

BLM California Desert Advisory Council
MEETING MINUTES
Dec. 10, 2022 – In-person Meeting in Laughlin, NV

For complete meeting discussion, please see meeting transcript

Desert Advisory Council Members: Randy Banis (Chairperson), Nathan Francis, Hans Haas, Jennifer Henning, Richard Holliday, Paul Martin (virtual), Billy Mitchell (virtual), Jayne Powell (virtual), Robert Robinson, Jack Thompson (virtual)

BLM Attendees: Shelly Lynch, Greg Miller (virtual), Kate Miyamoto, Jeff Childers (virtual), Carrie Sahagun (virtual), Paul Gibbs, Erin McConnell, Carl Symons, Tim Gilloon, Mike Ahrens, Michelle Van Der Linden, Rose Pettiette

Guests: Matthew Gibbs (Zoom tech), Andy Silva, Terry Work, Doug True, Gregor Losson, Anitra Kass (virtual), Jennifer Haley (virtual), Susan Herring (virtual), Moises Cisneros (virtual)

Opening and Introductions:

The meeting was opened by District Manager Shelly Lynch who welcomed everyone to the meeting. Kate Miyamoto, CDD Public Affairs Specialist, went over Zoom and public comment period protocols and housekeeping for the meeting. Shelly introduced BLM employees and turned it over to Randy Banis, DAC Chairperson, to introduce Desert Advisory Council members. DAC members provided a brief update on their background.

First presentation: Castle Mountain Mine Project

- Needles Field Office geologist Rose Pettiette presented on the Castle Mountain Mine Project. Rose gave a general overview of the project including the history of the mine dating back to the early 1900s, a scope of the area, and the actions being authorized and proposed.
- Rose presented a 3D video of the proposed expansion. There is no change to the Castle Mine boundary or the mining processes, but an additional disturbance of 425 acres of public land.

Questions: Rose received a question from DAC member Billy Mitchell if the project was part of the old YKL ranch, which it was on the Nevada side. The original house will be preserved as a national historic area. Jayne Powell (DAC member) asked when the rehabilitation would start. It would start in 2048 if the expansion is approved and would last 10 years. Full discussion and questions included in meeting transcript.

Morning break

Second presentation: Amboy Crater Future Trail Work and Visitor Impacts

- Needles Field Manager Mike Ahrens presented trail work planned at Amboy Crater to improve and enhance visitor experience and safety.

- Visitation has increased at Amboy Crater and there are plans to expand the trail network, restore trails, improve signage, and improve barriers around the parking lot.
- Mike discussed the four new trails proposed and showed DAC members additional signage encouraging the public to stay on trails and drink water.

Questions: DAC member Billy Mitchell asked if the BLM uses outside crews or college kids to help restore trails on Amboy Crater. Yes, last year there was an all-female fire crew who did trail work and trail realignment. Full discussion and questions included in meeting transcript.

District, Field Office, and Fire Overviews

- Shelly Lynch presented the State Director's report on leadership in California and the BLM National Office. She discussed the budget and statewide priorities and staff changes.
- Field Managers from each of the five field offices reported on issues and projects. The fire and fuels program also gave an update. Full reports and discussion included in meeting transcript.

Lunch Break

Completed the Field Office and Fire Overviews after lunch break

Third presentation: CDD Resource Program

- Erin McConnell, Assistant District Manager for Resources, presented on the resource program and each staff members scope of work.

Discussion on Future Agenda Topics

- DAC Members decided on the next three meeting dates and locations for 2023: Barstow Field Office in April, Ridgecrest Field Office in August, and Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office in December. The DAC expressed interest in several topics for future meetings including unpatented mining claims in the DRECP, Mojave Trails National Monument planning updates and rockhounding, light pollution, and the Round Mountain environmental assessment.
- The DAC does not have quorum, so no official decisions or recommendations were made.

Afternoon Break

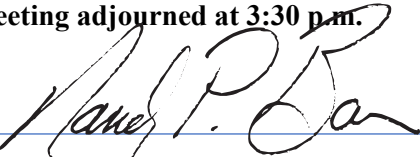
Public comment period

- Terry Work, Vice President of California Off-Road Vehicle Association, expressed the importance of off-highway vehicle safety education and talked about a statewide safety measure. He enjoyed the information about the Mojave Trails National Monument and having a face-to-face meeting.
- Anitra Kass from the Pacific Crest Trail Association appreciated the hybrid meeting and expressed appreciation for retiring Ridgecrest Field Manager Carl Symons. She let

everyone know she is the temporary contact for the whole District regarding the Pacific Crest Trail.

- Andrew Silva shared his appreciation for the face-to-face meeting.
- Dave Del Debbio submitted a written public comment to notify the DAC that the summer rains have make the Amargosa River Trail impassible in one small section. In this section, a steel culvert needs to be installed so that the water may pass through, and the railroad trestles could be connected again for hikers to pass. He requested the DAC recommend the BLM have an engineer assess the situation, make a budgetary recommendation, and propose a corrective plan.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy P. Banis", is written over a horizontal blue line.

Randy Banis, Chair
Desert Advisory Council