring called Fenner Springs. It's really drying up
11 this year, so we've actually had to start providing
12 water for that herd of burros there and have just
13 initiated a gather there as well. Unfortunately the
14 monsoons have come in, and our office now looks like the
15 Irish Hills. There's lots of foliage and water and what
16 have you, so the burros are still pretty interested in
17 the water we're providing but not really too interested
18 in the feed, so it's making collection a little
19 difficult there.

20 We also had a request from the Chemehuevi tribe
21 to help reduce burro herd size down there in the
22 Chemehuevi area, specifically within the tribal lands.
23 They had burros getting into the town there of
24 Havasu City and, yeah, causing all kinds of problems.
25 So with help from Carl Symons' Wild Horse and Burro

1 folks, been collecting some burros there as well over
2 the last month, maybe a month, and so that's going
3 really well as well, so it's good to see that work going
4 on and getting completed.

5 And I think that's really all I have to share,
6 unless there's some questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: DAC members, the floor is
8 open if you have questions, comments.

9 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I have a question on one of
10 the things in there you said, the substation. The
11 Ivanpah substation did not provide adequate data for you
12 so that you are going to generate a separate
13 Environmental Assessment. So if you're doing that work
14 for them, are they paying you for that for doing that?

15 MR. AHRENS: They are. Actually there's a cost
16 recovery agreement with them, and so they're paying for
17 us to have time to ultimately work through that whole
18 process and accommodate the process that they have. It
19 ends up being a two-step kind of an environmental
20 review, but it helps them with some of their -- managing
21 their program overall.

22 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay. Also as far as Ivanpah
23 Solar Generating Plant, I've been doing some research on
24 that, and they're not meeting up to their performance to
25 design that they -- when they put the plant in. And I

1 don't know how -- how does the BLM get paid for using
2 the Public Land?

3 MR. AHRENS: So there is a right-of-way there,
4 and they pay rental fees for the use of the land, and
5 then they also do pay a megawatt fee based on the amount
6 of power they produce.

7 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Based on megawatts or
8 megawatt hours?

9 MR. AHRENS: Well, you're too deep for me. I'm
10 afraid I don't know. I can ask.

11 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Megawatts are what's put out.
12 Hours are the actual energy that comes out of the plant.

13 MR. AHRENS: Okay.

14 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: They're only working now
15 about 80 percent of what their original design was. I
16 looked at the data for 2001, and they only produced 79
17 percent of what their original expectation was. So I
18 don't know if the original contract the fees for the
19 megawatt hours were based on what their proposed
20 generation was, and if so, are we going to relook at
21 that contract again?

22 MR. AHRENS: Yeah, so I don't know those
23 details, Dick. I could certainly ask and circle back
24 with you. I see Greg has come on. He's done way more
25 with renewable energy than I, so maybe he can help.

1 MR. MILLER: Yeah, Dick. Good question.
2 Sorry. I'm frozen up, it looks like. But the rent is
3 based on megawatts, not megawatt hours. And just
4 recently we did a new calculation on rent based upon a
5 formula. What the formula uses is acres, and then a
6 charge per acre is based on NASS, the National
7 Agricultural Statistics Survey, I guess -- I can't -- I
8 don't know what the other S stands for -- and then the
9 megawatts, and then whether it's solar or wind facility.
10 Solar, there's a certain percentage, like a hundred
11 percent, and wind might be 50 percent of the land
12 because of the use. But definitely it's in megawatts
13 and not megawatt hours.

14 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I'm going to ask, when we
15 talk about our next meeting, I want to have some more
16 data on how these fund tracks are done and why we're not
17 charging for megawatt hours instead of megawatts,
18 because they put a megawatt number in there, and then
19 they don't meet that requirement for that actual
20 generation, so we're using up a lot of Public Land to
21 not make energy, because the energy the kilowatt-hours
22 are what people use.

23 They don't use megawatts. They use
24 kilowatt-hours. So when they're only generating
25 80 percent of what they're supposed to do, the people

1 that are buying it, the PG and E and Edison are not
2 happy campers either because, you know, they're not
3 getting the energy that they need. And thank you.

4 MR. AHRENS: Thank you, Dick. Interesting
5 questions.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is open.
7 Desert Center got a lot of rain. All the roads were
8 closed around there. How did the solar projects do out
9 there with that heavy rain event? Did it prove that the
10 plants and everything worked well?

11 MR. MILLER: Randy, I can answer that.
12 Brandon Anderson, you know, he's our project support
13 team lead, and he and some other folks are going to come
14 out this week -- next week coming up to take a look and
15 to see what the impacts of those big rainstorms were on
16 some of these solar facilities. So we'll know more at
17 the end of next week.

18 MR. AHRENS: They got some free cleaning.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: They got the dust washed
20 off. Mike, I want to thank you and the office for
21 keeping an eye on the water sources there. As this job
22 continues to wear on and wear on, you know, there's the
23 stories in the past of the unfortunate losses when the
24 springs dry up, and the animals, the horses and burros
25 have nowhere else to go. And so I really appreciate the

1 proactive look at the springs out there and trying to
2 sustain what's there.

3 I know, regardless of the need and the periodic
4 roundups and the concerns about the population, you
5 know, nobody likes to see animals suffer. And so thanks
6 for keeping an eye on that.

7 MR. AHRENS: You're very welcome. It's very
8 important to us as well.

9 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I have one more question for
10 Greg, as long as he's answering some of my questions.
11 Do you also look at the amount of natural gas that those
12 plants are using -- that particular plant is using?

13 MR. MILLER: So, good question. We don't -- I
14 hate it when my camera freezes. That's just a really
15 good picture right there; right?

16 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I know they used way more
17 natural gas than they were supposed to, so I didn't know
18 if that was something that figures into your
19 calculations.

20 MR. MILLER: Right. So the natural gas
21 component of that is -- you know, Mike might be able to
22 answer more about this one, too, because he was the one
23 who signed the right-of-way grant, or somebody did for
24 that area, but he knows more about it. But a lot of
25 that is the utilities are working on that, too, looking

1 at that as well. You know, based upon the energy that's
2 being produced, you're right, the utilities are those
3 who are -- the off-takers of the buyers for the energy
4 are the ones who are really interested more in how much
5 energy is being produced.

6 As far as the amount of natural gas being used
7 on there, that's something that we worked with earlier
8 on with Zzyzx, I believe, and talked to them about that.
9 I don't know if we're accounting for that much at all or
10 it's just part of the operation plans that they have for
11 us and working through that process.

12 Mike, I don't know if you know any more about
13 that.

14 MR. AHRENS: I don't really. We did -- you
15 know, I remember running a gas pipeline down to that
16 site to provide them that service, and you know, it was
17 part of the right-of-way -- actually it was a separate
18 right-of-way, the pipeline, and -- but no, I've not ever
19 seen -- I don't think I've ever seen that reported. It
20 might be in some of the annual reports, the amount of
21 use of natural gas that they use. But it's never been
22 asked before, Dick. Thank you.

23 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: When the plan was going in, I
24 was on the DAC before, and the DAC met with their
25 engineer. And I had some history with the plant that

1 was in -- out there by Barstow that ran. I actually had
2 some of my programmers who were responsible for the
3 computers at that facility, so I was pretty
4 knowledgeable about how that was -- that was a test
5 facility between government and Edison and, you know, I
6 think, DWP. So I was pretty knowledgeable on that.

7 So when I asked the engineer for this Ivanpah
8 plant about how they were going to handle clouds, they
9 said, "Oh, we're going to have a boiler going there all
10 the time so we can cover that." So it ended up they
11 burn a lot more fuel to make kilowatt-hours than they
12 needed -- than they said they were.

13 So that's why I think that it's important
14 that -- as a government, we are letting them use our
15 land and take our tortoises, and they're not following
16 the rules that they put down. So anyway, thank you.

17 MR. AHRENS: Thank you. Interesting.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: More questions? The floor
19 is open. No?

20 Thank you. Appreciate it, Mike.

21 MR. AHRENS: All right. Thank you. It's
22 always a pleasure.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Next would be Tim Gilloon
24 from Palm Springs-South Coast office. Tim, good
25 morning. How is your connection today?

1 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Why don't we wait until after
2 lunch? Your lunch break is at 11:30.

3 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: We already hit it. Oh,
4 yeah. Thank you, Dick. Gee, I didn't realize.

5 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: We're going to need some
6 padding time to get up to our 2:45.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: You did great. Thank you.
8 Sorry about that, Tim. Dick, thanks for pointing that
9 out. I lost track.

10 It is 11:30, time for the lunch break, and I
11 think that we stick on schedule with that so the public
12 can know that we'll be back at 12:30 to pick up with
13 Tim's report.

14 Sorry about that, Tim. Got to make you last to
15 do lunch.

16 MR. GILLOON: Sorry you couldn't squeeze it in.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you. Without any
18 objections, we'll break for lunch and be back here at
19 12:30. Thanks, everybody. There's a great café just
20 down the hall.

21 (Lunch break.)

22 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: We're going to start back
23 here at 12:31. Hopefully everybody is back from lunch.
24 I didn't see anybody left at the café. I'm going to
25 start back where we left off, and that was with our

1 Field Manager Reports. And next up was Tim Gilloon,
2 before I cut him off, from Palm Springs-South Coast.

3 And, Tim, I'd love if you're ready to go, and
4 you've got the floor. Thank you.

5 MR. GILLOON: Thank you, Randy. Good
6 afternoon, now, to everyone.

7 So I don't have any slides to share this time,
8 but I direct you to the report for some more details on
9 a few of the projects. But I'll do my best to cover the
10 broad scope of sort of program areas and touch on some
11 of the projects and efforts.

12 So if any of the DAC members have comments
13 (inaudible.)

14 (Reporter clarification.)

15 MR. GILLOON: How is this? Is this a little
16 better? Awesome. Thank you.

17 And again look forward to hearing from the
18 public at the end just to make sure that we're covering
19 as much as possible.

20 I'd like to start with planning efforts like,
21 you know, what Noelle is working with the Mojave Trails
22 National Monument, our San Jacinto National Monument,
23 Jihadda Govan is leading the initial efforts for
24 developing land management planning for the Sand to Snow
25 National Monument. The Sand to Snow is one of the four

1 national monuments within the Palm Springs Field Office.
2 We share jurisdictions. Palm Springs-South Coast office
3 is the lead, with the majority of the usable or
4 different types of elements and resources. We also have
5 the Black Lava Buttes portion in the Barstow Field
6 Office and larger portions of the Wilderness area on the
7 San Bernardino National Forest.

8 So currently what we're working on for the next
9 step is opening community conversation sessions starting
10 in the next couple of months, and so we've got a
11 contract out for that. And our planning process is
12 staggered with the Mojave Trails National Monument
13 planning effort, and that's based primarily on our
14 staffing levels because we're supporting the
15 Mojave Trails planning effort, and it will also allow us
16 to mirror the process as close as we can so the public
17 will expect the same process there.

18 Related to that planning effort, we've got the
19 ongoing Whitewater Wild and Scenic River planning
20 effort, development of the Comprehensive River
21 Management Plan. That effort is being led by the U.S.
22 Forest Service with some of our staffing support, and
23 the land uses and guidance on how to maintain those
24 outstanding river values from that planning process will
25 be referenced in Sand to Snow Monument.

1 So as many of you already know, Palm Springs,
2 we handle a lot of the major projects' rights-of-way.
3 We have over 3,000 individual operational proposed
4 energy development projects. For some of our more
5 recent projects, like Arica, Victory Pass, Oberon Solar,
6 there's continuing managing of development of those
7 projects with various commitments, operation and
8 maintenance, monitoring activities. And that's part of
9 the process after those authorizations are approved.

10 Currently we're working on another couple of
11 major solar applications, getting those adjudicated and
12 moved to the next step in processing and evaluation.
13 We're also highlighting the new solar facilities
14 achieving connection quantity power grid, the most
15 recent one being the announcement last week that the
16 230-megawatt Desert Sunlight battery storage system is
17 now fully operational. I would also like the public to
18 recognize not only hard work from BLM staff but also
19 contributions and input from partners and public. And
20 again that goes to administration goals for energy needs
21 and security and balancing climate and environmental
22 needs. So it's challenging projects to work on.

23 We continue to work on backlog of other
24 rights-of-way applications and uses, land tenure
25 actions. Some of those projects include the Morongo

1 Comm Site Environmental Analysis. We had a public
2 comment session -- or public comment period a little
3 while ago, and I had actually asked, based on that
4 feedback, for additional alternatives to be reviewed and
5 considered and sort of preparing additional simulations.
6 So they're updating the environmental analysis, and
7 we'll be looking at that.

8 Another action of note is the Whitewater
9 Groundwater Replenishment Facility Final Environmental
10 Impact Statement, FDIS, it's in the middle of its 30-day
11 public review comment, which ends on September 12th.
12 And that project, if you're not familiar with Coachella
13 Valley Water District, filed an application for a
14 right-of-way grant for operation and maintenance of
15 their existing facility located both on public and
16 private land.

17 CVWD proposed alternatives with the issue of
18 right-of-way for their existing groundwater recharge
19 facility, just shy of 700 acres of Public Lands for
20 about 30 years and would allow up to 511,000 acre feet
21 per year from the Colorado River recharge.

22 There's a range of alternatives to choose from,
23 from the no action to the variations you see here. We
24 had ome relatively minor edit to the FDIS, and they did
25 that based on public comment. After that review period

1 closes, I'll sign the Record of Decision, the ROD, and
2 select an alternative from the FDIS.

3 We'll continue to work on the Santa Ana River
4 Wash Land Exchange, which is nearing completion. That's
5 a Congressionally directed action to convey
6 San Bernardino Water Conservation District to them about
7 300 or so acres in exchange for another 300 acres, and
8 that's to support their groundwater recharge efforts.
9 We're also working with local jurisdictions to resolve
10 challenges with some homeless encampment activities as
11 possible.

12 For our recreation program there's an increased
13 interest in trails within the Coachella Valley area,
14 creating some additional connections and opportunities
15 for the public. We are currently looking at the trails
16 along the border of the Santa Rosa San Jacinto Mountains
17 National Monument and municipalities in the valley for
18 that interconnection there.

19 We have concerns of bighorn sheep habitat and
20 healthy population, and we need to balance those with
21 users hiking and walking dogs in area. There's also
22 efforts in the larger community to expand connectivity
23 with the Big Morongo Preserve, and we're looking to be
24 more inclusive and supportive of those initiatives.

25 You may also be aware of the Meccacopia Special

1 Recreation Management Area, SRMA, off-highway vehicle
2 recreational facility project that just had a public
3 scoping period. That proposal would have been in the
4 California Desert Conservation Area Travel Management
5 Zones, and those two facilities support existing OHV
6 recreation in the Meccacopia Special Recreation
7 Management Area. The first would be a staging area
8 north of the SRMA, and the second would be an open
9 riding area south of the SRMA. BLM will also attempt to
10 acquire Private Lands to provide connectivity, lessen
11 conflicts, and improve the experience.

12 For efforts related to natural resources we are
13 continuing work with our partners at the Dos Palmas
14 Reserve trying to gain more desert restoration acreage
15 most efficiently as possible -- a challenging endeavor,
16 obviously. And in support of this, we recently updated
17 our Cooperative Range Agreement. The BLM cleared with
18 the buyer within the core marsh area of Dos Palmas. The
19 goal of this action will be to restore the
20 Ridgway's Rails habitat and assist in meeting the
21 environmental goals at Dos Palmas.

22 We're also working with our partners regarding
23 supporting desert bighorn sheep populations. California
24 Department of Fish and Wildlife and The Society for the
25 Conservation of Bighorn Sheep have proposed to repair

1 existing damaged water system guzzlers in the Chuckwalla
2 Mountain Wilderness, so the desert bighorn sheep
3 population will benefit from that.

4 And so you should expect to see the Wilderness
5 proposed action. So we're updating our partnership
6 mechanisms to include (inaudible due to poor internet
7 connectivity), afford the opportunities, and then the
8 long-term goal is to work with through state in having
9 parcels donated as part of the (inaudible). We're
10 working towards that.

11 We're also doing work on the Inland Fish and
12 Game Shooting Range cleanup project, which benefits the
13 San Bernardino kangaroo rat habitat and population as
14 well. Sterling White has a great presentation here a
15 little bit later on.

16 Other issues within the Palm Springs-South
17 Coast Field Office that address recreation and
18 unauthorized uses continue to be a process to work
19 through. Cattle grazing continues to be one of those
20 challenges both on the Santa Rosa San Jacinto Mountains
21 National Monument -- that's along the BLM-Forest Service
22 boundary -- and also in the Whitewater Canyon within the
23 Sand to Snow National Monument. So we're (inaudible)
24 activities such as creating mountain bike trails on the
25 Santa Rosa-San Jacinto Mountains National Monument, and

1 our national monument manager for that, Dani Ortiz, is
2 doing a really good job on that.

3 Mr. GILLOON: Finally, to close out for the
4 Palm Springs-South Coast, we're preparing as best we can
5 for the high increase in seasonal visitation as we
6 approach the fall. This is going to be an interesting
7 season in the Palm Springs-South Coast as we have some
8 turnover on staff, and with the heavy renewable energy
9 workload, we have added an assistant manager position to
10 focus on those needs. So starting Monday we welcomed
11 Dan Kasang to that position. He was promoted. Many of
12 you may already know him, the outdoor recreation planner
13 on staff here.

14 So our associate field manager, Janet Cheek,
15 has decided to retire at the end of the year, so we'll
16 bring on someone new to pick up her legacy and look
17 forward to the ever-revolving door of personnel on
18 staff. We are so busy here, and they gain so much
19 experience, it's inevitable they get taken away from
20 here and further their career. You'll see a lot of
21 geologists and specialists and maintenance staff joining
22 us in the next few months.

23 And I'd like to give out a -- I'd like to give
24 a special kudos to Ranger Burry (phonetic spelling). I
25 recognized him last month. He was able to assist in

1 helping us save somebody's life during a fire out in the
2 South Coast region. So he was just kind of driving by
3 and responded. So our BLM staff work on so many
4 different areas. In law enforcement they do marijuana,
5 they do border issues, they do regular stuff.

6 So that is it in a pretty good rundown. If there's
7 any questions from DAC members, I'd love to hear them,
8 or comments.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Awesome. Thank you, Tim.
10 I appreciate that. I'll open the floor. Comments or
11 questions for Tim from DAC members?

12 I'll jump in for a minute. Tim, you were
13 talking about Desert Sunlight and their battery storage.
14 What ratio is that battery project? Do you know, by
15 chance?

16 MR. GILLOON: Ratio in terms of?

17 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Like one-to-one,
18 one-to-two, one-to-four?

19 MR. GILLOON: I don't believe I have that
20 information here. You're talking about solar field
21 production versus their battery storage?

22 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Yeah. I just remember when
23 I first got wind of that battery storage being done at
24 one of our field trips, they referred to it as like a
25 one-to-two, meaning they were going to be able to store

1 up to half of the output.

2 MR. GILLOON: I don't have those numbers handy
3 in front of me. I'll e-mail you off-line for that.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Cool. Just curious where
5 we're getting. Am I also right, maybe, that nowadays
6 almost all the new solar projects going in are having
7 some sort of battery storage component to them?

8 MR. GILLOON: Yes, most of them are factoring
9 in battery energy storage systems. They're currently
10 using whatever is on the current market for technology.
11 But I know that there's advances in that technology for
12 battery storage systems, and so they're not there yet
13 for implementation, but again I'm sure when these
14 companies will come on and they use as a lifecycle for
15 their existing system's upgrades, they'll replace them
16 with more fancy technology. But, yeah, I think a lot of
17 those projects are factory updates. Then it's the areas
18 for battery storage.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good. I have another
20 clarification. The Meccacopia Hills OHV staging areas
21 that you're looking at, one was to the north, and the
22 other was to the south of the -- was it the SRMA, the
23 SRMA?

24 MR. GILLOON: Yeah.

25 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Okay. Thank you.

1 The floor is open. Comments, questions?

2 MEMBER THOMPSON: Sorry. Go ahead.

3 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Please, Greg.

4 MR. MILLER: Just want to follow up on
5 Desert Sunlight battery storage. It's 230 megawatts for
6 the battery storage, and Desert Sunlight's production
7 for its solar field is 550 megawatts, just to give you
8 an idea of the ratio there.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Oh, okay. Thank you.

10 Jack jumped in, and I see a hand for Paul.
11 I'll call Paul next, if I may.

12 Jack?

13 MEMBER THOMPSON: Hey, Tim, good to see you. I
14 just had a few questions. One was with regard to the
15 cattle that are on BLM land adjacent to
16 Whitewater Canyon. I had a little bit of history with
17 Wildlands, and the recent roundup captured about 70 of
18 those that had been around for a couple of years. We're
19 definitely seeing their presence around the canyon. You
20 know, we were kind of under the impression that fencing
21 was, you know, a big part of keeping them out of some
22 areas that they tend to get into and hold up in.

23 Do you have any updates on where some of that
24 stuff is at with regard to maybe that potential that
25 fence being or and/or follow-up roundups to catch the

1 ones we were able to get?

2 MR. GILLOON: For the fencing issue we ran into
3 a snag just working through access to get to those
4 repairs trying to get materials out there in terms of
5 working with the tribe, so we continue to work with the
6 tribe on that and just figure out the details of how we
7 can get out there the best way possible. As a result
8 our contingency plan was to try to get a roundup, but
9 it's just sort of on short notice with planning on going
10 in there. We didn't think it was going to be a big deal
11 but ran into a snag, so we weren't able get a roundup
12 authorized.

13 It was kind of a big deal to get that set up
14 last time. We didn't have enough time. We're going to
15 continue to work on that issue and have that
16 alternative, so I've looked at both of those options.
17 One is to make sure we can get fencing in place and then
18 get them removed as well, in the state office. And I
19 think it's really important for the next calving season
20 to -- or the next lambing season to make sure we can get
21 as many out of there as possible.

22 MEMBER THOMPSON: Yeah, that sounds good, Tim.
23 If you wouldn't mind just getting me a shout as you get
24 closer to that. I know Wildlands property had been a
25 key staging area for the first successful --

1 THE REPORTER: Mr. Thompson, you need to slow
2 down.

3 (Record read.)

4 MEMBER THOMPSON: Sorry about that. I'll slow
5 down.

6 Yeah, Wildlands Conservancy had offered the
7 Whitewater preserve lands for any of those roundups.
8 They're kind of strategically located. We also have
9 some relationships with the property owners that are
10 also kind of in strategic points, so as you do get
11 closer to any future roundups, feel free to reach out,
12 and we can help make sure that those partnerships are in
13 place to make sure they have the highest chance of
14 success. Really appreciate your efforts on that.

15 Another quick question was just in regards to
16 the Whitewater Canyon fire closure. This was the first
17 year that I hadn't seen signs up, and I wasn't quite
18 sure if the order actually went in this year and if
19 there was any connection there with the signs going in
20 or not going in.

21 This is just something that is important to us
22 as we get closer to a holiday weekend, and the
23 visitation in the canyon tends to go up during those
24 times. So just kind of curious what the status is of
25 that closure in Whitewater Canyon, if it's indeed in

1 effect or if it's actually not in effect.

2 MR. GILLOON: Yeah, so on the closure order I
3 think you're referring to, there's two closure orders --
4 right? -- historically. One currently we still have
5 issued at the district level is our standard fire
6 closure -- right? -- that stopped the fire activities,
7 shooting, things of that nature in those areas. For the
8 Palm Springs-South Coast area it's slightly different
9 compared to South Coast version -- or area and what's in
10 mainly San Bernardino County.

11 So Palm Springs portion, that's in place.
12 That's in effect. And the difference is, is for the
13 county, the county prefers to actually just do a full
14 access closure. And based on our requirements for
15 multiple use mandate and also the Dingell Act, when I
16 looked at it and I talked with our fuels staff, the
17 conditions and the risk there were not -- did not rise
18 to a level that we needed a full access closure to the
19 area.

20 Fire restrictions are still in place, and we're
21 still doing that outreach and will continue to monitor
22 that situation, so just to clarify the different
23 closures.

24 MEMBER THOMPSON: I appreciate that. Thanks.

25 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Paul, you're next. You

1 have the floor.

2 MEMBER MARTIN: Okay. Thanks. Real quick,
3 Tim, of the 2200-megawatt solar production that
4 currently the Desert District produces per Shelly this
5 morning, how much of that 2200 is from the South Coast
6 district?

7 MR. GILLOON: The South Coast itself does not
8 have any areas if we're looking at those subunits within
9 the Palm Springs South Coast area, and the South Coast
10 is going to be most of inland, L.A., San Diego areas.
11 But all of the development we have within Riverside
12 County, within that DRECP footprint, and that's, you
13 know, the Desert Center area out in Blythe.

14 And so that's where the solar activity and
15 rights-of-way are. It's just most of the land parcels
16 we have in BLM ownership in the South Coast portion are
17 not conducive towards that development.

18 MEMBER MARTIN: Okay. One other question. The
19 battery storage units, which I am pleased to see that
20 that number is increasing, are these units -- do they
21 use the lithium batteries? And where are these units
22 produced? Is it domestic or foreign, both the panels
23 and the battery storage units using the lithium?

24 MR. GILLOON: So a lot of that activity
25 production comes outside -- most of the panel production

1 comes from outside the United States for the panels,
2 yes, most of that activity comes from the panels. The
3 battery I've not a hundred percent read into yet, but I
4 think a good portion of that -- I'm not sure where the
5 production is percentage-wise between foreign and
6 domestic supplies. I know one of the administration's
7 expressed interests is to increase our domestic supply
8 of lithium. And again just the types of batteries we're
9 talking about, the new lithium iron technology coming
10 out, that's not ready for implementation yet. So I
11 don't have the numbers for you on that, on those
12 statistics for industry, but we can possibly follow up
13 with you.

14 MEMBER MARTIN: Thank you very much, Tim.

15 MR. GILLOON: Yeah.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Floor is still open.

17 Questions, comments for Tim? Once, twice, sold.

18 Thank you, Tim.

19 MR. GILLOON: All right. Thank you. I just
20 want to apologize to everybody. My microphone was
21 working this morning, but it seems that something has
22 gone on with it, so I apologize and will look to remedy
23 that.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Very good. Thanks, Tim.

25 I'll call on next down the list. Ridgecrest

1 Field Office, with Carl Symons.

2 MR. SYMONS: There you are. Good morning -- or
3 good afternoon, I guess, now.

4 I'm not going to go over the stuff in the
5 report other than where there's updates, but I'll fill
6 you in on some other things going on and then what's
7 been updated since we turned in our DAC reports.

8 One of the things in grazing, for the Kelso
9 Peak Allotment we're hoping we'll be putting out the EA
10 for public comment in September. We're going to do a
11 public comment period before the proposed grazing
12 decision on that. That's for renewal of grazing
13 allotments. That kind of got shuffled up when the
14 relinquishment of most of the Rudnick Allotment that you
15 heard Shelly talking about with the durability agreement
16 for the mitigations on Eight Minute Energy.

17 We are working on updating our Wilderness
18 Character Reports for a number of our Wilderness Areas
19 in preparation for starting a Wilderness Management Plan
20 for more of our Wildernesses in that same area, so that
21 will probably be kicking off this next fiscal year doing
22 that background work. We do have a new NRS for air,
23 water, soils assisting the Wilderness person with those
24 character reports.

25 We did get a presentation from the High-Speed

1 Rail Authority about the Palmdale-to-Burbank section
2 they're working on. That's in Palm Springs, and it
3 looks like their preferred alternatives for most all of
4 the sections -- there's not that many, but they'll be
5 tunneling under the BLM rather than going across it, so
6 ground disturbance will be minimal with that particular
7 project.

8 I did just sign off and issued a right-of-way
9 for a power line for Eight Minute Energy. It's actually
10 an aerial power line they're suspending across BLM, so
11 they're not actually putting anything on BLM, but the
12 line does cross parts of BLM land.

13 We took a field trip out to Yeager Solar up
14 there behind Rosamond with the company. It was a real
15 good trip. Kind of got their ideas on what they're
16 doing, and we were able to talk to them about concerns
17 we had. But overall it looks like that it will be a
18 pretty good project. Didn't run into -- at least the
19 areas we were at didn't run into any Joshua Tree
20 Woodlands. There are some Joshua trees out there, but
21 we don't have to worry about encroaching on that that
22 much.

23 Then we are working with Cal City. They're
24 interested in an R&PP lease that -- they have their OHV
25 center there they would like to expand. We have an

1 isolated parcel. It's about 300 acres or so, 320 acres.
2 They would like to get an R&PP lease on it. We're
3 trying to see if we can get an R&PP lease without an
4 amendment right now, because the land is not up for
5 disposal. The general Public Lands are not open for
6 disposal. We'll have to see how that works, whether or
7 not to do a plan or amend.

8 As far as mining goes, Conglomerate Mesa, the
9 precious metals K2 Gold project, they did send back
10 paperwork for cost recovery, so we'll be taking that.
11 We're waiting. From what I understand this week is that
12 they had a board meeting which they had to vote on in
13 order to cut a check for cost recovery, because the
14 project is going to be an EIS, which is cost recovery to
15 the proponent. So as soon as we get that, we'll be
16 initiating it, getting the Federal Register Notice out,
17 and that will start the scoping period for the EIS going
18 forward.

19 We do have three mining proposals in the Atolia
20 area. One is an exploratory drilling project, another
21 one is a trenching project. Both of those are in
22 critical habitat. Looking at their plan of operations
23 for those. Then we also have a 129-acre open bid
24 proposal that is in a doughnut hole out there. It's not
25 technically in critical habitat or any special

1 designation with ACEC or anything, so we're going to
2 be -- but we did have to send it back to them for some
3 more information and stuff as we go forward with that.

4 On our OHV areas, some -- we are working on an
5 MOU with the Navy for those in the Spangler Open Area,
6 the Navy road crosses right through it, and we've had an
7 MOU where we could cross in two spots that are
8 authorized. In this new MOU we're looking at six
9 crossings so that it won't be any more than a mile in
10 either direction, hopefully, to get to a crossing for
11 that. Met with the Navy a couple of weeks ago. They
12 were willing to do some of those adjustments to it so
13 we'll have that.

14 In fact we do have a night race tonight.
15 Starts at 8:00 tonight, a UTV night race that we have.
16 We did have a motorcycle night race a few weeks back by
17 the Desert Motorcycle Club, and that was our first
18 motorcycle night race since I got here. That's over a
19 decade ago. So they want to start trying to do a few
20 more of those night motorcycle races going across.

21 Cottonwood Creek Wild Scenic River we're going
22 to be looking at. Hopefully I'll be signing that
23 management plan in September. We're just doing the
24 reviews of the decision document and last-minute stuff.
25 Like I said, we're hoping to get that done, and that one

1 was under lawsuit to have to do that one.

2 Surprise Canyon, we're working on that with the
3 Parks Service, the River Plan. We are doing some water
4 monitoring and other stuff trying to get the baseline in
5 and moving forward. Right now they're extremely busy
6 with flood damage, but we'll be starting that back up
7 once they get going again.

8 You heard Mike talk earlier about the burro
9 gathers. The area by the Chemehuevi, we've gathered --
10 we've shipped 136 burros so far. I believe there's
11 about another 25 to 30 burros that are actually in the
12 traps right now that we're going over to get to bring
13 them back.

14 And then when he was talking about
15 Fenner Springs, we shipped burros back from that area.
16 Right now we're trying to get the jacks so that -- the
17 problem is that jacks get into the traps and they kick
18 all the others out. And so we have to get them gathered
19 up first, and then we can start bringing the other
20 animals, gathering the others.

21 We have signed an MOU. We just recently signed
22 an MOU with the Navy on the Wild Horse and Burro that
23 they're responsible for the Wild Horse and Burro on the
24 base, but we also coordinate and give them support. We
25 usually do gather up there. So how that's working, and

1 the assistance that they provide to our facility here
2 Ridgecrest, that they do that.

3 Personnel-wise you heard we got new natural
4 resource specialist for air, water, soils. A wrangler
5 and a wildlife biologist start Monday. Two weeks ago
6 our budget analyst started, so we're excited about that.
7 We did hire one more L.E. position as well. That
8 position, hopefully either in October or November, will
9 be heading to Biloxi for training to go forward.

10 And other than that, we're -- this time of year
11 and then into Halloween, we'll be helping other field
12 offices. We'll be supporting Bakersfield on the holiday
13 weekend coming up, and then we'll be going down to
14 El Centro to try to help them assist in that big
15 operation they have down there at Halloween.

16 That's about all the stuff for Ridgecrest.
17 I'll leave it to any questions anybody might have.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Carl.

19 The floor is open. Comments or questions from
20 the DAC members? It's going to be too easy.

21 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yea.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Okay. Thank you. Thanks,
23 Carl. Oh, I know, those night races. Those are in the
24 Spangler OHV Recreation right in the off-highway vehicle
25 area?

1 MR. SYMONS: Yes. All of our competitive
2 motorized events are in the Spangler Open Area. We have
3 dual sport and other things that are either outside or
4 go through some of our smaller open areas, but all of
5 our major competitive motorized events are in the
6 Spangler Open Area.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good. Okay. Thank you,
8 Carl. Appreciate that.

9 We have one more field manager level
10 presentation, and that's a Fire and Fuels Report from
11 Freddie Espinoza.

12 Freddie, are you ready to jump in next?

13 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Did you do El Centro, or did
14 you miss them?

15 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Did I miss them?
16 El Centro, they're not on the list. Sorry.

17 DIRECTOR LYNCH: El Centro is not here.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Oh, El Centro is not here.
19 That's why. Got it.

20 Tell you what, after Freddie finishes, if you
21 have questions for El Centro, at least you can post
22 them, Dick, and see if we can get answers. So let's go
23 with Freddie first, and then we'll see about El Centro
24 questions.

25 Go ahead, Freddie. Thanks.

1 MR. ESPINOZA: All right. I see Paul Martin
2 has his hand up. I wasn't sure if he had any questions
3 for Carl before I got started.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Oh, yeah. I think that's a
5 leftover.

6 MEMBER MARTIN: No. I've got a question.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Jump right in. Thank you.
8 I appreciate that. Sorry.

9 MEMBER MARTIN: No problem. This question is
10 for Carl. The mining activity in Ridgecrest, I read
11 that some of these projects are placer. I just found
12 that interesting. You know, there's not very many
13 placer gold mining operations left. And you know, it
14 does require a lot of water. But it is a more -- it's a
15 possibly environmentally friendly-type mining. But,
16 yeah, is that right? Is that 129-acre project a placer
17 mine?

18 MR. SYMONS: Yeah, basically it's a placer
19 mine. They're going to be going in and taking it there.
20 And I believe that that's also the way that they would
21 handle the -- if they find areas where they're doing the
22 trenching and the drilling projects around that Atolia
23 area, it's historically been placer mines for everything
24 from tungsten to gold.

25 MEMBER MARTIN: I see. Thank you, Carl.

1 MR. SYMONS: You're welcome.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Paul. Then we'll
3 give the floor over to Freddie. Here we go. Thanks.

4 MR. ESPINOZA: Good afternoon, everybody.
5 Again, I'm Freddie Espinoza. I'm the assistant district
6 fire management officer for the California Desert
7 Interagency Fire Program, which consists of the
8 California Desert District for BLM and the three desert
9 parks, including Death Valley, Mojave, and Joshua Tree.
10 And we're also interagency with the Forest Service at
11 our dispatch center in San Bernardino, with the
12 San Bernardino National Forest.

13 So to share, since we submitted the information
14 for the report that you guys all have, the only real
15 updates I have for that is we've had six additional
16 fires across the unit just totaling about an acre, six
17 of those on BLM land and one in the park at Joshua Tree.
18 It's been relatively slow fire season in
19 Southern California, so a lot of our folks have been
20 helping out other areas right now.

21 Paul is up in Oregon. He's our normal fire
22 management officer that you'll normally see on these
23 meetings. I'm covering for him this particular one, and
24 the last one I was able to, so it's good to be here. So
25 we do have -- a lot of our folks have been helping out

1 fires in Northern California and other parts of the
2 state and country.

3 But with that, you know, the forecasters are
4 saying that we should probably have a typical if not a
5 little bit more of a Santa Ana season. So we'll see how
6 that plays out as we get into October through December.

7 Other things with our program is, kind of like
8 everybody else, we do have lots of vacancies in our
9 program. And we are coming up with a -- the Department
10 of Interior is going to do an interagency hiring event.
11 There's going to be two, one in Redding and then one
12 down here -- we're still working out the details --
13 probably in Culver City is where we're looking at. It's
14 a good centralized location for everybody.

15 So we should be looking at filling some of our
16 positions in November 18th through 20th. It will be
17 over the weekend. People will be able to -- the
18 announcement should come out around October, and then
19 we'll do our event there, and people should be able to
20 come and apply in person and do interviews and that type
21 of thing. So we're really looking forward to that event
22 in November to get some of our positions filled,
23 permanent ones, and our seasonal positions for next
24 year. So we're looking forward to that.

25 Other than that I don't have anything else to

1 update. Everything else in the report is pretty good.
2 So if anybody has any questions about any of the things
3 that are in the report or anything additional, I'm ready
4 to take those if there's any questions.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Okay. Thank you, Freddie.
6 The floor is open. Does anybody have questions,
7 comments?

8 I can say, boy, it's uncomfortable to hear the
9 words, "We're having a slow fire season in Southern
10 Cal." I mean, it is you true. But, boy, it just always
11 makes you want to knock on wood.

12 With that said, the only thing I wanted to
13 point out, I think it's neat the bipartisan
14 infrastructure of funding that's going to be able to
15 support salary increases and be able to help with
16 retention and recruiting. It sounds like a good,
17 important step for being able to fill the ranks.

18 MR. ESPINOZA: Yep, for sure. You know, it is
19 limited. You know, it's only got a limitation to it
20 until 2024, I believe, or 2025 or until the funds run
21 out. So, you know, it is a limited one, but they are
22 also working on a new job series for firefighters in the
23 federal agencies, so that's something else that's in the
24 works also. So we'll see how all that works out also.

25 So hopefully I didn't jinx it by saying we're

1 having a slow season right now. Most of our monsoonal
2 stuff has had some moisture related with it,
3 which -- actually too much. It's been messing up some
4 of our access and things like that in the parks and in
5 the deserts. But, yep.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thank you. The floor is
7 open. Paul? Anyone? Very good.

8 Thanks a lot, Freddie. Appreciate your filling
9 in.

10 MR. ESPINOZA: All right. You're welcome.
11 Thanks. Good to be here.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Dick, did you have or
13 anyone else have any questions regarding El Centro's
14 report you want on the record?

15 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I have a couple of questions,
16 but are they're kind of trivial. What I would like to
17 do is, maybe I'll just talk to the people at El Centro.
18 But I think they should be looking at the way Barstow
19 has handled the Dumont fees. We would like to have the
20 exact same deal where we have a daily permit.

21 The questions that have been asked or the
22 requests to change things have been requested at Dumont
23 are exactly the same thing with the visitors that the
24 ISDRA asked for. They would like to have an extra
25 permit for a car with the yearly permit. They would

1 like to have a daily permit, because right now if you
2 come down for a day, you've got to buy a weekly permit
3 for \$35. So it seems a little ridiculous to have to do
4 that. So it seems like -- if Barstow can figure out how
5 to do that, it seems like El Centro can figure out how
6 to do that. Anyway, I think that's something they
7 should be looking at anyway. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON HENDERSON: Awesome. Hey, thank
9 you, Dick. Thank you.

10 Next on our agenda -- this is neat -- we get to
11 hear from Sterling White on a presentation of the
12 San Bernardino Kangaroo Rat and Inland Shooting Range
13 Cleanup.

14 So welcome back to the Desert Advisory Council.
15 Good to see you. And you have the floor.

16 MR. STERLING: Thanks, Randy. It's been a
17 while since we've seen each other. So thank you.
18 Hello, DAC members and folks.

19 Yeah, that fire thing that Freddie was talking
20 about is a little bit scary. Hopefully the buildup
21 doesn't come crashing down and there's a lot of fires
22 next year.

23 I'd like to share with you a screen and give
24 you a PowerPoint presentation today on the Inland
25 Shooting Range Project. It was a project that's been in

1 the works for, oh, gosh, probably eight or nine years
2 now. And let me see if this works.

3 Can everybody see that okay? Randy, can you
4 see that?

5 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Looks great to me.

6 MR. STERLING: Okay. Thank you. Yeah, so this
7 was an interesting project and not very common to the
8 Desert District or BLM in the sense that where we
9 actually closed an active shooting range or are
10 participant in the closure of an active shooting range
11 and then take that shooting range and clean it up and
12 try to put it back into some kind of a state that
13 everybody can agree upon.

14 So I'm going to give you a short presentation
15 and follow up by a short video. When we finish with the
16 video, then Randy will turn the floor open for
17 questions, if that's okay with you.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Sounds great.

19 MR. STERLING: So here's a picture of the
20 Inland Shooting Range during its active period. The
21 range sits here in Southern California, and I think
22 during this active period at the high points there was,
23 you know, between 7,500 to 10,000 people using this
24 range in a year. It was very active and had a lot of
25 different uses. I'll discuss those here in a little

1 bit.

2 But the manner in which we approached the
3 cleanup on the range, we used the CERCLA authority given
4 to BLM to go after the lead and the other contaminants
5 that the range considered hazardous. CERCLA is spelled
6 out here in the title, and if you want a definition on
7 that, I'll be happy to provide that to the group after
8 the presentation.

9 But there's really two authorities where BLM
10 can go after projects. One is with our NEPA authority,
11 and, you know, most of our big projects are handled with
12 NEPA. But with CERCLA we have some benefits. It comes
13 with access to funding, and it also comes with access to
14 contractors that work in the Superfund or the EPA world.

15 Let me see here. See if I can get this thing
16 to change gears. Here we go.

17 So the area first was being used by recreation
18 shooters, this tract of land, starting in the late
19 forties, and it became a popular spot for all of the
20 shooters to go and do recreation shooting in the early
21 fifties. By the early, mid sixties BLM had gotten
22 involved, and that's when the first leases of record we
23 can find were initiated on this land dedicating this
24 land specific to shooting. And that ended around the
25 2012 time period because of a lawsuit in an adjacent

1 landowner. I'll explain that in here in a little bit.

2 Also on the land from about 1950 through '63,
3 there was an area used by the local communities as a
4 cut-and-fill or really just haul-your-trash-and-dump-it.
5 And the street sweeper waste would come and dump on this
6 land. And at that time the land really was out there
7 and not close to the interface, the urban interface. It
8 was far away.

9 But in the most recent years -- here's the
10 tract of land that says "Site," as Highland and Redlands
11 grew, the range became part of the urban interface. Tim
12 had mentioned some tracts of land that BLM had been
13 working on for exchange in the Santa Ana Wash River
14 bottom. Those lands are actually in this picture. I
15 don't have them highlighted for you, but they are right
16 here between the two blue lines in this picture.

17 So the site sits next to Plunge and Elder Creek
18 just south of Highland. If we Zoom in on the site, the
19 range was made up by three diffuse areas. There was a
20 trap range, a skeet range, and then a multi-use range.
21 The multiuse range is one where they use rifle, pistol,
22 and shotgun for different shooting events and recreation
23 shooting, where the trap and skeet were primarily used
24 for shotgun.

25 I had mentioned that a lawsuit had taken place,

1 and one of the reasons the range was shut down is that
2 on the north boundary of this site in this pink, purple
3 highlighted line here, that's the property boundary, and
4 during a site assessment lead shot was found to the
5 north of that on private land. And after litigation,
6 the results ended with the trap range shutting down.
7 There was no one party responsible. They had disbanded.
8 And all of the accounts and all of the liability -- or
9 not the liabilities, but the buildings and the trap and
10 skeet throwers, anything of value was pretty much
11 abandoned and left in place. And the only group
12 holding -- or sitting at the table holding the bag was
13 BLM.

14 So in about 2012, that's when I got involved
15 with it as a HAZMAT specialist and project manager. And
16 looking at this and looking at the issues with the
17 potential for fire and flood events next to the blue
18 line here at the bottom of the picture, we developed
19 some objectives for the range. And those were to
20 prevent or reduce the exposure of lead to people and
21 critters and the environment. We identified that we
22 wanted to prevent or reduce any offsite migration.

23 So there was some urgency with this project
24 because of that blue line at the bottom. We really
25 don't know when the rains are going to hit or if there's

1 a fire up on the mountain and then the rains follow, any
2 of that could have potentially washed this range out,
3 since there was no one there maintaining those berms.

4 And what we found living in this range after
5 the buildings were demolished and taken out, were areas
6 of soft sand that were habitat for the San Bernardino
7 kangaroo rat. They had moved in and didn't see the
8 signs saying that, you know, "There's lead here, there's
9 potential for exposure. Stay out." They made a home.

10 And because of that what I have here on the
11 slide is two different processes, one for CERCLA that we
12 would normally work through for a project, but because
13 of the San Bernardino kangaroo rat we also needed to
14 work through our Section 7 process. And what I've done
15 here is lined up the different steps of those processes
16 as they work through time, and the time in this sense
17 can be the black arrows between those boxes.

18 So we first worked through discovery, and as
19 you can see over on the Section 7 side, this is where we
20 start by asking for a list of species from the
21 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. And I'll refer to them
22 as "Service" from here on. We then go through a site
23 assessment, which is similar in context.

24 Well, over on the Section 7 side our biologists
25 are doing the same, except they're trying to figure out

1 if there's going to be no harm or harm if BLM conducts
2 an action. That action that I'm speaking about is
3 formalized in an engineering evaluation over on the left
4 side. That's this box. So the biologists work up until
5 a point, and if they determine there's going to be harm
6 or potential harm to those species living out there,
7 then they need to formalize a letter that says, "We have
8 determined," that's BLM has determined, "that there
9 could be a problem."

10 And that's what we did. We brought the
11 wildlife -- or the Service in on this project early
12 during the site assessment, and during this process
13 between site assessment and formal consultation, we
14 worked with them. And I think it probably took eight,
15 nine months at the last effort when we really knew what
16 we were going to do.

17 We called that informal consultation to nail
18 down in a letter what the EPA said and how we were going
19 to address the species living there and also what
20 happens after the cleanup. In this case for this
21 project it resulted in BLM putting together a
22 Habitat Restoration Plan. Once that plan was finished
23 and submitted, then the service had up to 135 days to
24 conclude their efforts.

25 Because we had been working with them early and

1 often, we were actually able to work through their
2 process in less than 30 days to get us a biologic
3 opinion, which then allowed Tim to sign the action
4 memorandum. The action memorandum in CERCLA is the
5 decision made at the local level. We had this prepared
6 knowing what was coming because we were in constant
7 communications with the Service, but we worked out that
8 the kangaroo rats would be trapped, held, there would be
9 a lot of animal husbandry going on, where they would be
10 given three squares a day and housed in a nice
11 air-conditioned room, and then also we prepared a place
12 for them to be located nearby. I'll show you an
13 approximate of that in a later picture.

14 And then we went into implementation. So
15 that's really where we're at right now. And I'll talk
16 about these remaining boxes later, which are about
17 monitoring and follow-up. But really, we've
18 implemented, and the following pictures are about that
19 implementation.

20 So here's the SBKR and the approximate
21 locations within the gun range. We also have another
22 plant species, the Santa Ana River Woollystar, that was
23 within the floodplain behind the gun range. But
24 frequent flood events or people walking or something --
25 something had changed back there, and the plant that was

1 there could not be found by our biologists, so there was
2 no need to consult and to move forward with it.

3 But with the kangaroo rat, we did. We
4 installed an exclusion fence around the project area to
5 keep other kangaroo rats from coming in during
6 construction. But we did implement a trapping exercise
7 where the San Diego Zoo came in and helped us for a
8 period of three weeks trap all the individuals within
9 the site. The decision that we had made was to take all
10 of the soils with lead containing greater than 800 parts
11 per million out of the system and put it into a
12 waste-consolidation area, or repository. The study
13 showed that we had less than 30,000 cubic yards of
14 material to pick up, so that's what we had planned for.

15 During the trapping one of the components of
16 the trapping and understanding of the biologic resources
17 for the SBKR was trying to understand how big the sand
18 lenses, the areas of sand deposits, were at this
19 location. So those biologists doing the trapping had
20 brought in some liquid quickset material for casting,
21 and they casted a burrow.

22 And from where I'm standing in the picture to
23 where Mike Prominate (phonetic spelling), the biologist,
24 is standing here, that's about 30 feet across. So that
25 really provided us a lot of good information so that

1 after the project, when we go back with our restoration
2 plan, we can put some land lenses back down that are
3 approximately 30 feet in length.

4 Being in the river bottom, we did have some
5 challenges. The large, heavy yellow equipment we were
6 using was making a lot of screechy sounds, a lot of
7 noise. And here's what they were pulling up as they
8 were digging those contaminants out of the system.

9 Because it is a dry environment, we used a lot
10 of water on this project. Almost three million gallons
11 of water was used, I believe. I've got some stats at
12 the end, and we'll look at that. But starting in the
13 morning, the haul trucks would run the haul roads, and
14 then during the day, if they were not hauling water for
15 the haul roads, then they were hauling water to keep the
16 dust down at the actual haul sites.

17 During the process of removing soils, the
18 supervisor of the contract was keeping tabs on a number
19 of dump truckloads and the amount of material being
20 hauled. And because of the boulders -- and I think a
21 little bit of problem with not having enough soil pits
22 to test the materials, we estimated, you know, in the
23 beginning around 28,000 cubic yards, but we
24 underestimated by 22,000, and we wound up close to
25 50,000 cubic yards of material by the time the project

1 was said and done.

2 Here's the repository before we capped it, and
3 you can see the dozer up there doing the final grading.
4 That footprint for that repository, or waste
5 consolidation area, is about two acres in size.

6 Here's a timeline for the project. You can see
7 here back in May through June we went out for public
8 comment. Shortly thereafter we finalized our preferred
9 alternative. We worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
10 Service up through the fall, and then the action
11 memorandum was signed and by April, the contractor was
12 in place with heavy yellow equipment waiting for the
13 trapping to be completed, and we finished that project
14 up this last month.

15 Now we're sitting -- we've got a subcontractor
16 ready to begin work at the site in November. They're
17 going to go back in with native plant species and potted
18 plants with a black plastic irrigation system that
19 they're going to use a water truck with to irrigate
20 those potted plants. And we're going to keep those
21 folks employed through the end of 2023 trying to get
22 those native plants established for the kangaroo rat,
23 and they'll also be doing this next spring and fall, if
24 needed, during the summer a little bit of integrated
25 weed management at the site.

1 We'll release them at the beginning of 2024,
2 and we'll go into our monitoring, and then every five
3 years we'll come back and do a -- have a contractor do a
4 review with a written comment document for us, and we'll
5 see if we need to address any issues at the site.

6 So here's the stats that I was speaking about.
7 It was almost three million gallons of water used for
8 dust abatement, about 47,000 cubic yards of
9 lead-containing soil -- soils containing lead and other
10 materials placed in the repository. We put a cap on top
11 of that. The cap started with a clean six-inch lift of
12 material followed by rock. That was about 4500 cubic
13 yards of rock for the cap.

14 And then we used those big boulders around the
15 sides as armory for future flood events. And hopefully,
16 you know, the water doesn't get up this high and we have
17 to worry about it. A lot of diesel was consumed, and
18 the estimated cost of the project so far is around
19 2.5 million dollars.

20 So with that, Matt, if you would, can you kick
21 off the video. And this is a short video for about six
22 minutes, and it will walk you through the project as it
23 is today.

24 (Video Playing.)

25 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Sterling.

1 MR. STERLING: Yeah, Randy, thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good video. Forgive me.
3 My ears must have been plugged right when you got
4 started, but you did mention that San Bernardino
5 kangaroo rat, that's a federally listed endangered
6 species, and that's why significant concern about that
7 species. I know Riverside County has been in the news
8 dealing with habitat issues for that species and its
9 effect on projects. It's an important species there.

10 MR. STERLING: Yeah, it is, Randy. Thank you.
11 It is federally listed, and there are a lot of places
12 where the kangaroo rat used to live, but because of
13 non-native invasive grasses and weeds, a lot of those
14 areas have been taken over, and it's a real issue.

15 In this case when the range shut down and the
16 buildings were demolished and those materials moved out,
17 it left some sand that the animals moved into and made
18 home. There's a very small population in this area.
19 And, you know, one of the goals working with the Service
20 and working with our own biologist was that we
21 established was trying to create more habitat while we
22 were cleaning up all of the lead-contaminated areas.

23 So there's about, I think, all together at this
24 site between eight and nine acres of improvement that
25 have been made, and we'll see what happens in time, see

1 if those little buggers come back in and make home out
2 of eight or nine acres instead of just one or two.

3 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Is there going to be
4 revegetation?

5 MR. STERLING: There is. We have a
6 subcontractor. The prime contractor has removed the
7 big, heavy yellow equipment and gone home, but they have
8 a sub, a conservation group there in the Santa Ana River
9 bottom, that will begin work in November. And they've
10 already been working towards this project and collecting
11 native seeds and native plants, and they've got some
12 potted plants growing in a greenhouse setting. And like
13 I mentioned, about November they'll be out there working
14 away, trying to get this place up and running again.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: How many days were -- the
16 yellow equipment, how many days were they moving
17 material to move as much material as was moved on that
18 site?

19 MR. STERLING: So the challenge here was water.
20 The contractor moved in two very large excavators and
21 three mining haul trucks, articulating haul trucks. But
22 they were able to move more material and to create more
23 dust than what one water truck can keep up, so we had to
24 slow down after about the first three days and bring in
25 a second water truck to keep up. Once that second water

1 truck came onsite, then the whole process of start to
2 finish lasted about six, maybe seven weeks.

3 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Cool.

4 Questions? Comments? Floor's open.

5 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I have a question, and it
6 seemed like that shooting range had been there for a
7 long time, not that I'm a shooter. But did they move
8 that someplace? Is there another place where people can
9 have shooting?

10 MR. STERLING: That's a good question. This
11 group running this range disbanded after the litigation
12 action, and this range will never be reopened again
13 because of its proximity to houses. However, for
14 shotgun sports, probably less than a mile and a half
15 away to the south is another shotgun range that is open
16 to the public.

17 And then if you go east up the 210 and the 215,
18 there's Lytle Creek shooting range, which is a public
19 range for all disciplines, competition and public
20 shooting. And then there's also the new Route 66
21 shooting park, which is open to the public in all
22 disciplines. So while this shut down, there are others
23 that took up that slack within, I would say, less than
24 ten miles.

25 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: That's good. I see that this

1 society is -- just like there's places where we used to
2 ride motorcycles and, you know, you couldn't ride them
3 there because you were damaging the property. Then they
4 come in with houses, and they take and cut the hills to
5 nothing and build houses on there, but we couldn't ride
6 motorcycles on there, but we can destroy the land and
7 put houses on there. Just a little bit interesting,
8 anyway.

9 Thank you very much. Looks like an interesting
10 project.

11 MR. STERLING: Yeah, thanks. It was. We even
12 had some oldtimers come out that had shot there way back
13 then and tell us about the days, you know, when they
14 were a kid shooting with their dads and grandpas and
15 stuff. So it was a really interesting project. I
16 really hate seeing these old gun ranges go, but this one
17 was just located in a bad area.

18 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yeah, back in '40 there
19 wasn't much going on there.

20 MR. STERLING: Right.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: The floor is open.
22 Questions, comments? Good. Thank you.

23 I appreciate it, Sterling. Nice presentation.
24 Good video.

25 MR. STERLING: Randy, thanks. Thanks,

1 everyone. Have a good afternoon.

2 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Let's continuing forging
4 ahead today. We'll retain our break at 2:15.

5 The next item on our agenda is to discuss other
6 issues that we would like to have on the agenda for
7 future meetings. Our next meeting is scheduled for the
8 weekend of December 9th and 10th in tentatively the
9 Ridgecrest area. If we're fortunate enough to meet in
10 person and have a field trip, that's where we will be,
11 in Ridgecrest. Often our agenda items are influenced by
12 where we hold our meetings, but we don't know if we'll
13 be doing another Zoom meeting or not. I hope not.

14 But that said, I'm going to open up the floor
15 if there's items that have come up since our previous
16 meetings, if there are items that have come up that our
17 DAC members want to add to the list of issues to
18 consider.

19 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I'd like to propose -- I'm
20 kind of into solar plants here. And I would like to
21 kind of get some -- I have some comments that I would
22 like to see addressed, and I can send a copy of this to
23 somebody, but I would really like to see what the
24 criteria is used to approve a plan, you know, how the
25 government is receiving fees for this land. I'd like to

1 see, does anybody monitor the results of these fees? Do
2 the plans meet design criteria once they're in place,
3 especially for these other plants? Are there any
4 requirements for disposal and recycling of this
5 equipment?

6 One of the biggest problems with solar plants,
7 especially photovoltaic now, is what are we going to do
8 with these plants? They have about a 25-year lifespan,
9 and we're kind of getting to the end of that from a lot
10 of these way in. We're now getting to the point where
11 they're replacing the panels. Where are they going?
12 What are we going to do with all of these panels?

13 And, you know, what happens when they close?
14 Are they going to go back, and they have to go back in
15 and re-take care of this land? And that's just kind of
16 a lot of my concern. I think that we should be looking
17 at that.

18 I don't know if people are aware, but we have
19 so many solar plants now that the power company is
20 curtailing energy. You can go online and look at see
21 almost every day they're having to shut these plants
22 down. The Independent System Operator for California
23 has a website you can go on and look at, and you can see
24 the amount of energy that's being curtailed because we
25 have so many solar plants.

1 We don't have enough transmission capacity, and
2 we don't have enough energy online to control
3 frequencies, so we're actually shutting down plants. So
4 if we add more and more plants, we're making this
5 situation worse. Now, we may need this energy in the
6 future, but what's happening to these plants that are
7 going in now and we're taking up millions of acres of
8 Public Lands that we couldn't use or close or for
9 whatever reason? Anyway, I'd just like to have a little
10 more criteria. Are we looking at that? Are we looking
11 at any of the issues of having too many power plants or
12 that they're going to be curtailed?

13 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Sort of a post DRECP?

14 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yeah. I mean, we've looked
15 at all these places we're going to put plants. Now we
16 got too many, and we're shutting down -- people don't
17 understand. I worked for the power company for 30
18 years. When I retired, I was the manager for the
19 control centers that operate the electrical system, and
20 the problem that we have is we have to have units that
21 can move up and down to control the frequency, as people
22 don't realize that when you turn your lights on, we have
23 to start making it. When you turn your lights off, we
24 quit making it.

25 So we have to have plants that can move up and

1 down. Hydro plants, steam plants, can move up and down,
2 and these solar plants are not controllable, so we can't
3 control them. So when they come on, they come on. So
4 when we can't use them anymore, we got to turn them off.

5 I'd like to know what happens, because now
6 you're telling me that we don't get paid for the
7 megawatt hours, we get paid by the megawatts. So if
8 they got a 500 plant and we have to shut it down for 20
9 hours a week or 20 hours a month, we're not getting the
10 benefit of the plant, but we're still -- they're just
11 paying the same amount of money, so really we should be
12 looking at a way we charge them by the kilowatt hours
13 they produce, because that's what they're really
14 producing.

15 Anyway, I'd just like to see a little more
16 information about what the criteria is for approving one
17 of these plants.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Thanks, Dick. Thank you.

19 The floor is open. Other DAC members?

20 MS. MIYAMATO: Randy, I just wanted to note
21 that we can have the meeting in person in December, so I
22 wanted just the DAC members to be aware that it will be
23 in person unless we hear otherwise, but we haven't heard
24 anything saying that it won't be in person in December.
25 So please keep that in mind as you guys are thinking

1 about agenda items, et cetera, because there would be a
2 field trip on that Friday.

3 And I believe -- I know you said Ridgecrest,
4 but I think Mike was saying that it was between
5 Ridgecrest and Needles. And with the Mojave Trails
6 planning coming up, it might be nice to be in Needles
7 for that, so, just for that discussion.

8 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Good. Yeah, I concur with
9 that, yeah, yep, because this one was going to be in
10 Palm Springs. Very good. Will this be an opportunity
11 to drill down into Mojave Trails planning? It should
12 be. I guess I saw a number of 2023 deliverables on the
13 timeline, and this meeting will be in December, right
14 before 2023 kicks off. So if the council doesn't mind,
15 you know, further updates on that monument planning,
16 since we will be in the Needles area. Thoughts?

17 MEMBER THOMPSON: Sounds good to me, Randy.
18 Yeah, that sounds good to me. That absolutely makes
19 sense. I know you know might have to look at the
20 geography a little bit to see how feasible it would be,
21 but I definitely know that, with the DAC's
22 responsibility to weigh in on recreation fee sites,
23 going to see some of those locations and understanding
24 the infrastructure needs relative to the costs and kind
25 of wrap our heads a little bit around that on a field

1 trip where that's appropriate, that would help me, I
2 think, to be better informed just to see the sites in
3 person.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: So that would be something
5 that we would want to do in Barstow, because all of
6 those are in the Barstow Field Office projects.
7 Whitewater --

8 MEMBER THOMPSON: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Whitewater, again, that's
10 in the Palm Springs district; right? That's right.

11 MEMBER THOMPSON: Yeah, that's right. Thanks a
12 lot, Randy. That helps ground the geography to Barstow
13 for those things. Sorry. That comment really is for
14 future things, for future agenda items and things like
15 that to try to table that for a future meeting. That
16 would be good.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Exactly. Paul, do you have
18 any interest in some of the mineral and exploratory
19 projects that -- go ahead.

20 MEMBER MARTIN: This would be in the Needles
21 area?

22 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Or if we get up to
23 Ridgecrest. These are for general. This isn't
24 necessarily for the next meeting. If there's something
25 in the Needles area, definitely, because that is our

1 next one. But if there's other things that you'd like
2 to see that you saw in the reports today, for example,
3 that would make a field trip, I'm just saying, if we're
4 going to be in Ridgecrest at some point, I just notice
5 that they do have a good degree of mineral-related
6 projects, and I thought that just might have your ear.

7 MEMBER MARTIN: Yeah. It's very interesting to
8 hear that placer mining, you know, is being evaluated
9 after many, many years. But, yeah, nothing right now.
10 But having worked a lot in the High Desert area -- and I
11 do have a lot of contacts with the various cement
12 plants. And if we ever wanted to do a tour of a cement
13 plant and quarrying operation, you know, I would be able
14 to get that arranged.

15 Just a thought, because in the High Desert
16 you've got several. You've got the Oro Grande, the
17 Mojave plants and quarries that we could possibly visit,
18 you know, at a later date.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Does Portland have a quarry
20 over by Basin Road, Afton Canyon area?

21 MEMBER MARTIN: The closest quarry to there
22 would be the possibly the Oro Grande operations, and
23 that's a real nice setup where they have a real good
24 lookout point, and, you know, you could probably watch a
25 shot and then take a quick tour around the -- it's a

1 state-of-the-art-type cement operation. And they've
2 upgraded it quite a bit over the last couple of years.
3 But, you know, I can arrange that if needed.

4 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Another interesting thing I'd
5 be interested to do is the rare earth place. It's in
6 Mountain Springs or Mountain Pass?

7 MEMBER MARTIN: Yeah. That's -- yeah, the
8 Mountain Pass rare earths. That's an interesting
9 project. I don't believe it's on BLM land, but that
10 would be an interesting one to visit too, but that's
11 near Stateline, you know, all the way up close to the
12 Nevada border.

13 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yeah, we were going to do
14 that when I was on the DAC in 2008 and '09. We were
15 going to do that. We had a lady on that was a
16 geologist.

17 MEMBER MARTIN: Yeah, yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Dinah, Dinah Shumway.

19 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yeah.

20 MEMBER MARTIN: I know her quite well, and her
21 husband.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Of course.

23 MEMBER MARTIN: Yeah. The one interesting
24 thing about these rare earths, I don't know if you guys
25 are aware of this, but the -- I think it's the Army

1 Corps of Engineers was given a project to develop a
2 refining -- U.S. refining plant for the rare earth
3 concentrates produced at the Stateline operations.

4 And I checked on that, and that is still
5 ongoing. But that's interesting. That would be the
6 first time that rare earths are actually concentrated in
7 the United States versus overseas. So that was
8 something that is ongoing right now.

9 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: We're going to need some rare
10 earths to be able to make batteries in this country.

11 MEMBER MARTIN: Yeah, we're going to need both
12 lithium and rare earths. And, of course, I don't know
13 if you've heard about the new patent that Elon Musk has
14 out on lithium production, but that's quite interesting.
15 That's a new development. And if that goes through and
16 works, then large areas of California and also Nevada
17 could be opened up for lithium.

18 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Is that the way they're going
19 to take it out of the stuff they take out of the ground
20 for the generation plants, that take the water out of
21 the ground?

22 MEMBER MARTIN: No. Yeah, this process that
23 Elon Musk's company has patented uses water basically.
24 It's a very simplified process. And -- but, you know,
25 it's still not in operation yet, so it's being thought

1 about now.

2 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I understand they think they
3 can use something similar to that where the water is
4 being used for geothermal generation and take the
5 lithium out before they reinject the water back in the
6 ground.

7 MEMBER MARTIN: Correct, yeah. You can
8 actually look at the patent online. It's very
9 descriptive. But, yeah, it's interesting. And if this
10 works, then much of the lithium needed in this country
11 can be produced domestically versus, you know, having to
12 get it from China or other places like that.

13 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: There's a lot of -- it would
14 reduce the amount of mining that's required.

15 MEMBER MARTIN: Yeah, it's a much simplified
16 process, causing a lot less damage environmentally just
17 using basically water.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: It's been quite some time
19 since the DAC has had focus topics on mineral extraction
20 or technologies for that. You know, it's been a while.
21 And if obviously conversation is to be had on the topic,
22 we're having them here today. So thank you, BLM, for
23 taking note on that.

24 MEMBER MARTIN: Thank you, Randy.

25 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Oh, absolutely. Other

1 thoughts or ideas?

2 MEMBER FRANCIS: You could also visit the Boron
3 mine, too, if that was of interest.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: I was going to say Nathan
5 has a whole -- just outside of Barstow. We could take a
6 look at maybe.

7 MEMBER MARTIN: Yeah. That's an interesting
8 operation, too, one of the largest in the world.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: And I have not seen it.
10 Shame. Well, thanks, Nathan. I think that's a neat
11 idea too. I think we have the potential for some topics
12 on mineral extraction and focusing even on having a
13 little focus on the rare earths issue, since it's in so
14 much of the news.

15 Well, with that, folks, we are approaching a
16 break, and we're approaching the last stretch of our
17 agenda. Is there objection to powering through at this
18 point, or should we take a little bit of an early break?

19 Diane, how are you doing?

20 THE REPORTER: I'm doing okay, but as far as
21 your public, they're scheduled to come on at 2:45. So I
22 don't know if you need to start that at 2:45.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: No, that wouldn't be it. I
24 was more concerned about you needing a break. Just
25 turning to my stenographer. And I don't like to skip

1 the breaks for this, because I know the stenographer
2 needs rest. Her hands need rest, but our mouths may
3 not.

4 THE REPORTER: I actually got up for a couple
5 of minutes during the six-minute video, so that helped.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Would there be objections
7 to us starting the next item, the public comment? Kate,
8 I think we're okay on that?

9 MS. MIYAMATO: So I think we have to start it
10 at 2:45. I don't know if we can do that earlier.

11 THE REPORTER: Because some public might just
12 be planning to come on at that time.

13 MS. MIYAMATO: Yeah. So I think we have to
14 stick to starting at 2:45. So we have a little bit of a
15 break. We could break until then, because I think we've
16 gone through everything else.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: DAC members? Okay.

18 THE REPORTER: Or you could actually just start
19 before 2:45, and then people planning to start not until
20 2:45 could still catch it.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANIS: Well, I'm not hearing any
22 objections. So, Kate, let's follow your advice, and
23 let's break, returning at 2:45 for the public comment
24 period. Thank you. Great. Be back shortly.

25 (Afternoon break.)

1 (Chairperson Banis was absent for the remainder
2 of the meeting.)

3 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Randy had to get to an
4 important family function, so I'm going to keep track of
5 you for a few minutes. I have to ask Matthew how
6 exactly you go about exactly picking out the people that
7 want to speak.

8 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Kate is going to do that for
9 us.

10 MS. MIYAMATO: Yeah, I'll call on people as
11 they raise their hand, and I will open the floor to that
12 person, and then Matthew will allow speaking access.
13 We'll put the timer up.

14 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Very good. I think we can
15 start that now. It's 2:46.

16 MS. MIYAMATO: So if you can please raise your
17 hand if you would like to comment, and I will -- when I
18 say your name, you will be given access. If you missed
19 the beginning part of the meeting, you have three
20 minutes, and then if we have time at the end of everyone
21 going, you may have another three minutes.

22 So all right. I didn't see who -- so I'm just
23 going to go in the order. Let's go with Maureen,
24 Maureen Levitt.

25 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: All right.

1 MATTHEW GIBBS: All right, Maureen, you can
2 unmute.

3 MS. LEVITT: Hi. I'm Maureen Levitt. Can you
4 hear me?

5 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yes.

6 MS. LEVITT: All right. I have a question
7 about rockhounding out in the East Mojave area. It's
8 under BLM management. As you can see, it's a huge area.
9 I have been a rock collector since I came out to
10 California in the mid 1950s. I collect minerals and
11 rocks that look pretty and whatnot. I belong to several
12 gem and mineral societies, and I want to be sure that we
13 will still be able to go to these areas and collect.

14 It's not like we're a mining operation. We're
15 not a company or anything else. We're just
16 recreational. We like to go out in the desert, have
17 fun, and bring back samples of where we've been. And we
18 exist for educational purposes, too, to show kids, you
19 know, this is the kind of rocks that form these other
20 things and whatnot.

21 So is that still going to be open to us? Will
22 the roads be open? Will we be able to go in there, walk
23 in and disabled access? That's it.

24 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: If somebody can answer her
25 question. What about Greg? Can you answer her question

1 about these areas?

2 MR. MILLER: Those rock areas -- I'm not sure
3 exactly where you're talking about or where you're
4 referring to, but in the Mojave National Preserve -- or
5 National Monument, there will be -- I'm sure there will
6 be some opportunity for rockhounding.

7 Noelle Glines-Bovio, who's our national monument
8 manager, she will be able to answer that. I don't think
9 she's on the call anymore. But from what I understand,
10 there should be some more opportunities for that to
11 occur in that area.

12 The plan, the National Monument Plan that
13 they're proposing, will have those identified, I
14 believe, as areas to be able to do rockhounding and to
15 collect those precious stones.

16 Mike, maybe you know a little bit better?

17 MR. AHRENS: Yeah, I can try a little bit.
18 Yeah, certainly rockhounding is a matter that we're
19 going to address in the plan, the Mojave Trails Plan.
20 We've had a lot of input from rockhounds over starting
21 in 2016, so we know it's something that's really
22 important. The bureau actually just released some new
23 guidance about rockhounding, and it does not eliminate
24 that in monuments, especially if we've covered it in a
25 plan. And so -- and we don't have any intentions -- at

1 least at this point, no, we don't have any intentions of
2 doing away with rockhounding. We do need to look at the
3 where and how and how much and those kinds of questions
4 as we move forward through the planning effort.

5 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Maureen, you may want to make
6 sure that you monitor for the subgroup that's been
7 generated for the Mojave Trails National Monument.
8 We're going to have our first -- we've had one meeting,
9 and we're going to have some more meetings. And so that
10 will be someplace where you can learn about what the
11 planning process is for that area.

12 MS. LEVITT: Where do I find that information?

13 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: It will be on the DAC
14 website. And I don't know if they're going to have a
15 list of people like they do for some of the other ones,
16 some of the other subgroups, but if you watch the DAC
17 website, when we have a meeting scheduled, that will be
18 on there.

19 MR. AHRENS: And you'll also be able to hear
20 about the meetings and read the meeting minutes and what
21 have you on the Mojave Trails National Monument BLM web
22 page.

23 MS. LEVITT: So the Mojave Trails one I can
24 find on the DAC website?

25 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yeah. Just do a search for

1 the DAC, DAC website, BLM DAC, and there will be a link
2 to the website.

3 MS. LEVITT: Oh, wonderful. Thank you.

4 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay, Kate, can we go to the
5 next one?

6 MS. MIYAMATO: Okay. And the next person we
7 have is Barbara -- I don't want to mess up your last
8 name, but I think it's Schultheis, Schultheis?

9 MS. SCHULTHEIS: Hi. My name is
10 Barbara Schultheis, and I just want to go on the record
11 as hoping that you will allow -- continue to allow
12 rockhounding in the Mojave Trails National Monument.
13 It's very important to me and to my friends, and I just
14 want to state that for the record. I won't take more of
15 your time.

16 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Again, Barbara, stay in touch
17 with your -- watch for the Mojave Trails Subgroup --
18 Mojave National Trails Subgroup, and that will give you
19 information. I guess they're going to have a website.
20 I didn't know that. That will be good.

21 MS. SCHULTHEIS: Okay. Thank you.

22 MS. MIYAMATO: Okay. Next up is Linda Castro.

23 MS. CASTRO: Hi. I'm Linda Castro. I'm with
24 CalWild. I have a question for Carl. Is he still on?

25 MR. SYMONS: Yes.

1 MS. CASTRO: Oh, hi, Carl. I think I heard you
2 say -- and if I'm wrong, then please tell me. I think I
3 heard you say that you guys are going to be working on
4 four Wilderness management plans. Is that what you
5 said?

6 MR. SYMONS: Yeah. It's actually going to be
7 they're going to be combined all into one, all their --
8 all the Bright Star and the neighboring wildernesses,
9 yes, because they're so similar. But yes, we will be --
10 Marty's doing the character reports, updating those
11 right now, and then she'll be starting on that in fiscal
12 year '23.

13 MS. CASTRO: Okay. Do you recall the names of
14 all four? I know Bright Star. Isn't there a --

15 MR. SYMONS: I don't know the four off top of
16 my head. It's Bright Star. I believe that -- I don't
17 want to give you the wrong ones, but I can send you
18 the -- I can send you the e-mail that will have the ones
19 that Marty is looking to put into the plan.

20 MS. CASTRO: That would be great. And then do
21 you have any -- do you anticipate when you'll have a
22 public meeting and public comment period, just a general
23 idea? Like a year from now, two years from now?

24 MR. SYMONS: I would say probably late spring,
25 early summer.

1 MS. CASTRO: Of this year?

2 MR. SYMONS: Of '23. That would be --

3 MS. CASTRO: Oh, yeah, this is already fall.

4 Sorry. Okay. Thanks, Carl. That's it.

5 MR. SYMONS: Thanks.

6 MS. MIYAMATO: Okay. Thank you, Linda.

7 And next up we have Laura Cunningham.

8 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Hello. I just have a quick
9 question for Barstow. There's a borderline solar
10 project application somewhere on the California-Nevada
11 border, and I'm wondering if it's in Stewart Valley or
12 Pahrump Valley in California. Thank you.

13 MR. CROFT: I'll have to check on that. I'm
14 not aware of that particular project.

15 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Brian, where would that
16 information be where she could look that up?

17 MR. CROFT: I'll have to look it up and get
18 back to you. I'm not exactly sure. Maybe Greg knows.

19 MR. MILLER: Yeah, so I believe the borderline
20 solar facility is in Nevada, so the Southern Nevada
21 District is going to be handling the application for
22 that.

23 MS. CUNNINGHAM: The gen-tie line for that
24 solar project is in Nevada, but this one is in DRECP
25 California. I just wanted to know where. I don't have

1 a map. Thank you.

2 MR. MILLER: Okay. I'm not familiar with that
3 project at all. If it's on private, then we wouldn't
4 know where it's at, because I haven't heard of that
5 project yet. But I will ask Brandon Anderson, who is
6 our project support manager. He'll be able -- he should
7 be able to know if that project is an application on BLM
8 lands or proposing on BLM lands, and then I can ask him
9 to check it out, and we'll have some more information on
10 it. And you would probably look -- if you were looking
11 for -- if it's not -- if we don't know about it on the
12 Desert District, then we wouldn't have a list of it
13 anywhere in our database, but I can check to see.
14 Otherwise it would be on LR2000, Legacy Rehost 2000, and
15 you can look for it on that application.

16 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Okay. Thank you very much.

17 MS. MIYAMATO: Okay. Thank you, Laura.

18 And next up we have Ruth Hidalgo. Ruth, the
19 floor is yours.

20 MS. HIDALGO: Hi. First off I have a question.
21 Can the DAC and the BLM see who from the public is
22 attending the Zoom meetings? The public can only see
23 your participants. We can't see other people. Can you
24 guys see who's here from the public?

25 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: I don't know.

1 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Yes, we can. So if we click
2 on the participants, it breaks it down, the panelists
3 versus the public.

4 MS. HIDALGO: Okay. Thank you. And I
5 appreciate the opportunity to comment. Frankly I loathe
6 having to do so via Zoom. Commenting now on something
7 you all discussed five hours ago just feels removed from
8 the content. I urge you to get the DAC back to
9 in-person meetings. I know it's not as convenient for
10 those of you that work at the BLM and have to be there
11 on the weekends, but it's imperative to engaging the
12 public, which is what these meetings are intended to do.

13 I attended my first DAC meeting just after the
14 Mojave Trails National Monument was declared by
15 proclamation. I had no experience with public meetings
16 and absolutely no idea how our land use plans or
17 management worked. When I commented, my voice cracked.
18 It might still be doing that.

19 When I got to ask about doing what we could do
20 about keeping the best rockhounding in Southern
21 California open, tears welled up in my eyes, in as I had
22 personally connected with those lands. The DAC made me
23 feel welcome, and they didn't make me feel uneducated or
24 naive. They asked questions.

25 But then Barstow field manager, Katrina Symons,

1 approached me after the meeting, gave me some tips, and
2 told me to stay involved. Here I am six years later. I
3 don't believe I would be here if that meeting had been
4 via Zoom. There's no substitute for seeing faces of the
5 public when they comment and personal engagement that
6 occurs in personal meetings.

7 Next, I do appreciate Noelle attending the DAC
8 meeting, and it's unfortunate she's not here. I have
9 some comments and questions for her that I guess I'll
10 have to e-mail her on.

11 The DAC does do a great job of making sure that
12 the lingo from the BLM gets translated. I know that
13 both Randy and Carl have helped translate things for me
14 in the past, and I really appreciate that. I did see
15 Nathan was back, and I'm glad to see that he's back on
16 the DAC. It gives me an opportunity to thank him for
17 the opportunity to collect on the dumps of the mine out
18 there on Boron. We really appreciate that.

19 Brian from Barstow? Is it Brian that's the
20 field manager there now?

21 MR. CROFT: Yeah.

22 MS. HIDALGO: Is he still here?

23 MR. CROFT: Yes. Go ahead.

24 MS. HIDALGO: Before Katrina left, she
25 mentioned at a previous DAC meeting a solar project

1 going in just outside the western border of
2 Mojave Trails National Monument, the Pisgah Crater. She
3 e-mailed or copy e-mailed to Jeff and asked him to keep
4 me informed. I haven't heard anything. Do you know the
5 status of that?

6 MR. CROFT: I do not know the status of that
7 project, no.

8 MS. HIDALGO: Okay. Perhaps I can try
9 e-mailing and touch base with you on that?

10 MR. CROFT: Yeah, yeah, if you want to send me
11 an e-mail on it, I can check on the status of it.

12 MS. HIDALGO: Okay. Thank you. I appreciate
13 that. And Shelly, it's nice to meet you. Welcome to
14 California.

15 MS. MIYAMATO: Thank you, Ruth.

16 Let's move to Lisbet Thoresen. You have the
17 floor.

18 MS. THORESEN: Can you hear me?

19 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Yes.

20 MS. THORESEN: Great. Thank you. Listen,
21 thank you so much for meeting on this beautiful
22 Saturday. I'm in Temecula. It's actually a really nice
23 day here today. Might be where you are, too, so thank
24 you to the BLM staff and to the DAC council members who
25 showed up today. And welcome, Shelly. Welcome to the

1 Desert District, and welcome to California.

2 Based on the comments from earlier, I concur
3 with everything that Ruth said, and I realize that it's
4 not in the hands or the choice of the BLM to have these
5 Zoom meetings, that this is dictated from Washington.
6 But we really do need to have those in-person meetings,
7 and we really look forward to them.

8 And it would be very nice to know how many
9 people are participating. When you used to stand inside
10 a live meeting, you could look around the room, and
11 you'd recognize, oh, these are the conservation people,
12 and here are some rockhounds. And we sort of miss that
13 completely now in this sort of disassociated,
14 disembodied environment. So we look forward to live
15 meetings.

16 I wanted to say that, if I understand correctly
17 based on what Randy was saying this morning, that
18 without a quorum present of members, of DAC members,
19 that the DAC can't make recommendations to the BLM. So
20 I take this to mean transitively that the public
21 comments submitted at this meeting and meetings like it
22 that are submitted to the DAC will not or cannot be
23 assimilated into any recommendations that they might
24 then take and forward to the BLM. So this is really a
25 concerning thing.

1 I really hope to see Jim Bagley return as a DAC
2 member. I always appreciated his thoughtfulness and his
3 comments and his sober perspective. Billy Mitchell,
4 Jayne Powell, Dan Taylor, past and current DAC members
5 who we really need to see at future meetings, especially
6 as we wind our way forward to the finish line for
7 drafting a final management plan for Mojave Trails.
8 These members have always contributed thoughtful input,
9 and I really missed them here today. We need them. We
10 need you. So we hope to see you next time.

11 I hope I get to talk a little bit longer if
12 there aren't too many people, Kate, because I've hung in
13 there the whole darn day.

14 I'd also like to say that Noelle unfortunately
15 isn't here. I was really, really happy to see her
16 finally make an introduction of herself as the
17 Mojave Trails manager here at the DAC meeting.

18 The next 24 months are just going to go
19 running, fleeting by in no time at all. We really,
20 really do need to have regular updates at the DAC. This
21 is the venue where rockhounds and people who are
22 interested are used to being able to come and get
23 information from the BLM, be educated about what's going
24 on, and have the opportunity to give feedback and
25 comment.

1 And, you know, there are so many people who
2 have been waiting on tenterhooks for the last six years
3 over Mojave Trails, and I'm just going to remind the BLM
4 what then DAC chairman Leslie Barrett had said way back,
5 that, when you do Mojave Trails, that the transparency
6 and the quality of communication is going to be
7 incredibly important, because there isn't a great
8 history of that. That was when Leslie Barrett was
9 chairing the DAC then.

10 So he admonished the council, and he
11 admonished -- or he admonished the BLM, be sure that the
12 communication is really, really good, because there are
13 a lot of people here who really want to hear and want to
14 participate and give input.

15 It's our understanding that Mojave Trails was
16 supposed to be a blueprint for all other monuments that
17 are under management by the BLM in the United States
18 throughout the country, the opportunity to get it right
19 in balancing the mixed uses and give accommodations
20 where they have been lacking in the past, especially for
21 rockhounding. So it isn't only important for
22 Mojave Trails, it's really important as a benchmark for
23 the way that BLM administers --

24 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Thank you.

25 MS. MIYAMATO: Lisbet, if we have time at the

1 end, we will give you three more minutes. But for other
2 people's time, we're going to move on to the next
3 person.

4 Maureen Levitt.

5 MS. LEVITT: I have a question. The lady that
6 just spoke said that, because you don't have a quorum,
7 does that really mean that our comments will not go on
8 public record?

9 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Well, I don't know that.
10 Maybe Shelly or Greg can answer that. But we'll have a
11 transcript of this meeting, and it should be posted
12 online. So your comments should be in that. That's why
13 we have a court reporter that is taking all the
14 information.

15 MR. MILLER: And all public comments will be
16 going on record. Like Randy said earlier, it's just
17 some of the decisions that are going to be made during
18 the DAC or any kind of -- what do you call it? -- vote,
19 we'll say, like, that cannot be done without a quorum.
20 But all comments are going up on record.

21 MS. LEVITT: Okay, because like the others
22 earlier, I do want to be on record that I support the
23 rockhounding. It's very important to us, and also on
24 the question will we still be able to trailer our horses
25 in up there and ride horses in the area?

1 MS. MIYAMATO: Thank you, Maureen. We'll move
2 on to Anitra Kass.

3 MS. KASS: Great. Thank you. So my name is
4 Anitra Kass, and I am the Southern California regional
5 representative for Pacific Crest Trail Association, the
6 PCTA. So first, of course, want to welcome Shelly.
7 It's been a while since we collaborated on an issue in
8 that southern terminus area where a contractor was
9 blocking access to the southern terminus of the
10 Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. It was important
11 work, but I am hopeful that we will get to work on stuff
12 that's, like, a little more -- I'm using air quotes --
13 fun, as we continue our work together.

14 Another kind of update for everybody on this
15 call, we have some staffing changes that might be
16 relevant to the work that people here are doing. So
17 just to let people know, my counterpart in the
18 Southern Sierra has moved on to work with a land
19 conservancy, so Ben Barry is no longer with PCTA.
20 Unless we hire a new regional representative, we will be
21 kind of dispersing responsibilities among the current
22 staff, specifically myself; our regional trail
23 stewardship coordinator, Michelle DiMeglio; our director
24 of trail operations, Jennifer Tripp; and our associate
25 director of trail operations, Justin Kooyman. So if

1 you're not sure who to contact about something dealing
2 with the PCT, you can always ask me or Jennifer, and we
3 can disperse that inquiry as needed.

4 So I am looking forward to working with Carl
5 and the staff at Ridgecrest again. It's been a few
6 years since I've worked with them but happy to do that
7 again. You're stuck with me again, Carl, at least for a
8 little bit.

9 Also thanks for bringing it up earlier, Jack.
10 The cattle situation that is going on in
11 Whitewater Canyon and into the other canyons in the area
12 is impacting the PCT as well. So I would really love it
13 if, Tim, maybe you could help facilitate some sort of an
14 in-person partners meeting to update, brainstorm. We
15 could lend support. It's a really important issue, and
16 so I would love to see that.

17 And then finally I just want to appreciate
18 Noelle's presentation earlier. The PCT doesn't go
19 through that monument, but as a Public Lands nerd, I
20 certainly appreciate that presentation, and I'm hopeful
21 that, when the time arrives, we might see presentations
22 for Sand to Snow Monument and for the Whitewater CRMP.
23 So, recognizing, of course, those are interagency as
24 well. So thank you so much.

25 MS. MIYAMATO: Thank you, Anitra.

1 Next up we have Jennifer Haley. Jennifer, you
2 have the floor.

3 MATTHEW GIBBS: Jennifer, you're still on mute.
4 You can use the unmute button on the bottom left of your
5 Zoom screen.

6 MS. HALEY: There we go.

7 MATTHEW GIBBS: Thanks.

8 MS. HALEY: Jennifer Haley, California
9 Federation of Mineralogical Societies and also the
10 American Lands Access Association.

11 First, I'm just really happy to hear that
12 there's no intention to do away with rockhounding in the
13 monument. That just really thrills me. And I know all
14 the rockhounds, even across the country, are going to be
15 thrilled to know that. It's a first.

16 And I wanted to tell you that I was at the
17 first educational sessions that you had, and today's
18 also, that you're just great people to work with, and I
19 really appreciate that. And I learned a lot today about
20 so many different things.

21 And I wasn't sure if I understood something
22 correctly. Will the DAC subgroup, which I'm happy to
23 hear you've got -- will they have a website, or is that
24 going to be, like, on a DAC website? I didn't hear that
25 clearly.

1 MR. AHRENS: Let me go ahead and say just a few
2 words about this, since we've had so many interested in
3 rockhounding. Yes, there is a Mojave Trails website on
4 the BLM and under the Desert District. Kate might be
5 able to point us there better. So there is that
6 website. The information from the 2016 envisioning
7 sessions are on there. The processes, information that
8 came from the Zoom sessions we had earlier this year
9 will be posted in there, and minutes from the subgroup
10 meeting and all that will be posted there as well. So I
11 encourage you to check in, surf around, find that, and
12 make it a favorite there.

13 And then let me also just share, you know, that
14 gemstones are an object of the Mojave and not identified
15 in the proclamation. So -- and rockhounding, the
16 collection of gemstones, is a value and also recognized
17 by the proclamation. So our challenge in the plan is to
18 protect that value and also protect the gemstones so
19 that that's an activity that can occur, you know, in
20 perpetuity. So, you know, the challenge is being able
21 to show that we can actually manage that in that manner.

22 MS. HALEY: Thank you.

23 MR. AHRENS: Thank you. Oh, and also quorum or
24 no quorum, we hear you.

25 MS. HALEY: Thank you.

1 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Is there anybody else? Oh,
2 there we go. Got another one. Lisbet can have some
3 more time.

4 MS. THORESEN: Thanks very much. So, for
5 Maureen, the San Diego Mineral Gems Society puts out a
6 bulletin. I prepare a report of every meeting -- every
7 DAC meeting I attend in the following month, which
8 usually comes out in the early in the month. This month
9 it will come out around the tenth. And you can go to
10 SDMG.org and sign up for a free newsletter, which will
11 give you a link to the reports. And I am going to
12 funnel as much information as I can, as many interest
13 inquiries for Mojave Trails and that subgroup to
14 Gregor Losson, and hopefully he'll formalize some way of
15 people getting access to him directly. He is the
16 rockhound representative now on that subgroup.

17 Mike Ahrens, thanks very much for your comment
18 with regard to treating the collecting as a --
19 rockhounding as a value. I would draw attention to
20 anyone who's not familiar with it, that in the last few
21 weeks the final rule for the Paleontological Resources
22 Preservation Act was published. The final comment
23 period closes in a few days, and then that will be
24 enshrined as a rule.

25 And many rockhounds participated and supported

1 the Southern California Paleontological Society in their
2 very good comment letter about the proposed rule, which
3 had a lot of really impractical, draconian,
4 counterproductive recommendations in the rule. And we
5 were very surprised, many of us, when we saw the final
6 rule come out, to see how very accommodating it was in
7 that they seem to have taken to heart a lot of the
8 practical criticisms that we had and a more expansive,
9 actually, attitude about making -- collecting
10 paleontological resources, just more efficacious,
11 easier.

12 The reason I'm bringing this up here, there's
13 you know, the Marble Mountains trilobites in
14 Mojave Trails is not so much about the paleontological
15 resources, but what was interesting about the PRPA final
16 rule is that it had generalized language about
17 collecting. And, you know, the most restrictive rules
18 about collecting apply to paleontological resources, and
19 yet here was some more expansive language that was much
20 more accommodative and was generalized such that one
21 could treat it as being applicable to other collecting
22 activities; i.e., rockhounding.

23 So I would very much like to suggest that
24 Noelle and the BLM turn their attention to what was
25 written in this law, the PRPA, and that's document

1 number Federal Register 87, F, like Frank, R, like
2 Robert, 47296, because we've had some really useful --

3 MS. MIYAMATO: I have to move to the next
4 person. Thank you.

5 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Thank you.

6 MS. MIYAMATO: All right. Mike Nelson, you're
7 up.

8 MR. NELSON: I live in Colorado Springs, and
9 I'm here to comment again about paleo collection on the
10 monument in the management plan. I've been involved
11 with BLM and collecting since, I believe, 1967 in
12 Southwestern Wyoming. When I was collecting vertebrate
13 fossil, then the permit system was, what's your name and
14 address? What are you going to do with the fossils?
15 Later on I helped with some of the BLM stations in Utah
16 write permits out. Sometimes I wrote the permits.
17 Sometimes we crossed out the grazing permits and put in
18 collecting fossils.

19 But what brought this up is the other day I
20 spent about four cups of coffee, strong coffee, reading
21 that entire file, or final rule, put out by the BLM.
22 And I have a great deal of respect for BLM employees who
23 have to read the Federal Register all the time or write
24 for the Federal Register.

25 But I read it all, and the thing that strikes

1 me is that BLM has the authority to allow casual
2 collecting of invertebrate fossils. And I don't want
3 that taken away when national monuments that are run by
4 the BLM are established. I work with a lot of rock and
5 mineral clubs around the country trying to explain what
6 the Federal Register says.

7 So anyway, I think that it's very important
8 that it goes in the management plan, the rules that the
9 BLM have out there today in that final rule, that casual
10 collecting is allowed.

11 The other thing I'm very interested in is
12 moving, collecting of invertebrate fossils and plants
13 away from any connection to archaeology or cultural
14 resources. It's not a part of archaeology. It's not a
15 part of cultural resources. And sometimes it's stuck in
16 there, and people get mixed up about, he's out there
17 collecting fossils, probably picking up arrowheads or
18 something. But move it away, and put it in recreational
19 activities.

20 And the other thing is, when you go through the
21 BLM website for the Mojave Trails National Monument, put
22 the information, the exact information about collecting
23 invertebrate fossils on the website where people can see
24 it, where they can understand it, and they know what and
25 what they cannot do.

1 So my time's up. Thank you very much.

2 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Thank you.

3 MS. MIYAMATO: Thank you, Mike.

4 Linda Castro, the floor is yours again.

5 MS. CASTRO: Thank you. Linda Castro,
6 assistant policy director for CalWild.

7 Just wanted to say a couple of things based on
8 some comments that I've heard since I last spoke. First
9 of all, I forgot to say thank you to BLM staff and thank
10 you to DAC members for taking the time today and other
11 days when you do this work. It's greatly appreciated.

12 Randy's comment, I think, was a little bit
13 confusing to some folks, the comment about the lack of a
14 quorum, so I just wanted to add to that. A lack of a
15 quorum means that the DAC can't make recommendations to
16 BLM. And one of the major reasons there is that lack of
17 quorum, it has nothing to do with local staff. It has
18 nothing to do with -- or, well, not -- well, never mind.
19 I'll try to explain this. Not the DAC's fault.

20 What happened was, in the prior administration,
21 the prior Secretary of Interior put a pretty lengthy
22 hold on all Resource Advisory Councils, including the
23 DAC, and so things were on hold, I forget how long. And
24 maybe others can remember, but it was a good amount of
25 time where no meetings were held, nobody was considered

1 to be on the DAC or anything like that.

2 So that really put a big damper on the DAC's
3 ability to conduct business. So I just want folks to
4 understand it was much higher up than the folks here,
5 and it was in the prior administration. And so I'm
6 looking forward to the DAC being able to become filled
7 with members and being able to do its work like it's
8 meant to do. Thanks.

9 MS. MIYAMATO: Thanks, Linda.

10 Next we have David Kuskie. You have the floor.

11 MR. KUSKIE: Okay. Hear me now? Yes. Okay.
12 Good.

13 Hi. This is Dave Kuskie. I'm with the
14 American Sand Association. I'm executive director.
15 Been involved with ASA now for just a couple of years.
16 Prior to that I was in the off-road industry supplying
17 tires and wheels not just to off-road enthusiasts but a
18 lot of the rockhounding.

19 It's really refreshing to see all the
20 passionate rockhounding people that are on this call and
21 on this meeting. I used to run into a lot of them off
22 in the trails and sit and talk to them about access,
23 because we need access for all, not just access for
24 certain groups, because if we lose access, all groups
25 lose access, so it's real important to remember that.

1 But thank you for all your passion here, and
2 I've really enjoyed this meeting today and learned a lot
3 today. So thank you for your time. Have a great day.

4 MS. MIYAMATO: Thanks, Dave.

5 Next up we have Maureen Levitt again.

6 MS. LEVITT: I think I had myself muted when I
7 was asking about the equestrian access to the area.
8 Will we still be able to trailer our horses in and ride
9 in the East Mojave area, or will it be protected in some
10 areas because of the habitat and the animals, plants,
11 and stuff that are growing out there?

12 MR. AHRENS: Equestrian use isn't a topic I've
13 heard raised a lot. I think it's certainly something
14 the plan will want to look at. And so, yeah, we'll
15 include that as we go through the planning process.

16 MS. LEVITT: Thank you.

17 MS. MIYAMATO: All right. Thanks, Maureen.
18 And we are at the end of our comment period. I don't
19 see any other hands. So I'll turn it back over to you,
20 Dick.

21 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Well, I see Billy Mitchell
22 come back on there. Do you have something that -- we're
23 just about done here, Billy. I want to also let
24 everybody know, as far as the quorum, we have -- like
25 everybody has kind of figured out now, we haven't had a

1 quorum for several years, and hopefully we'll be getting
2 some members on if people can get processed through. It
3 takes a long time. I know I signed up and didn't hear
4 anything from anybody for a year. So anyway, that would
5 be good.

6 Do you have anything you want to say before we
7 finish here, Billy?

8 MATTHEW GIBBS: Billy, you're muted.

9 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: You're muted there, Billy.
10 You got to unmute your thing. Push your little button
11 down. It's in the lower left-hand corner.

12 MEMBER MITCHELL: I had an issue with my eyes
13 and some poison, and my daughter could just barely get
14 here right now, so it was kind of hard getting this
15 hooked up for me.

16 But the only issues I really would have is
17 checking on year-round grazing for that one ranch, how
18 they were going to -- how Barstow was progressing on
19 that. I imagine they can tell me.

20 MR. CROFT: What was the question on it?

21 MEMBER MITCHELL: Can you hear?

22 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Question on grazing.

23 MEMBER MITCHELL: On the Round Mountain
24 Allotment. That's what I was curious, how Barstow --
25 how they were progressing on it with Jack Hamby.

1 MR. CROFT: That I'm not certain of. I'll have
2 to check. I gave an update earlier on that, the
3 Mountain Grazing Allotment Fencing EA that's been
4 released. I'll have to check on it and get back to you.

5 MEMBER MITCHELL: Okay. That's fine. I'm
6 sorry I was late, I really am. This won't happen again.

7 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Do we have any other wrap-up
8 or closing remarks here? Do any of the DAC members have
9 any closing remarks?

10 Paul, anything? Paul.

11 MEMBER MARTIN: Nope.

12 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Do you got anything else,
13 Billy?

14 MEMBER MITCHELL: No, no. I'm fine. Thank
15 you.

16 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: Okay, Jack, you're done?
17 Jack, do you have anything further to say?

18 MEMBER THOMPSON: Hey, sorry about that.
19 Computer madness. No. I just wanted to say thank you
20 to everybody for all the patience and thoughtfulness.
21 We really, really appreciated it. I know that everybody
22 gave their Saturday up for this, and it's wonderful to
23 see so much good energy going towards the desert that we
24 love so much. And communication and collaboration is
25 really what makes things happen, so I really appreciate

1 everybody engaging. It means a lot to me. Thank you
2 all.

3 MEMBER HOLLIDAY: All right. Well, I thank
4 everybody for being here, and hopefully we'll see
5 everybody in person here in December. We need to get
6 back to -- like everybody says, get back to some real
7 meetings and get some more direct connection between
8 people. All right. So I think we're done here.

9 MEMBER MITCHELL: Thank you.

10 DIRECTOR LYNCH: Thanks, everybody, for
11 joining. We'll adjourn the meeting.

12

13 (The meeting was concluded at 3:29 p.m.)

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MOTIONS

(No motions were made, and no votes were taken.)

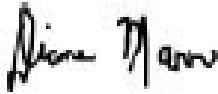
CERTIFICATE

I, Diane Carver Mann, C.S.R. No. 6008, in and for the State of California, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing pages were taken down by me in shorthand at the time and place stated herein, 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 14th day of September, 2022.



Certified Shorthand
Reporter in and for the
State of California

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